

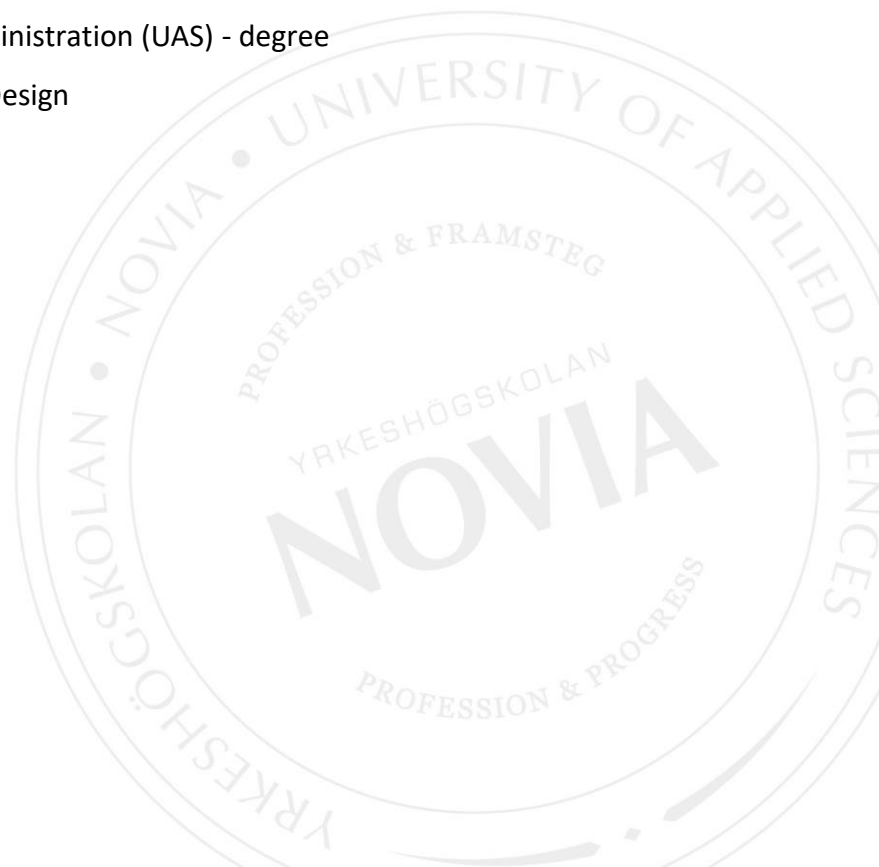
Enhancing Career Prospects of International Students in Finland Using Service Design Approach

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Abstract

In recent years, Finland has become an international student hub for higher education studies, owing mainly to its world-class education system. Usually, the educational journey of a foreign background student in Finland is challenged in several ways. Nevertheless, the main goal of the thesis is to provide a service design-based solution for enhancing career prospects of foreign students in Finland.

Language is one of the main components for integration in a culture and society. To investigate naturalization of a foreign-student career in Finland, several service design techniques such as business canvas model, swot analysis, customer journey maps, and survey were performed. The pertinent data was collected with a survey questionnaire which in fact received 58 responses out of 70, and then four personas and a corresponding customer-journey maps were formed out of it. Furthermore, two online workshops were held with a focal group where brain-storming and co-designing proved ample for prototyping.

The research conducted highlights the fact that there should be strong integration of compulsory Finnish language courses especially with non-technical degree programs. In addition, the Finnish authorities should further pave the way for programs through which international students can easily integrate into Finnish society.

Language: English

Keywords: immigrants, integration, Finnish language, service design, employment

Table of Contents

2	Introduction.....	1
2.1	Initial Research.....	3
2.2	Navigating the Finnish Job Market: Challenges Faced by International Students .	4
2.3	Research Questions	5
2.4	Research Approach	6
2.5	Thesis structure.....	6
2.6	Frame of reference:	6
3	Research and service design Methods	7
3.1	One on one interviews.....	8
3.2	Descriptive Research.....	8
3.3	Service Design Process.....	9
3.4	Time chart	10
4	Theory Cahpter	11
4.1	Finnish Labour Market	13
4.1.1	Employment and Unemployment of foreigners in Finland.....	13
4.1.2	Employment situation of international students in Finland	14
4.2	Unemployed and unemployment rate October 2022-August 2023	16
4.3	Finland needs foreign workers	17
4.4	PESETLE Analysis	17
5	Service Design and tool methods	19
5.1	Business Model Canvass	20
5.1.1	Key Partners.....	21
5.1.2	Key Activities.....	21

5.1.3	Channels	21
5.1.4	Key Resources.....	22
5.1.5	Customer Segments.....	22
5.1.6	Value proposition	22
5.1.7	Customer Relationships.....	23
5.1.8	Revenue streams	23
5.1.9	Cost structure	23
5.2	Stakeholder Map.....	24
5.3	SWOT Analysis	26
5.4	Benchmarking	27
5.5	Research approach with survey.....	31
5.6	Online survey as Research Methodology	32
5.7	Online survey 1	33
5.8	Results of survey	37
5.9	Analysis of survey.....	52
5.10	Trends for international student's recruitment.....	54
5.10.1	Employer branding & Diversity.....	55
5.10.2	Language support & Soft-skill development	55
5.11	Case study - SOL	56
6	Personas	57
6.1	The journey Map.....	60
6.2	Co-design	63
6.2.1	Brainstorming	64
6.2.2	On-Line workshop 1.....	65
6.2.3	Online workshop 2.....	66
7	Prototype & Progressive Innovation Report	68
7.1	Finnish Government initiatives.....	71

8	Recommendations by Respondents.....	72
9	Results & Conclusion	74
9.1	Self Assessment	77
9.2	Unlocking Worlviews: The Power of Open Dialogues with International Students 79	
9.3	Main Findings.....	81
9.4	Future directions.....	82
10	References	82
11	Appendices	88
11.1	Interview Questions:	88
11.2	Interview questions for SOL:	88
11.3	Survey Questions.....	89

1 Introduction

Every year thousands of students apply for higher education in international universities. Studying abroad is a popular trend nowadays. Internationalization of the education system is somehow expanding more and more, especially in the EU universities. A record number of applications are received every year through joint a application form. According to Finnish Higher education, the applications received this year doubled from 2022, and most of the applications were from non-EU students who applied for programs in English (Jokela, 2023). A total of 61,800 applications have been received and more than 50,000 received from outside of the EU area, whilst the Finnish student ratio is same as last year (EDUFI / Vipunen - Education Statistics Finland, 2023). The main reason behind this active student recruitment and reforms in student resident permits in the spring of 2022.

Finland captivates students worldwide, not just with its stunning nature, rich ecology, and vibrant culture, but also with its exceptional education system. Many international students from various corners of the globe flock here for higher education, often with dreams of making Finland their future home. These students immerse themselves in Finnish lifestyle, culture, and language, recognizing the pivotal role language plays in their long-term prospects, especially within the Finnish job market. However, the Finnish language, considered one of the world's most challenging, poses a formidable obstacle. It is spoken exclusively in Finland, making it time-consuming to learn alongside university studies. Consequently, when students complete their degrees, they possess expertise in their respective fields but often lack the necessary language skills.

The application fee for non-EU /EEA students from 2017 and the COVID-19 pandemic reduced the number of international students in Finland, the problem of unemployed international students and graduates still struggled with poor Finnish language skills. As per latest data from the Finnish National Agency for Education, (Education, 2020) the number of international students has increased by 50% in the past decade, in the following figure shows the strength of international students in higher education and most of them come from Asia, particularly China and India.

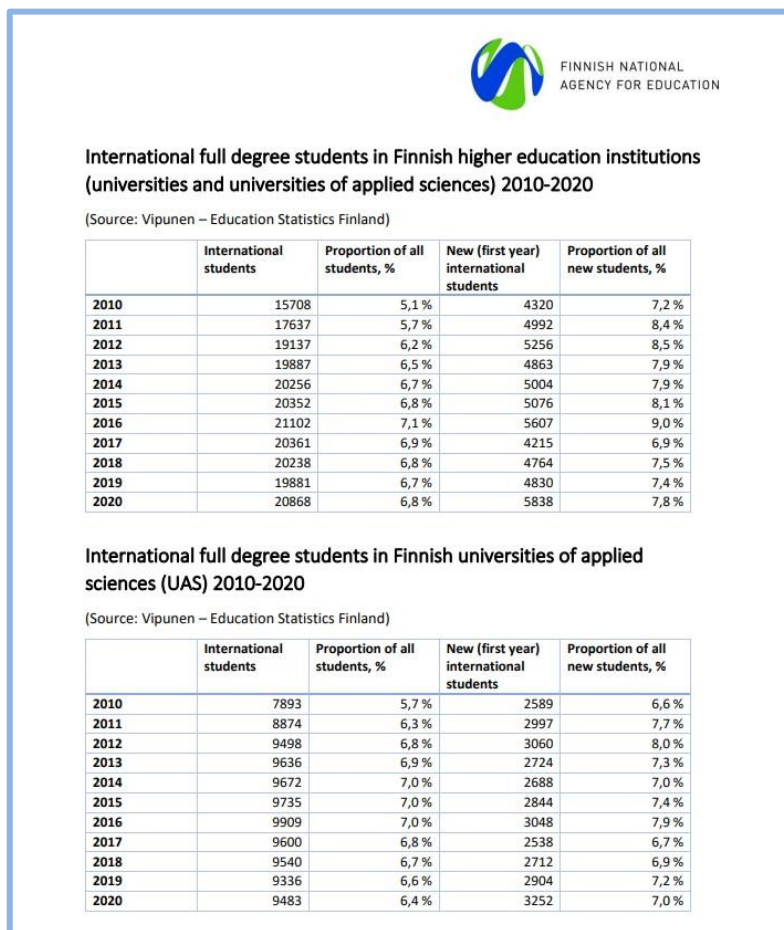


Figure 1. International students in Finnish higher education (Kuusela, Employment Bulletin, December 2022, 2023)

According to one of survey by Statistics Finland, 50 percent of Finnish international students start working during their studies with 55 percent of university students and 58 percent of Universities of Applied Sciences students, having a job alongside their studies (Kuusela, In September unemployed jobseekers, 2021). These students face similar challenges in the job searching process as international students. Another statistics survey provided information, foreigner job seekers number increased compared to the last year of Dec 2021 (Kuusela, Employment Bulletin, December 2022, 2023). Based on the data, it appears that there has been a general increase of 2.2% in the number of job seekers, with a significant percentage 15 percent of job seekers being unemployed. This may be due, in part, to employer language requirements, which may be affecting international students' ability to find work.

The YLE news report highlights a situation where an international student and a local student possess identical qualifications, field-relevant skills, and necessary background

information. Despite the similarities, the employer opts for the Finnish candidate (Ahmad, 2021). A study from 2013 found that only 58% of international graduates from Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences were employed, compared to 81.9% of Finnish graduates.

This study aims to investigate the hypothesis that a lack of proficiency in the Finnish language presents a significant barrier for international students in their pursuit of study-related employment in Finland. The research has the potential to illuminate the language challenges international students encounter in job searches and provide valuable insights into the factors contributing to successful employment outcomes.

The writer identified a problem and recognized the need to find solutions for the benefit of future students at Novia University of Applied Sciences. To address the issue, the author conducted an initial survey using a Google questionnaire, reaching out to both current and former students.

1.1 Initial Research

Appendix 1 shows the research questions, were more likely that international students may face in Finland. Below are the some of pain points, that students listed most;

- **Language barrier:** Although English is widely spoken in Finland, it may still be difficult for a non-native English speaker to understand the local accent and communicate effectively.
- **Adapting to a new culture:** Finland has unique culture and identity, which may be different from the student's home country, which could cause some initial challenges in adapting to a new way of life.
- **Cost of living:** The cost of living is bit high compared to other EU countries. Affordable housing can be a bit challenging for international students, especially in larger cities where prices and demands for accommodation are high.
- **Navigating bureaucracy:** Dealing with administrative procedures and paperwork, such as visa, resident permits, Finnish ID and banks is confusing and time-consuming for international students.
- **Feeling Isolated:** International students experience loneliness and isolation after COVID-19 pandemic (Tiilikainen, 2020).

Many students replied that hinderance for career survival in the country is language that is, Finnish. Due to the difference between their native language and academic language, work life language brings a huge challenge for many International students.

1.2 Navigating the Finnish Job Market: Challenges Faced by International Students

Finland provides ample support to international students to help them overcome all these obstacles and adjust to their new surroundings. The universities and international houses for international students offer resources and services, such as language classes, cultural activities, and mentorship programs to help them settle and integrate in Finland. Despite the support offered by Finland, international students still face challenges during their job search after or during the studies. When students seek employment in the Finnish job market, both before and after completing their degrees, they face challenges related to language. The impact of linguistic factors is observed on both their degrees and skills during this process. A major downside and stressful phase for a student who is just trying to get settled in Finnish society to give return in terms of knowledge. Many well-educated students must agree on low paid jobs due to absence of fluency in the Finnish language. Every year, Finnish companies miss out talented applicants who can offer different lived perspective or experiences from outside of Finland, which could really help them to innovate and develop their work (Helsinki, 2021). Many of universities offer studies in English to international students, which help students in their academic life but the hinderance for career survival in the country is the official language that is, Finnish. Due to the difference between their native language and academic language, work life language brings a huge challenge for international students. Globally the most examined and discussed problem for international students is language. In Finland, the local and official language is Finnish, which is not spoken in other countries, creates huge adjustment issues for international students. No doubt, international students are supposed to learn Finnish if they want to get a study related job they struggle for years in irrelevant jobs if they do not get to learn Finnish at earlier stage. In this type of situation, international talent faces discrimination as well. Finland wants international talent, to turn international students into a potential workforce (Pratchett, 2021) that can return the investment on their education to the Finnish society. However, international students cannot find work as Finnish companies demand an excellent command of Finnish.

Subsequently the experiences of overseas job searchers in Finland were shared with YLE News. It was discovered that looking for work in Finland is difficult without already existing social networks and informal relationships to share information and opinions during the hiring process. Some jobs are not even available for open search, and recruiting takes place within a small circle of recognized people. Students who are looking for work face discrimination and even racism. Another hiring need is perfect fluency in the Finnish language, even though that skill is not used in the job performance (Ahmad, 2021).

1.3 Research Questions

This thesis aims to facilitate the seamless transition of international students into the workforce, both pre- and post-university. It will work as a guide to improve business students' employment prospects in their chosen fields by addressing language barriers. Additionally, the thesis embraces service design principles and technology to create a practical guide for prospective business students, enhancing their overall experience and preparedness for the job market. During extensive problem elucidation and ongoing research, it became apparent that there existed a distinct need for the provision of a specialized service tailored to support international students enrolled in the business program at our institution. In response to this identified need, the author has undertaken the proposition of a comprehensive service designed to cater specifically to the unique academic and non-academic requirements of the student demographic within our institution.

Understanding people's emotions and perspectives allows you to gain a better understanding of how different situations and contexts affect the individual. In service design, it refers to the deep core of human centered approach which is empathy (Siang, 2021). This approach can be helpful to make more informed decisions and take considerate actions.

Further objective of this thesis is to develop a practical instrument that will act as a manual for international students at Novia University of applied sciences. The use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods will provide a comprehensive picture of the situation and help in identifying specific competencies and growth opportunities for international students.

The objectives of research are:

- To elaborate on the language barrier in employment search for international students during and after studies.
- To introduce reforms in institutes with the help of service design methodology.
- To enhance the university experience for the upcoming future, recommendations.

1.4 Research Approach

A research approach includes the plan and procedures for research that encompass the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. In other words, it refers to the overall choice of method to investigate a subject or phenomenon. The research will be carried out as qualitative one. The researcher had to take into consideration which research design best suits work, and the research method of online survey will be used as a mode of data collection (Kumar, 2015).

1.5 Thesis Structure

This thesis is partitioned into 10 chapters. The first chapter introduces the attraction, goal, and scopes of the research. Chapter 2 looks at the problem and research framework and its relevance to the study. Chapter 3 discusses the thematic and frame of reference and reason for choosing methods. The fourth chapter looks at the service design method. The fifth chapter answers the questions posed in the research question section. The sixth chapter discusses prototyping, while the final chapter presents discussions, work recommendations, and references, along with an appendix.

1.6 Frame of Reference:

Frames of References are useful as they allow us to take in a wide range of information and process it based on our prior experience and values. The frame of reference for this thesis comprises of five main components that shed light on the research questions. As indicated in the figure 2 below, the keywords are international students, employment, Finnish labor market and language barrier. The central aim of the research is to find ways to help international students minimize the challenges they encounter due to language barriers

during their job search. The goal is likely to improve their chances of successfully securing employment opportunities despite language-related obstacles. The main goal is to elaborate on the language barrier as an impediment for international students, and to propose some solutions to overcome this problem soon as the Finnish labor market is facing labor shortage (Ahtiainen, 2023).

The theoretical framework will expound on these terms. The main objective of this thesis is to increase the career prospects for foreign graduates after graduation with language skills.

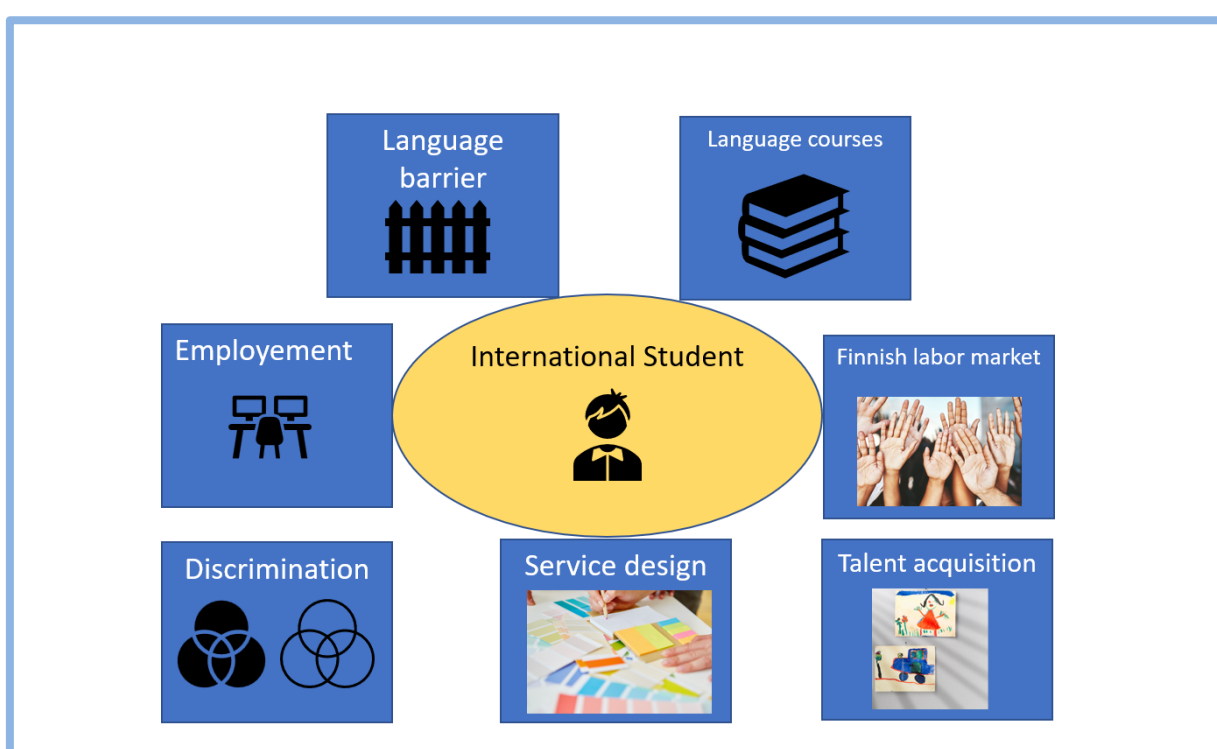


Figure 2. Frame of reference

2 Research and Service Design Methods

Research method refers to the systematic process and procedure used to collect, analyse, and interpret information or data in a methodical and structured way. Research methods are crucial to the research process to guarantee that the conclusions are accurate, trustworthy, and educational. Designing services that meet customer wants and expectations while simultaneously advancing the objectives of the service provider are known as service design methodologies. In service design, you work within a broad scope

including user experience (UX) design and customer experience (CX) design (Schneider M. S.)

