

UNIVERSITIES AS EXPORTERS OF FINNISH EDUCATION

Experts' perspectives

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This master's thesis investigated universities as exporters of Finnish education from the perspectives of experts. The field of Finnish education export has developed from internationalisation of education in the global world, in which a shift from a welfare society towards a competitive state has evolved. In this study, education export was defined as a knowledge-based business funded by a foreign agent.

This study concluded Finnish universities as public, non-profit institutions, which exported products of education and educational knowledge that were traditionally based on equality and free of charge. The research was interested in how Finnish universities in cooperation with other agents exported Finnish education as a profitable business. In this respect, the thesis investigated how experts experienced the cooperation, given the competitive environment, by analysing opportunities, challenges, and problems in the field. Finally, Finnish education export was conceptualised from a theory-driven approach through cultural, social, economic, and symbolic capital.

This qualitative research consisted of semi-structured interviews with experts of Finnish education export at four universities in Finland. The interviews were conducted during November and December in 2020, and the data was analysed with a qualitative thematic analysis.

The results indicated that cooperation in Finnish education export was arranged in local, regional, and national levels both as (1) commercial profit-oriented business in joint marketing and implementations, trade fair trips, and joint companies, and (2) sharing of good practices and information in networks. Even though cooperation among national education exporters was seen important, limited resources resulted in lack of cooperative arrangements. Moderately perceived, national competition between agents was challenged by international customers.

Opportunities of cooperation were increased through visibility, reputation, and risk management. High price level, bureaucratic regulations, and the dual model of the Finnish HEIs set challenges for cooperation. In Finnish education export, the cultural capital of Finnish educational knowledge and Finnishness served as the export product, which was exchanged with the economic capital of the customer. At the same time, the social capital of all parties was increased. Finnish education as an institution was seen as symbolic capital.

In the thesis research, the literature and theory of education export are discussed first. Secondly, the methodology and the data of the research are introduced. Thirdly, the data collection is analysed. After that, the findings along with their implications and comparison to previous studies are critically discussed. Lastly, the main results of the study are introduced.

Key words *International Education, Education Export, Transnational Education, Cross-border Education, Globalisation, Internationalisation of Higher Education*

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List of Abbreviations

EDUFI – the Finnish National Agency for Education

EEA – the European Economic Area

EU – the European Union

HEI – Higher Education Institution

IEA – the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement

OECD – the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PISA – the Programme for International Student Assessment

MEAE – the Ministry of Employment and Economy

MFA – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland

MOEC – the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland

UN – the United Nations

1. INTRODUCTION

Education embodies elements of the surrounding communities, which are built and developed in cooperation with the economies in the world. In today's global, capitalist economy, education as a capital has captured an enormous position as an export product, which is seen in the industry of the education export. Accordingly, the importance and demand of education has globally been on secure economic boom, which aside of the increased international cooperation can be seen in investments made in expertise-based business activities, often referred as education export. Education branding and marketing of the educational systems has awakened interest within the national governments around the globe in investing in education export (Schatz, Popovic, & Dervin, 2015). Increasingly, this has become a current issue also in the Finnish education policy since the early 2000s. In 2019, education export was chosen as one of the main goals of Prime Minister Marin's Government Programme in Finland, and the export volumes were expected to increase significantly in the future (Finnish Government, 2019). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on education export and expectations regarding export volumes.

This thesis research analyses education export as a part of the Finnish education policy. As a nation, Finland is globally known from its educational equality, great learning results, highly educated teachers, and well-working administration, that supports education and learning. The main reason for this global interest towards the Finnish education system can be found in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's [OECD] Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA] results, that were released for the first time in 2000. Subsequently, the opportunities of the Finnish education system have attracted interest throughout the world. In consequence, legal obstacles were removed, and Finnish organisations were encouraged to discover the market potential based on the nation's education system and its success factors. Since international level solutions have become a source of business, Finland has been considered to have potential in becoming a successful player in the education export scene globally (MOEC, 2021b).

As an essential part of the Finnish welfare state, equality of education has been an important value for the Finns. Internationally observed, this is a unique promise. By using education as the key, Finland has economically and socially developed from a remote agrarian society in the 1950s to an affluent knowledge-based society of today (Sahlberg, 2007). In addition, the role of education has been crucial in building the Nordic welfare state that Finland has become (Rinne, 2010). Thus, the essential features of the Finnish

education system can be found in the equal educational opportunities and free basic education. In Finland, only the matriculation examination, which is a national examination based on the syllabus of the Finnish upper secondary school results, are ranked in public. Therefore, due to the lack of published ranking results of schools, the internal stratification in the education system in Finland is low compared to other countries (Rinne, 2010). Indeed, every Finnish person remembers hearing the expression “to be born Finnish is like hitting the jackpot”, which is rooted in the Finnish educational equality.

However, as stated by the Finnish National Agency for Education [EDUFI] (2020), in today's globalised world, the dynamism of a nation requires abilities to succeed as international knowledge's, and innovations' leading country in its strong areas. The shift from the welfare state to the competition state (Kettunen et al., 2012) can be seen from the history timeline of the Finnish education policy. The competition state is driven by the ideas of neoliberalism, whereupon the market is increasingly determining the most important priorities of education. The construction of a national competitiveness community has shaped the education system and created conditions and incentives for a competitive differentiation also between universities in Finland (Kettunen et al., 2012). As a result, in today's competitive society, education must increasingly support the competitiveness of an innovation-based society in international markets. As a part of this far-reaching shift, the education export industry has developed (Silvennoinen et al., 2016).

A central key of success is in the abilities to seize the opportunities of change, and to provide solutions for them, which, according to the EDUFI (2020), can be achieved with education export. In Finland, education export is a relatively new and rapidly growing industry. It connects the fields of education and economics into an export sector. According to Jaakkola (2017), the motives behind education export are often related to commercial benefits but they may also include demands of sharing good practices and making long-term impact in the field of education. Thus, these both sides of education export cooperation benefit from its practices also non-commercially; the educational and cultural expertise of both parties have a chance to develop throughout the export and import processes (Jaakkola, 2017).

Even though research on the Finnish education export is on the rise, more studies of the gap between the higher education and the governmental policy, especially from the perspectives of the experts and of the cooperative arrangements in the Finnish education export, are needed. The implementation of education export and related policies, especially from the experiences of experts working in the field, is an important and

interesting issue worth investigating. In the EDUFI's recent report about education export in Finland, Juusola and Nokkala (2019) mention, precisely, the lack of research about the administrative staff's experiences of education export in Finland. This confirms the importance to study the phenomenon from the perspectives of experts, who are the ones implementing and experiencing the cooperative arrangements in the field. By listening to them, the application of education export in practice and the related challenges, can be better understood and further developed. This thesis aims to contribute to a more enhanced understanding of the phenomenon of the Finnish education export at universities, by analysing the current situation with the valuable views of the experts of the field.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: EDUCATION EXPORT AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

In the literature review, education export and its development are presented based on the previous knowledge and research conducted on the topic. The literature review is divided into two main parts. The first part aims to outline the diverse definitions of education export through globalisation and internationalisation of education. The second part approaches the field of education export in Finland from the development of the national strategy, through discussing the present, and focusing on education export at the Finnish HEIs.

2.1. Outlining the Diverse Definitions of Education Export through Globalisation and Internationalisation of Education

Globalisation has led to the constantly expanding internationalisation of education (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Schatz et al., 2015). Since the 1960s, education policies have been observed, and transnational educational borrowing has been developed with internationally comparable information, provided by supranational organisations, such as the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement [IEA], and the OECD (Wiseman & Baker, 2005). Consequently, competition between different global agents has increased (Wiseman & Baker, 2005). At the same time, internationalisation has provided many new educational and career opportunities around the world for students, teachers, and researchers (Schatz, 2015). Accordingly, in an international context, in higher education, an institution's funding is usually dependent

on its reputation. However, as stated in Seuri and Vartiainen (2018), budgets for higher education in Finland are regulated through core funding and result-based funding. Consequently, increasing emphasis on result-oriented funding has increased competition and need to perform in Finland, too (Seuri & Vartiainen, 2018). Simultaneously, international higher education rankings have increased reputation-based competition. Therefore, among other organisations, educational institutions have begun to compete against each other both on the national and international level. Productized cross-border education has been recognized as a practice capable of bringing wealth both to educational institutions and national economies (Schatz, 2015).

In addition to globalisation and the internationalisation of the HEIs, the extension of the multilateral trading system to the service sector and the expansion of international student mobility worldwide have resulted in the rise and growth of education export (Juusola & Nokkala, 2019). According to Schatz (2016) and Nokkala (2007), education export as an industry is a result of the constantly expanding internationalisation of education. More specifically, as stated by Knight (2016) and Schatz (2016), education export is a form of international mobility based on the markets, in which products, people, knowledge and/or services move over national borders. It is a growing business field with products of various education and teaching services (Knight, 2016; Schatz, 2016). Furthermore, as Lindberg (2011) suggests, the educational service must occur in an international setting and be subject to a charge, to be called as education export. Siikanen (2014) separates the phenomenon further into export of educational capability, which consists of export of expert services, and into education export, which covers the actions benefitting as tuition fees in return.

According to the EDUFI (2020a), the most significant sector in education export financially, and on a global scale, is the marketing of education and updating education which leads to a degree awarded by a HEI. In contrast to the more traditional non-profit forms of academic internationalisation, education export is a new field of practice in numerous universities (Lönqvist, Laihonen, Cai, & Hasanen, 2018). In that sense, education export refers to, for instance, traditional individual-based mobility, bilateral institutional agreements, international programmes, and institutional and disciplinary networks (Cai, Hölttä, & Kivistö, 2012). Other significant sectors in education export are the development services and the products connected to schools, and a variety of expertise development programmes or evaluation services connected to learning (EDUFI, 2020a).

According to Juusola and Nokkala (2019), together with Cai et al. (2012), education export as a concept has been used since the 1980s for describing potential commercial opportunities for HEIs and other national educational organisations. In practice, the aim of exporting education has been in providing training services and selling software for pedagogical improvement. However, the contents of education export differ depending on the country, and no precise or universal definition of it has yet been made (Juusola & Nokkala, 2019; Cai, Hölttä, & Kivistö, 2012).

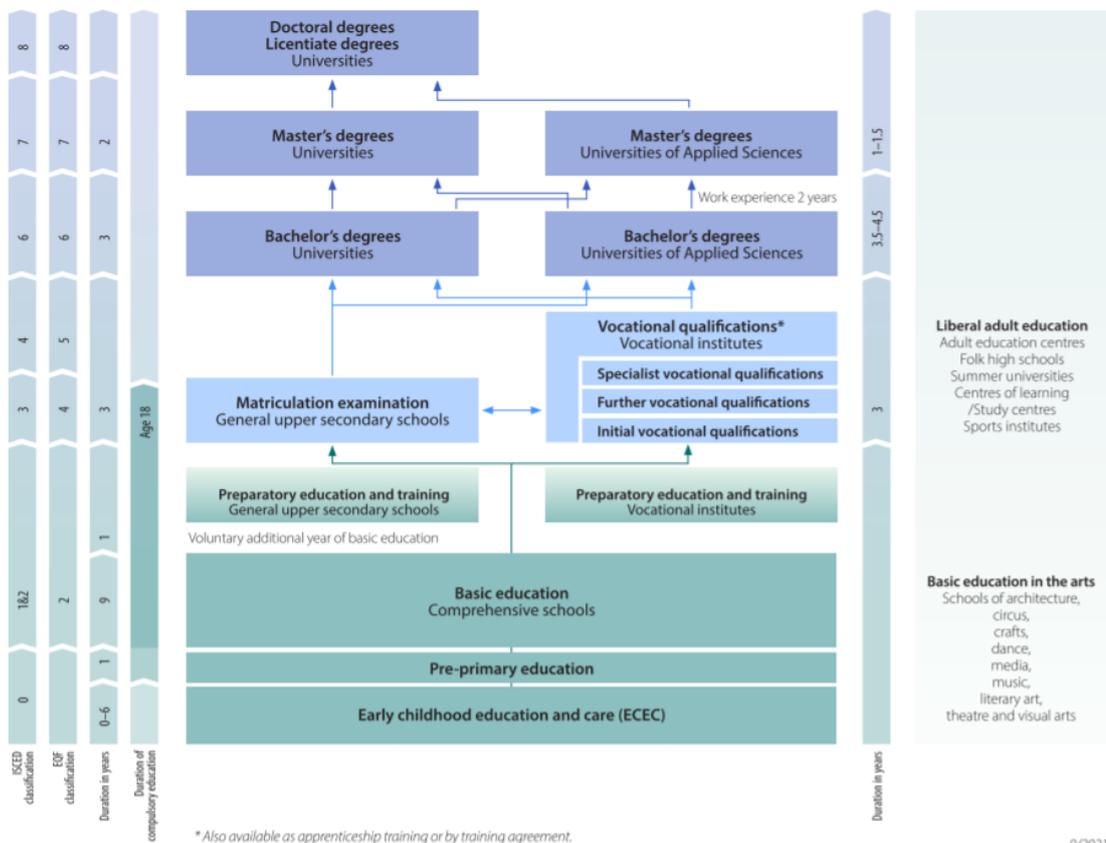
Therefore, as stated by Schatz (2015), depending on the perspective, many kinds of conscious and unconscious education-related distributions could be examined as education export. Traditionally, the dominating agents in the field, both in terms of scale and wealth, have been England, Australia, and the USA. These countries have had long-term experiences with advertised educational systems already since the era of colonisation. Exporting their educational ideas and systems abroad has influenced the higher education sector globally, and the income has mostly been gained through tuition fees from international students (Schatz, 2015). Globally examined, the education export market has traditionally been highly competitive, precisely among native English-speaking countries (Carrington, Meek, & Wood, 2007).