2.1 One on one interviews

In-depth interviews a most common quantitative research method, in-depth interviews provide the opportunity to get deeper insights of problem from the respondent. (Frances Ryan, 2013) An advantage of this research is that it allows us to collect the precise data of what respondents believe and what are their motivation in the said concern. It helps to gain valuable insight into people's perception, understanding and experience.

This qualitative method is used for gathering empirical information from international students and international graduates via structured interview (Appendix 1). Author decided to approach some of international students working in different Finnish companies to know what kind of challenges they are facing.

This method provided wide picture on the research problem and allowed to get respondents' opinion in open format and experience that could not be counted. It also helped to collect recommendations for the educational institutes and Finnish firms and new coming foreign students in language learning approach and professional growing. Conducting one-on-one interviews with international students being an effective way to gain insights into the language barrier they are facing more in depth. Some potential questions (Appendix 1) will be asked in an open discussion mode to understand the challenges they have experienced for employment.

2.2 Descriptive Research

Descriptive research methodology, a logical procedure or step-by-step plan for resolving a research issue involving variables that cannot be changed, such as age, gender, or educational attainment, among other things. Most internet surveying is quantitative and is regarded as conclusive. Using this approach, the study population is identified, the sample size is decided, the type of data to be gathered, how it will be collected and analyzed, how the data will be presented and interpreted, and how the research findings will be reported.

2.3 Service Design Process

Through visualization, the service design process operates flawlessly. To mirror and image the issue, Double Diamond was employed. Discovery, definition, development, and delivery are the four Ds of the Double Diamond acronym (Design Council, 2015). The discovery phase, which represents the identification of the issue areas, is where the thesis starts. The term "discovery" refers to approaching the issue from several vantage points or angles. Define includes focusing on certain elements of the issue. Development is the process of considering every option for resolving the discovered problems, done at the third stage. Since it involves iterative testing and revision as well as taking user feedback into account, this is the most crucial stage of the design process. Delivery is the last D in the design process, the objective of this stage is to produce practical solutions using the least expensive resources at the designer or researcher's disposal (council, 2023). Reviewing and assessing the complete procedure from beginning to end, followed by writing recommendations supporting the project, is another important purpose at this stage.

A visual illustration of the design and innovation process is the Double Diamond. Regardless of the techniques and resources employed, it is a straightforward approach to summarize the steps involved in every design and innovation project.

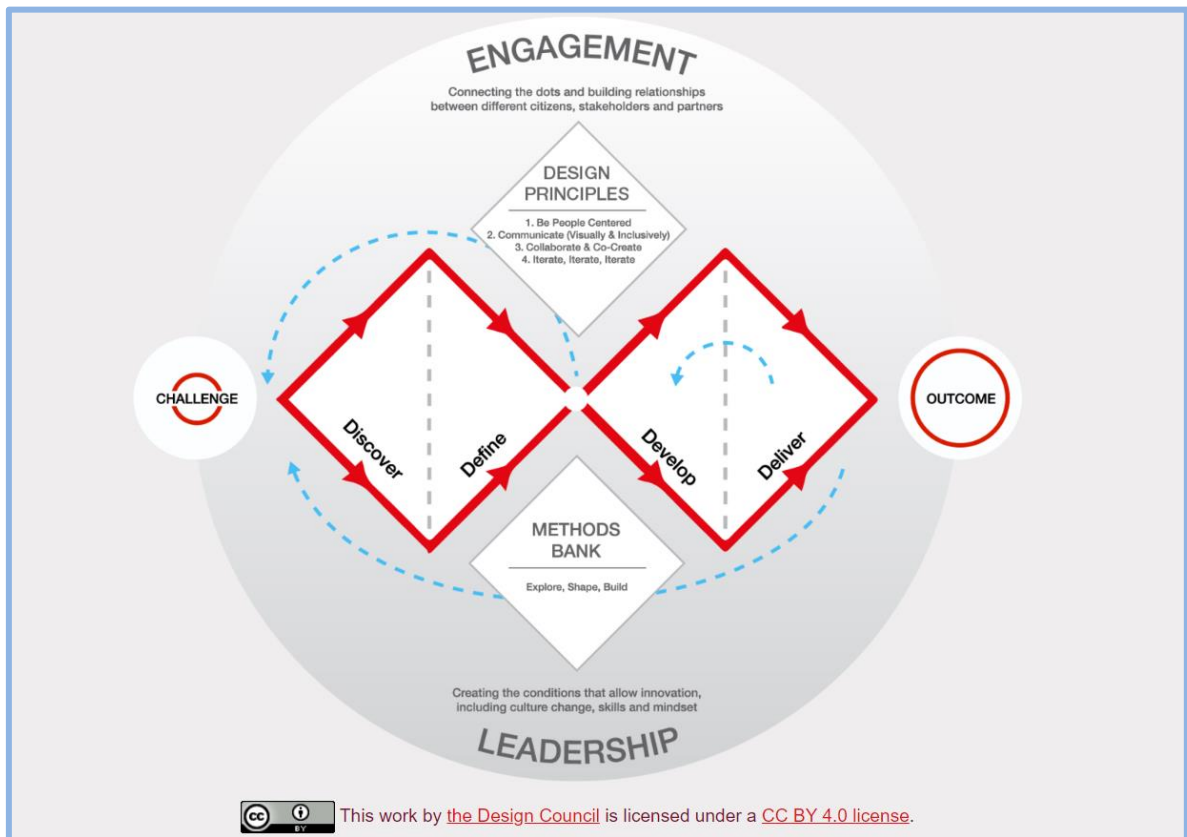


Figure 3. Tool guide

2.4 Time chart

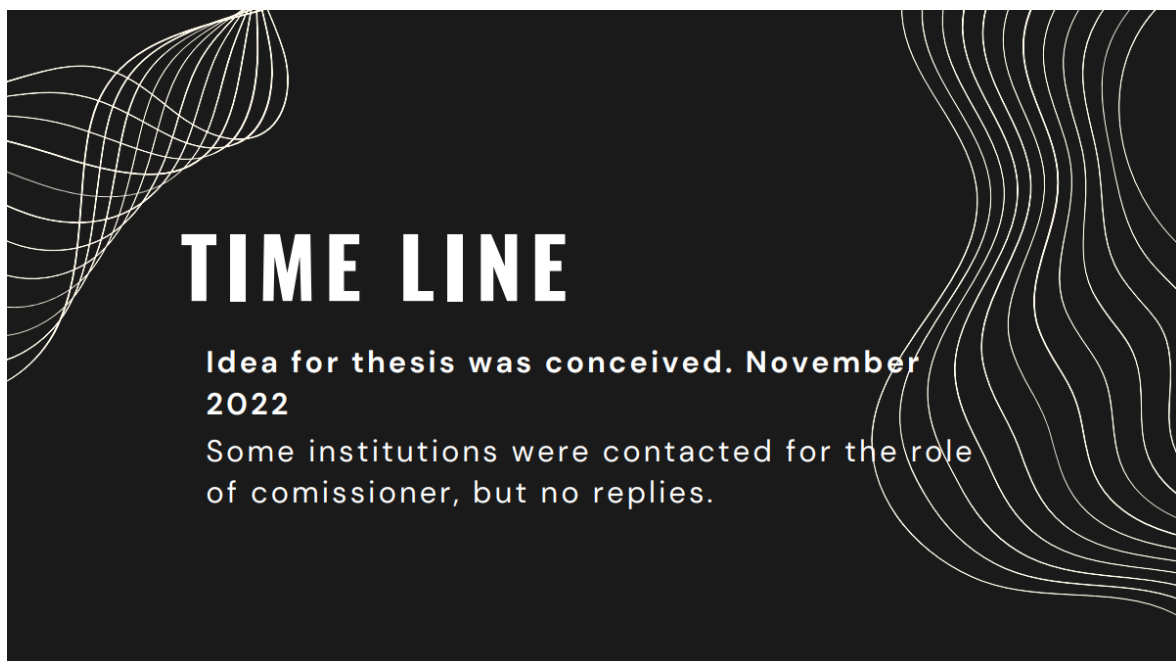


Figure 4. Time line for research

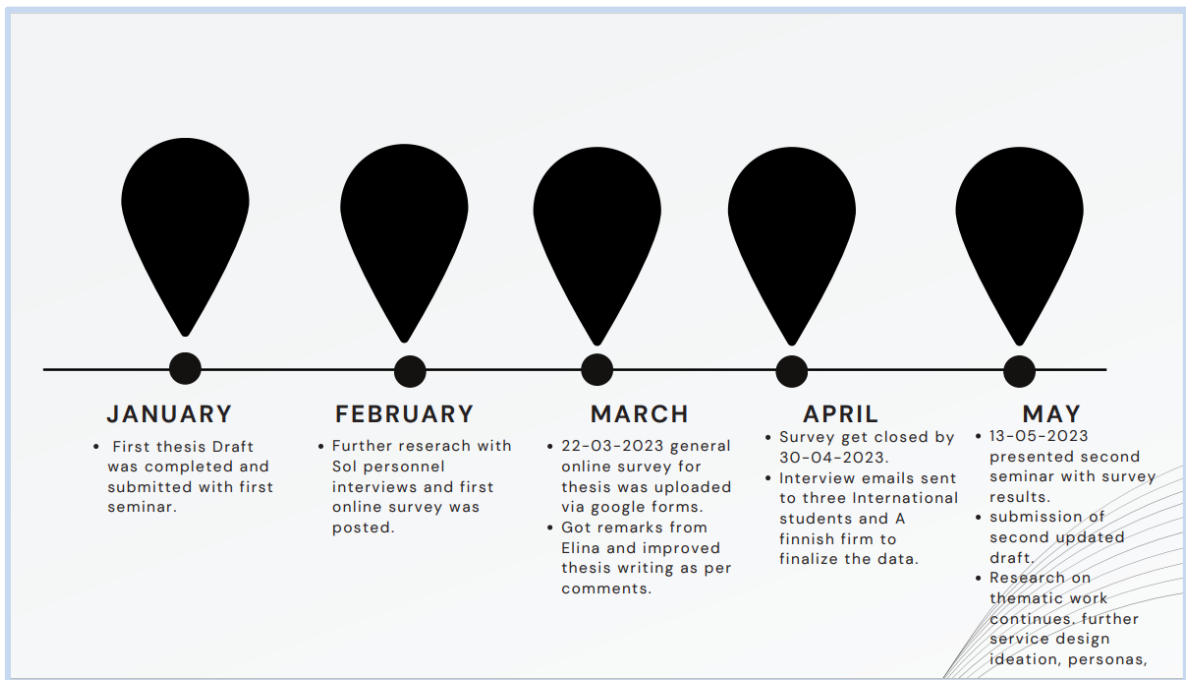


Figure 5. Monthly review of thesis

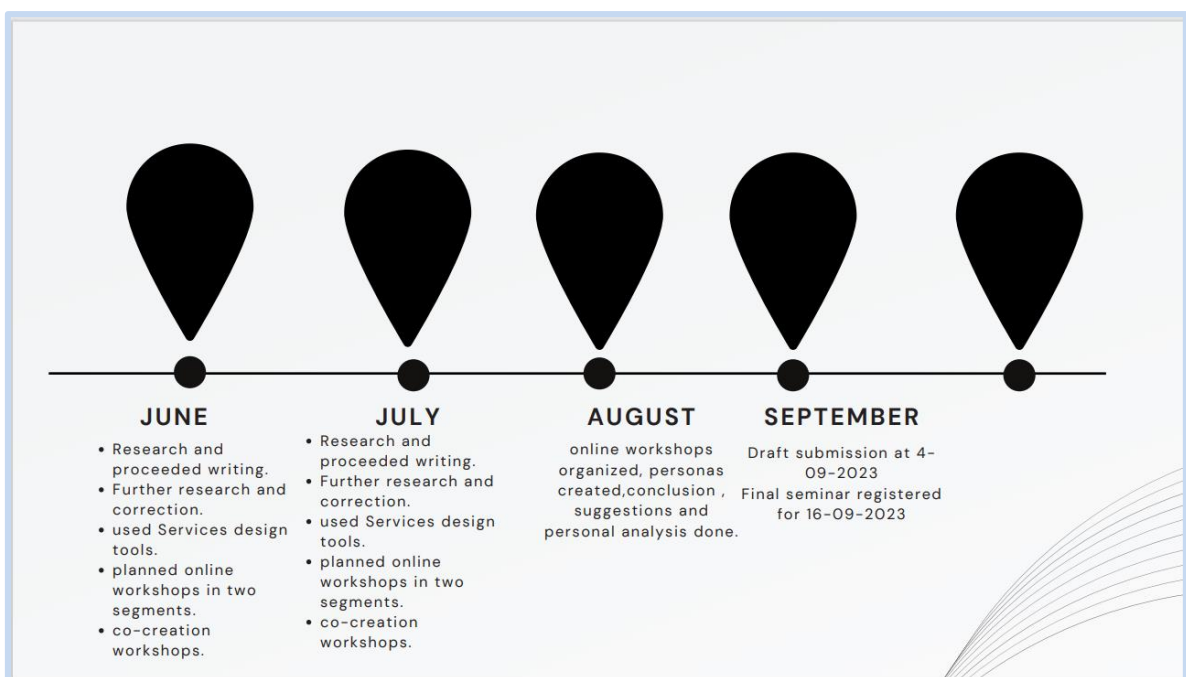


Figure 6. Thesis finalized.

3 Theory Chapter

This study is devoted to international students in Finland confronts language barrier. Advanced education system and globalization are attractions for students to move to a

foreign country for achieving higher education and well-established life later. Finland is a multicultural country in that way, hundreds of students move here yearly in different universities aiming the same goal. This chapter highlights the unemployment and employment of foreigners in Finland and some of Finnish firm's trends for hiring international students.

Furthermore, this chapter explains the general situation of foreign student facing challenges and their employment in Finland. International students face various hurdles in Finland (Twinkle, 2023). Some of the common hurdles are as follows:

- **Language barrier:** Finnish language skills are a major obstacle for international students and graduates seeking employment in Finland. A strong command of Finnish language is often a requirement for almost every job opportunity in the country.
- **Lack of work experience:** Many international students may have limited work experience, which can make it difficult for them to compete for job opportunities in Finland.
- **Work permit restrictions:** International students face restrictions on their ability to work in Finland, and finding a job is in line with their field of study so work permit regulations can be challenging.
- **Limited job opportunities:** Some areas, especially smaller towns, and rural areas, have limited job opportunities. Language proficiency can limit job opportunities as well; it depends on the specific job requirements and industry sector.
- **Employer bias:** Many Finnish employers have biases towards international students and may not be willing to offer them job opportunities despite having required competence for job posted.
- **Networking:** Building a professional network can be challenging for international students, which can limit their job prospects.
- **Competition:** International students may face strong competition for job opportunities in Finland, particularly in highly sought-after fields.

3.1 Finnish Labour Market

The workforce is the economic backbone of any civilization. Finland has a well-structured welfare system that has survived the years thanks to a vibrant workforce and taxation. The scenario is steadily changing as the population ages. According to Statistics, Finland may begin to suffer the effects of its aging population by the year 2035 if urgent solutions are not implemented. Finnish Jobless Rate Steady at 6.7% Finland's unemployment rate stood at 6.7 percent in February 2023, unchanged from the same month a year earlier. The number of unemployed persons rose by 1 thousand to 186 thousand, while employment increased by 12 thousand to 2.582 million (UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AND EMPLOYMENT DATA IN FINLAND, 2023).

FINLAND UNEMPLOYMENT DATA

Indicator	Data	Period
Unemployment Rate	6.7 %	Feb/23
Youth Unemployment Rate	13.2 %	Feb/23
Employed Persons	2582 Thousand Person 2.582 Million Person	Feb/23
Employment Change	1.2 %	4Q/22
Employment Rate	72.9 %	Feb/23
Full Time Employment	2057 Thousand Person	4Q/22
Long Term Unemployment Rate	1.4 %	4Q/22
Part Time Employment	449 Thousand Persons	4Q/22
Unemployed Persons	186 Thousand Persons 0.186 Million Persons	Feb/23

Fig 7. Unemployment rate in Finland by February 2023.

3.1.1 Employment and Unemployment of foreigners in Finland

It is common for international students to face difficulties in job search due to language issues, as most of Finnish companies require applicants to have fluency in Finnish, which is often considered a basic requirement for job vacancies. This makes it challenging for international students for job search.

According to a survey, the most significant barrier for international students in job search is excessive level language requirement. This is a major weakness while evaluating the overall work life in Finland (EK, 2021). The confederation of Finnish industries conducted this survey, researchers have identified major career hindrance, Language barrier which can be very complex when it comes to adjustment of an international student in Finland. They have focused on the point that Finnish firms must open the doors to international talent and be more flexible about Finnish language requirement for new positions in organizations. According to the survey, to better recruit and retain foreign talent, Finnish businesses should reconsider their strict language proficiency standards, for job applications from international students.

This issue sometimes leads way of social isolation and stress, which ,limits their opportunities for their further development and success. International students face interpersonal challenges, racial intolerance, social support, and language barriers (Twinkle, 2023) . The challenges can have a negative impact not only on the overall experience of international students but also on social integration, personal and professional development.

The international students have a difficult labor market situation. Many of the research journals explained multiple obstacles for the employment search. The recruitment practices of Finnish organizations such as too hard language requirements and lack of understanding foreign qualifications and experiences stand in the way of employment.

3.1.2 Employment situation of international students in Finland

This table gives detailed information about the job situation of foreign nationals in Finland, with a comparison between December 2022 and December 2021. It looks at a few factors of their employment situation as well as what employment and economic development departments were up to at the time. The data includes information on the total number of job seekers, their classification (such as unemployed, fully laid off, working part- or full-time), their use of employment-related services, the structure of unemployment (such as gender and age groupings), and information on unemployment insurance. Additionally, it talks about patterns and variations in unemployment rates, as well as those who started or ended periods of unemployment and people who obtained new jobs thanks to

employment services. Understanding the dynamics of foreign workers' employment in Finland at this time depends on this data. According to Bulletin (Kuusela, Employment Bulletin, December 2022, 2023) the employment situation of international students during the month of December 2022 has been quite changed with increased numbers of as compared to December 2021. New entrants to labor market training were also increased by 9.6 percent.

EMPLOYMENT BULLETIN December 2022				
Foreigners' summary table				
FOREIGNERS' EMPLOYMENT SITUATION AT THE END OF 2022 DECEMBER (I) AND ACTIVITIES OF EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES DURING DECEMBER (II) WHOLE COUNTRY				
EMPLOYMENT SITUATION AT THE END OF MONTH	Dec-22	Dec-21	CHANGE NUMBER	CHANGE %
A. JOBBEEKERS				
1. Unemployed jobseekers	37 091	32 172	4 919	15,3
of whom fully laid off	2 874	3 025	-151	-5,0
2. On reduced working week	373	553	-180	-32,5
3. Those who have work	16 780	20 290	-3 510	-17,3
of which in full-time work	11 144	18 477	-7 333	-39,7
of which in part-time work	3 670	0	3 670	0,0
of whom employed through employment services	1 966	1 813	153	8,4
4. Persons outside the labour force	27 729	27 221	508	1,9
of whom in services promoting employment	2 667	2 372	295	12,4
of whom in training	22 982	22 499	483	2,1
1-4 Total of jobseekers	81 973	80 236	1 737	2,2
C. PARTICIPATING IN SERVICES				
1. Employed by the State	13	6	7	116,7
2. Employed by municipalities	613	460	153	33,3
3. Employed by the private sector	2 193	1 641	552	33,6
1-3 Total number of employed people	2 819	2 107	712	33,8
4. Labour market training	9 268	8 459	809	9,6
5. Training	159	105	54	51,4
6. Engaged in work/training trials	1 192	1 121	71	6,3
7. As a job alternation substitute	65	66	-1	-1,5
8. Rehabilitative work	1 148	1 059	89	8,4
9. Self-motivated studies supported by unemployment benefit	11 122	12 123	-1 001	-8,3
1-9 Total number of people participating in services	25 773	25 040	733	2,9
D. STRUCTURE OF UNEMPLOYMENT				
1. Unemployed women	18 921	15 946	2 975	18,7
2. Unemployed men	18 170	16 226	1 944	12,0
3. Under 25 years old	2 645	2 065	580	28,1
4. Over 50 years old	9 097	8 585	512	6,0
5. Unemployed over a year	8 805	10 570	-1 765	-16,7
E. UNEMPLOYMENT SECURITY				
1. Unemployed members of employees' unemployment funds	6 570	6 666	-96	-1,4
II EMPLOYMENT SITUATION DURING THE MONTH				
1. Unemployed jobseekers	39 394	34 203	5 191	15,2
2. Other jobseekers	44 875	48 389	-3 514	-7,3
1-2 Total number of jobseekers	84 269	82 592	1 677	2,0
4. Started spell of unemployment	7 707	6 150	1 557	25,3
5. Completed spell of unemployment	2 397	2 356	41	1,7
6. New jobs found through employment services	214	165	49	29,7
7. New entrants to labour market training	576	727	-151	-20,8

Figure 8. Foreigners' summary table in terms of part time and full time work

To retain international students in a better way and how to overcome this major problem in future where Finland need manpower as it was suggested by Helsinki Mayor (Helsinki, 2021) that Helsinki declare itself an English Language City as many of Highly qualified

international students and professionals as well are moving out of Capital and even Country because of exacting language requirements.

3.2 Unemployed and unemployment rate October 2022-August 2023

A statistics survey, (Kuusela, In September unemployed jobseekers, 2021) foreigner job seekers number increased as compared to the last year of Dec 2021. Total number of jobseekers increased by 2.2% with 15% change in unemployed job seekers as compared to last year and over the period of year it increased instead of decreasing as companies are 21 more focusing on fluency of Finnish language, a major reason of unemployed international students.

The study of employment and unemployment situation can vary greatly depending on the location, industry, and individual circumstances. Finland's unemployment rate was 6.7 percent in August 2023 (statistics, 2023), the same as it was in the corresponding month the previous year. While the number of employed people increased by 45 thousand to 2.662 million, the number of unemployed people increased by 5,000 from a year earlier to 192,000. Additionally, the jobless rate for those between the ages of 15 and 24 increased by 2.9 percentage points from the previous year to 11 percent in August. The employment rate climbed from 63.6 percent to 64.5 percent, and the activity rate improved from 68.1 percent to 69.1 percent.

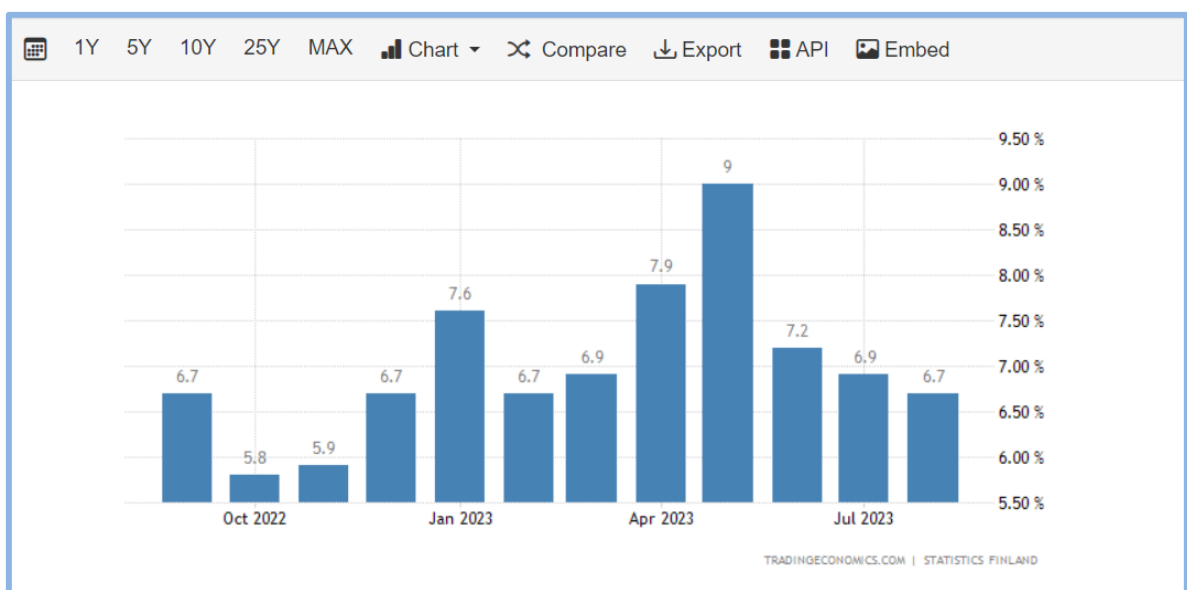


Figure 9. Unemployment rate from October 2022 to August 2023

3.3 Finland needs foreign workers

The Covid-19 pandemic has had profound effects on labor markets globally, including Finland. It has led to adverse consequences such as increased unemployment and job losses. Finland is experiencing severe workforce shortages, just like its neighbors in Europe, and must increase its working force to successfully maintain its economy and welfare systems. Currently in Finland, industries such as technology, e-commerce, Early child, and health care have seen significant growth and increased demand for workers. According to statistics from Statistics Finland, Finland's net migration was roughly 15,000 persons per year before to the commencement of the war in Ukraine. According to a report by the ETLA Economic Research Institute, immigration needs to nearly triple to stabilize Finland's workforce. This would entail an annual net migration of around 44,000 people (Institute, 2023). Integration of international students in Finnish society can be easy if communication is smooth and understandable. This effort is crucial because integrating foreign graduates who are currently unemployed or engaged in low-skilled jobs successfully is a key component of the answer. The findings of the thesis will also be helpful to other entities that are urgently in need of immigrant workers because of Europe's ageing population.

3.4 PESETLE Analysis

PESTLE analysis is a valuable tool for service designers and business planners to assess the external factors that could impact a new service. It's typically conducted early in the process to inform the development and planning stages, not after the service design is already complete.

A PESTLE analysis can be used by university to analyze the possible impact and feasibility of including a Finnish language course as a required component of a business degree program. PESTLE analysis is a strategic framework for investigating the external macro-environmental elements that can influence an organization's or, in this case, a university's decision-making process. In this case, a PESTLE analysis can be used as follows:

Political factors: Consider Finland's political landscape. Is there any government policy that encourages or discourages the inclusion of Finnish language courses in higher education? Are there any political players or institutions who could have an impact on this decision?

Economic Factors: Analyze the economic conditions in Finland. Is there a demand for business graduates with proficiency in the Finnish language in the job market? What would be the financial implications for the university in terms of resources and funding required to offer these courses?

Social Factors: Examine the societal aspects. Is there a growing interest among students and the community in learning Finnish? Are there cultural or social reasons that support the inclusion of the language in a business program?

Technological Factors: Assess the technological infrastructure and tools available for teaching and learning the Finnish language. Are there innovative methods or digital resources that can enhance language instruction?

Environmental Factors: Consider any environmental or sustainability factors that might be relevant to this decision. For instance, are there eco-friendly teaching methods or materials that can be used in language courses? Are there any future prospect for job searching as an international student.

Legal Factors: Examine the legal aspects, including any legal requirements for language education in higher institutions. What are the student rights and employments duration with contracts for job perspective. Are there any legal barriers or considerations related to language courses?

Ethical Factors: Think about the ethical implications of adding a compulsory language course. How might this decision impact the accessibility and inclusivity of the program for students with diverse backgrounds and language abilities?

By conducting a thorough PESTLE analysis, the university can gain a comprehensive understanding of the external factors that may influence its decision to add a Finnish language course to the business degree program. This analysis can help the university make an informed and strategic decision based on the current and anticipated future scenarios. Additionally, it can assist in identifying potential challenges and opportunities associated with this change.



Figure 10. PESTLE Analysis

4 Service Design and tool methods

This chapter will go over the various service design tools used and the reasoning behind their selection. According to Marc Stickdorn and Schneider, tools are physical artefacts such as journey maps, spreadsheets, and storyboard templates. Tools reflect "what" we use in service design initiatives such as interviewing, synthesizing, and prototyping, whereas

methodologies often explain "how" we develop and engage with certain tools (Marc Stickdorn, *This Is Service Design Doing*, 2018).

To answer the research issues and fulfil the thesis's purpose, the double diamond design instrument was utilized in conjunction with additional tools such as personas, customer journeys, stakeholder's maps, two online surveys, business canvas models, and swot analysis. Initially, the researcher painstakingly developed a few questions in Google Doc and sent them via email to all past program participants with a two-week window for comments or ideas. After the specified time had elapsed, 50 formal students had answered the initial survey, allowing the researcher to focus on language learning and the possibility for better prospects of international students.

The author has hope that the conclusions and suggestions of this thesis will assist her school administration in updating the curriculum to better meet the needs of prospective students and create space for better engagement between the various stakeholders in finding better solutions to the country's current and upcoming labor crises. The joint venture of Novia and TUAS for Master of Business Administration has been giving tremendous service designers as input for market as, the same way altogether they can work for integration of international students in Finnish society through their same venture while focusing on international students' language and employment need. Finally, the researcher hopes to develop his own skills in doing reliable, academic research and advance the field of knowledge. International graduates and immigrant graduates will both be utilized interchangeably in this study. The same approach will be taken when using former students and registered pupils.

4.1 Business Model Canvass

The business canvas model is a vital tool for service design that may be used to describe, evaluate, and develop business models. The business canvas model graphically represents a business model made up of nine fundamental construction components. Customers' and staff' experiences are also affected. Use the company canvas concept to understand the different options available to both staff and customers. It can also be used to recognize and evaluate the competing companies' business models (Stickdorn & Schneider 2018, 76). Nine building components make up the business model canvas, each of which represents

a different market group. The business model canvas's first seven levels are directly related to the earlier fundamental service design tools. This framework establishes a common platform for designers and managers to discuss new service concepts inside any organizational structure by including hard facts like resources, revenue streams, and cost structures. According to Stickdorn and Schneider (2018), the financial blocks require a design team to predict the probable profitability of a company model. Figure 13 below provides an overview of how the organization functions and displays the nine building blocks that make up the business canvas model.

4.1.1 Key Partners

The Ministry of Education of Finland, which is tasked with overseeing all educational activities in the country, is one of the essential partners in the operation and success of this program. All Finnish universities and universities of applied sciences (UAS) and the study portal Finland are also listed as significant partners. The organization that organizes everything from the application process until when a candidate is admitted to one of Finland's universities is called Study Portal Finland. Business stakeholders have a variety of interests; thus it is crucial for the design team to take into account the needs of each partner. This fosters trust and contributes to the working and professional connection lasting longer. The key partners involved in the running are listed in figure below.

4.1.2 Key Activities

The term "key activities" refers to all the major things a business does to satisfy its stakeholders and clients. Education is main pursuit which is accomplished by continuously creating curricula that better meets the demands of the nation now and in the upcoming future. The universities should organize workshops with actual partners, monitor thesis and projects, and impart information to society.

4.1.3 Channels

Channels refer to the medium in which the key activities or business is being run. The channels used by universities of applied sciences to get to the students and other

stakeholders range from web pages, study info portals, emails, websites, face-to-face contacts, and even phone calls.

4.1.4 Key Resources

The intellectual, human, and financial resources that underpin the business's productivity and performance are referred to as key resources. In Finland, Novia and Tuas are renowned institutions with outstanding facilities. The most important resource they have is their MBA program a joint venture of both universities. The key resources in the Business Model Canvas encompass academic expertise, curriculum and course materials, facilities and infrastructure, a diverse student body, financial resources, industry partnerships, qualified teaching and administrative staff, essential technology and software, accreditation and certification, brand reputation, student support services, marketing and promotion, an advisory board, research and development capabilities, networking opportunities, access to library and online resources, and legal and administrative support. These resources collectively enable the program's success by ensuring high-quality education, industry relevance, financial sustainability, and effective program management.

4.1.5 Customer Segments

The people who use the products or services are referred to as the customer segment. For Novia and Tuas, the focus is mainly on education, and students make up the majority of their clientele. Education (courses) are available in English, Finnish, and Swedish in Novia and Tuas, respectively. They now have a large student body made up of both domestic and foreign students from all over the world as a result.

4.1.6 Value proposition

Values are at the center of the value proposition. Here, the emphasis is on providing the customer with satisfaction at the conclusion of their experience. Education is a source of strength and is what allows access to all other facets or areas of life. In other words, a society's level of literacy determines how valuable its members are. The major objective of the degree programs at Novia and Tuas University of Applied Sciences is to provide their students with knowledge, which in turn makes them graduates. The graduates' new

professional route or opportunity in life will be made possible by their expertise. They become better citizens and potential leaders as a result of it.

4.1.7 Customer Relationships

Customer relationships are an essential part of every business. This is true since a customer's level of satisfaction with a product or service will determine how likely they are to use that business again. Since happy customers frequently recommend businesses to their friends and families, customer relationships are also a useful tool for advertising. The customer relationship is ongoing in Novia and Tuas. Relationships frequently start off backstage, during the application procedures, and move forward across the university to the front-stage, where instruction takes place. Some of the partnerships continue into the after-sales phase, where students and institutions connect via an alumni association or through collaborative projects. The interaction includes discussions about development as well as advice and support.

4.1.8 Revenue streams

Revenue streams describe the company's cash flow. In other terms, it refers to how and where the business obtains its financial resources. Typically, the majority of the income from the field of The Ministry of Education is responsible for education in Finland. But some of universities also receive funding from its non-European students who must pay fees under the law. Some R&D money and launch subsidies are sources of funding.

4.1.9 Cost structure

The term "cost structure" refers to the ongoing expenses that institutions incur in order to provide current, prospective, and former students with educational opportunities. The expenses include wages for the staff, rent for the facilities, IT equipment, maintenance expenditures, and insurance coverage.

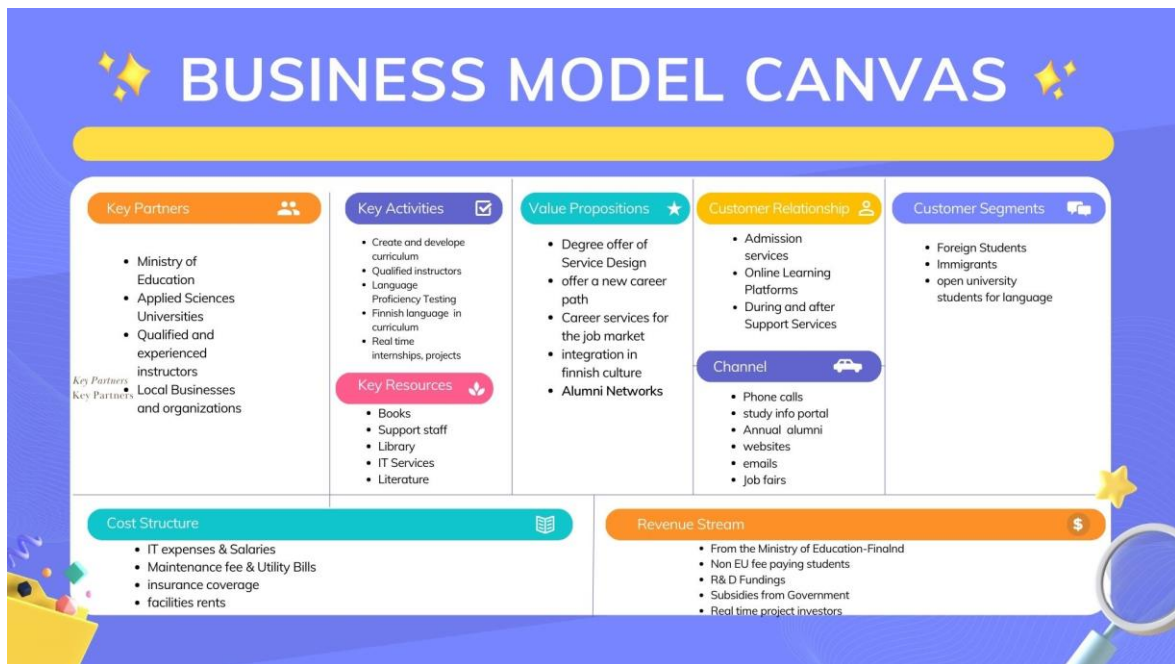


Figure 11. Business model canvas

4.2 Stakeholder Map

The stakeholder map lists all the parties with an interest in an experience. The stakeholder map provides an answer to the query of who are the significant individuals and groups involved in an experience. A stakeholder map enables us to identify the many players in this ecosystem and their respective stakes in the operation and success of the program. Additionally, it highlights untapped commercial opportunity and bring light to those obscured stakeholders and their connections. Anyone with power over and an interest in a certain project, whether internal or external, is considered a stakeholder. The distinction between internal and external stakeholders is critical, and understanding how they differ will help you set clear project priorities (Jain, 2023).

When creating a stakeholder map for a business degree program for researcher's school, it's important to assess the interests, influence, and expectations of each group. This helps in understanding their roles and potential impact on the MBA Service Design program's language learning initiatives and job prospects for international students. Additionally, maintaining effective communication and collaboration with these stakeholders is crucial for the program's success.

Various stakeholders play vital roles in the success and advancement of the MBA Service Design program, particularly in the context of international student language acquisition and career opportunities. In the figure 14 Internal stakeholders, universities of applied sciences oversee curriculum design and quality assurance, with administrative staff ensuring program operations run smoothly. Faculty and instructors directly impact education and language learning quality. Both international and domestic students can influence the program through feedback and engagement. Alumni offer insights based on their experiences and may provide mentoring and networking opportunities.

External stakeholders, such as employers, help shape the curriculum to align with industry needs and offer internships or job opportunities. The TE Office aids job-seeking students with counseling and connections to employment. Government and accreditation bodies set essential standards and regulations for program credibility. Service Design Industry representatives contribute insights into industry trends, ensuring program relevance. International Student Associations advocate for students' unique needs and cultural integration. Finland Municipalities provide support for local services and housing arrangements.

Connected stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education and Student Housing Providers, influence policy and funding, and ensure housing availability. Student Support Services offer language support and career guidance. The Finnish Immigration Service handles immigration and residency matters. Language schools aid language learning, and the local Finnish community facilitates cultural integration. In summary, each stakeholder group's specific roles in curriculum development, student support, industry alignment, and job prospects collectively shape the program's success. Effective communication and collaboration with these stakeholders are integral to the program's continued growth and relevance.



Figure 12. Stakeholders map

4.3 SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis is a method to identify your company's or even a particular project's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. It can be used as one of the most effective businesses and decision-making tools for organizations—from small businesses and non-profits to huge corporations (Business Queensland, ei pvm).

An effective technique for assisting in locating possibilities for improvement in the marketplace. It assists in enhancing group and company while maintaining abreast of market developments (Raeburn, 2022). This method was chosen by author in order to assess the present situation and determine how it may be improved. The degree programme in business fields strengths, flaws, threats, and chances for growth are briefly displayed in Figure 13 below by the author on basis of survey analysis and co design workshops. For instance, language courses addition in applied sciences institutes in degree programme is a significant strength. The institution receive more and better resources as a result.

3D SWOT ANALYSIS TEMPLATE



Figure 13. SWOT Analysis

4.4 Benchmarking

Benchmarking is a process used to gauge and assess how well systems, procedures, goods, or services perform in comparison to industry norms or best practices. It entails contrasting one entity's performance with that of others operating in the same field or sector, such as computer systems, software applications, or business processes. Identifying areas for improvement and promoting performance improvement are the main objectives of benchmarking. To find internal improvement opportunities, benchmarking is used. You can put changes into place that will result in substantial gains by analyzing businesses that perform better than average, dissecting what makes such exceptional performance possible, and contrasting those procedures to how your organization runs (Staff, 2022).

To gain a better understanding of this comparison, we will break it down into essential categories. These sectors include language lessons and curriculum internships like real-world projects. This will be an excellent tool for this project because the author wishes to capitalize on how graduates from other Western countries are integrated into the labor force. Germany is the country used in this comparison. The reason for this is that Germany has one of the world's best and most well-organized initiatives for integrating international

students. We thought evaluating the German model made sense because the project's goal is to improve the Finnish model by learning from the best.

Every country is looking for strategies to attract more people and outcompete their rivals due to the global competition for skilled labor, as we are all aware. The country aim is to give students both international and national the possibility to obtain valuable experiences in work-related activities relevant to their course of study with language, thereby preparing them ready in advance for the job market. In order to be able to achieve this, universities offering language courses and employers partner to offer students internships, projects, simulations, fieldwork, and other activities. For this partnership to succeed, universities are offering sustainable supports to employers so that they can accept students and involve them in their organizations. The employers on the other hand are also increasing and solidifying their links with the universities through placements. This way universities are helping international students to integrate in the new society with language skill. The goal of the plan is to keep Germany at the top of the world rankings for training, education, and research.

Since internship and job placement procedures range greatly from country to country, some international students may not be accustomed to Finland's method. Undergraduate courses frequently include job placements and internships in Finland, giving students the chance to get experience in their chosen industries. On the other hand, internships might not necessarily be a required component of master's programmes. Finnish is widely used as the major language of communication in many enterprises and organisations in Finland, which may explain why business students in particular are expected to have proficiency in the language. For international students who do not have any prior experience with the Finnish language, this requirement could be challenging.