Even though the traditions around education export have already been developing for decades, the phenomenon is still constantly growing (Cai et al., 2012). Big projects in the field are often implemented through the international financial key institutions, including the World Bank, regional development banks, the United Nations [UN], and the European Union [EU] (EDUFI, 2020b).

2.2. Education Export in Finland

In the second part of the literature review, the education export in Finland is discussed in more depth. As the focus of this thesis is specifically on the Finnish education export, to deepen the understanding of the topic, the chapter is further divided into five sub parts. Hence, education export in Finland is considered from the perspectives of the national strategy development, the industry's current state in Finland, the HEIs, Bourdieu's field theory, and lastly, from the aspects of ethics concerning exporting Finnish education.

EDUCATION SYSTEM IN FINLAND



9/2021

Figure 1: Overview of the Finnish education system (MOEC, 2021a)

2.2.1. Development of National Strategy

The starting point of the Finnish education export can be dated to the beginning of the 21st century when the successful PISA results put the Finnish education on the world map, and other nations got interested in Finland and its success factors behind the education system. Thus, year 2008 is acknowledged as a turning point in the history of the Finnish education export. At the time, the constitutional Universities Act (Yliopistolaki 24.7.2009/558), took place, whereupon market-orientation and neoliberal values increasingly started to shape policymaking in the field of education in Finland, too (Välilmaa, Aittola, & Ursin, 2014).

As a result of the occasions in the beginning of the 21st century, a construction of an official national brand of Finland started in 2008 (Schatz, 2016). A national brand aimed to define and promote what differentiates one nation from another, which, according to Moilanen and Rainisto (2009), was an advantage in the competitive setting between countries and their shared markets. As stated in Schatz (2015), the national brand

building was an essential point for the education export development in Finland, because as a significant part of it, 'Education Export'—working group was set by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MFA] and the Ministry of Education and Culture [MOEC] in 2009. Supposedly, Finland's national brand was strongly tied with the image of a successful education system. The aim of the working group was to create the first education export policy and strategy for Finland (Schatz, 2015). As a result, in 2010, the EDUFI published the first national strategic guideline for the Finnish education export, which created a basis for Finnish education export market internationally (Schatz, 2015).

As a part of Finland's education export development, two umbrella organisations were founded. As stated in Cai, Hölttä, and Lindholm (2012), 'Future Learning Finland' was created under the Finnish trade promotion organisation's [Finpro] coordination in 2010. This growth programme was instructed by the MOEC and the Ministry of Employment and Economy [MEAE] to connect Finnish HEIs with the Finnish private sector, embassies, and external consulting agencies (Cai, Hölttä, & Lindholm, 2012; Schatz, 2016). Later, based on the 2011 government programme, 'Team Finland' was established to operate as a network to combine all public internationalisation services and offer businesses a service chain to help along the whole internationalisation process (Team Finland, 2020).

In 2013, a second working group on education export was formed, which recommended the government to establish tuition fees for students who arrived in Finland from outside the EU and the European Economic Area [EEA] (Schatz, 2016). In the same year, a company called 'Finland University' was founded to take responsibility of the marketing and selling abroad the education services of three member universities: University of Turku, the Eastern University, and Tampere University. Later, also Åbo Akademi University joined the company as a shareholder. Due to the company, universities' personnel could focus their resources to work more on the academics and the delivery of the international programmes, as the commercial practices and organising of the education export were now delegated to its own administrative personnel (Lönqvist et al., 2018.)

The institutionalisation of education export was continued throughout the decade. In 2015, the first 'Education Export Roadmap' was issued by the MOEC, to indicate the development of Finnish education export in 2016–2019 (MOEC, 2019). The idea behind the publication was to give guidelines for education export experts and entrepreneurs to develop themselves as exporters of education, and to support the broader goals of the government programme of growing the industry in Finland (MOEC, 2019). In addition, the strategic guideline introduced the present situation in the Finnish education export,

along with focus on the important topics concerning the measure of support. Additionally, policy lines and support services to growing education export were discussed in the document (EDUFI, 2020b).

The 'Education Export Roadmap' influenced the national education export programmes. In consequence, the EDUFI (2020b) replaced the 'Future Learning Finland' with a programme called 'Education Finland', which since then has helped to promote the Finnish education export businesses' internationalisation by strengthening the cooperation between the public and the private sector in education and accelerating the growth of education export in Finland. The programme is directed to companies, HEIs, education organisers and communities, which all share the aim of growing as education exporters. The number of the members more than doubled between the years 2015–2020. The important role of the 'Education Finland' is to boost the cooperation within the different agents in the field (EDUFI, 2020b).

Also, another essential frame of reference for organisations' education export opportunities is always set by the national legislation. Additionally, the Finnish higher education system has its own legislations set by the Finnish government. According to Välimaa et al. (2014), to better adapt to global changes, the Finnish government started to initiate reforms in the Finnish higher education system and its structures starting from the mid-2000s. In practice, as stated by Välimaa et al. (2014), this meant "diversifying the funding base of universities, providing better opportunities to compete for international research funding, increasing cooperation with foreign world-class universities, and ensuring the quality and effectiveness of universities' research and teaching" (p. 46). In consequence, the Universities Act, set by the Ministry of Justice of Finland (2009), was stipulated in the process of reforming Finnish higher education (Yliopistolaki 24.7.2009/558).

Due to the Universities Act (Yliopistolaki 24.7.2009/558), since 2009, universities were separated from the state budget, which enabled them to make contracts and function under private legislation as independent economic corporations (Välimaa et al., 2014). This gave universities an autonomous financial and administrative position (Ministry of Justice, 2009; Yliopistolaki 24.7.2009/558; Rinne, 2010). Further, decrees from 2010 to 2014 provided direction and framework for the legislation (Yliopistolaki 1172/2014; Yliopistolaki 125/2010), and in 2015, the internationalisation of education and research and the removal of obstacles to education export were prioritized (Suomi, 2015). In consequence, from the 2017–2018 academic year onward, tuition fees had to be

charged from all the students coming from outside the EU / EEA area to study in the foreign language degree programmes in HEIs in Finland (EDUFI, 2020a).

Over the last five years, new administrative organisations have been established and later reorganised into hybrids with an aim to better coordinate the education export industry in Finland. Based on the guidelines for promoting the internationalisation of higher education and research from 2017, the MOEC (2020) founded a network named 'Team Finland Knowledge'. Since 2018, its experts have aimed to attract international professionals of different fields to come to live and work in Finland and build connections for the Finnish education exporters. In their local areas, which currently are Singapore, Beijing, Delhi, Washington D.C., Buenos Aires, Pretoria, Abu Dhabi, and Moscow, they also support the goals of 'Talent Boost'. This governmental programme aims to bring together companies and top experts of various fields and to grow the reputation of Finland as being profitable and innovative place to live for both employees and employers (EDUFI, 2020b). In addition, as part of the 'Team Finland' –network in 2018, the former organisations 'Finpro' and 'Tekes' merged into 'Business Finland' (2020), which has since then aimed to finance innovations and provide internationalisation services along with promoting tourism and investments into Finland. The organisation employs 600 experts in 40 locations worldwide and 16 locations in Finland (Business Finland, 2020).

To intensify the cooperation and observe the actions in the field of Finnish education export, a group for coordinating multifunctional cooperation of ministries and other educational sector's agents was founded in March 2020 (EDUFI, 2020a). Later the same year, the EDUFI published the second 'Education Export Roadmap', which continued the first one's path by covering the years 2020–2023 and set the goal of the value of education export to grow in the Finnish economy to 1 billion euros by 2030. In the coming years, Finland aims to focus on promoting joint communication and activities between the 'Study in Finland' –function, the activities of the 'Talent Boost' –programme, and the 'Education Finland' –programme, to strengthen the cooperation and synergies between these actions (EDUFI, 2020b). However, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the global situation, and the effects of it have been reflected on the operations of many companies and organisations regarding education export by critically changing the operating environment and future of education export from the beginning of spring 2020. Even though the pandemic has challenged education export, it has also increased the interest in digital content and online training and consulting services (EDUFI, 2020b).

As can be noticed above, since the beginning of the Finnish education export development in the early the 2000s, the national strategy has been based on the shift from the welfare state to the competition state. The changes significantly reflect the way a competitive state operates in the world market and how it effects the field of education. According to Rinne (2010), the traditions behind the Finnish universities are built by uniformity within institutional structures, central administrative steering, free tuition, and strong equality principles. However, internationalisation of education is intertwined with the increasing emphasis on education export to boost the economic development of Finland (Nokkala, 2008). In conclusion, a significant shift from the welfare state to the competition state orienting towards market was manifested in the way how Finnish education policy started to embody in innovations and education export.

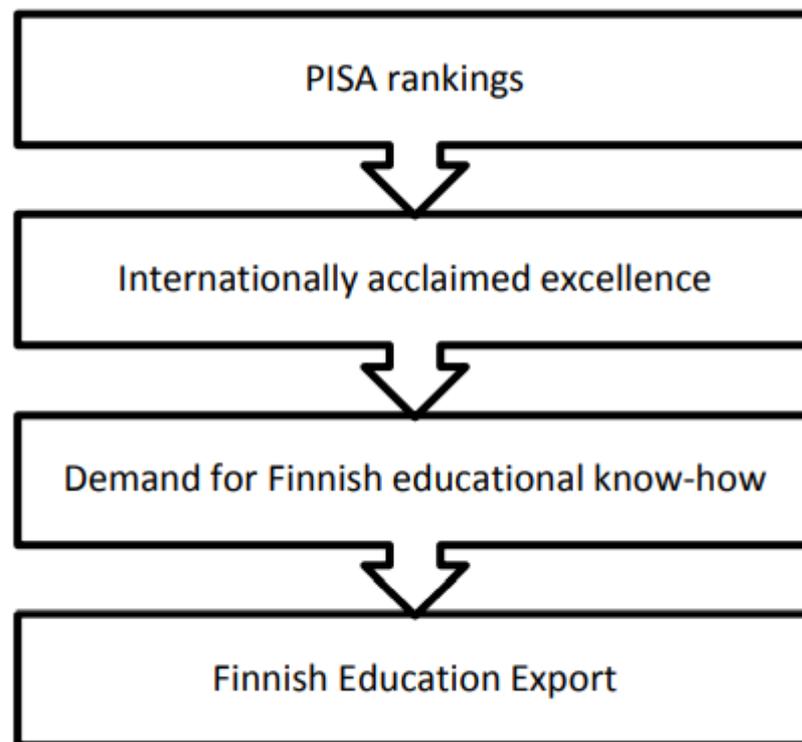


Figure 2: Emergence of education export in Finland (Schatz, 2016)

2.2.2. Finnish Education Export at Present

In the EDUFI's (2020) 'Education Export Roadmap in 2020–2023', the Finnish education export is defined simply as a knowledge-based business, and more thoroughly as

“business activities that are based on education, education system or transferring its expertise which are paid by a foreign agent” (p. 6). According to the EDUFI (2020), this was the established and accepted definition of Finnish education export in 2020. In the earlier years, the definition of Finnish education export was constantly undergoing change. Previously, for example, based on the EDUFI’s wide overview of Finnish education export in 2010–2019, education export is stated as a knowledge export, transnational, or cross-border education, and as a form of internationalisation that has a commercial dimension (Juusola & Nokkala, 2019). Whereas, Schatz (2015), who is known as a higher education researcher with extensive knowledge of Finnish education export, defines it as “an intentional business transaction concerning educational practices, services, and materials from one country to another” (p. 52). Moreover, the MOEC (2010) referred to education export as educational activities occurring in cooperative interaction with an international agent.

At present, the Finnish education export field provides services and products to all sectors of education, from early childhood education to higher education, and to life-long-learning and personnel training (EDUFI, 2020b). The export of Finnish educational systems covers education from preschool to higher education, however, even Finnish early childhood education has been internationally recognised and exported (MOEC, 2010). As reported by Schatz (2015), the common range of products within the Finnish education export includes educational visits, teacher training, and curriculum design offered by Finnish universities. However, other kinds of products such as digital learning solutions or Finnish design school furniture have also been sold (Schatz, 2015).