Any successful partnership depends on clear and frequent communication. An essential element of successful integration is language. In Finland, Master's programmes often do not include language studies but students are being offered language courses on a separate study portal as an optional part of study (campusonline, ei pvm). As a result, finding employment after degree completion becomes challenging for international students. For instance, internships are a required component of the general curriculum in all academic disciplines and levels in Germany. Many institutions include internships in their master's

degree programs, and one can also locate independent internships outside of university. This indicates that the students have a wide range of internship options to pick from (Internship Opportunities for International Students in Germany, 2023). These internships are planned by the colleges, saving the students the stress and time of having to find them on their own. This is crucial for overseas students, who might not be familiar with the culture and may first struggle with language and other issues. In Finland, the opposite is accurate. Only undergraduate students are eligible for internships, and most of the time, master's students are responsible for doing their own searches. For international students who must balance the two systems, this is challenging.

Then comes to the language part, German universities now focusing on to provide language courses in curriculum to the students onsite, so that their hustle with language come to an ease and they get prepared for job market with more practical of language. **University of Mannheim**, offer different levels of language courses for international English-speaking students, especially in business programs (Courses on german langugae and culture). Special German language courses coordinators are there to help students in this regard. In Finland, universities offer courses as elective one and online as well through a separate portal other than universities' own. Finland typically places highly among non-native English-speaking nations in terms of English competence. In the many global enterprises that call Finland home, English is frequently used as the main form of internal communication. These include the IT, banking, and engineering sectors. By adding language courses as mandatory in business programs, Finland can have more skilled labor in all fields and professions concerning public sector, day cares education and healthcare.

Effective communication is essential for any successful and rewarding relationship. As a result, it is critical that the intended meaning of the message is understood by the recipient. Language proficiency is required for successful integration. The Language Centre is a teaching and service institution of the Humboldt-Universität Zu Berlin that provides high-quality classes in 14 languages at various levels to students, faculty, and alumni (Langugae centre). Typically, graduate and master's programs in Finland do not involve language instruction, making it difficult for international students to find work following graduation.

Berlin School of Economics and Law specifically offers a variety of Business Language courses for the business students, the course allocation priorities and the eligibility criteria

that students must adhere to in order to attend these courses, particularly emphasizing the significance of prioritizing certain groups and fulfilling specific conditions, such as language proficiency and attendance, to secure a spot in the courses (business languages). The five comparison areas between Finland and Germany are shown in the benchmarking diagram below. The study discovered that overseas German students at all degree levels were more prepared for the job market than their peers in Finland.

The University of Stuttgart, located in Stuttgart, Germany, offers support and resources for international English-speaking students to help them with their job hunt and language learning. German courses for international prospective and enrolled students being offered with course studies (Subsite für englische Inhalte www.student.uni-stuttgart.de). University provide Job portal and Career service from the alumni network including Career events, further training, academic careers. With internships students can expand their horizons even before graduating, while the networking opportunities for female students such as Start Science or Femtec offer some interesting insights and possibilities (After studies, ei pvm).

In conclusion, the Finnish education system differs from some other countries as students are often responsible for finding and securing their own internship opportunities. This approach can empower students by honing their self-promotion and job search skills, but it also presents challenges, particularly for international students who may be unfamiliar with the local job market, culture, or language. Language barriers are a significant hurdle, as efficient communication is crucial in the workplace. Conversely, in Germany, some businesses collaborate with colleges to engage top students through competitions and project work, fostering skill development and recognition. These differing approaches reflect the diverse strategies in place to prepare students for the job market in these two countries.

Benchmarking		
Traits	Germany	Finland
internship opportunity	Offered as part of master's program	some of universities, mostly provide career counselling. some give mandatory and some give elective but too less.
Firms collaboration with universities	a common practice to get more skilled international talent. mostly collaborations are funded by government.	common and beneficial practice that fosters innovation, research, and workforce development
Real time projects	typically emphasize practical, hands-on learning and close ties to industry. As a result, many programs incorporate real-time projects into their curriculum to provide students with practical experience and prepare them for the demands of the job market.	started focus on focus on providing practical and hands-on education, to give students practical experience to get prepared for job market.
Language courses	Recently, German universities recognize the importance of supporting international students in their language learning journey, and many provide opportunities for them to improve their language skills while pursuing their studies as elective courses.	Not all but some of universities started , programs may have language courses integrated into the curriculum. but for integration, language is must for international students before going into job market.
working environment	German firms are supportive of employees and interns learning language. Larger international companies are more likely to have a diverse workforce and a higher degree of English proficiency	Finnish firms are now trying to get flexible for internationals in terms of language, but not very common. Finnish companies may offer language courses or support for their international employees to learn Finnish.

Figure 14. Benchmarking

4.5 Research approach with survey

The online approach is distinct in that the same questionnaire is prepared by the researcher and distributed digitally to the targeted respondents, who answer the questions electronically and then return their answers to the sender. It should be noted that online questionnaires are popular among researchers and are relatively inexpensive. They also reach more people all over the world. It is not a difficult method of data collection. (Mbuva(PhD-Finance)) A less time-consuming approach-the method saves time because it only requires either directly confronting the respondent in the case of a face-to-face approach or sending the questionnaire. Economically viable-the approach is economically viable because when conducting a survey, one only needs to pay to produce the questionnaire materials. Removes geographical barriers-if an online approach is used, the issue of mountainous or valley terrain or geographical distance is removed, and thus coverage is expanded.

4.6 Online survey as Research Methodology

The aims of this research-oriented study were achieved using two separate methodologies, as this combined approach reveals many significant aspects of the problem and aids in gathering a large amount of knowledge about the subject.

The qualitative method was utilized to collect empirical data from overseas students and alumni via structured interviews (Appendix 1). This strategy provided a broad view of the study topic and allowed for the collection of respondents' opinions in an open style as well as experience that could not be counted. It also aided in the collection of recommendations for educational institutions and new incoming international students in terms of language learning approach and professional development. A survey developed with Microsoft forms and based on organized interview inquiries is presented as quantitative research. This form was adopted since it was simple to apply in practice, the questions were logically designed, and respondents could offer honest responses due to total anonymity and easy access to an online Microsoft platform with time limitation of 2 months almost from March 1st, 2023, to 30th April 2023.

When the answers to the closed-ended questions were counted and turned into figures, the open-ended questions were considered to obtain opinions in an open form. The survey consisted of 21 questions designed to collect respondents' personal information such as name, age, experience with language in their workplace during the job search phase, and thoughts on the main topic. The questions were open-ended, allowing respondents to express themselves freely, and closed-ended, allowing for the collection of a variety of attributes. Microsoft poll was shared and circulated via WhatsApp groups, social media platform such as the Facebook group "PSA Finland Official Ry," (PSA Finland Official Ry, 2023), and to personal contacts of international community as well.

One on one interviews were planned initially with some of international students and questions were designed to shed light on topic of my research, it was formed at coffee table with some of former and current foreign students of universities, universities of applied sciences, and engineering universities who had worked for Finnish organizations or were looking for work and were having difficulty finding a suitable job. The research included 8 interview participants and 59 survey participants.

4.7 Online survey 1

Online surveys have been conducted to get more authentic and fresh data for analysis. They are cost-effective and allow researchers to survey a large population quickly, online surveys have become one of the most popular survey methods (Qualtrics, PVM). This chapter explains the result of the survey and how themes were constructed. The chapter also explains the personas and their journey map in relation to the aim of the thesis.

Surveys can be conducted on political and consumer choices, health-care utilization, labor-force participation, and just about anything else. Surveys are typically used to learn about people by asking them questions about their feelings, motives, plans, beliefs, and so on. A survey can be conducted via mailing the questionnaire to the respondents, self-administering it, using the internet, face-to-face, or by phone. A surveyor's job can be tremendously rewarding in many ways, but it can also be very demanding.

A survey was posted concerning on problems faced by foreign students in Finland job market. It helped author to narrow down research to specifically for international business students facing language issue for job hunt. Initially, Google form have been used to investigate basic issue of language barrier for international students for employment search.

Survey Report On Problems Faced By Foreign Students In Finland Job

Market Due To Language Barrier

Introduction:

The Finnish job market is an attractive destination for foreign students who wish to gain practical experience in their respective fields of study. However, language barriers can cause various difficulties for these students, who are trying to navigate through the Finnish job market. To identify these challenges and understand the impact of the language barrier on foreign students, a survey was conducted among a sample of foreign students in Finland. The purpose of this report is to analyze the findings of the survey and present a comprehensive overview of the problems faced by foreign students in the Finnish job market due to the language barrier.

Methodology

The survey was conducted among a sample of 50 foreign students who are currently pursuing their studies in Finland. The students were selected from different universities in Finland, and the survey was conducted online. The survey consisted of multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions aimed at understanding the challenges faced by foreign students in the Finnish job market due to the language barrier.

Problems	Percentage of Students (n=50)
Difficulty in communicating with employers	68%
Difficulty in understanding job requirements	59%
Difficulty in completing the job application process	59%
Difficulty in understanding instructions and feedback from supervisors	46%
Feeling isolated and excluded from workplace culture	46%

Table 1: Problems faced by foreign students in the Finnish job market due to language barrier

The data presented in Table 1 shows that most foreign students face difficulties in communicating with their potential employers, which makes it challenging for them to express their skills and experience. Additionally, a significant number of students reported facing difficulties in understanding job requirements and completing the job application process, which is primarily conducted in Finnish. Furthermore, almost half of the students reported facing challenges in understanding instructions and feedback from supervisors and feeling isolated and excluded from the workplace culture due to their limited language skills.

Hence, language barriers pose significant challenges for foreign students in the Finnish job market, and employers and educational institutions should consider providing support and resources to help overcome these challenges.

Additionally, 46% of the foreign students reported facing challenges in understanding the instructions and feedback provided by their supervisors and colleagues, which can negatively impact their work performance. Furthermore, 46% of the foreign students reported feeling isolated and excluded from the workplace culture due to their limited language skills.

Language Support	Percentage of Students (n=50)
Provided by Employer	28%
Provided by University	12%
No support provided	60%

Table 2: Language Support Provided by Employers and Universities

The data presented in Table 2 shows that a limited number of students reported receiving language support from their employers or universities. Only 28% of the students reported receiving language support from their employers, and only 12% reported receiving support from their universities. This highlights the need for employers and universities to provide language support to foreign students, in order to help them overcome the challenges posed by the language barrier in the Finnish job market.

Impact	Percentage of Students (n=50)
Negative impact	76%
No impact	24%

Table 3: Impact of Language Barrier on Job Opportunities

The data presented in Table 3 highlights the impact of the language barrier on the job opportunities of foreign students. Most of the students (76%) reported that the language barrier has had a negative impact on their job opportunities. This highlights the need for

employers and educational institutions to provide language support and resources to help foreign students overcome the language barrier and secure job opportunities in the Finnish job market.

Findings

The survey findings reveal that most foreign students (68%) face difficulties in communicating with their potential employers due to the language barrier. This makes it difficult for them to express their skills and experience, which may lead to a lower chance of being hired. Moreover, 59% of the foreign students reported facing difficulties in understanding the job requirements, as well as in completing the job application process, which is primarily being conducted in Finnish format.

Result for survey

In summary, the survey findings reveal that language barriers pose significant challenges for foreign students in the Finnish job market. These challenges can hinder their chances of securing a job and effectively performing in their workplace. The survey findings suggest that employers in Finland should consider providing language support and training programs to help foreign students overcome the language barrier and fully participate in the Finnish job market. Additionally, the Finnish government and universities should consider providing language courses and support to help foreign students navigate the job market and integrate into the Finnish workplace culture. The survey results emphasize the critical relevance of resolving language hurdles that foreign students confront in the Finnish labour market. Employers and educational institutions must provide language assistance and training programs to assist these students in overcoming communication hurdles and successfully integrating into the workplace. They can do so by fostering a more inclusive and varied workplace, which can contribute to higher productivity, innovation, and overall success.

Online Survey 2

The findings from the first survey indicate that the language barrier is a significant difficulty for international students entering the Finnish labor market, emphasizing the importance of language support and training programs. However, the poll does not provide precise information on international students' skill levels in Finnish, which is required to assess the

magnitude of the language barrier and the sort of language support required. I may need to undertake additional research to gain a better knowledge of the Finnish language competency of international students and the sort of language help required. This research could include examining the effectiveness of current language support programs offered by employers and universities, conducting interviews with students and employers to understand the specific language challenges they face, and analyzing language proficiency and flexibility by Finnish employers towards international students.

By conducting new research, the author will be able to gain insights into the language proficiency of international students and the challenges they face in job market. This information can be used to develop effective language support and training programs by the universities or student community that specifically address the language needs of international students and help them overcome the language barrier to secure job opportunities in the Finnish job market.

A survey is best defined as a research strategy that involves asking people questions on a certain topic or topics and then describing their responses (Business Research Methodology). The Microsoft forms has been used for survey, it was sent to former and current international students at some Finnish universities in 3rd week of March 2023. Figure 1-4 below give background information about the respondents regarding gender, age, education, and country of origin. While figures 5-20 explain the employment situations of the respondents, their language proficiency before and after completion of studies, their language skill during the job and some discriminative factors. It also covered the suggestions from the respondents on how best the Finnish society and institutes can help international students integrate into Finnish labor market.

Final Online survey link: <https://forms.office.com/e/tcvp7PrqDA>

[International students facing language barrier for employment in Finland \(office.com\)](#)

4.8 Results of survey

1. Gender:

Out of 58, respondent to the questionnaire, 40 were men and 16 were women, 1 respondent preferred not to respond in this gender concern. This image clearly shows the percentage of Men which is 70% and women with 28% and about 2% didn't disclose identity. The data indicates most of ex-students are men or those who find this topic more interested were men.

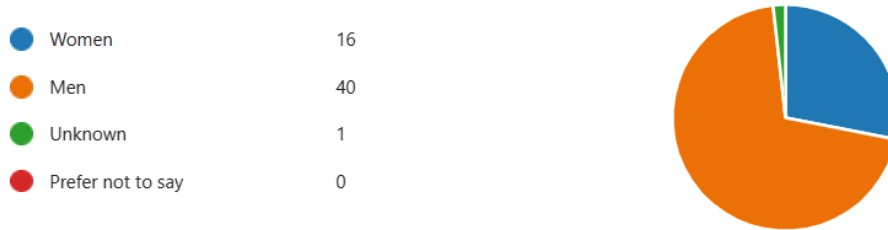


Figure 15. Gender Division of the Respondents.

2. Age Group:

The data reveals age disparity between the respondents. 44% of the respondents were between the age 35-45. 7% of the total were of the age of between 45-55, that indicates that most of the respondents were ex-students and over the age of 35. 49% of the respondents were between the age 25-35, clearly indicating the current students and giving a good picture of the number of active students.

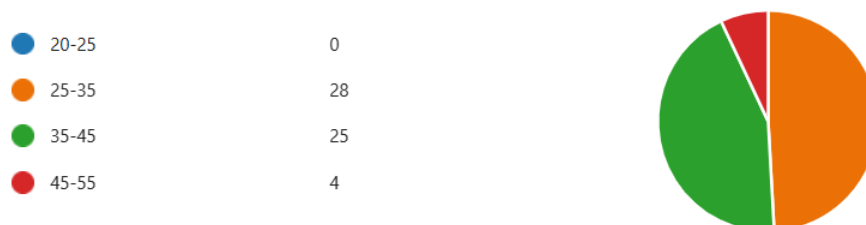


Figure 16. Age Division of the Respondents.

3. Your home country in which region?

This information provides some insight into the geographic distribution of respondents in the survey. 91% of the respondents were from Non-Eu region that clearly indicates that international students were more keen to respond to the survey as compared to the Students from EU region whose percentage was 9%.

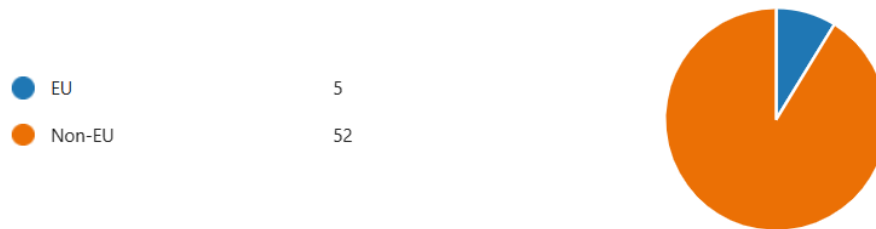


Figure 17. Geographical distribuion according to Region.

4. Are you a full time degree student in an English degree program?

The total respondents were 58, and out of that 63% of them (which is approximately 36) were from a degree where primary mode of instruction was not English. Conversely, 37% of the respondents(approximately 21 respondents) were from degree program where English was primary language of study.



Figure 18. Full-time student in English degree program.

5. How often do you face difficulties in communicating with potential employers due to the language barrier? (Select one)

It appears that a sizable proportion of participants encountered communication challenges when dealing with potential employers.

It's likely that the 21% who said "rarely" have had fewer job interviews or have been fortunate enough to have had favorable experiences with potential employers. It's probable that the 30% who answered "sometimes" have encountered communication barriers on occasion, but not consistently. 32% who answered "often" indicate that they frequently have communication challenges with potential employers. This could be due to a variety of factors, including trouble expressing themselves, a lack of confidence in their communication abilities, or potential employer biases.

Finally, the 18% who responded with "always" indicate that they struggle with communication when communicating with potential employers on a regular basis. This could be due to more serious language hurdles or other communication limitations that make successfully communicating their abilities and qualifications challenging.



Figure 19. Hurdles in communication with potential employers.

6. How well do you understand the job requirements and the job application process in Finland? (Select one)

According to survey, In Finland, 5% of participants had no understanding of the employment requirements or application process.

47% of participants are extremely familiar with the job requirements and application process in Finland.

In Finland, 33% of participants had a hazy understanding of the employment requirements and application process.

16% of participants have a thorough understanding of the job requirements and application process in Finland.



Figure 20. understand the job requirements.

7. Have you felt isolated or excluded from the workplace culture due to your limited language skills? (Select one)

Based on the responses provided, international students have occasionally felt isolated or excluded from workplace culture due to their low language skills. This was demonstrated by the fact that 47% of participants answered "sometimes." It is worth mentioning, however, that a sizable minority of participants (14%) did not feel alone or excluded, and just 19% answered "very often." Another 19% answered "rarely." It is critical to note that experiences might differ greatly depending on individual circumstances, workplace culture, and the international student's degree of language competence.

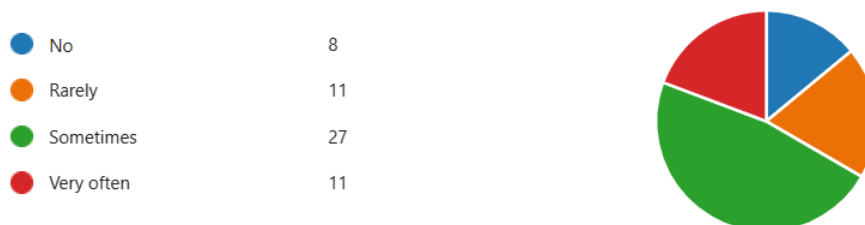


Figure 21. International students felt isolation from workplace culture.

8. What was the language load during studies?

16% of those polled said they were learning at level 1, which covers basic vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. This means that some international students may be starting their Finnish language studies from scratch. 20% of respondents said they were studying at level 2, which covers more complex grammar and vocabulary. 29% of those polled said they were learning at level 3, which covers more complicated grammar, vocabulary, and

idiomatic expressions. Students at this level may be able to converse in Finnish more efficiently, but they may struggle with more complex or technical language. Another 29% of respondents said they were studying at level 4, which covers advanced language skills in reading, writing, and speaking.

Finally, 5% of respondents reported studying at level 5, indicating a very high degree of Finnish proficiency. Students at this level may be able to operate freely and engage in complicated discussions in a Finnish-speaking environment. It should be noted that these levels are based on a broad framework for language competency, and that individual experiences may differ. Furthermore, the specific language load throughout study may be determined by the requirements of the specific program or institution.