According to Schatz (2015), Finland only recently began exporting its education system. Before, the export had covered areas such as the traditional individual-based mobility, internationalisation based on bilateral institutional agreements, programme-based internationalisation, networking, and market-based internationalisation. Therefore, due to the short history of the field, traditions in education export in the Finnish context are relatively new, which gives the country an exceptional position in a global scale (Schatz, 2015). Relying on the OECD’s PISA results, the base of Finnish education export seems insecure, especially as the results have deteriorated in recent years. Thus, Finnish education is increasingly respected as an internationally competitive resource, which has affected how Finns themselves see their own educational system, too (Ministry of Education, 2009). Consequently, Finland began to promote education export related activities as part of an internationalisation process of education, with the aim of becoming a leading economy in the field of education (MOEC, 2010).

The prior research has noted how Finland, as a late adopter in the global education business market, has avoided coercive approach in its education export strategy. As stated by the EDUFI (2020), Finnish education export aims to promote the realisation of human rights, equality, and sustainable development in the target countries, and design the services according to the needs of the partners. Additionally, the basis of Finnish education export lies in the strengths of the country's education system, and the organisations' opportunities on utilising them (EDUFI, 2020b). As stated also in Sahlberg (2011), the Finnish education is not sold as a ready-made product, but rather bases on sharing expertise. According to Cai, Hölttä, and Lindholm (2013), the aim of the education export scene in Finland has been in taking advantage of the country's robust human capital base. Therefore, according to Schatz (2015), in Finland anyone can become an education exporter with an individually designed educational product or service. However, the forms of education export are sometimes difficult to identify because the definition changes rather quickly (Schatz, 2015). So far, the emphasis of Finnish education export has been on basic education, therefore, the traditions and values are on free education and Finnish language (Schatz, 2016). Also, due to the education's importance based on the Finnish national brand, the initiative is government-driven rather than an outcome of existing business practices (Schatz, 2016).

Expectations for the Finnish education export are generally high. According to the EDUFI (2020), with education export, at least a portion of the international interests that are directed towards Finland can be capitalised on as commercial practices. At its best, these activities may produce new innovations to the Finnish education itself. Thus, the activities in the field aim to transform the interest towards Finland to commercially profitable and ethically sustainable cooperation. Simultaneously, this cooperation could also benefit local educational services by developing their international interactions. Finland requires a strong commitment from the public administrations in the target counties of education export to the development of education systems, as well as a commitment to business and ethics, and sustainable cooperation in the field of education (EDUFI, 2020b).

Finally, in recent years, the field of education export in Finland has experienced a rapid growth. In 2020, according to the EDUFI (2020), approximately 300 companies or educational organisations defined themselves as Finnish education exporters. Moreover, in 2014-2018, the net sales have increased from 260 million euros to 359 million euros, and by the year 2019 the net sales already amounted to 385 million euros. It was predicted, if the direction stays the same, that Finland may accomplish export intake of billions of euros in the future. In fact, a stated goal of Finnish education export is to achieve one billion euros in the value of education export in Finland's economy until the

year 2030. However, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have not been addressed in these calculations. At least before the pandemic, strong interest and demand towards Finnish education expertise has been showed by Latin America (Brazil, Columbia, Uruguay, and Mexico), the Gulf countries (Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Kuwait), the Southeast Asian countries (Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malesia), China, South-Africa, and India (EDUFI, 2020).

2.2.3. Education Export at Finnish HEIs

As stated in the MOEC (2020), the higher education system in Finland consists of universities and universities of applied sciences [UAS]. According to Välimaa (2001), Finnish HEIs are traditionally national cultural institutions. From the late 1950s to the late 1980s, they spread throughout Finland, which in practice meant expansion to a mass higher education system. In 1990s, the polytechnic sector was established and the UASs were created to focus on higher vocational education and research and development activities (Välimaa, 2001).

As stated in the EDUFI (2020), today, 14 universities and 23 UASs operate under the MOEC's administration. In addition, 12 other research institutes and two HEIs operate under other ministries. Moreover, one HEI locates in the autonomous Åland Island (EDUFI, 2020b). Furthermore, internationalisation has been one of the main goals in the Finnish higher education policy as well as the strategies of HEIs since the 1990s (Kallo & Mikkilä-Erdmann, 2017). This has led the universities practise international activities and cooperation, and especially during the last decades, the number of international operations has increased (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

In 2009, the constitutional Universities Act in Finland (Universities Act, 2009; Yliopistolaki 24.7.2009/558) provided universities with more autonomy, which enabled them to start profiling on the educational market and profiting from it more financially (Välimaa et al., 2014). Thereafter, education export became part of the HEI legislation, when an amendment to the law on universities and UASs enabled exporting of education as a business activity (MOEC, 2013). However, when it comes to education export, many HEIs have not considered it to be their core business (Schatz, 2015). Many of the HEIs experience a lack of support in becoming active in the field (Schatz, 2015). However, due to the national education policy, the Finnish HEIs still aim to become the initiators of education export (EDUFI, 2020b).

Different programmes and policies regulate the HEIs' education export. According to Prime Minister Marin's Government Programme (2019), Finland aims to be internationally attractive place to study, research, and invest (MOEC, 2016). As part of the MOEC's (2016) policies to promote internationalisation in Finnish higher education and research in 2017–2025, a report and a business plan for education export implementation model was compiled. In addition, coherent ethical and qualitative standards for Finnish education export were collected as part of the business plan (MOEC, 2016). Consequently, 'Global Education Brand Finland' –survey was established to get a closer approach at Finnish strengths and their productization and marketing opportunities, along with education country brand building conditions (MOEC, 2016). Moreover, the 'Team Finland Knowledge' –network was created to facilitate cooperation between universities, research institutes, and individual researchers, as well as operate as an access to the newcomers in the field (MOEC, 2016).

In the 'Vision for Higher Education and Research in 2030', published by the MOEC (2017), the internationality of higher education is strongly present. By promoting national and international higher education networks, and strengthening cooperation between the agents nationally and internationally, Finland aims to develop its internationally competitive higher education system by the year 2030 (MOEC, 2017). The educational skills as a Finnish strength and their value in the national and international markets are recognised, along with the potential for economic exploitation through education export (MOEC, 2016).

However, according to the EDUFI (2020b), the HEIs in Finland are expected to invest in education export in their profile areas, and in accordance with their own strategies, taking advantage of the possibilities of digitalisation. This naturally gives more autonomy to the institutions (EDUFI, 2020b), but it can be questioned whether this is good for the Finnish education export for the whole. However, the EDUFI (2020b) claims that business expertise has been strengthened at the universities and in the field of education export. Also, reported by the EDUFI (2020b), publicly funded education that leads to a degree, and is arranged by an educational institution, should clearly be separated from education export, when in educational cooperation.

The basis of HEIs is on expertise, which makes them as potential education exporters (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Inside the EU, education export is mostly built upon higher education (Lindberg, 2011), meaning that for the HEIs, education export activities may be playing a crucial role in increasing the reputation and funding they are receiving (Lönqvist et al., 2018). In Finland, universities have founded companies to grow their

education export businesses. For example, 'EduCluster Finland' connects HEIs and the Jyväskylä Association of Education Municipalities in Jyväskylä area, Finland, together into a company which exports teacher education abroad (Sirén & Vuorinen, 2012). Whereas, at the University of Oulu, education export is coordinated by the 'Center for Continuing Studies TOPIK'. Instead, education export practices at the University of Helsinki are carried out by its company 'HY +', which specialises in continuing education, continuous learning, and various development services (HY+, 2020). Also, various export consortia and mutual companies have been formed in the UAS's. For example, 'EduExcellence Ltd.' is a consortium located in the Helsinki metropolitan area, formed by the UASs Haaga-Helia, Laurea, and Metropolia (EduExcellence, 2020). Additionally, 'Finland University' is an education export company owned by the University of Turku, the Eastern University, Tampere University, and Åbo Akademi. However, its operations as a university consortium were discontinued during 2020 (Finland University, 2020). According to the Finland University (2020), the operations are claimed to continue separately in the universities who will obtain all agreed projects and will develop their education export according to their own internationalisation strategy. It remains to be seen, how resigning of this kind of synergy-cooperation will affect the education export at the university level in Finland.

According to the EDUFI (2020b), the universities, together with the MOEC and Education Finland, will continue to create an operating model to support the export of higher education in the following years. As the EDUFI reported in the newest 'Education Export Roadmap' (2020b), the opportunities in the Finnish education export during years 2020-2023 will be founded in (1) teaching technology, digital services of education, and the development of learning environments, (2) pedagogical development of early childhood education, (3) development of the pedagogic and operations models of basic education, (4) development of vocational training, and (5) universities and UASs investing in education export in their own strong areas and along with their own strategies utilising digitality (EDUFI, 2020b).

The delegation of the responsibility to the university personnel in higher education export has required staff to become familiar with the field. The employees working directly with education export at universities are placed in an administrative position. According to Llurda, Cots, and Armengol (2014), administrative staff are a key faction at university, but often ignored when analysing policies or attitudes related to higher education. As stated in Whitchurch and Gordon (2013), their job description includes tasks, such as student services, human resources management, and coordinating cooperation between different agents. In addition, the identity of an administrative staff can consist of multiple

roles, which have been changing over time. This has led to a need of an increased expertise knowledge, finance, and cooperation abilities, and growth of multifaceted task varieties (Whitchurch & Gordon, 2013).

Currently, the phenomenon affecting businesses including education export worldwide is the COVID-19 pandemic. It is still uncertain how the pandemic, that started to spread globally in the beginning of 2020, will affect the future of education export both in Finland and abroad. According to the EDUFI (2020b), for instance, international travel restrictions and residence, have already affected directly on how foreign degree students are applying and being admitted to universities abroad. In addition, the restrictions affect expert-based projects that are in the destination countries, too. According to the assessments already made, the effects will most probably be long-lasting. Also, international degree and training programmes, continuing education programmes designed for teachers and head teachers, and teacher training, not to mention expert and camp school visits, along with development and consultant actions directed to international clients, face challenges, at least in the short term (EDUFI, 2020b).

However, as mentioned in the EDUFI (2020b), not all the effects will necessarily be negative. Namely, the situation might open some fresh opportunities, for example in the field of digital product development, and be of success in other strong areas of Finnish education, too. The shift from contact teaching to remote learning has rapidly created a new kind of learning environment, which can also become a meaningful commercial opportunity in the future of Finnish education export (EDUFI, 2020b).

3. THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND ASPECTS OF ETHICS IN EDUCATION EXPORT

3.1. Application to the Field Theory: Bourdieu-based Approach

In this thesis, education export is theorised through the concepts developed by the French social scientist Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, using the concept of capitals as a framework (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu's (1986) notion of capital takes economic, social, cultural, and symbolic forms, which are mutually intertwined.

According to Bourdieu (1986), the field is a setting in which agents and their social positions are located, and capitals constitute the basis for the power. Economic capital

includes financial resources, such as money, and social capital can be understood as social networks, which can be legitimised and institutionalised by memberships (Bourdieu, 1986). Further, cultural capital refers to knowledge, skills, intelligence, experiences, relationships, and other non-monetary capital that an individual can use to succeed in society (Bourdieu, 1986, in Joy et al., 2018). It has three forms: “institutionalised (e.g. academic qualifications which confer to its owner legitimised recognition in a given societal context at a given point in time); embodied/incorporated (e.g. past work experience, cultural experience of living in a particular society and language proficiency); or objectified (e.g. existing in material state such as books, equipment, dress and accessories)” (Bourdieu, 1986, in Joy et al., 2018, 2544). Lastly, “symbolic capital reflects power gained by individuals through the mobilization of their economic, social, and cultural capital, and is manifested in social ranking, class position etc.” (Bourdieu, 1986, in Joy et al., 2018, 2544).

This thesis operationalises and discusses these concepts and their applicability in the field of education export. It is expected that both educational institutions and national economies have chances to benefit from education export products also themselves (Schatz, 2016). Thus, in the context of education export, the income from the business is anticipated to generate economic capital. Also, in education export practices, social networks are an essentiality: social relationships promote a person's activities in the field. The ability of people to interact with each other, and, particularly, trust, is highly important. As stated by the EDUFI (2020), both the opportunities and challenges in Finnish education export lie in mutual networking. Moreover, the involvement of the stakeholders in wide-ranging and multifaceted partnerships has become increasingly important in the Finnish education export. In a matter of fact, impressive, large-scale reform projects in education and teaching fields are based on the cooperation of various international agents. However, Finnish agents have not been commonly involved in the international networks in the field of education export. Nonetheless, Finnish agents' active role in networking and cooperating with well-established international education exporters, who have long-term experience in the field, is expected to be accentuated in the future (EDUFI, 2020b).

Within education export, the stakeholders have a chance to develop their educational and cultural expertise, i.e., cultural capital. Along with the processes of export and import, these can be experienced as valuable opportunities and learned through the practices of education export. However, as Altbach and Knight (2007) point out, challenges among education export are the different evaluation processes of the countries and, specifically, the lack of matching quality measures: what functions nationally, often do not function

internationally. Evaluation is an important part of ensuring the quality of international higher education, including ensuring the quality of teaching, student evaluation systems, and the academic and sociocultural support for the students. Therefore, higher education exporters should take the selection of suitable partners, sharing of responsibility among agents, and academic and economical risks' assessment into account, when making decisions concerning exporting education (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

According to the EDUFI (2020b), to succeed in education export, deep knowledge of the field of study and business economy is required. Thus, consistent, and long-term cooperation between public and private sectors is needed to uplift growth especially among new education exporters (EDUFI, 2020b). Succeeding in education export requires in-depth knowledge that binds together the fields of education and business, and cooperation of experts is needed to combine complementary skills required in producing new solutions (EDUFI, 2020b). Therefore, functional cooperation is in everyone's interest in education export practices. In addition, cooperation in national level among companies and educational institutions can play an important role in making the field of education export grow and promote innovations (EDUFI, 2020b). Education export cannot be excluded from cooperation, and success in the field requires the different agents' interest for fellowships (EDUFI, 2020b).

Lönnqvist et al. (2018) argue, among others, that Finnish universities' sales and marketing skills are typically not very strong due to the tradition of tuition-free university education. According to the EDUFI (2020b), the most common challenges to the growth of education export, experienced by the members of 'Education Finland', are linked within legal constraints and non-compliance with guidance, preconditions for domestic and international financial instruments and investments for start-ups, the cost of protecting intangible services, and the knowledge of business environments and practices in different countries.

Sahlberg (2011), criticizes that Finnish education authorities have paid more attention in attempts of turning Finland's global educational fame into a profitable business at the expense of international cooperation. As stated in Lönnqvist et al. (2018), international cooperation is a way of developing broader opportunities and cross-cultural perspective for the participants, for example in a form of foreign programmes that HEIs are offering. One example of the foreign programmes is the joint- and double-degrees, that HEIs have started to develop besides the traditional study-abroad programmes (Obst & Kuder, 2012). Therefore, the HEIs, governments, and funding and accreditation agencies

worldwide have started to consider strategies and policies for cross-border cooperative degree programmes due to this phenomenon (Obst & Kuder, 2012).

According to the EDUFI (2020b), one of the four main dimensions of Finnish education export in the following years includes making paths for common consortia and partnerships – which in theoretical terms, would imply the need for growing the social capital. The public sector's services for growing the business of education export companies will primarily be channelled through 'Business Finland', 'Team Finland', and 'Education Finland' (EDUFI, 2020b).

According to Schatz (2016), Finland's unique characteristics and exceptional position as an education exporter may cause challenges, but they can also serve as an opportunity for profiling Finland into an interesting education exporter compared to others internationally. Also, the field of Finnish education export has struggled with lack of coherence and coordination. The final product in many cases has been unclear, which causes a risk of customers losing their interest (Schatz, 2016). Furthermore, communication and cooperation in the Finnish education export scene has proven to be difficult, which have created competition among Finnish education exporters (Schatz, 2015).

3.2. The Aspects of Ethics and Values in Education Export

As stated in Knight (2003), exporting education gives the country opportunities to increase its international recognition and strengthen its national brand in a global scale, simultaneously with serving as a source of income and sharing of national intellectual capital to other countries, who are interested and in need of it. This is supported by Altbach and Knight (2007), who argue that international higher education should be guaranteed as public education and not just as a profit- or income-oriented action. However, in addition to economic profits, the transmission of knowledge and cultural understanding, is seen as a benefit in various international education export projects (EDUFI, 2020b).

As reported by Reinikka, Niemi, and Tulivuori (2018), Finland's international role as education exporter should be intensified, and more investments should be added to help solving the learning crisis in developing countries. This requires an increase especially in the strategic cooperation between the agents in the Finnish teaching and education fields (Reinikka, Niemi, & Tulivuori, 2018). According to Lönnqvist et al. (2018), another aspect of education export is to see it as an activity aimed at transferring intellectual

capital as a two-way process benefiting both ends of the cooperation. By cooperation and partnerships, the agents have chances to learn from each other, which can benefit all the participants, for instance by increasing the understanding of international education standards and practices as well as developing better-quality practices (Lönnqvist et al, 2018). From this perspective, education export can be examined as a process in transferring national intellectual capital, with an aim of benefitting both parties involved (Lönnqvist et al, 2018).

International competition seems to play an enormous role in the globalised planet of today. As stated in Schatz (2016), Finnish education brand is tied with the idea of free and equal education system, but however, education export practices are based on neo-liberal values favouring effectiveness and erosion of public intervention. According to Schatz, Popovic, and Dervin (2015), international comparisons of educational performance conducted by supranational organisations, such as the OECD and the IEA, influence competition between countries. Consequently, this affects the international mobility among students and teachers, and the transition of skills and knowledge around the globe (Schatz et al., 2015). Indeed, as stated in Schatz (2016), international mobility and migration among students, teachers, and researchers is constantly increasing, which makes education export as a competed business field, both on national and international levels. According to Schatz (2015), the lack of communication and coordination in Finnish education export has led to an increased competition rather than cooperation among similar education exporters. This has taken place especially in the university sector (Schatz, 2015).

Education exporters are dependent on their reputation, skills and knowledge, funding, and their own initiative to succeed in the education export business (EDUFI, 2020b; Schatz, 2016). Even though education export might profit all the participants involved in the cooperation, the reason for selling education often lies on the commercial benefits it has to offer for the provider (Knight, 2003), whereby competition cannot be excluded from this phenomenon in today's world that has been named as "era of international competition" (Wiseman & Baker, 2005, p. 2). Consequently, these ethical considerations cannot be ignored due the extreme controversy of the scene. As critically observed by Schatz (2016), sustainability and morals of the education export product can be questioned, because "the brand relies on "Finnishness" as a trade quality, rather than on educational research" (p. 116).

4. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the chosen research methods along with the methodology behind them are introduced and justified. First, the scope of the study is described through the research aims and questions. Second, the research data is introduced. Thereafter, the data collection and analysis are explained. Finally, trustworthiness and ethical considerations of the study are assessed.

4.1. Research Aims and Questions

The main aim of this master's thesis was to investigate the cooperative arrangements in the field of Finnish education export at the university context. In addition, the data was analysed with the application of the sociologist Bourdieu's field theory by contextualising the Finnish education export from the perspective of capitals.

The research questions were as following:

1. How do experts experience the current cooperative arrangements in Finnish education export at universities, given the competitive environment?
2. What kind of opportunities and challenges are involved in cooperation in Finnish education export at universities? How about problems?
3. How are cultural, social, economic, and symbolic capitals embodied in Finnish education export?

4.2. Research Data

The research data consisted of thematic and semi-structured interviews conducted with education export experts from universities in Finland. The interviewees worked in their respective universities as, for example, key account manager, education export coordinator, customer relationship manager, and project manager. The interviewees worked in a total of four different universities involved in promoting higher education export, of which each was represented by two interviewees. All the interviewees had worked several years in the field of education export. Because it is not possible to complete a degree in education export in Finland, the educational background of the experts was diverse.

The interviews were recorded with the consent of the interviewees. The duration of the interviews varied from 40 minutes to 57 minutes. The interviews were transcribed, and the formatted interview transcripts used for final analysis ranged from 7 to 11 pages, compiled to 62 pages, with an average of 9 pages per interview.

Finnish education export policy documents, published by the Ministry of Justice (2009), the Ministry of Education (2009), the MOEC (2010; 2017; 2019; 2020), the EDUFI (2020), and the Finnish Government (2019), served as supporting research data.

4.3. Data Collection and Analysis

As stated in Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008), interview is a functional data collection method, when the research topic is not particularly well-known. The interviews were conducted as thematic and semi-structured interviews, with pre-selected themes and questions specified on each (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). The interview template (Appendix 1) was divided into three different themes based on the research framework: (1) cooperative arrangements in education export at the university, (2) opportunities and challenges in the education export cooperation, and (3) skills and knowledge and the cultural context in education export. In addition, each theme contained sub-questions. In semi-structured interviews, the main themes are the same despite the interviewee, but the interviewees can answer with their own words, and no ready answers are provided (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998).

The interviewees were selected based on their positions within their respective universities. The first interviewee was contacted in consultation with the master's thesis supervisor. The rest of the interviewees were found by following the method of snowball sampling, in which the first interviewee leads the interviewer to the next one (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). The aims of the study and its themes were presented in the contacting email that was sent personally to each expert. After scheduling the interviews, examples of the main interview questions, together with a privacy statement, were sent to the participants via email. The privacy statement followed the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation [GDPR] of the EU. Because the aim of the interviews was to obtain as much information as possible about the subject, it was justified to give the interviewees the possibility to prepare for the interview in advance (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018).

The interviews were carried out as six (6) individual interviews and one (1) pair interview during November and December in 2020. Altogether, eight (8) experts were interviewed.

The language of the interviews was Finnish because it was the mother tongue of both the researcher and the experts. The interviews were conducted via Zoom, which is an online platform for video and audio meetings online.

The qualitative data was analysed with thematic analysis, which, according to Braun and Clarke (2012), is a method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning that helps the researcher with the theme development of the study. In this research, the analysis started by transcribing the interview data. Transcribing allows the researcher to focus on the data in a more comprehensive way, as listening the audio again multiple times gives the researcher more opportunities to familiarise oneself with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The transcribing was done word for word, and no pauses and non-verbal communication were included. During the transcription process, separate notes were taken of possible themes to have a starting point for the theme development.

After the transcribing was finished, the transcriptions were categorised under different themes to compare and generate initial codes in a Qualitative Data Analysis Software 'Nvivo'. This gave the researcher an opportunity to find similarities and differences between the answers of the participants, and to reflect them on earlier research. After the development of the themes, the respective comments were highlighted for citations, and the answers were reorganised under the themes. In this context, the research questions were formulated partly again through the theme development and analysis, as more in-depth understanding of the content was gained. In the final phase, the themes were outlined in the report (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Citations from the participants, which were chosen to represent the themes in the report, were translated into English by the researcher.

According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018), research analysis can be roughly divided into three types: data-driven, theory-driven, and theory-based analysis. This study was analysed by mixing a data-driven and theory-driven approach. The whole data collection was progressed on a data-driven basis, but in the final stage of the analysis of the third research question, theory-driven analysis was utilised. Thus, the theory served as a support, but the analysis was not directly based on the theory. Additionally, theory-driven analysis is based on inductive reasoning in which a theory is created to guide the results (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018).

The theoretical approach in this research was guided by Pierre Bourdieu's field theory. Therefore, Bourdieu's key concept, capital, was placed at the centre of the theory-driven analysis. His theory was chosen to this research due to its significant and sustained place in the educational field, and the contribution to educational ideas, which arguably have

been stronger than any other social theorist of the late twentieth century (Murphy & Costa, 2015). The field theory facilitated the conceptual analysis of the research topic and brought depth to the empirical data.

The research of education export, and especially the Finnish education export, is young. Therefore, it was interesting and fruitful to study the phenomenon from the perspective of Bourdieu's field theory. As Murphy and Costa (2015) define, Bourdieu's work and research have been given a global dimension in the study of educational issues, therefore they are easily adjustable to different cultural contexts including Finnish education export scene.

4.4. Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

To ensure trustworthiness and ethics of this master's thesis, all the working stages within the research process have been written down in the final report (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998). In qualitative research, it is important to understand the subjectivity of the researcher, and to acknowledge the researcher to be a part of the research tool (Eskola & Suoranta, 1998), thus the actions of the researcher were reflected at all stages of the research. As stated in Nowell et al. (2017), the trustworthiness criteria of the process have been accounted by focusing on the main points of the data also in this research. To conduct a trustworthy qualitative research and thematic analysis, the process of the analysis should be demonstrated as transparent as possible (Nowell et al., 2017). In establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research, the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability should be covered (Nowell et al., 2017). As stated by Nowell et al. (2017), clearly documented research process demonstrated dependability. By following the principles of trustworthiness, confirmability could be achieved. In addition, all the relevant results, including results that were unexpected or did not correspond to the main explanations of the study phenomenon, have also been discussed.

In this study, semi-structure interview was selected as a suitable tool to generate a large amount of detail of the subject and gain a deeper understanding of the interviewees' response (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). However, with semi-structure interviews, inferring the cause and the effect is not possible, which was acknowledged as a disadvantage. This study aimed to follow the ethical research principles (Varantola et al., 2013), for example, by informing participants with the purpose and subject of the study before conducting the interviews. The research questions were based on the previous literature, research, and documents related to the topic. The interview questions were formulated

in a semi-structured way to give space for individual perspectives, but also to provide a guide to cover the same aspects with every participant. Before the interviews, the consents from the interviewees were obtained (Varantola et al., 2013).

The interviews followed the principles of a research interview by aiming for impartiality and neutrality and giving a voice to the interviewee without the interviewer's guidance (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). During and after the interviews, the participants had the possibility to withdraw from the study at any time. All the interviews were recorded with the participants' permission and the recordings were transcribed into text for analysing after the interviews. The participants were offered the opportunity to view the transcribed data before analysis. The audio recordings as well as the transcriptions were kept in a secure location. No names, or any other personal details were transcribed for ensuring the anonymity of the participants. Finally, the data was deleted at the time of publication of this master's thesis.

In connection with the results, citations taken from the interviews were presented to give the reader also the opportunity to evaluate the interpretations done from the research data. The codes for the interviewees were intended to add coherence to the research. The analysis has sought to provide a fair and comprehensive account of the whole research data.