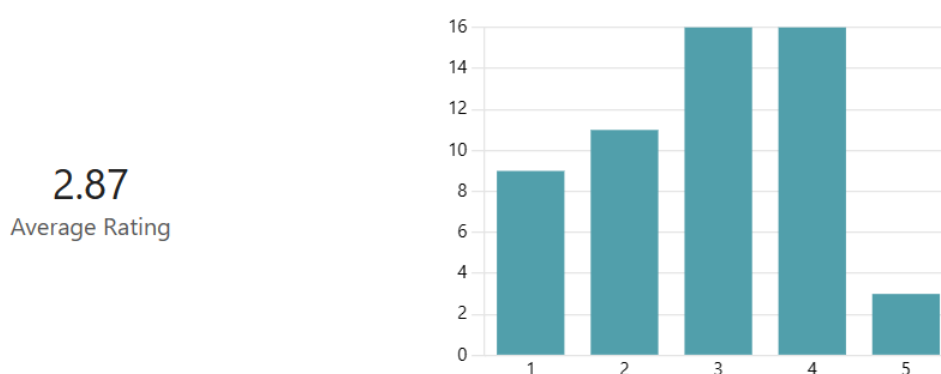


Figure 22. language load according to Levels.

9. How has the language barrier impacted your job opportunities in Finland?

(Select one)

The survey result suggest that language barrier has predominantly had a negative impact on job opportunities for international students, 70% replied with a negative impact, this could mean that international students are finding it difficult to secure job opportunities in finland. 19% of the respondents replied there has been no impact on job opportunities. It could be that some industries are more open to hiring international students and providing them English speaking workspace. 11% of respondents replied that they have positive impact, this means that students might have been able to leverage their language skills to secure a job.

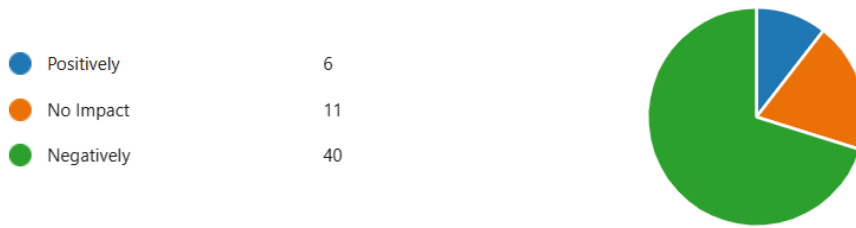


Figure 23. impact of language barrier on job opportunity.

10. How often do you use Finnish in your current job?

Based on the survey response, most international students do not use Finnish in their present employment. Only 19% of respondents said they used Finnish daily, 35% said they used it seldom, and 37% said they never used it at work. Only 9% of respondents said they used Finnish at work on occasion. This shows that competence in Finnish may not be a crucial element for success in most overseas students' present careers. It should be noted, however, that this is based on a single online survey and may not be representative of all international students in Finland.



Figure 24. Use of finnish language at workplace.

11. How important do you think it is for you to speak Finnish fluently to succeed in the Finnish job market?

According to the respondents, the total percentage of respondents who assessed fluency in Finnish as "extremely important" or "very important" is 71%. This indicates that many respondents believe that having a strong command of the Finnish language is critical for international students to be successful in the employment market.

While 18% of respondents assessed it as "Somewhat important" and 12% as "Somewhat not important," these numbers are low when compared to those who rated it as extremely or very important.



Figure 25. Importance of fluent Finnish language to get success in Finnish market.

12. Have you encountered any language-related discrimination in the Finnish job market?

Some international students in the Finnish job market appear to have faced language-related discrimination, whereas others do not appear to have. 22 of the 58 respondents said "Yes," this shows that a sizable proportion of international students have encountered this problem. 11 respondents said "No," indicating that some international students have had positive language and employment experiences. 24 respondents said "Maybe," implying that they may have encountered some level of language-related prejudice but are unsure. This could indicate that these respondents had mixed feelings or encountered situations that were unclear.

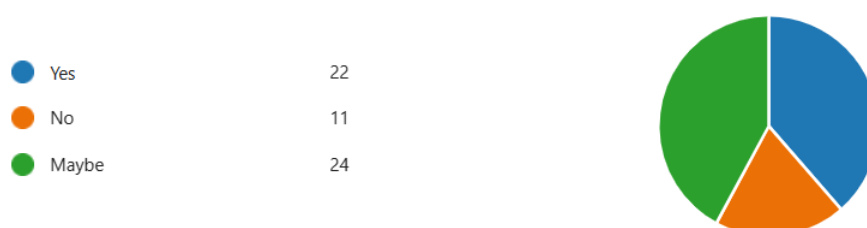


Figure 26. Language related discrimination international student face.

13. How long have you been looking for a job during studies and after graduation?

Based on the survey replies, it appears that international students looking for work in Finland during their studies or after graduation have been looking for a variety of time

periods. 42% of the 24 respondents had been looking for work for 0-6 months, indicating that a sizable proportion of international students are actively looking for work soon after finishing their education. 25% of respondents i.e. 14 respondents had been looking for work for 1-2 years, indicating a more difficult job market or a preference for certain employment kinds or industries. 16% of respondents had been looking for work for 2-5 years, implying that obtaining work in Finland as an international student may be a more difficult and time-consuming procedure.

The remaining 18% of respondents chose "Other," which could indicate that they have been looking for work for a longer or shorter period than the options presented in the survey.

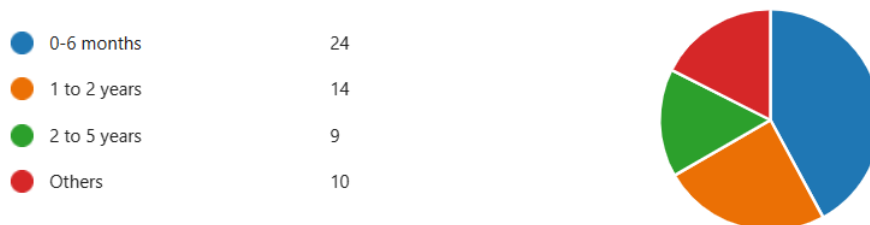


Figure 27. Looking for a job during studies and after graduation since?

14. How satisfied are you with the language support provided by your employer or university?

The following are the results of online survey. 11 students (19%) said they were not satisfied at all, 37 students (65%) said they were somewhat content, 6 students (11%) said they were extremely satisfied, and 3 students (5%) said they were not satisfied at all. It is crucial to highlight that these findings are based on a small sample size and may not be reflective of the experiences of all overseas students. Further research to collect more complete data on international students' satisfaction with language support provided by universities and workplaces may be beneficial.



Figure 28. Satisfaction of language support from employer and university.

15. What is your job status?

The information presented, demonstrates the current employment status of international students. Out of the total number of students, 53% are employed full-time and have a permanent job, while 9% are employed full-time, but their employment is fixed-term.

Part-time employment is available to 11% of international students, but it is temporary. Additionally, 5% of students are employed part-time, but their job is permanent.

Unfortunately, 23% of international students are currently unemployed. It's vital to remember that these numbers are susceptible to fluctuate dependent on many factors such as the economy, employment market, and personal situations.



Figure 29. current job status of respondents.

16. How would you rate your Finnish language level when you started your first job in Finland?

Based on the survey results, it appears that most international students who started their first employment in Finland would grade their Finnish language level as A1-A2, which is a basic user level. This could imply that many international students had little exposure to the Finnish language prior to starting work in Finland. A lower proportion of international pupils assessed their Finnish language level as B1-B2, which is the level of independent users. This implies that some international students may have had prior knowledge or experience with the Finnish language prior to beginning their first work in Finland. It's also worth noting that a sizable proportion of respondents stated that they had no knowledge of the Finnish language or that their English competence was adequate for their employment. This emphasizes the necessity of having a diverse and inclusive workplace that accommodates various language ability and encourages language learning for individuals who may require it.

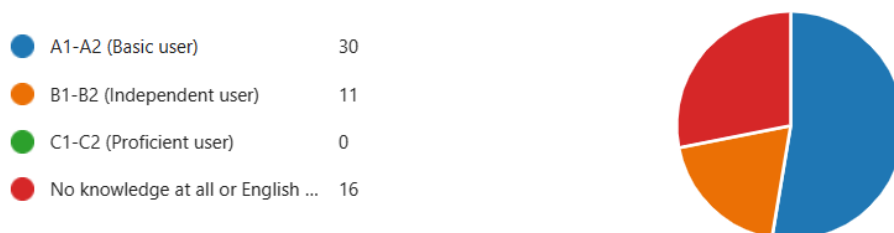


Figure 30. Level of Finnish language at start of job.

17. Your education background before coming to Finland?

Based on respondents' answers, it appears that the majority of respondents with 58% and 33 in numbers had a bachelor's degree before coming to Finland, with a lesser percentage of 33% having a Master's degree or Intermediate education. Only one responder held a PhD before to moving to Finland.



Figure 31. Educational background before.

18. Which of the following category describes your job nature?

It appears that 75% of respondents had employment that are classified as white-collar, meaning that shows most of the respondents are graduates from Engineering and IT sector, where they do not need physical or manual labor. The remaining 25% of respondents work in jobs classified as blue-collar, which typically require physical or manual labor.



Figure 32. Job nature of respondents.

19. What were the hurdles you faced during employment search?

39
Responses

Latest Responses
"Limited contacts, not many good references "



Figure 33. Problems faced in job search.

In conclusion, the job market reality described by the individual reflects a challenging landscape where traditional methods of applying and waiting for responses may not yield success. Many positions, it seems, are primarily posted for formalities, with companies often preferring internal recruitment. This internal preference is a common practice in Finland. As a result, most of job opportunities may remain hidden to external candidates.

The importance of building a strong professional network of Finnish contacts, which can prove essential for job seekers.

The individual's experience highlights the effectiveness of platforms like LinkedIn in connecting job seekers with relevant opportunities worldwide.

The proactive approach to job hunting, continuously searching and applying for positions, field of expertise underscores the importance of personal effort and persistence in navigating the competitive job market.

20. Are you doing job in your area of expertise?

Based on the survey replies, the following conclusions can be drawn:

37 respondents replied "Yes," 17 respondents answered "No," and 3 respondents answered "Maybe" of the total number of respondents who answered the question, which is $37+17+3 = 57$. This suggests that many respondents, 64.9%, are now employed in their field of competence. However, 29.8% of respondents responded "No," indicating that they are not actively working in their field of competence.

Of the remaining three respondents, 5.3% answered "Maybe," indicating ambiguity about whether they are working in their area of competence.



Figure 34. Job in area of competence.

21. What suggestions do you have for improving the language support for foreign students in the Finnish job market? (Open-ended question)

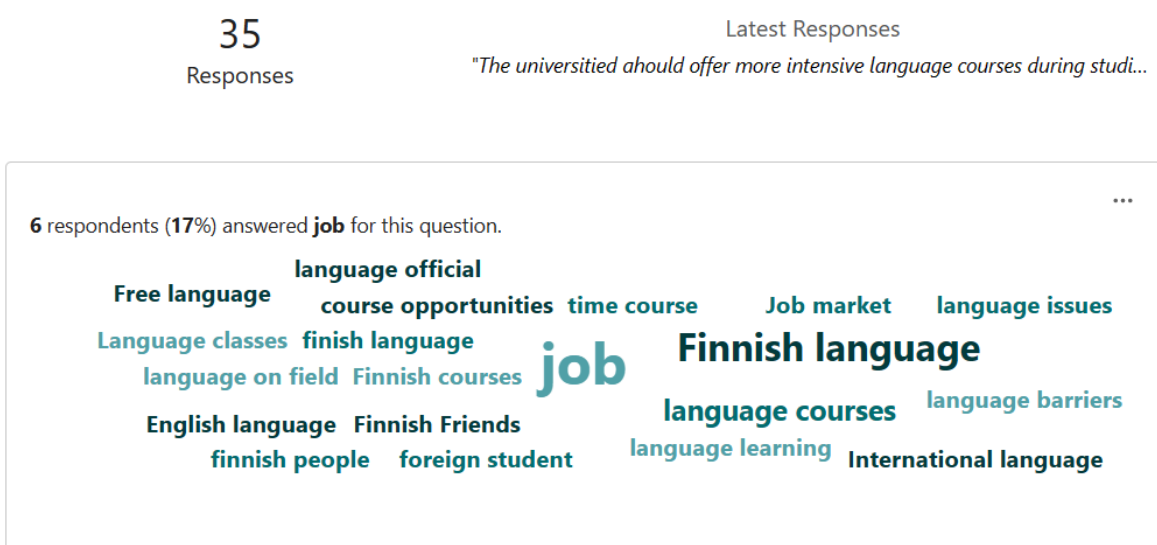


Figure 35. suggestions

In summary, the respondents expressed concerns about the current curriculum's inadequacy in preparing students for a competitive job market. To address this, they recommended the incorporation language and U courses to provide more relevant skills. Additionally, respondents suggested the inclusion of internships to expose students to real-life situations, gain work experience, and build valuable networking connections with potential employers. On a positive note, some former students highlighted how their job search experiences broadened their horizons, showcasing numerous opportunities in service design worldwide and emphasizing the ease of connecting with employers through platforms like LinkedIn. These suggestions and real-life experiences underscore the need for curriculum enhancements and practical exposure to better equip students for the job market.

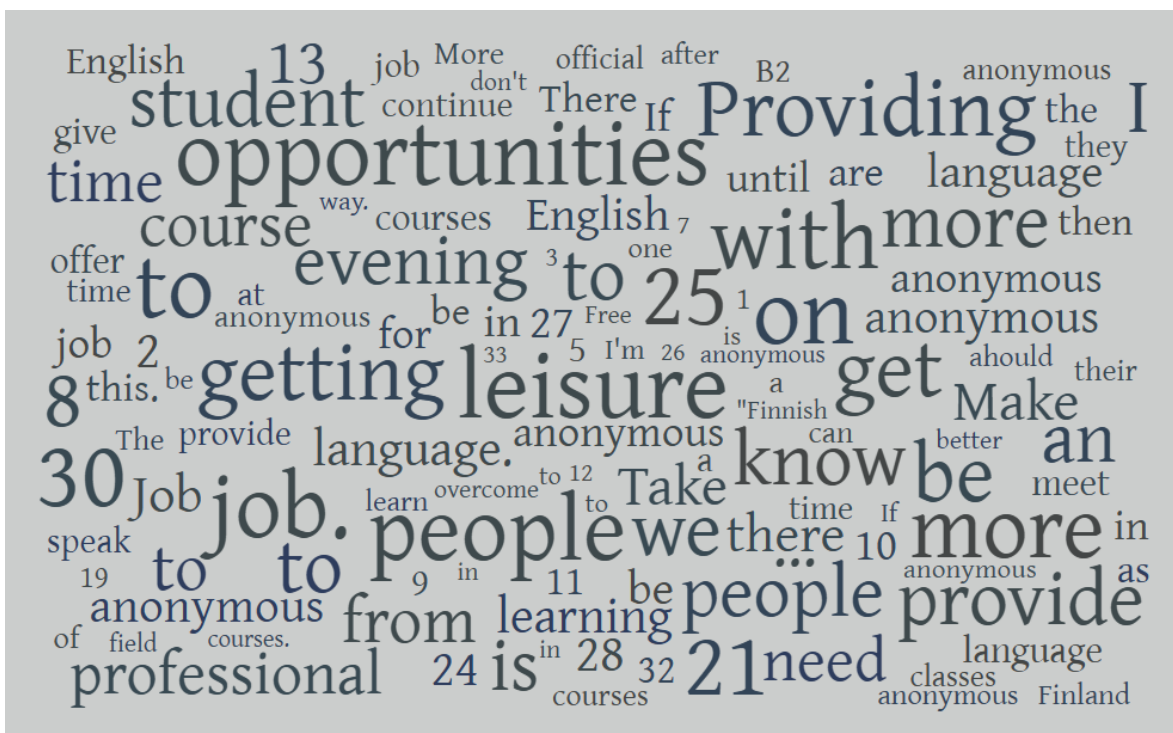


Figure 36. suggestions for improvement of language support for foreigners.

The significance of Finnish language studies within the context of Finland must not be underestimated, given the substantial demand for linguistic proficiency by numerous businesses operating within the country. To optimally equip students for the competitive

job market, it is imperative to foster robust connections between the academic realm and the corporate sector. This can be achieved by enhancing interactions between students and prospective employers, such as through guest visits by corporate representatives and former students now gainfully employed, and the cultivation of collaborative ventures with business entities.

Collaborative engagement with local municipalities can further offer tangible, real-world projects for students, allowing them to apply their acquired skills, particularly in domains such as service design, where practical urban experience holds considerable value. The incorporation of mandatory internships and intensive language courses into the curriculum stands to confer numerous advantages. These include heightened employability prospects, hands-on professional experience, and the application of academic knowledge in tangible, real-life settings. This multifaceted approach serves as a bridge between the realm of academia and the demands of the professional sphere, thereby effectively preparing students for prosperous and rewarding careers.

4.9 Analysis of Survey

Most of students came to Finland for master's degree after completing graduation in their home country. As Finland attracts them in many ways and they decide to stay over here and start searching job in their relevant field. The employment status of respondents showed that mostly from technical background and student at engineering universities got job without language proficiency, but respondents who do not have the technical education are unemployed or working in an irrelevant job to survive. The journey of international students in Finland is riddled with various challenges as they seek to integrate into the Finnish society and find job opportunities. The findings of the study emphasize the significance of Finnish language proficiency and the choice of academic field in shaping their career prospects. It's evident that prior work experience in Finland, while valuable, may not be as influential as these factors. The study also revealed that international students face specific difficulties in their job search. The most prevalent issues include language barriers and the requirement for fluency in Finnish. Many international students encountered obstacles in the form of unresponsive employers or a lack of job openings in

their respective fields. Some even felt that there was a bias towards native Finnish speakers.

On a more positive note, certain fields, such as IT, appear to be more accommodating for international students, with fewer significant challenges. In this regard, the experiences of international students in Finland are as diverse as their academic and professional backgrounds. Ultimately, addressing these challenges will require a combination of language support, field-specific opportunities, and perhaps a shift in employer attitudes to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for international talent in Finland.

Furthermore, applying for employment through informal sources such as networks and friend referrals is more likely to influence respondents' chances of landing a job than applying through formal sources such as official websites and recruitment agencies, indicating that having connections and different networks could increase the chances of gaining employment in Finland, as discussed by (Ahmad, 2021). Respondents, on the other hand, revealed that employers' negative attitudes have an adequate impact on hiring international students, as (Ahmad, An Experimental Investigation of Ethnic Discrimination in the Finnish Labor Market, 2019) stated in their studies that racial discrimination is a key factor that influences international students' chances of finding employment. The paper addresses the topic of linguistic prejudice experienced by international students in the Finnish labor market. Out of 58 respondents, 22 reported encountering such discrimination, indicating that a sizable number of overseas students have encountered this issue. However, 11 respondents reported favorable language and employment experiences, implying that some overseas students were not subjected to such discrimination. Furthermore, 24 respondents responded "Maybe," indicating that they may have encountered some level of linguistic prejudice but were unsure or had mixed opinions about their encounters.

The poll findings illustrate the different problems that foreign students experience in the Finnish employment market because of the language barrier. Many students reported difficulty interacting with potential employers, understanding employment criteria, and completing the job application process. Furthermore, nearly half of the students expressed difficulty comprehending supervisory orders and feedback, as well as feeling isolated and removed from the workplace culture. The data also reveals a scarcity of language support

provided by employers and universities, emphasizing the need for employers and educational institutions to provide language support to foreign students to help them overcome the language barrier and secure job opportunities in the Finnish labor market. Many students said that the language barrier had a negative influence on their job chances, emphasizing the need of providing language support to foreign students in the Finnish labor market.

The study results show that language limitations provide major challenges for foreign students entering the Finnish labor market. These obstacles can jeopardize their chances of getting a job and functioning well at work. According to the poll findings, employers in Finland should consider offering language support and training programs to assist international students in overcoming the language barrier and fully participating in the Finnish employment market. Furthermore, the Finnish government and institutions should consider offering language classes and support to assist international students in navigating the job market and integrating into the Finnish industry.

After both online surveys, author decided to access some of Finnish firms to get information about their hiring process specifically international students. The information was revealing enough that now Finnish firms are also setting some trends to hire international talent as work force.

4.10 Trends for international student's recruitment

Recently, there has been a significant approach of Finnish firms towards international student recruitment. Such approaches are promoted through local city administration such as Hello Espoo (Services for international professionals) and Signals for integrating international student (Mikko Karamo, 2023). Many firms recognized the benefit of hiring international students, including diversity of thought and experience, a global perspective, and the ability to speak multiple languages.

Finnish firms are placing particular emphasis on recruiting international students with expertise in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. These fields are crucial for Finland's continued economic growth and competitiveness.