The short history of the topic of the research and the limited number of experts working in the field, set challenges in securing a complete individual anonymity in this research. Therefore, to secure the ethics of the research, not all the collected data could be used in the report, and it was decided not to specify which respective universities were involved. Also, the interview citations were chosen with keeping the anonymity issue in mind.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS: UNIVERSITIES AS EXPORTERS OF FINNISH EDUCATION

This chapter presents the results of this master's thesis. The main findings of the study are divided into five sections below. First, education export in the context of Finnish universities is determined in general by the experts. Additionally, the types of education export products offered by the universities are examined. Second, the variety of the universities' cooperative arrangements in the field of the Finnish education export are

introduced. Third, the opportunities and challenges of cooperation in the Finnish education export are considered. Fourth, the problems of exporting the Finnish education are discussed. Finally, the Finnish education export is viewed from the perspectives of economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital.

5.1. Education Export as Viewed from the Experts' Vantage Points

As introduced in the literature review, Finnish education export has proven to be multidimensional. Therefore, to build a comprehensive understanding of the study, it was considered necessary to start by clarifying the experts' views on the concept and its contents. Thus, the interviews were started by asking the experts to define Finnish education export with their own words.

Basically, the experts were aware of the variability of the existing definitions within the Finnish education export. Indeed, their definitions somewhat varied between each other and the respective universities. Some of the experts were unwilling or ignorant about the ways to define the Finnish education export in the first place, due to its inconsistent and changing status in its relatively short history. Also, some of them perceived the word as misleading, due to the interactive features of the education export business, and therefore disliked it. Alternatively, some preferred calling the sector simply as international education-business, or global services. Nevertheless, all identified themselves as experts in the field, and they were clearly motivated to share their thoughts on the Finnish education export.

“At least for me it's difficult to define [education export], after I have listened to the recent national debate about what it actually includes.” (E6)

“‘Education export’ as a word – I use it in Finland, but I never use it in English. We rather talk about ‘global services’ because from the customer’s perspective, export of education may not always sound that nice. People don’t want to import education, but they like to export it.” (E7)

Most experts based their definitions of Finnish education export on the international strategies of their respective universities. Thus, it seemed to depend on the perspectives that Finnish education export was looked at from, what was meant by it. For example, most experts approached defining Finnish education export by separating it from the other international business activities of the universities. Accordingly, the issue that

strongly divided opinions was the aspect of educational developmental cooperation. Whereas most experts strongly excluded the idea of the educational developmental cooperation from the education export, at least one expert was not that absolute with their definition.

“This is an international education business, and it is a business just like any other, in the sense that we export our service: academic expertise. Now, as I speak from university's perspective; it takes the university's expertise to the world, and this should work in the same way as any business, that is; it produces euros, and ideally the business is invested. This is not educational development cooperation.” (E5)

“I do not exclude this aspect of educational development cooperation in education export either, although it is not directly related to it, but we have also had clients who have received external funding for being able to work with us.” (E4)

Along these lines, a shared definition within the experts could be tentatively summarised into ‘Finnish education export as being a business-related education, in which the payer is someone other than a Finnish stakeholder, and the revenue is generated from the sources outside of Finland’.

To explore the different forms for cooperative arrangements in Finnish education export, the interviews explored the different product types in the field offered by the universities. The product catalogue of education export seemed to follow the same formula within all the respective universities. Based on the interviews, the forms of education export at Finnish universities could be divided under three main categories, listed by the length, and starting from the shortest one: (1) *educational visits*, (2) *training programmes*, and (3) *curriculum design*. In addition, the product catalogue included *other education related products*, that varied between the universities.

Further, (1) educational visits could be divided into study visits and short courses. The first was also referred as educational tourism, which length varied from a couple of days to a week, and located in Finland, physically or online. Instead, short courses, also called as thematic modules, lasted couple of weeks, and could be arranged both in Finland and in the target countries. Further, (2) training programmes included study and degree programmes. The first one was arranged for example as summer school programmes set in Finland, or continuing education, set either in Finland or in target countries, and

their lengths were longer than of short courses, but they did not lead to a degree. Whereas the degree programmes included international degree programmes set in Finland, professional degree programmes set either in Finland or in target countries, and customised degree programmes set in target countries. Then, (3) curriculum design involved education system reform projects set in target countries. In addition, other education related products included licensed products and consulting services sold by Finnish universities to the target countries. For the licensed products, the university first educated their own personnel on the specific themes and products, whereafter they continued to educate the foreign partners, who further shared the same package locally in the target countries. Also, as the newest by-product of the COVID-19 pandemic, online implementations known as Massive Open Online Courses [MOOC] and hybrid models, including both face-to-face and online implementation, had been announced by the universities.

5.2. Diverse Cooperative Arrangements

Told by the experts, each university had its own strategies, interests, areas of focus as well as expertise, which set boundary conditions for cooperating with other organisations. Hence, the education export products of the universities served as a basis for the cooperative arrangements.

To begin with, according to the experts, universities cooperated in the field of education export with different kinds of organisations in Finland and abroad. In Finland, cooperative partners included HEIs, private companies, Ministries and the EDUFI, and Finland's embassies, consulates general, and honorary consulates. Regionally and nationally, the cooperation was arranged through the implementation of partnerships, joint marketing and implementations, trade fair trips, joint companies, as well as informal and formal networks. Instead, internationally, the cooperative partners included HEIs, private companies, and foreign public sectors, and the cooperation was arranged through implementation partnerships and consultations.

In international context, the difficulty in defining cooperative arrangements in the Finnish education export business was to separate a cooperation relationship from a customer relationship. For clarity, in this study, the focus was put on the cooperative arrangements between agents who sold Finnish education to foreigners. Thus, the basis of the product was on Finnish expertise. However, customer relationships in the field could be also referred as international cooperation.

“When talking about foreign agents, of course you talk about partners, but basically they are also customers. First you must build the partnership, whereafter they then possibly buy the education. [...] We have a few countries like this, as if there are consultants who again then sell and market our products and we have contracts with them then for that kind of business.” (E1)

Firstly, it was seen as important to know the potential partners, as well as their intentions and interests, to build an effective cooperation relationship. Compared to exporting education alone as one agent, the cooperative arrangements within organisations were seen as valid, when complementary skills and competencies, or complementary technology, for instance, were needed.

“Everyone comes from a home organisation and has their lines are at a very different level, thus it can be tricky to do practical cooperation. But if those lines are roughly in the same direction, then it will be easier to cooperate. [...] I strongly believe in the partner model when you have a suitable partner sharing common interests.” (E2)

“When you know the other organisation and its people well, it is easy to see the similarities, and how you can cooperate and complement each other. I see those partnerships within the country as important.” (E3)

“We need to understand each other’s organisational cultures: we need to understand what their expertise is, who would be their key persons...” (E6)

Beyond building a cooperative arrangement, Finnishness and typical Finnish traits related to the cultural context were mentioned. In the context, a Finn was pictured as an independent individual, and Finland as a free country. These factors were thought to negatively affect motivations towards cooperation with other Finnish education export agents in practice.

“In principle, it is possible to cooperate with anyone, but when there is no so-called mandate or strategy or such a strong one – I would like to say coercion – but because there is no coercion, the Finn is very independent. Then you prefer to do it yourself and so, that you do not have to help, so to speak.” (E5)

However, cooperation with other Finnish organisations, in contrast to the international ones, was seen as easier due to the shared cultural factors. Besides, trust between the Finnish agents seemed to be natural and strong compared to other nations, where it had to be built separately. In this manner, building a cooperative arrangement with other Finns was faster compared to other nationalities. Also, the experts described that discussing and agreeing on issues in Finland was done based on the content of each topic, which made it rather easy, because knowing the person of the other organisation beforehand was not seen as necessary.

“Finland is kind of a clinical society where we do not have to know each other personally, because the things are discussed and agreed upon, even if we had never met each other before.” (E1)

“We have no problem working with foreign agents, but of course when we sell Finnish teacher education, it is easier when there are Finnish individuals as experts.” (E7)

Indeed, all the experts agreed that all cooperation is built on trust and so-called win-win situations from which all parties can benefit. Especially, with international agents, building trust was acknowledged as an explicit part of an education export cooperation process. A common goal was seen as important whenever in cooperation, and the partners were expected to be sufficiently committed to it.

“Trust is the most important thing in cooperation. [...] Building trust requires a very close cooperation and a constant dialogue – you are not able to build that trust and especially now during these [pandemic] times, it is WhatsApp, or email, or Zoom calls, or whatever. Yeah, so really, really, close it must be, so that the trust is found and through that the ways of working together, too.” (E1)

Foremost, cooperative arrangements in the Finnish education export scene at the universities were divided to two types, depending on whether the cooperation included merging financial resources: (1) *commercial profit-oriented business* and (2) *sharing of good practices and information*.

The first type of cooperation in the Finnish education export scene at the universities, (1) commercial profit-oriented business, was based on merging commercial practices of partners together. Hence, it was focused on an efficient disposal of resources, in forms of joint marketing and implementations, trade fair trips, and joint companies. In education export companies, the universities' role varied between acting as subcontractors and having other companies as subcontractors in education export projects. In this form of cooperation, the education export product was already pre-designed by the main agent, but specific expertise and/or services outside were also utilised.

"[...] we have a company called Polar Partners as a partner, which offers a Finnish school concept abroad, i.e., what a Finnish school is like, from architecture and learning environments, technology to content, and curricula. They have a complete package, in which we offer as their subcontractors, teacher training and services." (E1)

According to the experts, joint implementations, or consortium, as a form of cooperation within Finnish universities were arranged, when complementary expertise was needed, or in case of big projects. In practice, cooperation was established when universities' own resources and time were not sufficient to carry on a specific project. An example of this kind of large implementation, that was mentioned several times during the interviews, was a teacher education cooperation with the state of Saudi Arabia. The project was shared with the Finland University, University of Helsinki, and Omnia UAS in 2017.

"A concrete case with Saudi Arabians was a deal obtained as a consortium." (E8)

"Even though [many organisations] were involved in the project, still everyone's hands were full of work so that no one alone could have handled such a group." (E2)

In international contexts, implementation partnerships were expressed as common arrangement for example in degree cooperation, in which students started their studies in another country, and were taught mainly by their local teachers. However, a few courses in between this kind of arrangement were organised by a Finnish university, and for the last year of the degree programme, the students returned to finalise their studies at the Finnish partner university abroad.

Moreover, not all kinds of national cooperation had to be carefully planned and self-developed by universities. According to the experts, national cooperation had been arranged by Finnish universities via international events, too.

“For example, this has been the case as the World Expo is in Dubai [...] we have Finnish education export agents who in cooperation strive to build up materials and exhibitions together.” (E1)

The second type of cooperation in the Finnish education export scene, (2) sharing of good practices and information, was not based on profiting commercially, at least not directly. This kind of cooperation was described to occur via networks in local, regional, and national contexts.

For instance, local cooperative arrangements included universities' own faculty-specific education export working groups. Additionally, provincial consortia offered a platform for sharing information regionally.

“FinnWayLearning’, as it has already been mentioned, is a consortium of Finnish education export agents, and it is really this kind of regional cooperation in marketing and information exchange. There have been a few joint implementations, joint tenders, and they have been implemented in such a way that everyone has done it with their own business ID, that it is not such a joint venture, but it is like such a consortium or network.” (E3)

Programmes led by the government, such as ‘Education Finland’, and ‘Team Finland Knowledge’ –network, offered the same nationally. The latter, together with export promotion trips led by the ministries, in terms of advertising Finnish education export, were mentioned and highly praised by most experts. In the context of national cooperation, ministries, especially the MOEC and the MFA, were also mentioned.

“Team Finland Knowledge –network: export ambassadors like this, they make really good contacts and provide a lot of up-to-date information, locally pass on like leads and requests for quotations and hint at partners and interesting things, and then on the other hand, they spread our Finnish brand locally. They are a very practical help, the advantage of that type of cooperation is good. [...] When, for example, prestige services are needed, such as a minister or a senior official, or some opportunity is needed to

open or speak, or letters of support are needed, or ministers of this type are used. [...] For instance, within the framework of 'Education Finland', we exchange experiences about what works and what not, we learn from each other. So that type of cooperation makes sense. (E1)

In addition to the current cooperation arrangements, experts were asked about their ideas for the future. When asked about what kind of new arrangements they would think of as beneficial to promote national cooperation between education export agents, ideas about a national offer portal, an extended cooperative environment, an education travel agency, a locomotive company, and a register of education exporters, for instance, were brought up.

"It would be useful to have an offer portal. Now they are run by 'Team Finland', for example, but if there was such a resource that could look at requests for offers at university level around the world. [...] It would be good to cooperate with the whole education sector. Now, we are little differentiated in the way that our universities work together and so on. But I think there are such practices at a lot of different levels of education that could be replicated and utilised to some extent in others." (E3)

"There could be like an education travel agency – if you sell education trips, then such partnerships are quite interesting [for universities], too." (E8)

"Some register or someone from whom you could check these, what great things even these small start-ups can do, so how could we combine them with the activities of a bit bigger and more rigid agents like universities are, would be great." (E2)

Most experts mentioned the idea of a locomotive company, which, according to them, had already been discussed and promoted by the 'Education Finland', too. In this model, education export was based on customer orientation and a national organisation which acted as a leader on the international field, searching for potential leads. Under the leadership of the education export locomotive, Finnish agents clustered and built the offered products together.

"I like the idea of a locomotive company that is now discussed." (E2)

“An export locomotive that is out there in the world and gets bigger projects from there. Then it is clustered and built, always offered among Finnish agents.” (E8)

In addition, considered as an essentiality, experts were asked about the current world situation with the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact to the cooperation in the field. Everyone agreed on that the actions on the field of education export were completely paused for some time in the beginning of the pandemic. At the time of the interviews, all the face-to-face implementations and meetings were cancelled and/or placed to occur online, which in education export was seen as new issue globally. Due to the pandemic, travelling had been on hold and most of the cooperation had been built online through distance meetings, and outlooks for the future seemed to have changed due to the crisis. Thus, experts highlighted the possibility of creation of a so-called hybrid-model, in which online implementation would stay as an essential part of education export also after the era of the pandemic. As another result of the pandemic, online education had become popular in the Finnish education export, which was seen to allow new openings for cooperation, too.

However, some experts did not recognise any effects especially to the cooperative arrangements, whereas some believed the crisis would unite the field of the Finnish education export, as well as increase and deepen the cooperation between organisations in the future. In the end, however, the crisis was seen more as a positive rather than negative issue for the future of cooperative arrangements in the Finnish education export.

“I think this world is shrinking in such a way, that we are now forced to make a bigger digital leap. Therefore, the cooperation could significantly change, evolve, and grow now precisely because of it. [...] I think it might even increase and deepen the forms of cooperation. (E2)

“Perhaps corona virus has furthered that search for those clusters and discussion culture in Finland. [...] it is discussed that when we then get to do something, we’ll do it together.” (E8)

5.3. Opportunities and Challenges of Cooperation

As stated by the experts, cooperating created both opportunities and challenges in education export at universities, depending on the case and situation. According to most

experts, the opportunities, and challenges of cooperation in the Finnish education export were similar with the cooperation in other foreign trade.

In general, cooperation was seen as a way in strengthening universities as exporters of education. Working together was experienced to look good in an international context.

“We will appear stronger if we cooperate.” (E4)

“I see tremendous strength in cooperation.” (E7)

“Joint implementations: together we are stronger.” (E1)

The strength of cooperation was combined with the increased size of universities as exporters of education with added resources. Due to the small size of Finland and its minor agents in the field, as compared to international context, cooperation was seen as important on a global scale. When in cooperation, resources were shared, and as a result, increased. As small agents were united, they appeared larger in size, which further helped them to gain international visibility, which was believed to be important for the business.

“Even if all Finnish universities and all Finnish university experts are put together, we will be a small player when compared to the big world. That is why we should be able to work really closely together here.” (E8)

“If there are big projects, then not one university or its faculty or department have enough resources and time. Therefore, [with cooperation] we can secure the implementation of projects and the resource side.” (E1)

“[In Finland] we do not have such an opportunity with these smaller resources. We do our best, but, of course, the visibility is very different – how we can be visible to our customers and partners and look for good potential, high-quality partners. And here, of course, the networks help that we seem to be bigger, and it always looks good if you can cooperate instead of working alone.” (E3)

“As we are medium-sized players here in Finland, we don't have the kind of giant universities that the world has, so of course we also look bigger in size if we cooperate and get student numbers or degree numbers, or others put together in that way.” (E4)

In addition to visibility, the reputation of the university was experienced to increase through cooperation, which was also seen as important in education export on a global scale. An expert working at one of the biggest and best ranked universities in Finland, viewed their reputation as an advantage to cooperation in education export compared to other universities in the country. According to the expert, even though the rankings done in Finland might not be that significant and had a minor impact on the cooperation practices between the universities nationally, for the foreign customer they did matter. Thus, for other agents, it was seen as an opportunity to improve their reputation from an international perspective, when in cooperating with the university of this profile.

Moreover, through cooperating the practical work within education export seemed to decrease and facilitate with other agents. In this manner, cooperation was seen as a risk management due to the shared responsibilities and resources.

“When there are multi-year projects, then it is also maybe risk management – I started to think. It may also be risk management at a point where you may have a 4–5 -year project, for example. Of course, they [multi-year projects] do not often come, but for a 4–5 -year project, you do not know what is going to happen to the experts of your own organisation, so you then have a spare resource to take from.” (E7)

On the other hand, however, the high price level of Finland, and limited resources of the institutions were experienced as structural boundary conditions setting obstacles to the national cooperation. If many agents shared an education export project, it had to be financially profitable to all the parties involved, which increased the price of the final product. Therefore, not all kinds of cooperative arrangements were seen as worthy or reasonable. The lack of resources could also limit the possibilities to cooperate with others, and, therefore, appear as a challenge for the cooperation in the field.

“The price level in Finland is high, so the more we have cooperative agents, the more expensive it will get for the buyer. [...] In the end, no one really has any profit of it, that is why it does not make sense to cooperate in practice.” (E1)

“As these processes are long and resources are limited, it would be worthwhile to focus on this kind of long-term partnership, to really seek to develop things and deepen the understanding.” (E2)

Also, bureaucratic challenges in the trade market, including the Finnish entry policies, were mentioned. The bureaucratic regulations set boundary conditions for implementing education export in practice. For example, as it was possible to make a commercial offer with only one business ID, challenges to cooperative arrangements were set, which led to a reduced interest in cooperation between agents.

“[Finland’s] entry practice, that is perhaps the most tangled issue at the moment.” (E3)

As Finnish education export is a commercial business, even in cooperation, the agents remained as each other’s competitors. Most experts acknowledged the field as competing in Finland, however, saw the competition as light and not necessarily problematic in terms of cooperation. Nevertheless, one expert claimed the competition within Finnish education exporters as too heavy.

“There is competition to some extent, but in the end, it is pretty moderate.” (E1)

“There may have been a bit of cracks and a bit of suspicious stuff in between, too much competition.” (E4)

One expert also expressed that the sector might appear to be competitive from the outside, but in their opinion, it was not.

“Those who do not do the actual education export might look from the outside that we are competing, even though I do not think it is the case. The education exporters who get the trade have very good cooperation together.” (E3)

All experts agreed that the amount of international competition exceeded national competition in the field, due to the small size of Finland, and the diversity of expertise of organisations actively practising the business. As a matter of fact, the small size and the number of universities was seen as an incentive to favour cooperation over competition inside the country.

“We are such a small country and we have so few really good universities, therefore we have no need to compete.” (E2)

“I think our competitors are abroad and not in Finland, because we are such a small country.” (E7)

“The products are a bit different. Even if there is a master's programme of the same name, its contents are a bit different in Finland as well.” (E3)

Over the years, some experts had noticed a change from national competition towards a more cooperative environment. By consensus, this shift was seen as a good direction for the Finnish education export field in general.

“Some years ago, there was still quite intense competition, but I think we are starting to get ahead of it.” (E2)

“I think that competing with others has been kind of diminished. People have seriously realised the strengths of cooperation and the importance that we should do. That it is like going in a more positive direction.” (E7)

In this context, it also depended on the size and reputation of the university, how much weight was given to the thought of competition inside the field in Finland. As the reputation was acknowledged as important in the international context of education export and was further seen as relevant to marketing, the advantages of cooperating rather than competing with larger and higher ranked universities were rehearsed.

“There is no competition with a larger university in the same way – with it, in fact, the aim is to cooperate.” (E7)

In addition, the competition had even created opportunities for cooperation. In some cases, a competitive situation had led to cooperation within the Finnish agents. All these examples included a foreign agent, whose tendency to turn Finnish agents against each other was raised several times during the interviews.

“I remember somewhere abroad, where we were with another university, and we noticed that we are in the same project, and the customer is competing us. And then we started making a joint offer, and that is how it can work.” (E8)

“The Chinese approach us all [universities] and then compete us against each other, which cannot be avoided.” (E1)

According to the experts, the formal ways of networking reduced competition and increased cooperation between the agents, and vice versa. This could be noticed when asked about the discontinuation of a joint venture in education export business; 'Finland University', for instance.

"After all, all these former member universities have continued education export, but that has been based on their own strategies, their own goals. And yes, this in a way changed the situation so that these universities became each other's competitors the moment this decision came." (E5)

"When not having the same employer, not working together daily – it is pretty much less cooperation. [...] It is not structured." (E3)

In addition, the experts shared that cooperation that is based on sharing experiences and information, for example about current issues in different target countries, was perceived as an opportunity to prevent mistakes in implementing Finnish education export. This was experienced as an advantage for the entire Finnish education export field, too, and therefore, sharing experiences was in all cases seen as a good and important mode of cooperation.

"When something has already been thought about somewhere, not everyone has to make the same mistakes, and bad practices that are not worth trying, can be shared." (E2)

"Cooperation, where information and experiences are exchanged, is really fruitful." (E1)

Lastly, the differences between the Finnish education system and other countries' systems, as well as the specialty of the dual model of the Finnish HEI's, set challenges to international cooperation in the field. Hence, the Finnish HEI system, which consisted of both universities and UASs, was perceived internationally compared as unique and uncommon. Therefore, the ambiguity towards the Finnish education export has been raised by the international agents, which has challenged the building process of the international cooperation in the field. Also, other practical challenges concerning international cooperation in the field were schedule related. For example, in Finnish basic education, the months from the beginning of June until the middle of August were

described as summer vacation months when schools were closed, therefore education export could not be practiced in Finland during these times.

“They do not understand this dual model of HEIs in Finland at all.” (E6)

“We have had a lot of requests for them to come in July, but we cannot accept educational visitors then when we do not have schools open where to go. [...] Finnish education is a very high quality and that is with what we must move forward because we are a small country and we have very high-quality universities, very high-quality teacher education, which we proudly export. But it is also very challenging to explain it to customers because it is so a different model than what those other countries offer.” (E7)

5.4. Problems of Exporting Finnish Education

In addition to challenges related to cooperation, the interviewees generally highlighted the existing problems in Finnish education export. According to the experts, the main problem of the Finnish universities in engaging in the education export was traceable to the absence of national support structures for the industry, especially in the university sector. The experts indicated the resources of the universities as limited, and funding improper and insufficient. As universities were not financially supported in the same way as companies, more support from the government was wished to increase the volume of the business. To invest more in the education export practices, universities were told to need more financial support and changes to the current actions from the government.

“We do not have such export support structures as we have for other industries, such as ‘Business Finland’ and this type of funding. ‘Tekes’-funding is not directed at the university, because it is not thought that universities and educational institutions in general could do such activities, so the system is focused on supporting companies, as it also should be, but if the ministry's strategy is to grow Finland's education export sector, then investments should be increased in the same way, this support repertoire also to this side.” (E2)

“At this moment, the university itself commercialises and pays for all the product development, and there are even such restrictions that the government does not allocate product development money to it. In comparison to the business side, there is money for product development,

and you either get it or not, but this is not the case for the education export side. It is even sometimes forbidden.” (E3)

The problem of the lacking national support structures was seen as traceable to the young age of the industry in Finland. Especially, the Finnish universities were still considered as newcomers in the field. Moreover, the government’s slow response to the education export scene in Finland was criticised. The experts thought that the government had not reacted quickly enough to the growth of the field, of which potential had been seen already in the early 2000s.

“In my opinion, we have had a slow reaction to all the success of PISA and other things that could have been started much, much more strongly twenty years ago.” (E4)

“This is still a young industry, and we are not accustomed to this. This has been done by many countries in the world for ten years, even a hundred years, and we have started like yesterday.” (E2)

The lack of resources was not only seen as a limitation to the university sector, but also to the operating agents at a national level. For instance, criticism towards ‘Education Finland’, and the opinion of its limited resources, were shared within the experts.

“‘Education Finland’ may be even more in the project world than in the fact that now we really would have to think about how to turn this [education export] into business. And then, of course, there is a lack of resources; ‘Education Finland’ is not resourced enough, there is not enough staff to serve this field.” (E7)

In addition to the national resource issues, ethical considerations on these resources’ allocation in the Finnish education export industry were acknowledged, too. As experts indicated, traditionally, the Finnish education has been based on free education, and universities were built on sharing knowledge and research, rather than for doing commercial activities, such as education export. Therefore, this was seen as a problematic value conflict in the education export at universities because resources could not principally be allocated to the field. Due to the main activities of the institution, universities were seen as rigid organisations lacking agility, which was experienced as a

problem in the business of education export. In this manner, companies were seen as having an advantage over universities.

“For the university, education export is not the main activity. Instead, it is to teach and research students and things like that. So, that is how our experts, professors, and teachers, get involved in these trainings. Thus, in a way, finding their time and then aligning it with the clients’ schedules is a practical challenge.” (E1)

“We can’t be so agile because we do not have the kind of staff to make us offers or content, for example, or whatever companies can have. All the experts are already employed in the university and teach courses, and so on.” (E4)

However, another value conflict that was mentioned by the experts was due to the government’s aims to grow the education export sector in Finnish universities, which were not experiences as in line with the support the universities perceived. For instance, project funding was not seen as sufficient in the education export sector, however, it was still commonly used.