Many Finnish firms are building stronger partnership with universities to attract top international talent especially in STEM field. These partnerships include collaborations on research projects, internships, and job placements. These internship programs provide international students with valuable work experience and the opportunity to develop their skills. These internships often can lead to full-time employment opportunities.

4.10.1 Employer branding & Diversity

Finnish firms are investing in their employer branding to attract international students. They are showcasing their corporate culture, values, and benefits to prospective employees through social media, career fairs, and other recruitment events. Finnish firms are recognizing the value of having diverse workforce and are actively seeking out international students from a variety of backgrounds. They are also working to create an inclusive work environment where all employees feel welcome and valued. Diversification of the workforce is a source of getting new ideas and experiences from different backgrounds. This way Finnish firms are positioning themselves to attract the best and brightest international students.

4.10.2 Language support & Soft-skill development

Some Finnish companies recognize the importance of helping international students adapt to Finnish work culture by offering language support. This support can include language classes, online resources, and tutoring to improve students' Finnish language skills. The goal is to assist these students in understanding and communicating with Finnish colleagues, making them more effective in their careers and fostering stronger relationships. Ultimately, providing language support for international students in Finland promotes inclusivity and a friendly work environment for all employees.

Finnish firms now prioritize soft skills like communication, teamwork, and adaptability, realizing their importance for workplace success. Previously, technical skills were highly valued, but the significance of soft skills, such as effective communication for building relationships and teamwork for achieving common goals, is now acknowledged. Adaptation skills are crucial for dealing with workplace changes. Finnish organizations actively seek individuals with or willing to develop these soft skills. International students

are often considered advantageous due to their experience in adapting to new environments and working with diverse cultures.

4.11 Case Study - SOL

The author had an interview with one of recruitment personnel at Finnish firm SOL (Friman, 2023), she provided me the answers of my questions (Appendix 2), which help me to understand their international talent promoting trend. In SOL there are 80+ nationalities. She explained that Finnish language is not before competence but in some cases it does. For example, if looking for a cleaner in nursing home for seniors, and the job includes also helping the seniors, the Finnish language is required. In some cleaning teams we have supervisors who speak very little Finnish, but their skills in cleaning and team leading are strong. Even though they are learning Finnish because it is the company language and the salary programs, company's newsletters etc. are published in Finnish. Finland needs workforce but lack in Finnish language skill, international student cannot apply for any Finnish firm. In SOL Palvelut they have more than 50% of employees with other than Finnish background. Approx. half of them speaks Finnish, the other half not. They have many students working in cruise ship cleaning where evening shifts are also available. Most of the clients want their facilities to be cleaned in office time (at 06-18). The point that is to be noted here was, due to only language barrier international students, having multinational companies experience and degrees, they are not able to get white color jobs and their potential is of no use in these cleaning jobs. According to her, SOL is planning to make awareness in departments to make language requirement flexible for international students. SOL have a lot of material translated in English languages. Also, the training courses are held both in Finnish and English. They have a multicultural team who is doing the awareness job. Every year they publish the multicultural calendar for instance. (Attached last year's calendar in references list). International students can apply for job and learn Finnish language during the job. SOL is looking into this scenario to retain international students. For example, one of their supervisors in Metro cleaning in Helsinki is teaching to her employees 3 new Finnish words every day. Knowing the Finnish language helps a lot here in Finland. In this context one video regarding that subject is on the reference list.

One of SOL International tutor & trainer and Palveluesimies, Mr. Adil Khan (Khan, International tutor & trainer and Palveluesimies, 2023) , explained that he was hired with basic Finnish language skill and then over the time he was improving language and when he was promoted to trainer as his designation required communication with multinational employees, his competence was above the language skill. International tutor promotes equality, SOL's first international tutor (International tutor promotes equality, 2021). SOL is setting example for hiring international talent who doesn't have technical degree but regardless of background of education, Finnish language skills and experiences, they are hiring international students.

5 Personas

After analyzing the questionnaire results, the next step was to create a persona for each separate group that emerged from the data. Personas are imaginary identities or profiles created to represent service consumers. They help to keep a customer-centric emphasis throughout the design process (Juan Fernandez, 2022). Furthermore, personas allow the researcher to empathize with customers by presenting a profile of a specific group of people, which could be a customer or a customer group. Despite their fictional nature, personas are archetypical representations based on actual research. Personas can also help with communicating research findings and insights within a research team and even to a larger audience (Marc Stickdorn, This Is Service Design Doing, 2018).

The characters created for thesis depict formal students from various Finnish universities focusing on engineering, business, service design, and technical studies. Four unique groups of personalities were established through survey data analysis. According to the study, 70% of respondents were male, while just 28% identified as female, and the remaining 2% decided not to identify their gender. A Finnish national, an immigrant who arrived in Finland through familial ties, and two immigrants who traveled to Finland to pursue further education but eventually settled in the country are among the three categories of personas produced.

Persona 1:



Figure 37. An international student, a service designer

Hafsa Umar is 33 years old, moved to Finland years ago for master's degree program and then planned to settle here. She got a job in her field without any language skills as she explained that she has the "Specific need of the client and on good recommendation", which helped her to get on board. She is also having frustration with things related to work but is satisfied.

Persona 2:



Figure 38. A philipine international student, a cleaner

A 35-year-old guy with a master's degree in business leadership and finance. He relocated to Finland from Philippine with his Finnish spouse as family ties. He discussed his life's events and the difficulties he overcame despite speaking Finnish fluently. Prior to finding this job, Markus spent around three years actively looking. He spoke extensively about his unhappiness with the procedures, was forced to look for work in other places because he needed to provide finances for his family. He was hired as a cleaner and has been doing so ever since.

Persona 3:

An international Engineering student from Pakistan, moved here for Master's degree. Inspired from finnish education and working style, he pursued PhD as well. Got job in the final semester of master's program without Finnish language proficiency. He is quite contented and satisfied. But to acquire citizenship he is planning to start learning Finnish language.



Figure 39. An electrical engineer with Phd degree at latest

Persona 4:

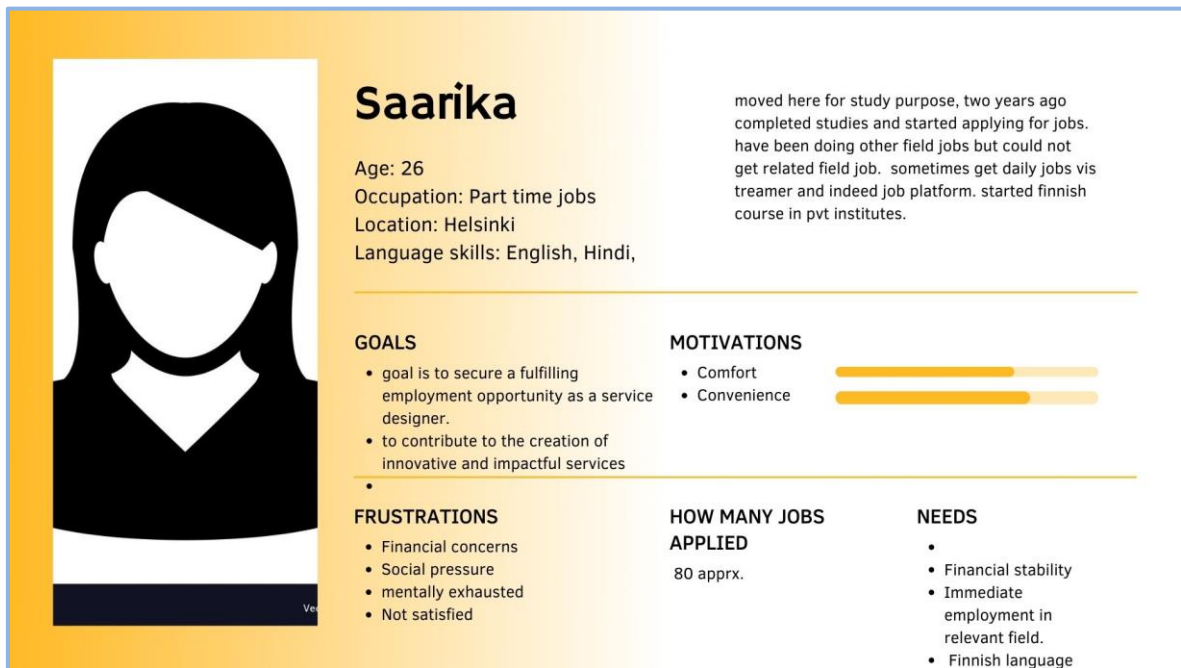


Figure 40. A service designer by profession

A 26-year-old foreign graduate who relocated to Finland two years ago to pursue a service design degree. She graduated two years ago, and since then, she has been looking for employment. She wants to launch her profession. She is doing some daily jobs and is presently studying Finnish.

5.1 The Journey Map

A journey map's primary objective is to chart the user experience through time. The customer's access to each phase or touch point with a specific firm is included in the trip map. The client may not be able to see every one of these touch points, but what matters is how the customer feels about the company overall. Using a journey map, firms may identify customer experience gaps and look for solutions. Journey maps give you the chance to assess both past and potential future consumers' experiences (Asbjørn Følstad (SINTEF, 8 February 2018) .

A very thorough explanation of how micro-interactions work, step by step (Stickdorn & Schneider 2018, 43). A customer journey map is typically created in the service design tradition using the information from the personas. The scale and scope of the journey maps might vary, and one will typically require multiple to depict a particular feature of an experience or service.

In this study, the researcher opted to create three separate customer journey maps, each focusing on a distinct customer persona. This departure from the usual single journey map approach was motivated by two key objectives. First, it aimed to simplify comprehension for readers less familiar with service design methods, offering a more accessible view of each customer's experience. Second, By creating individual customer journeys for each persona, the researcher effectively showcased the variations in the experiences these customers encounter when interacting with the studied service. This approach emphasized the diversity of customer experiences and facilitated a more in-depth analysis of each persona's journey. With the help of below given customer journey maps researcher sought to provide a clearer and more detailed depiction of the unique experiences encountered by each of the three customers from information research to Finnish language skill and integration into finnish job market.

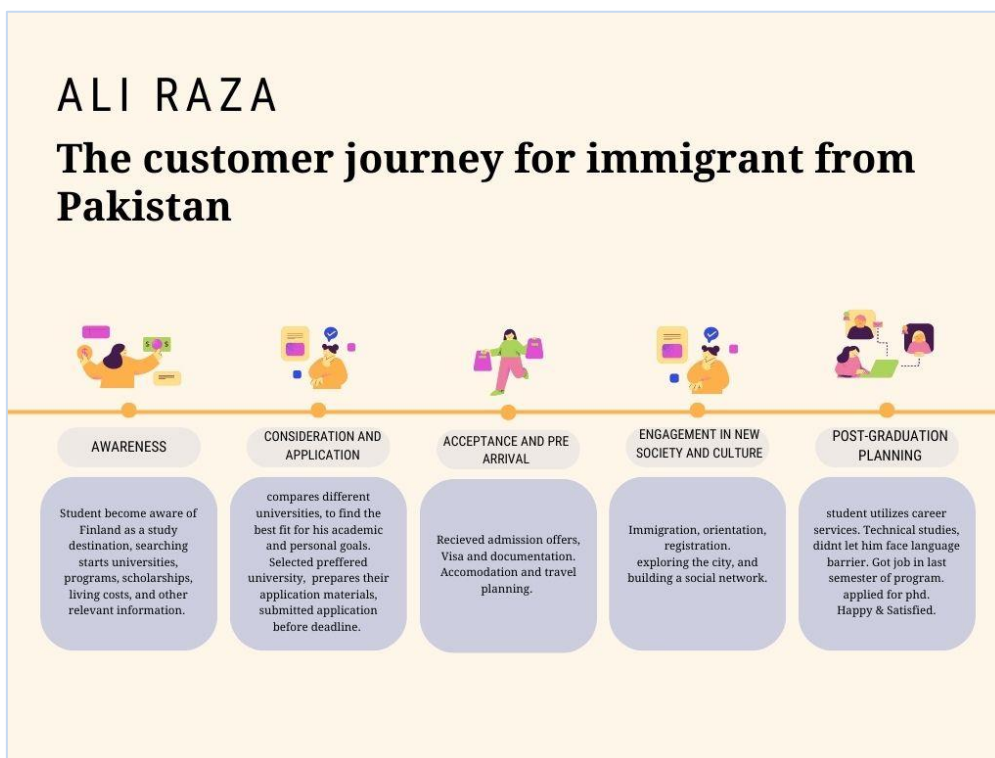


Figure 41. Customer journey for Ali

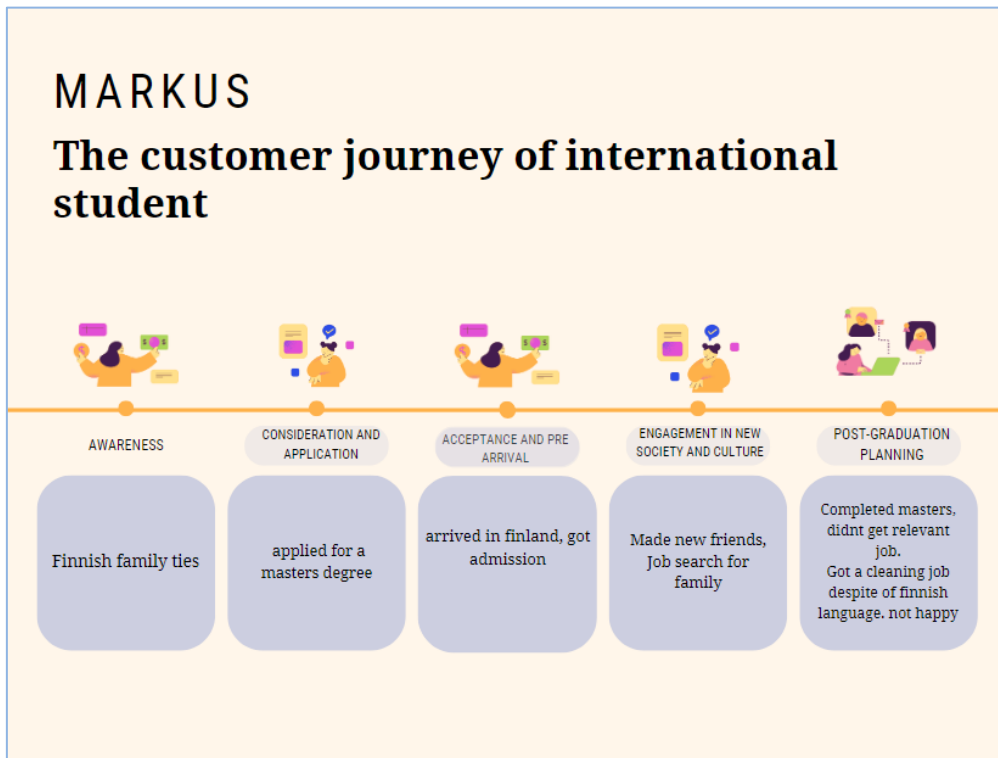


Figure 42. Customer journey for Markus

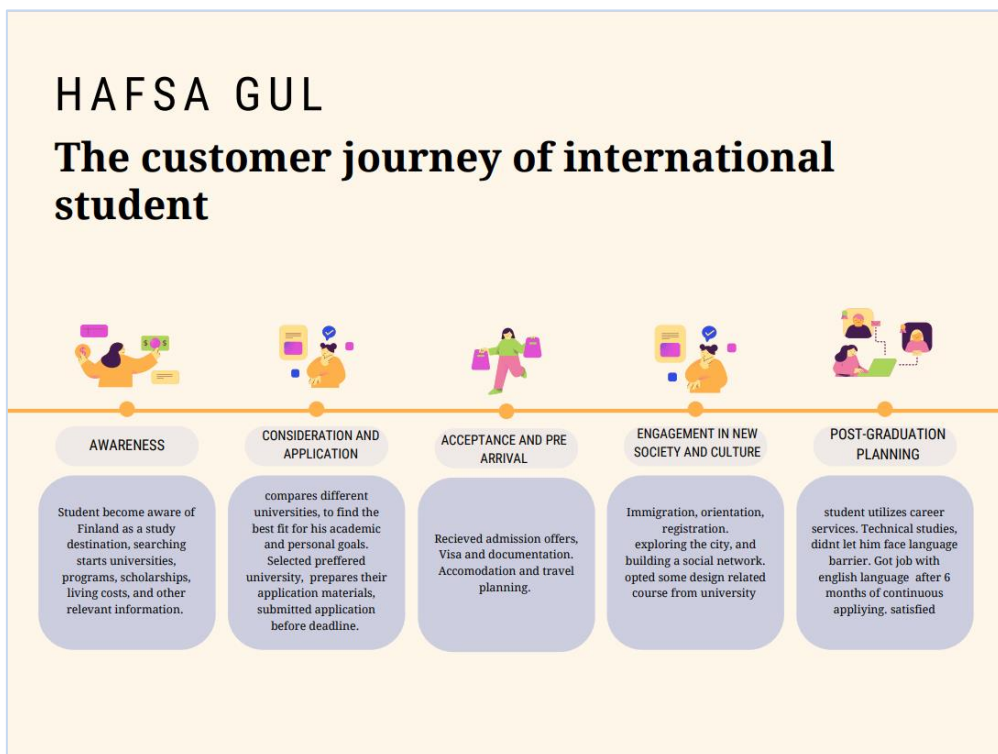


Figure 43. Customer journey for Hafsa

5.2 Co-design

Co-design is becoming more and more well-liked across various industries and fields of study. The exceptionally innovative collaboration between the various stakeholders and subject matter specialists in the design processes is to blame for this popularity. As a result, co-design may be described as the gathering of many professionals to work creatively together to produce goods and services. Researchers, designers, producers, users, or customers who are also specialists in the user's service journey experience are referred to as "diverse experts" in this context (Visser, Stappers, Van der Lugt, & Sanders, 2005).

Three types of user experiences within the interaction of design processes were identified by Sander (2002). These encounters allow people to speak, act, and create. The researcher or designer can use the tool interview to hear what the interviewee has to say before attempting to understand it. The researcher can see and interpret what other individuals do and react to after utilizing a service by employing the observatory technique. Finally, "make" refers to the co-design process when solutions are developed with designers or researchers. Brainstorming was employed by the researcher and former students in the co-design workshop for this thesis. The figure below shows how complex the co-design workshop may appear at first and how straightforward the final product may be.

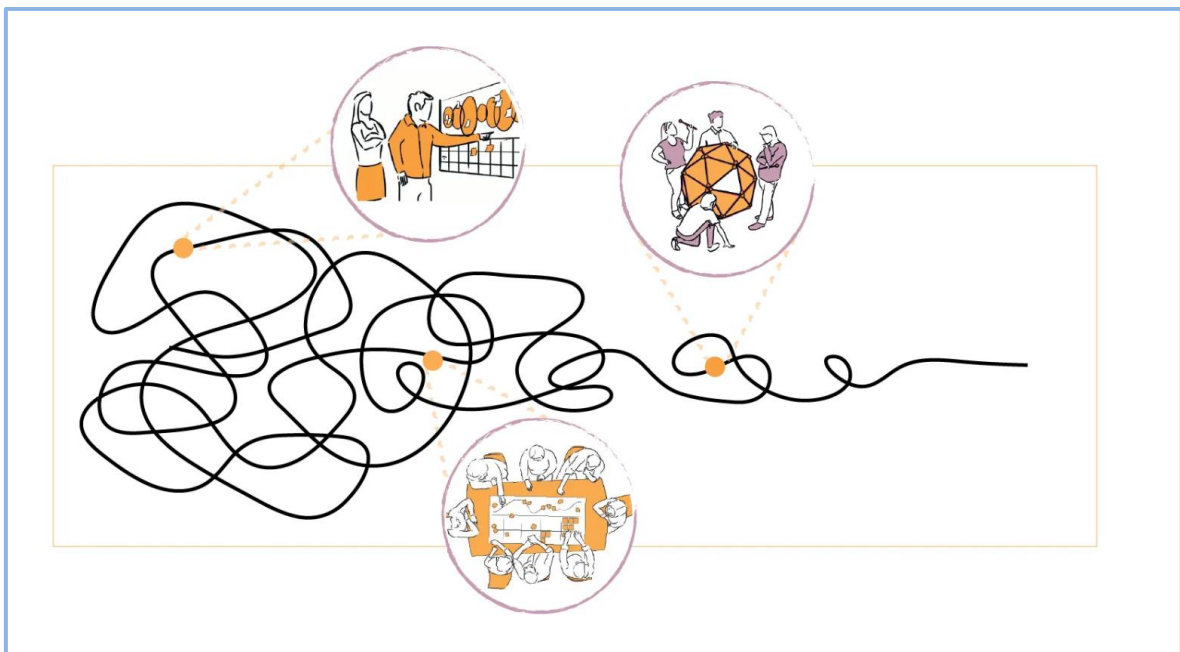


Figure 44. Online medium used as co-design process (co design powerful force).

5.2.1 Brainstorming

A strong method for stimulating creativity and producing a variety of ideas is brainstorming. It requires a group of people, or even just one person, to think freely and openly without restriction or criticism to generate as many ideas as possible. Brainstorming aids in breaking free from established thought patterns and promotes creative ideas by combining an informal problem-solving method with lateral thinking (Bernstein, 2017).

The emphasis during a brainstorming session is more on quantity than quality. No matter how outlandish or ridiculous an idea may seem, it is embraced and promoted. This strategy aids in creating a setting where people feel at ease discussing their thoughts, which may result in unanticipated connections and insights. Nevertheless, academic studies have demonstrated that participants produce more ideas when working alone or in smaller groups than when working in larger ones (Paulus et al. 1995, 1996; Pinsonneault et al. 1999). However, working alone requires more time in terms of gathering and then evaluating ideas. "Group-think" or peer pressure, where participants are unwilling to offer ideas for fear of scorn, is a well-known barrier to idea development in groups. A brainstorming rule that states upfront that no evaluations are permitted during the actual brainstorming activity aims to get around this problem.

It's intriguing to see that Eckerson (1988) emphasized the benefit of brainstorming, specifically how it enables people with different areas of expertise to interact and produce results that go beyond what everyone would have contributed individually. Brainstorming meetings frequently produce fresh and creative answers that might not have been obvious to participants working on the same issues independently. It is vital to remember that brainstorming, when properly assisted, can be a very powerful creative process. Participants are more likely to freely express their ideas in an environment that is encouraging and nonjudgmental, which opens a wider range of options and potentially ground-breaking solutions. The main method employed in this thesis during the single workshop for idealizing and creating the prototype's conclusion was brainstorming. The procedures will be described here, and the results will be displayed in the prototyping part.

5.2.2 On-Line workshop 1

The workshop was held online because of the summer break, which made it impractical to hold in-person gatherings due to people's work obligations. This circumstance clarifies the inability of the researcher to arrange any workshops in the initial stages of the thesis. The singular workshop occurred during the middle week of August and specifically on August 16th, 2023, spanning from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. A registration form was disseminated to students via email, a topic-focused WhatsApp group, and a Google Form, offering them the option to enroll for the workshop. The aid of former international business students was enlisted to facilitate this process. Interested individuals were requested to provide their email addresses in the form to ensure subsequent communication about the workshop.

On the day before the workshop, the author of the thesis, who also served as the facilitator, dispatched an email to all participants who had expressed their interest in attending. This email included a tentative workshop agenda. The workshop commenced with a brief overview of the guidelines and the workshop's objectives. Following this was the introduction of the attendees to one another. However, due to conflicting commitments, several of the participants who had initially indicated their desire to take part in the workshop were unable to attend. Consequently, the workshop saw a modest turnout of only six individuals who participated by commenting separately. Notably, among these participants, three were female, while the remaining attendees were male.

The workshop was divided into two halves, with a five-minute coffee break in between. The participants in the first session were asked how incorporating language courses can be helpful to resolve international students' language issues and the importance of language at the same time to go into market. Here, all the participants agreed that including a language course in the curriculum was a good idea. Some said it should be completed online and the pupils' competency levels should be considered while dividing the classroom.

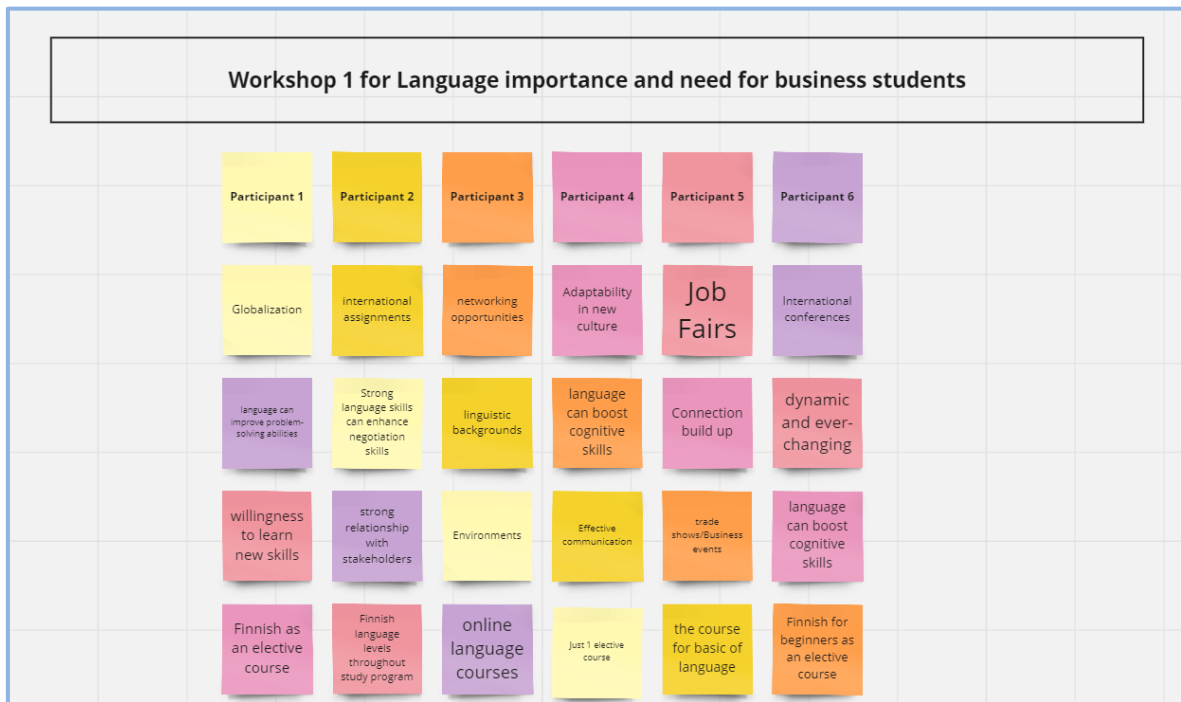


Figure 45. Online workshop 1 for international business students

Key points gathered from Workshop 1

- Finnish language knowledge important.
- Language skills will help international students to boost their networking skills and will help to integrate in Finnish culture.
- Language courses will help them to build strong relationships.
- With help of language, Job fairs will help them to communicate effectively with potential employers.

5.2.3 Online workshop 2

In the second section of research, participants were likely engaged in a workshop where they were asked to brainstorm solutions for language difficulties related to job searching. It's important to have a diverse group of participants to gather a wide range of perspectives and ideas. During the workshop, participants shared their ideas on how to tackle language difficulties in the context of job searching. These suggestions could include strategies to improve language skills, tools to enhance communication, or ways to increase access to job opportunities.

After the workshop, the researcher reviewed and analyzed the suggestions provided by the participants. This analysis likely involved identifying common themes, innovative ideas, and feasible solutions. This step is crucial in identifying the most promising directions for further development.

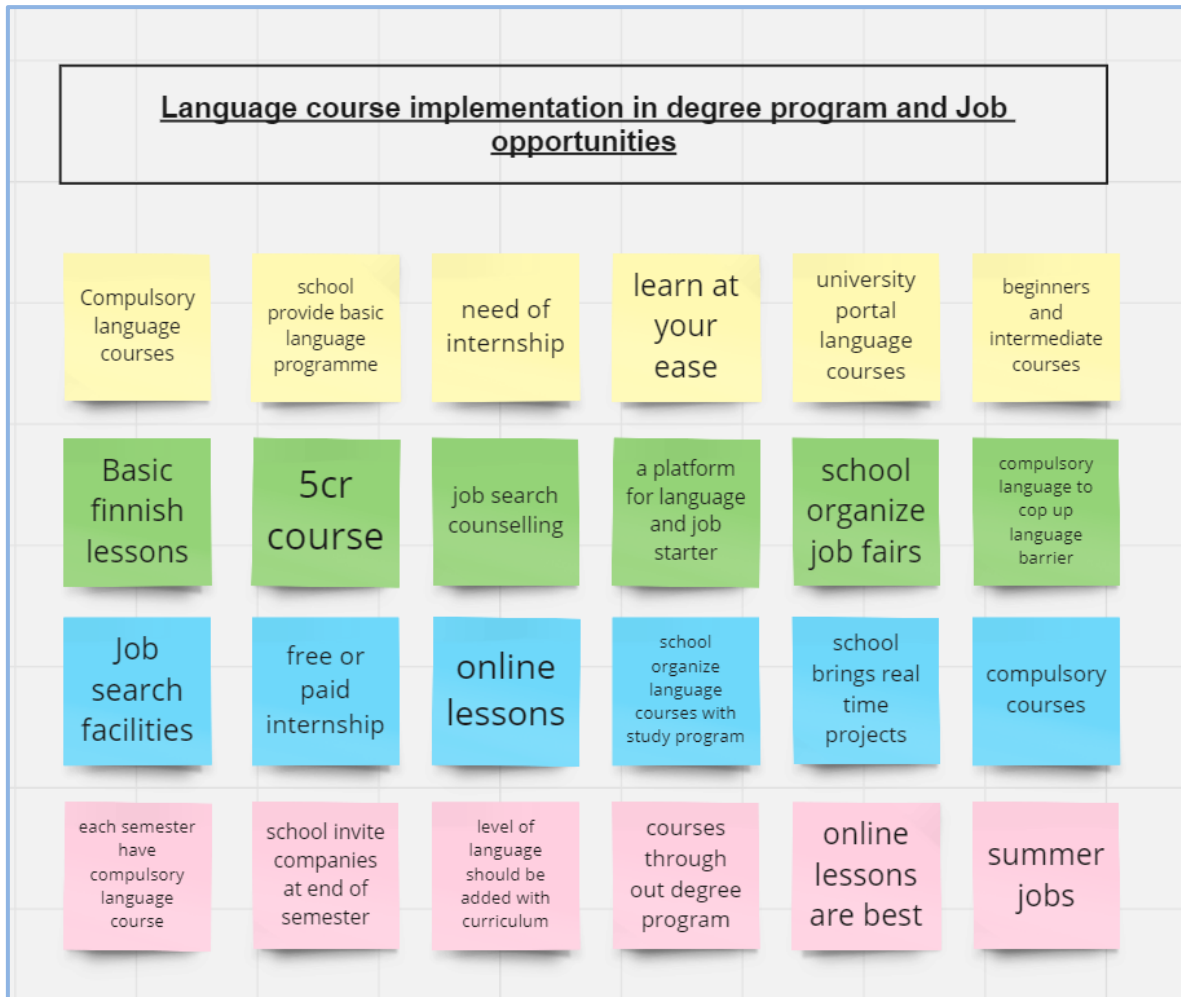


Figure 46. Online workshop for language course implementation and Job opportunities

Key points gathered from Workshop 2:

- Finnish language addition in curriculum.
- School should invite local employers to job fairs.
- Real time projects and internships.
- Different level of Finnish language courses according to requirements of student.
- Online courses in alternative days of study schedule.

6 Prototype & Progressive Innovative Ideas

Prototyping is an important step in the Design Thinking process, is typically used in the final testing phase. Designers create an almost-working model or mock-up of the product, known as a prototype, and test it with potential customers and stakeholders to see if it genuinely solves its consumers' concerns. As a result, prototyping allows designers to test the viability of existing designs and maybe research what potential buyers may think and feel about product. It permits appropriate testing and investigating design ideas before an excessive number of resources are employed (Simplilearn, 2023).

The target of our service design prototype for international student's career enhancement relies mainly on integration of Finnish language in study path. Firstly, we need to have a rough estimate of student's study workload in various degree tracks [1]. In general, a student in Finland has either university of applied (UAS) path or university degree tracks with corresponding degree level and study credits per year are shown in Table. 7.1

Study path	University		UAS	
	Bachelor	Master	Bachelor	Master
Degree Level	Bachelor	Master	Bachelor	Master
Credits total (ECTS)	180	120	210 - 240	60-90
Study duration (year)	3	2	3.5 - 4.5	1-1.5
Credits per year(ECTS)	60	60	60	60

Table 7.1

A student's degree study path with corresponding credits-workload at a Finnish university or university of applied sciences (UAS). An average of 60 credits in a degree are equivalent to roughly 1620-hours per study year assuming 1 ECTS is equal to 27 hours of class contact-sessions, self-study, and assignments.

Secondly, an international student must attain a certain level of language proficiency during their study. In Finland, the language proficiency is categorized as basic, intermediate, and advanced level. By utilizing (Language course levels, ei pvm) and

(Suomen mestari” series – Finnish Study Books, ei pvm) , one can make a correspondence between a typically used Finnish language book~ (Oy, ei pvm) and the proficiency level it addresses. Figure 7.1 provides this combined picture of proficiency levels and book version a student must study for such attainment. Attaining Intermediate level proficiency is a recommendation as it will enable long-term settlement for an international student in Finland while also resolving skilled-worker shortage in Finnish job market.

Basic level (A1.1–A2.2)	
Basic level begins A1.1 – Language basics	
Basic level A1.2 – Language basics	Suomen mestari 1
Basic level A1.3 – You can use the language in simple non-work-related situations. You can write a little.	
Basic level A2.1 – You can use the language to run the most common errands.	
Basic level A2.2 – Your understanding of familiar subjects is reasonably good. You can write in simple language.	Suomen mestari 2
Intermediate level (B1.1–B2.2) YKI test passing threshold for citizenship	
Intermediate level begins B1.1 – Moderate language skills in day-to-day work and leisure situations.	Suomen mestari 3
Intermediate level B1.2 – A fluent grasp of language in day-to-day work and leisure situations.	
Intermediate level B2.1 – Basic level of independent language proficiency.	Suomen mestari 4
Intermediate level B2.2 – Functional level of independent language proficiency.	
Advanced level (C)	
Advanced level C – Language skills are excellent or comparable to a native speaker. There is also a more specific level classification for C-level courses, C1.1, C1.2, C2.1 or C2.2.	Advanced textbooks

Figure 7.1 Language proficiency levels described in detail along with most widely used Finnish language book versions. Our prototype is anchored around level B1.1-B2.2 as its sufficient language level for obtaining Finnish citizenship and suitable job in Finland

Based on the above-mentioned preliminary aspects, a student study calendar is devised with an open-source tool (Working Days in 2023, 2023). A student work-calendar requires roughly 1620 hours of study-load as mentioned previously. She might have two options:

- a) Adopt slow-paced courses: For example, (turku, ei pvm), which covers half-book of suomen mestari-1 in 4-months with five-course credits. A full-book coverage course can consist of 10-credits and can be studied in 8-months. A 10-credit study is equivalent to 270-hour study because 1-ECTS is equal to 27-hours.

- b) Fast-paced courses: For example, (Adult education institutes in Helsinki, ei pvm), which covers half-book of suomen mestarti-1 in 1,5 months. A full-book can be studied in such courses in 3-months.

Finally, prototype can be extracted based on this analysis where a bachelor student can go for slow-paced Finnish language courses along with their study-workload. Figure 7.2 provides a typical student workload aiming for 60-credits. An international student must study at least 1,5 hr/day for Finnish language in order to attain 10-credit . study of one-finnish book such as suomen-mestari-1 (Oy, ei pvm). In this way, a bachelor can study three volumes of Suomen-Mestari book which are address B1.1-B2.2 proficiency level.

Besides that, a master student workload is relatively hectic where an alternative approach can be applied. For instance, fast-paced courses in summer holidays can be a good time for enhancing their Finnish language proficiency. In this way, roughly a master student with international background can actively aim for at least B1.1 level during their 2-year study program as shown in Figure 7.3.

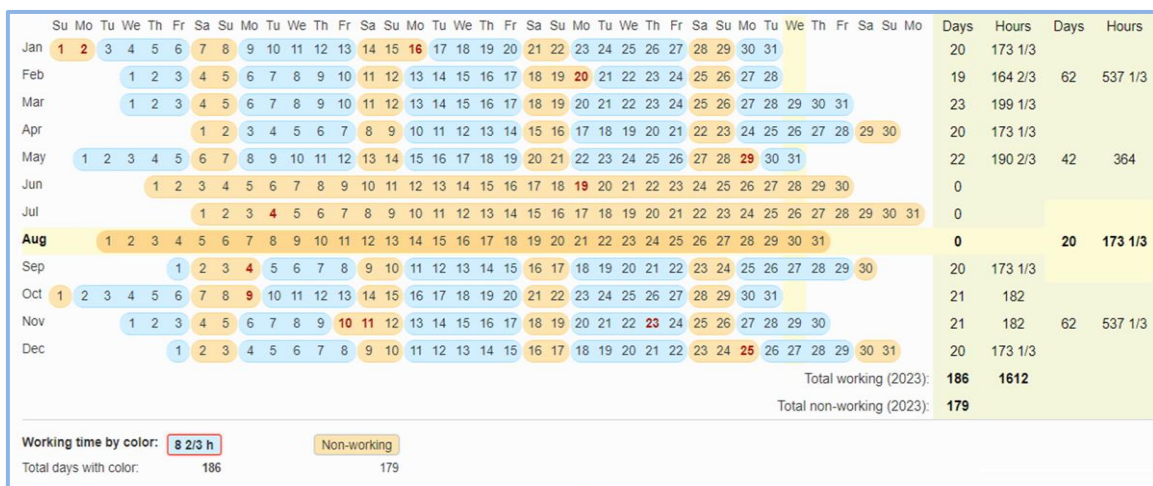


Figure 7.2 A Finnish student work-load for 60-credits across whole year.

An international student has to include Finnish-language learning of 10-credits during full-calendar year as 10-credits correspond to a 270 hours workload. Assuming 186 working days, a 1,5 hour/day studying Finnish is recommended.

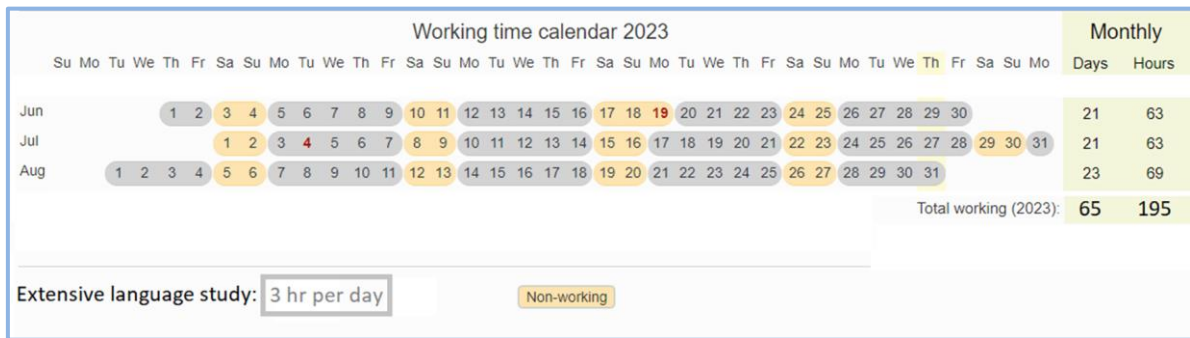


Figure 7.3 An international master's degree student study calendar during summer-vacations.

An average of 3 to 4 hours per day Finnish language learning enables a student to study 10-credits or one Suomen-Mestari book in 3 months. Assuming a student has more time in other months, intensive language courses can also be taken during those free times.

6.1 Finnish Government initiatives

The Finnish Government has also introduced several initiatives to facilitate the transition of international students into the workforce, such as Finnish immigration services' permit for an employed person and the Finnish Employment and Economic Development Offices' start-up permit for Innovative Entrepreneurs. These programs aim to encourage international students to stay in Finland after graduation, and to contribute to the country's economic growth. In 2023, it is likely that the employment situation of international students will move towards a positive edge, given the country's growing economy and high demand for skilled workers in various sectors. By 2023, comprehensive modification of the Integration Act will hasten integration and employment of immigrants in Finland (Employment, 2023). The complete overhaul of the Act Promoting Immigrant Integration (Integration Act) promotes immigrant integration and employment by providing early-stage integration services. It also aims to promote equality, well-being, and healthy inter-group relations. The reform will go into effect on January 1, 2025. The reform will give municipalities more responsibility for encouraging integration. Services promoting integration will be organized in the future as part of a new municipal integration program and services provided by municipalities, wellbeing service counties, and the Finnish Social Insurance Institution (Kela), as well as activities of organizations, associations, or communities.