“If you want to do big, then you should also get support to do it big.” (E2)

“Once you are used to outside financing and project financing, how is it also seen as being able to actually be sold to someone outside. That is not always about project money. That is something where is a place to think about.” (E4)

As part of the ethical issues, the marketing authorisation of education export in Finland was told to be awarded to all levels of education, which was seen as problematic. As mentioned by several experts, it was questionable, that the UASs, for example, could export education from Finland to abroad, which, however, in the Finnish context and under the Finnish legislation, was licenced to the universities’ domain only.

“In practice, in Finland we have the responsibility for education, which determines, for example, which field of in-service education each organisation can provide in Finland [...] It is confusing, however, that the UASs sell the exact same teacher education abroad. [...] When we go over the border, in the sense, it is also as a troublesome side of the competition,

that now then those agents, no matter who, meet the demand of Finnish education export.” (E6)

“All the levels of education just want to sell a lot [...] and there have been questionable things that vocational training, for example, may have provided teacher training, and they don't even have a license to do so in Finland. Therefore, it is a question whether it is ethical at all.” (E4)

Further, compared to the business world and related to the staff, the experts told that exporting education required diverse expertise, which universities were sometimes lacking. Gaps in skills, that were experienced as required in education export – such as sales skills, customer relationship management as well as acquisition of new customers – was seen as problematic in the field.

“Sales skills could be much, much better. We may have only a very few sales professionals who strongly, from a business perspective, master the sales and the process that it may be.” (E4)

“Sales management, new customer acquisition, customer relationship management are at a completely different level in export companies than at universities. This is something we could develop in these networks to a more professional direction. But of course, universities are not robust marketing machines of international trade, and they also should not, but that is where we could make a big leap to this day in many ways.” (E2)

In general, Finland's high price level was experienced as a problem in exporting education on a global scale. In contrast to other countries' education export products, Finland and Finnish education was seen as expensive. Since Finland was expressed as incapable in competing on price, it was considered as a requirement to stand out in terms of quality. The experts considered the quality of Finnish education export and its cooperation by making it an opportunity to stand out in the world. However, the multitude of the small agents with limited resources in the Finnish education export was seen as a problem for this. The more players in the field, the more price competition existed, which was experienced as disadvantageous to the whole field.

“The price level, it is not just a university problem, but a Finnish problem. Competition is very fierce in Asia and other countries, so the price level

should be quite low to get to the market. But perhaps it is being sought to emphasise the quality side, that we will then become of better quality than somewhere else.” (E1)

“We do pretty much a disservice to the world, when we have these one- and two-man orchestras or two-woman orchestras that do education export” (E5)

“If we had found exactly the same customer for two Finns, then it is the price that matters – if the neighbor has offered it at one price, then the only thing to compete with is to give it a little cheaper, which creates a spiral, which is in fact is disadvantageous for all Finns, because market prices are being trampled on.” (E6)

“In my opinion, the big challenge associated with Finnish education export is that there are a lot of small players in Finland and all of them are almost unprofitable.” (E8)

Because Finland was perceived as a small country with comparatively small number of active exporters of education, the lack of cooperation between the agents was seen as a disservice issue for Finland globally. The possibilities of Finland in being able to rely on single organisation were seen unlikely, compared to the other countries with the world-famous universities.

“Finland is really, really small even if you take the whole country as a single unit. And the notoriety is not the same, as we do not have ‘Harvards’ and ‘Oxfords’. We do not have the kind of solid export articles on which any university could rely on.” (E5)

“If we want to get those big projects, a billion-dollar business, then Finnish agents should all work together on a large scale. Otherwise, it will not work.” (E8)

In addition, challenges due to the geographical location of the country were raised. Also, the decrease in birth rates was mentioned as a challenge in the future of education export in Finland. Therefore, from an international perspective, cooperation in Finland was seen as important.

“We are here in Finland on the edge of Europe, so how do people find us, and our skills? [...] Our age groups are shrinking, so we will not have so many Finnish university students in the future. If we do not cooperate, in a few years' time we will inevitably have to close the doors when we will not have students. So, we would need that kind of attractiveness for international students, master's degree students, undergraduate students...” (E4)

According to the experts, because the idea behind education export has primarily been based on national education systems, that are mostly run by national governments, the field has been heavily dependable on the public sector and their agents. This feature was believed to make the industry as inflexible and unpredictable, as public administrations of different countries were in many cases perceived as complicated clients, which further made the education export into a complex business field.

“Exporting education is not easy, and one of the challenges is that the public sector is easily there as customers and they may not have the money, and then there may be surprising turns. [...] The challenge in the education sector, compared to other sectors, where things are sold to companies, B2B trade and it is steady in every country, so it is much more stable and maybe clearer. Here, however, when it comes to trade with the public administration, it has these certain commercials that need to be tolerated and understood as what this export of education is.” (E8)

Furthermore, the ambiguity of the terminology and its contents was experienced as a threat or delay element for the future of Finnish education export, too.

“Resolving this issue is, in my view, the path to the progress of education export.” (E5)

5.5. Cultural, Social, Economic, and Symbolic Capital in Education Export

This chapter examines Finnish education export from the perspectives of economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital. According to the experts, the education export in Finland was based on applying and sharing the Finnish expertise to other countries. In the export process, education was sold as product that was not ready-made, instead it

was used as a capital to create something new that would fit the aimed cultural context. The experts considered that the other countries exported their education per se, but Finland exported the educational knowledge, which equated to cultural capital. In addition, Finnishness itself was seen and utilised as cultural capital. Therefore, the process of building the Finnish brand was seen as an integral part of education export, too.

“Finnish education, on the other hand, in the teacher sector in particular, is that we try to tailor those best Finnish doctrines to fit the local level.” (E7)

“In my opinion, it [education export] can be done anywhere and with anyone, because education is what makes people think for themselves, act based on research and knowledge, to better understand what is best in their context. [...] We do not go anywhere to say how to do things or how they should be done, but we can share our understanding and experience. [...] I think education is the key to everything.” (E2)

“Finnishness is valued, Finnish education is valued, and we are trusted as people and companies.” (E8)

Although the Finnish education export involved the export of Finnish cultural capital, the cultural capital of the target country also played an essential role in the process. To ensure ethics, the experts identified the importance of the cultural consideration of the international customers when exporting education from Finland.

“This cannot be done without [paying attention to the cultural context]. And, of course, activity always in the background is guided by academic values, respect for people, research, ethics.” (E2)

As an integral part of the education export process, most experts pinpointed the relevance of social and interaction skills. Hence, without the existence of cultural and social capital, exporting education was seen impossible.

“Interaction skills are the most important.” (E1)

“People do the business actions; it is not done with a machine. In that sense, being with people and interaction skills are a really important thing.” (E8)

“There has to be respect and interest for other people. I think everything else can be learned.” (E2)

In accordance with social capital, the experts described Finnish education export as a personalised activity. Therefore, the value of social capital within the field of education export in Finland was also experienced as profitable in terms of the business and its opportunities for cooperation, too.

“Because this is a small circle, who [experts of education export] in Finland actively export education, we all fully know each other. Thus, this is such a personalised relationship with these people who do this and are in the industry. [...] Of course, when this is a personalised relationship, of course it means that I first grab the phone and call the people I have worked with before.” (E7)

In addition, social capital in a form of cooperation was seen as a key to add cultural capital to education export. Thus, the utilisation of social capital in education export was also seen as beneficial because of the cultural capital it produced.

“Sure, this is business, but at the same time we see that the business will improve as we cooperate.” (E7)

Together with the lack of financial resources and funding, the amount of economic capital that Finnish universities invested in the industry of education export, seemed to be low in contrast to other countries.

“Then there are these big things of financiers. At this moment, the university must commercialise itself, it must pay for all the product development itself, and there are even such restrictions that the government does not allocate product development money to it.” (E3)

At the same time as the Finnish universities exported their education, they exchanged their cultural capital with economic capital of other countries. Simultaneously, social capital was increased within both parties. The continuous development of the capitals could be seen as an integral part of education export. The Finnish education export was

expressed as a for-profit business and aimed for growing the economic capital of the education exporter. Still, the development of other capitals was hoped as a by-product.

“In the process of a new customer contact, I think, you have to be able to have to your eyes and ears open, listen and study and acquire the knowledge.” (E4)

“Ideally, education export projects function always two-ways. Therefore, this whole Finnish term education export is disgusting in my opinion. It somehow reflects a one-way thing like “we are just taking something out of here”, but we have had the best feedback from experience when it worked reciprocally and it was more of a co-creation or co-evaluation type, when the knowledge and expertise as well are appreciated that those experts in the local organisation have. At best, we are creating good cooperation when they are then combined with our expertise.” (E6)

“What we can learn from each other is also strive for us, that it is also reciprocal that our lecturers also like it, and these people who are involved with us as experts that they also learn from our participants. We also strive to make that expert get something out of it.” (E7)

However, in effect, cultural capital was not always experienced to correlate with the perceived economic capital of the education export processes. Nevertheless, education export was still perceived as important and useful activity due to the increased cultural capital which evolved in the process.

“Although that success may not always be measured in euros, it can be measured in the expertise that we have accumulated in this process.” (E7)

“For us, the best experiences are not related to how many hundreds of thousands big the trade is, it is kind of a great bonus. Our best experiences are related to the fact that there are long, multi-year friendships with the members of those organisations, and there is a clear angle of entry that we can help and we can somehow contribute to it and we also get that our teachers have very good feelings usually after their projects that they too are surprised that “hey I got a whole new flow to my own teaching” and so that it’s not like anything “well I went there to throw it and came away” – type.” (E5)

While the export of education generated economic capital for the university, it generated common capital for the society. One expert described the export of education as an excellent way to distribute the Finnish capital to the rest of the world to build a better place to live for all. They also hoped their children would understand the worth of the Finnish education and use this capital they received through the Finnish education, for a good cause in the future. Consequently, this thought represented the symbolic capital, which the Finnish education and its export produced. Finnish education and its export served as value that the expert held within their culture.

“You are in such a privileged position when you get into a free school, the best school system in the world, you have the best teachers in the world, you do not know how privileged you are, and when you get this capital, I hope you use it so that you try to make this world a better place. You have this opportunity, not all children have this.” (E2)

6. DISCUSSION

The focus of this master’s thesis was on universities as exporters of Finnish education with the main emphasis on the cooperation, including networks and other cooperative arrangements, practiced in the field. From an international perspective, the education export in Finland and especially in the context of universities is a young business field consisting of unique characteristics, that can be investigated from various viewpoints. In this study, cooperation was analysed from the perspectives of opportunities, challenges, and problems.

Compared to other countries exporting education, Finnish education export has a special position in a global context indicated by this and previous studies (Lönngqvist et al., 2018; Schatz, 2015). Therefore, it cannot be directly compared to education export in other countries. Due to the young age of the Finnish education export, the industry is still constantly evolving, thereby these research results should be considered in relation to the time of the study. Particularly, an important issue to note is that the study was conducted under the global COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, it was impossible to investigate the themes related to the cooperation in the field without close relation to these restrictions. In addition, it can be concluded from the results that the existing opportunities, challenges, and problems related to Finnish education export are reflected into the cooperation of the field as well.

Firstly, the experts considered education export as other than core business of the universities, and support of the Finnish government for becoming active in the field as insufficient. This inevitably affected the cooperative arrangements, which is also emphasised in earlier research (Schatz, 2015). In contrast, even though the EDUFI (2020) claims that business expertise has been strengthened at universities and in the field of education export, many experts still experienced business expertise at universities as incompetent. Even though the adaptations to the Universities Act (2009; Yliopistolaki 24.7.2009/558) have been claimed to have modified the common boundary conditions to the education export actions across universities in Finland (Välilmaa et al., 2014; Rinne, 2010), the field still seems to face challenges that further negatively affect the cooperation. For instance, 'Education Finland' as a supporting network for Finnish education export at universities was experienced as insufficient, and it was claimed to approach education export from a different perspective that was needed. The experts hoped that the process to build cooperation would have started from a more practical level.

Moreover, the field of Finnish higher education consists of public institutions, which, internationally observed, is a unique feature (MOEC, 2021b). Private universities can use capital very differently from public ones, which are dependent on outside funding (Stachowiak-Kudła & Kudła, 2017). This can be one reason for the challenges in education export in Finland where universities are public and education traditionally non-profit, free of charge, and comparatively equal for everyone (Schatz, 2015). The situation is different in other countries with private universities, which possibly makes exporting education as business simpler in practice.

However, the variety of the products in the Finnish education export at universities, defined by the experts, followed the description made earlier by Schatz (2015). The products served as the basis for the cooperation between the agents in the field. Due to the pandemic, the international business sector, including education export, had been strongly affected on both national and international levels. After the difficult start, the experts agreed with the EDUFI (2020) that the pandemic had created new product openings in the Finnish education export scene and increased the demand on digital learning and teaching services.