The new Integration Act is linked to other key changes of Government (2019-2023), such as the transfer of employment and economic development services to municipalities in 2025 (TE Services Reform 2024). It will be easier to provide and integrate various services because municipalities will be responsible for both services connected to integration, promotion and jobs and skills development. However, the job market may also become more competitive, as more students from universities will be in the market to seek job opportunities in the country. But with change of government in Finland, there are rumours related to immigrants as well which is also pressuring international students in so many ways.

7 The recommendations provided by respondents offer valuable insights and suggestions for improvement.

- First and foremost is that the education system must prioritize language education for new students to improve their chances of employment.
- Furthermore, the courses should be longer and more intensive; the study plan should be designed so that students graduate with at least B1-level proficiency in the Finnish language.
- Additionally, students in the study groups should have comparable proficiency in the Finnish language; proficiency gaps do not promote growth.
- Moreover, there should be a wider variety of study materials and increased teacher involvement in Finnish language classes.
- Equally important to prepare students for working life in Finnish enterprises, the courses should incorporate corporate language in addition to common vocabulary.
- In addition to that, more courses should be offered with non-Native Finnish instructors; they can explain Finnish grammar rules more clearly.
- The use of spoken language in daily life should be emphasized.

- Likewise establish a Finnish language "internship" program where students can apply the language skills they learn in class in a variety of businesses while using the vocabulary specific to their field of study.
- Encourage Finnish businesses to partner with educational institutions in developing the best possible future workforce by enabling language practice on the premises of the businesses.
- Additionally, prioritize and actively seek in-person interactions as they offer a richer and more dynamic learning experience compared to relying solely on books.
- Subsequently, include Finnish language classes up until the end of the program.
- Ultimately, providing students with additional opportunities to engage in writing, reading, and presenting, fostering a more comprehensive development of their communication skills and overall academic proficiency.

Recommendations to new international students:

- Engage in frequent communication with Finns or with those taking Finnish language classes.
- Speak as much as you can, even when you make mistakes.
- Pay close attention to Finnish language usage.
- Read a ton, from the news to business study books in Finnish, and broaden your vocabulary where it is needed.
- Give speaking more attention than writing.
- Additionally, it is recommended to opt for a personal tutor for focused attention and simultaneously engage in group lessons to foster a collaborative learning environment.
- Avoid burning out.

- Find a Finnish acquaintance. Enroll in Finnish courses. Converse in Finnish with others.
- Do not give in to embarrassment by switching to English. Put everything of yourself into it.
- Establish or join a group and engage in daily chat.
- Do not wait to begin learning; begin as soon as you arrive in Finland.
- Use the language and ask others to correct you without feeling embarrassed.

8 Results & Conclusion

Finland attracts numerous international students each year, with the goal of nurturing a future workforce. While some students leave after completing their degrees, others who wish to stay face barriers like language difficulties and limited job prospects. This poses a loss to Finland's labor market, necessitating government initiatives to support these individuals, including language programs and development opportunities. Discrimination is also a concern in job applications, where Finnish-named applicants often receive preference. To address this, local awareness programs, support from educational institutions for job searching and career development, and internship opportunities for international students could be beneficial. Some of the respondents to the questionnaire commented on the discrimination factor as well. According to YLE, "at time of job applications, this occurs at the grassroots level in Finland, in low-wage employment," explains Akhlaq Ahmad, a researcher at Helsinki University (Ahmad, 2021). If a worker with a Finnish name is available, they will probably get the job. International students' employment is completely dependent on Finnish language skills, which could be discouraging to some foreign applicants.

The importance of language skills for international students in a foreign country, particularly in Finland, suggests that organizations should plan for long-term language learning scenarios to make recruitment of international students more feasible. These scenarios also encourage to provide opportunities for English speakers to learn the national language and highlights the benefits of improving Finnish language skills, seeking

mentorship, and building a professional network. Language classes and cultural immersion are recommended, along with reaching out to local companies and showcasing unique skills and international experiences to enhance employment prospects. The research aims to provide recommendations for international students and Finnish educational institutions to implement language programs within study courses. Additionally, it seeks to convey a message to the government to reform the recruitment process in organizations, facilitating the integration of international students into the Finnish job market. These findings have potential benefits for international students, Finnish educational institutions, government agencies assisting international students, and Finnish organizations interested in revising their hiring procedures for immigrants to enhance their skills and competencies for future employment.

The Finnish government does not provide financial aid to international students while they are in school, and non-EU nationals are required to pay tuition. Numerous international students must work in addition to their studies. The study's participants had a range of employment situations: 50% were in paid employment, 19% were unemployed, and the remaining participants were looking for work. According to the statistics acquired, the average job search lasts more than six months, but it is also possible to land a position within 6 months of the search's beginning. The majority of those in the labor force, according to the study's findings, were employed in fields that required education and in which a degree or other credentials were advantageous. Four persons held jobs in occupations that did not require a degree. The remaining respondents had jobs in a variety of fields that were unconnected to their education or even required professional abilities.

The mismatch between educational requirements and job duties may have a negative effect on job satisfaction. The study found that, aside from those respondents who desired to switch jobs or positions, ratings of job satisfaction and unhappiness were on a par, at roughly 31–32 percent each. This number indicates very low possibilities of employment and does not demonstrate employment success. The research sought to identify potential barriers that can arise in the course of the job seeking process. In response to an open-ended question about the challenges they encountered when looking for work in Finland, the respondents were asked to relate their experiences. Lack of Finnish language proficiency is the biggest barrier, as stated by 25 out of 32 respondents. The second major

issue for international students and graduates seeking employment was a lack of prior work experience. Finnish businesses value experience acquired locally and, even at the entry level, demand a certain amount of experience in a related field.

Racism and discrimination are two other significant issues that many foreign job seekers encounter. Even though Finns have a similar set of talents to those of a foreign applicant, this hurdle was brought up in the context of giving preference to hiring predominantly native Finns for professional positions. One of the reasons an international applicant would be rejected was because of their proficiency in Finnish and their immigration status; some respondents even claimed that not being a Finn could lower their chances of getting recruited (Ahmad, *An Experimental Investigation of Ethnic Discrimination in the Finnish Labor Market*, 2019). Many of the respondents saw it as a challenge when employers did not react to their job applications. Theoretically, it is not a barrier but rather the result of another obstacle, which may even not meet the needs of the organization. This issue points to a barrier that requires foreign professionals to work harder than native professionals to get noticed and invited to an interview. One factor that can lessen opportunities for work in Finland is a lack of familiarity with local norms and behavioral difficulties.

The one of objectives of the study was to pinpoint potential obstacle that might appear during the job search process. The respondents were invited to share their experiences in answer to a survey in which they discussed difficulties they ran into when looking for job in Finland. The primary obstacle reported by 35 out of 58 respondents is a deficiency in Finnish language proficiency. Additionally, concerns are raised about the limited availability of English-speaking job opportunities in Finland. Respondents emphasized that only a small portion of tasks within companies, particularly multinational corporations, is conducted in English instead of Finnish. The survey participants also observed that, despite an English headline in job advertisements, the content within the body is often in Finnish, diminishing the understanding for potential foreign applicants. Another notable concern is the restricted networking opportunities for foreigners. Some job postings are not even made available to the public and are only available to a select few. Networking is crucial not only for obtaining feedback on the company's reputation but also for gaining insights into unfamiliar tasks and disseminating information about job openings. Starting internships in their specific fields was difficult for many individuals because a significant number of

positions were unpaid. The lack of essential government funding to cover basic living expenses worsened the situation. As a result, numerous international students and graduates had to take low-skilled jobs to support themselves and prevent rejection from sought-after positions.

8.1 Self Assessment

In conclusion, the text highlights the challenges that international students face in the Finnish job market due to the language barrier. The narrative emphasizes the difficulties that international students encounter in the Finnish job marketplace because of language prejudice. While some students with technical expertise and fluency in Finnish have found work, others with weak language skills or academic credentials are having difficulty finding relevant employment. Many students are doing cleaning jobs as they do not have the Finnish language skills to work in white-collar jobs such as customer services, marketing, or any business-related field. The analysis also emphasizes the necessity of informal networks in gaining job prospects, while company and university language help is limited.

The research highlights a significant issue in the context of employability and the educational system in Finland. The country's educational institutions attract a substantial number of foreign students with the goal of equipping them with high-level professional skills. However, there seems to be a gap in focusing on providing these international students with adequate Finnish language proficiency, which is crucial for success in the Finnish labor market. The research reveals that the inability to effectively apply one's professional skills in a foreign language, particularly Finnish, can diminish the value of education and hinder employment prospects.

The study's findings underscore the importance of acquiring Finnish language skills for future employment opportunities in Finland. The research demonstrates a clear connection between developing proficiency in the Finnish language and job satisfaction. This suggests that individuals who can communicate effectively in Finnish are more likely to experience greater job satisfaction due to their increased ability to contribute meaningfully within the workplace. The research outcomes offer valuable insights for foreign students who are planning to reside in Finland. It further suggests that these students should proactively

invest efforts into learning the Finnish language from the outset of their stay, as this can significantly enhance their chances of securing successful employment in the country.

The research findings have potential implications for recruitment agencies and employers. It indicates that the research findings have important consequences for two specific groups: recruitment agencies and employers. There could be advantages in establishing workplaces that either mandate English proficiency or provide a sufficient level of Finnish language skills. This approach aims to close the gap between the expertise of foreign professionals and the language criteria set by the Finnish labor market. The study's insights could guide students, employers, and recruitment agencies toward better strategies for navigating the Finnish job market and fostering a more productive and harmonious work environment. The findings highly indicate a need for improved language support for international students entering the Finnish job sector, which could improve their career prospects and integration into Finnish the workplace.

In conclusion, the research successfully achieved its objectives by both theoretical and empirical means, demonstrating the considerable challenges faced by international students and graduates. The primary issue identified was the lack of proficiency in the Finnish language, which emerged as a common barrier. Additionally, it was revealed that these obstacles resulted in a decline in work motivation for international students and graduates. Furthermore, their professional advancement was hindered due to the deficiency in Finnish language skills. This research is noteworthy for its effective exploration of the problems arising from global mobility, internationalization, and multiculturalism, indicating the necessity for modifications in both the educational system and corporate culture. The findings indicate a notable gap in the Finnish labor market, specifically in the effective integration of international professionals. The most significant improvements must be directed towards enhancing Finnish language instruction and transforming the prevailing corporate culture to accommodate diverse talents.

The selection of this topic was rooted in the author's personal employment experiences. By investigating trends in Finnish employment and comparing their own encounters with broader perspectives, the author sought to highlight the universality of these challenges. This research serves as a call to action, urging institutions and educational bodies to recognize the imperative for change. Through a comprehensive understanding of these

issues, the groundwork is laid for the implementation of more inclusive policies, fostering an environment where international professionals can thrive.

The thesis emphasizes the importance of its research findings, tackles the challenges faced by international students and graduates, and advocates for swift adjustments to educational and corporate practices to address these issues within a rapidly changing global environment. The goal is to communicate the wider implications of the research and underscore its relevance in a broader context.

8.2 Unlocking Worldviews: The Power of Open Dialogues with International Students

In today's interconnected world, the opportunity to engage in open and meaningful discussions with international students has become more accessible and important than ever. As our planet grows smaller through advancements in technology and increased global mobility, the need to bridge cultural gaps and foster understanding among diverse communities has become a pressing concern. Open discussions with international students offer a unique window into the rich tapestry of global perspectives, allowing us to explore and appreciate the diverse cultures, traditions, and worldviews that shape our global society. These interactions not only promote cross-cultural awareness but also contribute to personal growth, empathy, and the development of well-rounded global citizens. In this exploration, we will delve into the significance of open discussions with international students, the benefits they offer, and the techniques for facilitating constructive and inclusive dialogues in an increasingly interconnected world.

Finland's top-notch educational system can be used to prepare the workforce of the future. The lack of collaboration between student activities, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and job offices has hindered effective coordination in organizing career fairs or corporate networking events. In many cases, universities fail to adequately market these events, limiting their reach and awareness among potential participants. More employees from outside the country are required to bridge the skills gap in Finland as several sectors of the economy will experience a severe shortage of competent personnel. More graduates will be employed and pay taxes as international students graduate and more opportunities are

generated by opening up the employment market to them. The employment office, higher education institutions, and international students looking for employment prospects after graduation have all been working on various efforts in this respect.

Integration is a two-way process, and immigrants are expected to assimilate the language and cultural norms of the host nation. In a similar vein, the culture and host nation must reciprocate and foster acceptance of international students. In the beginning of 1990, immigration was still a rather novel concept in Finland. Recent years have seen an increase in work-based immigration to Finland, as skilled professionals, particularly in the sector of ICT, or Information and Communication Technology, came to work here. Professionals are willing to relocate since the nation offers a great atmosphere for raising a family.

Finland has a high quality of living, unspoiled natural beauty, excellent public services, and a population that is generally well educated, making it more of a non-aligned and neutral nation. However, it is believed that immigration is unavoidable for the nation given the shifting demographics, an ageing population, and the anticipated skilled labor deficit. Integration is crucial for the success of immigration, as has been argued in this report. In other words, a high percentage of immigrants are successful in integrating into their new nation, picking up the language, and locating employment. In this research, the significance of employment has also been covered, as it is crucial to immigrants' and international students' efforts to integrate.

On the other hand, a lack of integration can cause serious issues for immigrants, international students, and the host nation. Without decent employment and the ability to communicate in the local language, immigrants are vulnerable to exploitation in low-skilled or unskilled jobs and may find it difficult to adjust to their new lives. As a result, individuals are often obliged to work for the lowest pay and lose their potential as they advance in education. Due to the constrained opportunities and lower acceptance in the larger society, this may also result in a sense of alienation and isolation. Different communities like PSA Finland are organizing gatherings and seminars offering support advice and mentoring to the new entrants. Sharing their own inspiring journeys (Ahmed, 2023).

The research aims to help immigrants in Finland access the training necessary to succeed in the Finnish job market. The study finds that international students and immigrants require support from educational institutions and employment policies to meet their training and career guidance needs. To ensure fair competition with local workers, language training programs need to be well-designed and implemented alongside the regular study curriculum. Often, language instruction is overlooked in university programs. The proposal suggests introducing Finnish language courses for all international students at the beginning of their degree programs and organizing business networking events to connect foreign students with multinational corporations.

8.3 Main Findings

The main conclusions of this study indicate that the vast majority of international students see the chance to study in Finland as a method to advance their professional lives. After completion, the majority of students are eager to find employment in Finland, though few are contemplating entrepreneurship as a career. The integration of students from foreign backgrounds into the local job market is not a one-sided effort but rather a dynamic process where students must contend with competitive factors, such as academic qualifications and language proficiency, to successfully navigate and establish themselves in the local job market.

Above all, universities should add language courses with course work so that students can attain language skills by the time of applying for employment. On other hand, society must become more welcoming and accepting of international students. This can be done by offering cultural competence training to employers, managers, and academic staff at higher education institutions. There are now many stereotypes about international students, such as the idea that because their education is paid for by tax payers, they are a burden. However, the potential contributions of international students to the workforce, calls for more attention to this matter in public discussions, and advocates for a shift in employers' perspectives to embrace diversity in the workplace.

8.4 Future directions

To overcome language challenges, international students can make their resumes in a way that highlights their transferable skills and seek feedback from mentors or career counsellors.

It is advised to conduct research on how to enhance Finland's career assistance systems for international students and job mobility in the future. This can be achieved by taking into account institutions of higher learning, employers, the business community, and those in charge of making policies. The transition of international students from their academic careers to their working lives could be explored in this field of inquiry.

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[EDIT.org - online editor](https://www.edit.org/)

Board Used:

Miro

Canva

10 Appendices

10.1 Interview Questions:

1. What is your home country and age?
2. Is your job related to field of study?
3. How long did it take you to get a job after graduating?
4. What were the hurdles you faced during your employment search?
5. What was the extent of language load during your period of study?
6. Have you felt isolated from the culture due to your limited language skills?
7. How has the language barrier impacted your job opportunities in Finland?
8. What suggestions do you have for improving the language support for foreign students in the Finnish job market? (Open-ended question)
9. How often do you use Finnish in your current job?
10. Have you encountered any language-related discrimination in the Finnish job market?
11. Describe your job-searching experiences!
12. Do you have any more thoughts or advice for the researcher on the integration of foreign graduates?

10.2 Interview questions for SOL:

1. Are there some separate processes for recruiting international students as compared to the Finnish students?
2. In recruitment process, The Finnish language skills comes first before professional background and competences.
3. Finland needs workforce but lack in Finnish language skill, international student cannot apply for any Finnish firm. Is the government making reforms in that scenario?

4. International students can apply for job and learn Finnish language during the job. Is SOL is looking into this scenario to retain international students?
5. Does your company sponsor work visas for international students?
6. Are there any specific requirements for international students that differ from domestic applicants?
7. Are there any language requirements for the job?
8. Does the company have experience hiring international students, and what has been their experience with the process?
9. Are there any resources available to help international students transition to a new work environment?
10. Are there any cultural differences or nuances that international students should be aware of when working in your company?
11. Are there any opportunities for international students to participate in training or professional development programs?

10.3 Survey Questions

Survey: International Students in Finland facing language barriers for employment search

The following survey is included in Master's degree thesis for fulfillment of Master's degree requirements. The thesis writer can be approached at the following email address for detailed queries.

..

1

Gender?

- Women
- Men
- Unknown
- Prefer not to say

2

What is your age group?

20-25

25-35

35-45

45-55

3

Your home country in which region ?

EU

Non-EU

4

Are you a full time degree student in an English degree program?

Yes

No

5

How often do you face difficulties in communicating with potential employers due to the language barrier? (Select one)

- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

6

How well do you understand the job requirements and the job application process in Finland? (Select one)

- Extremely well
- Somewhat not well
- Very Well
- Not at all

7

Have you felt isolated or excluded from the workplace culture due to your limited language skills? (Select one)

- No
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Very often

8

1. What was the language load during studies?



9

How has the language barrier impacted your job opportunities in Finland? (Select one)

- Positively
- No Impact
- Negatively

10

How often do you use Finnish in your current job?

- Daily
- Rarely
- Never
- Occasionaly

11

How important do you think it is for you to speak Finnish fluently to succeed in the Finnish job market?

- Somewhat important
- Extremely important
- Somewhat not important
- Very Important

12

Have you encountered any language-related discrimination in the Finnish job market?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

13

How long have you been looking for a job during studies and after graduation?

- 0-6 months
- 1 to 2 years
- 2 to 5 years
- Others

14

How satisfied are you with the language support provided by your employer or university?

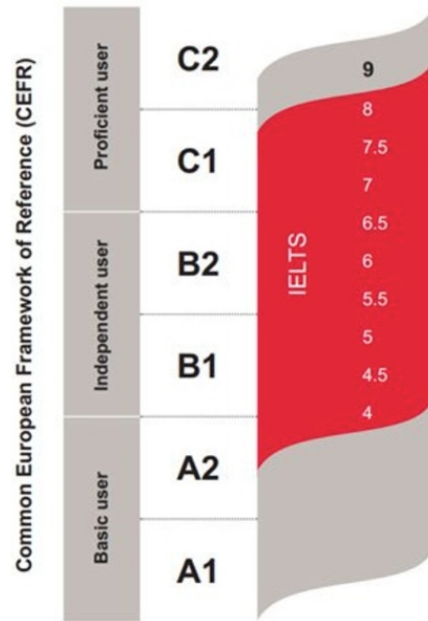
- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not Satisfied at all
- Not at all

15

What is your job status?

- Full-time and permanent employment
- Full-time and fixed term employment
- Part-time, fixed term employment
- Part-time but permanent employment
- Unemployed

17. How would you rate your Finnish language level when you started your first job in Finland?



- A1-A2 (Basic user)
- B1-B2 (Independent user)
- C1-C2 (Proficient user)
- No knowledge at all or English was sufficient for job

Your education background before coming to Finland?

- Master
- PhD
- Bachelor
- Intermediate

18

Which of the following category describes your job nature

- Blue-collar job: Requiring physical or manual labour
- White-collar job: no physical or manual labor

19

What were the hurdles you faced during employment search?

20

Are you doing job in your area of expertise?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

What suggestions do you have for improving the language support for foreign students in the Finnish job market? (Open-ended question)

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