The EDUFI (2020) states, that involvement of the collaborators in expansive and versatile partnerships has become increasingly important in the Finnish education export. As one of the main guidelines of the Finnish education export in the following years, the EDUFI (2020) has suggested creating possibilities for common consortia and

partnerships. Indeed, according to the experts, the cooperation in Finnish education export at universities extended from the universities' own faculty-specific education export working groups to national consortia. No mention of international education export networks was included in the interviews. This is in line with the previous literature, in which, Finnish agents have been claimed to be commonly absent in the international networks in the field of education export (EDUFI, 2020b). Thus, experts' views about international networks as cooperative arrangements with their opportunities and challenges would be beneficial to research in the future.

As national cooperation partners of education export, the experts highly praised the importance of the Finnish prestige services, with reference to the Finnish embassies and other ambassadors and employees of the delegations abroad. In particular, the 'Team Finland Knowledge' –network was held as a notable support for Finnish education export. Hence, in the future research, it would be interesting to pay more attention to the network and its experts' thoughts concerning Finnish education export to further development.

The study indicated that through national consortia, the commercial activities had been separated from other functions of the universities inside the organisations. In this manner, universities had a chance to incorporate commercial operations such as education export under their operations. For instance, the University of Helsinki had incorporated its education export and continuing education operations to 'HY+', and 'Finland University' had been established to unite the University of Turku, University of Eastern Finland, and Tampere University together into a university consortium. As a successful cooperative arrangement mentioned by most experts, a teacher education cooperation project in 2017 with Saudi Arabia was implemented in cooperation with Finland University and HY+.

Originally, the Finnish education system and Finnish universities were built for other than commercial purposes. From the perspectives of maintaining ethics, a separate company, such as HY+ and Finland University, could therefore be seen as a useful function to segregate international profit-oriented education from free national education. This has also been emphasised by the MOEC (2020). As follows, the ultimate ideology of the Finnish education is preserved, as the business actions and education export in Finnish universities are inequitable due to the ultimate mission of the university.

The international interest towards Finnish education seemed to be strongly tied with the country's success in the PISA results published by the OECD. In an international context, good reputation of the university, based on the higher education rankings, was perceived to be essential to get customers in the education export. Therefore, also in Finland, a good reputation of the university served as an advantage for cooperation matters, as it

made the organisation an internationally valued partner, that is also supported by Schatz (2015).

In accordance with the previous studies (Finnish Government, 2019; Schatz, 2016; Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009), experts hold Finnish culture, and Finnishness as a brand, as an important part and strategy tool for exporting Finnish education. Also, the international customers seemed to be interested in Finland, its culture and Finnishness itself. In a global perspective, the Finnish brand itself is observed as valuable. Even though the experts underlined the Finnish education export as high quality, Schatz's (2016) critical questioning of Finnish brand relying rather on "Finnishness" as a trade quality instead of educational research, was lacking even in this research, and should be further investigated.

When reading between the lines of the interviewees, it seemed, that the motives in exporting Finnish education varied depending on the customer. According to the experts, some of the customers clearly approached the universities with the idea of getting "the best quality with the cheapest price". However, Finnish education export is rather based on quality and, due to the high price level of the country, is incapable to compete on price compared to many countries in Asia, for example. In the future, it would be interesting to study the motives and aims behind different countries for importing Finnish education in the first place. It can be asked whether the customers of the Finnish education export primarily wanted to develop their own education system, or whether they were more interested in making use of the "quality stamp" of the Finnish education.

As Schatz (2015) has pointed out, communication and cooperation in the Finnish education export scene has proven to be difficult, which has created competition between the Finnish education exporters. According to this research, this was noticeable between the universities and UASs in Finland. From a global perspective, the Finnish dual model of higher education is one of the specialties and a less known feature of the Finnish education system, and it seemed to create challenges in exporting education. For instance, the experts indicated that the UASs exported education, which under the Finnish legislation was out of their responsibility and even forbidden inside Finnish national borders. This clearly created a schism and negatively experienced competition between the Finnish universities and UASs and should be further investigated. In addition, the opportunities of the dual model and UASs in the Finnish education export, as well as cooperation between the UASs and universities, remained unexamined. Likewise, the thoughts and experiences of experts representing UASs, would be

interesting and fruitful future research topics also recommended by some of the interviewees.

According to this study, creating a cooperation within Finns was experienced as rather easy and fast, due to the shared cultural factors and strong built-in trust of the national agents, and discussing and agreeing on issues happened based on the content. However, for example, the field still lacked wide education export related consortium within the Finnish universities. Namely, operations of the university consortium 'Finland University' were discontinued from 2020 and responsibilities were distributed back to the member universities (Finland University, 2020). The decision to discontinue a consortium of many universities is surprising, and it seemed to be taking Finnish education export to a different direction as is outlined at the national level. Also, the lack of common consortia and discontinuation of existing ones seemed to be inconsistent with the national education export strategy and research conducted in the field, in which cooperation has strongly been emphasised already since the beginning of Finnish education export.

However, at the time of the interviews, some universities seemed to focus on building local and regional cooperative arrangements in exchange for national ones. Also, the experts revealed the plan of having a national locomotive model as the main cooperative arrangement within Finnish universities promoting their education export in the future, which HY+ was mentioned to be openly willing to operate. It remained to be seen as if this will become the operating model to support the export of higher education in the following years, planned by the MOEC and Education Finland (EDUFI, 2020b). In cooperation, this study supported the EDUFI's claim of mutual networking being both an opportunity and a challenge in Finnish education export at the same time (EDUFI, 2020b).

From an international perspective, experts experienced education export as a competitive industry. This is not a surprise, as international competition is claimed to play an enormous role in today's capitalistic world, and education export practices have been based on neo-liberal values from which even universities have been excludable (Schatz, 2015). However, when asked about education export in Finland, most experts perceived the field to be rather non-competitive within the agents, due to the small size of the country. Apparently, the answers would have been different if asked some years ago, as a shift from a competitive environment to a more cooperative one was seen among the experts. According to Schatz (2015), Finnish education export has suffered from the lack of communication and coordination, which has led to an increased competition rather than cooperation among similar education exporters especially in the university sector (Schatz, 2015). Therefore, it would be interesting to study if the situation since has shifted

to another direction, and if the foundation of the university consortium Finland University and later its discontinuation, have influenced the outcome.

Nevertheless, it seemed, that most previous research related to Finnish education export, in which the participants of this study had participated, had been focused rather on the problems and challenges of the field. Some interviewees told that the MOEC asked about these annually, which seemed to irritate the experts. For that reason, a stronger focus could be rather based on the opportunities and strengths, the positive sides, of Finnish education export.

The study concluded that the field lacks not only cooperation between education exporters, but also competition between them. Also, the national clusters set by the government were based more on sharing good practices instead of the commercial cooperation. However, Finnish education export was a comparatively young, wide, and multidisciplinary research area, which is constantly evolving. Supporting the research gap mentioned by Juusola and Nokkala (2019), to develop and improve the field, the experiences of the administrative staff implementing the education export activities at HEIs should further be studied.

In Finnish education export, cultural capital consisted of a combination of the Finnish expertise and Finnishness itself and served as the export product of the business. The specialty of Finnish education export lied in the fact that the cultural context of the target country was also considered and utilised throughout the process. However, social capital proved to be the most important tool in promoting the business, since socialising and interaction skills were acknowledged as the basis for the education export activities. In return to exporting education, economic capital was obtained in the form of money. In conclusion, Finnish education and its export produced symbolic capital.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this master's thesis was to investigate universities as exporters of Finnish education from perspectives of experts. The study focused on education export at universities, with the main emphasis on the cooperation arranged in the field. In addition, the Finnish education export was conceptualised using cultural, social, economic, and symbolic capitals.

The findings of the thematic analysis were categorised into five major themes: education export at Finnish universities, cooperative arrangements, opportunities and challenges of cooperation, problems of exporting Finnish education, and cultural, social, economic, and symbolic capital in education export.

The study concluded that the experts from Finnish universities defined education export as a business-related education, in which the payer is someone other than a Finnish stakeholder, and the revenue is generated from the sources outside of Finland. Education export at Finnish universities was divided under three main categories: (1) educational visits, (2) training programmes, and (3) curriculum design.

The study indicated that the elements that contributed arranging cooperation in Finnish education export were (a) well-known partnerships, (b) cultural similarities, (c) trust, and (d) win-win situations.

The cooperative arrangements at Finnish universities' education export could be divided into two types: (1) commercial profit-oriented business, and (2) sharing of good practices and information. In the first, the focus was on an efficient disposal of resources, in forms of joint marketing and implementations, trade fair trips, and joint companies. Whereas the second was focused on sharing good practices and information via networks. Further, the context of both types of cooperation in the Finnish education export could be categorised into local, regional, and national levels.

The study indicated that opportunities and challenges for cooperation in Finnish education export at universities were considered as partly overlapping. In general, cooperation in Finnish education export was seen as an important issue with opportunities profiting the whole industry in Finland. However, several challenges for concrete cooperation were perceived.

Cooperation in the Finnish education export at universities was seen as an opportunity due to the strength it perceived to add to the university, in terms of increased size as an exporter of education with added resources. Simultaneously, visibility and reputation of the university were experienced as increased. In cooperation, the responsibilities and resources within the agents were shared, thus cooperation served as a risk management for the parties involved. With cooperation that was based on sharing experiences and information, mistakes could be prevented, and resources saved.

Cooperation in the Finnish education export at universities was seen as a challenge due to the high price level of Finland and limited resources of the institutions. Other structural boundary condition setting obstacles to cooperation was found in the bureaucratic

regulations in trade, including the entry policies of Finland. Besides, the differences of the Finnish education system compared to other countries, and the specialty of the dual model of the Finnish HEI's was experienced as challenging for international cooperation.

The competitive environment of the field was rather seen as an opportunity for cooperation. Experts experienced the competition among Finnish education export agents as moderate compared to the international ones. Factors that encouraged universities to cooperating, instead of competing, within other education export agents, were found in the small size of Finland and the low number of universities, as well as the diversity of different education export agents. In addition, a competitive situation created from outside encouraged Finnish agents to cooperate with each other. Further, formal ways of networking reduced competition and increased cooperation between the agents, and vice versa.

The study indicated that the considered problems with Finnish education export at universities were the lack of national support structures related to limited resources and inappropriate and insufficient funding. The problems were seen to be related to the young age of the industry. For instance, value conflicts and ethical considerations concerning Finnish universities as exporters of education and resource allocation caused problems from time to time. The government's aims with the Finnish education export sector at Finnish universities with the support the universities perceived was experienced contradictory. Another problem related to ethical issues was that Finland's internal principles and rules on education were contradictory to the export of education abroad.

According to the study, universities staff was experienced to lack of diverse expertise needed in education export. In addition, Finland's high price level, the multitude of small agents with limited resources, and price competition were perceived as problems of the field. The field was claimed to lack of cooperation within the agents. Other problems were related to the geographical location of the country and the complexity of the business field and typical partners. Lastly, the indeterminacy of the terminology and its contents were experienced as problematic.

In the future, to find solutions to existing problems in Finnish education export, practical challenges need to be addressed from the perspectives of all stakeholders, and cooperation in the field of education should be improved and expanded. Future decisions must encourage cooperation and create opportunities for cooperation without limiting it. The development of the Finnish sales expertise should further be strengthened, and entry practices need to be developed. Attention must be paid to the price competition without compromising the quality of Finnish education export, which is known in the world.

Finally, challenges and problems need to be addressed from the perspective of opportunities, which Finland, as a young and valued agent, has a wide range of.

Based on this master's thesis, possibilities for future research could cover the Finnish prestige services, such as the 'Team Finland Knowledge' –network, and their potential as export developers, which was also praised by the experts. Also, experts' views about the international networks as cooperative arrangements, which were absent in this study, would be beneficial to consider in future research. Another possible research topic that appeared, should be focused on the target countries and their motives, and aims, to import Finnish education, to better meet the demand of the customer-driven business. The possible locomotive model of the future also offers new opportunities for research into Finnish education export.

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Interview questions

First

1. Could you tell me briefly about yourself and your work in education export?
2. Could you define with your own words the concept of *Finnish education export*?
3. Could you tell me, what kind of education export is carried out in your university?

Education Export –Cooperation and Networks at the University of the Interviewee

4. What kind of cooperation is conducted at your university with other agents in the field of education export?
5. Could you tell me, how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the cooperation in education export?
6. Could you tell me about the education export consortium *Finland University*, which practices were discontinued in 2020? (What was involved in its practices? Why was it discontinued? How has cooperation within the universities continued ever since?)
7. What kind of practices in cooperation in education export are functional and what are not? Why?

The Opportunities and Challenges of Education Export Cooperation

8. In your opinion, what makes cooperation between education exporters profitable if anything? (Financially and non-financially)
9. Are there some problems or challenges involved in education export and if yes, how?
10. Have you noticed competition between Finnish education exporters? (If yes, how has it appeared and what is your opinion of competition in Finnish education export scene?)
11. What kind of networks or partnerships would Finnish universities benefit from in Finland and abroad?

Skills and Knowledge and the Meaning of Cultural Context in Education Export

12. What kind of skills and knowledge are required in education export?
13. How is the cultural context (target country, culture, and language of education export) considered in Finnish education export?
14. How does the future of Finnish education export look like?

In conclusion

15. Is there something you would like to add concerning education export, cooperation, or related topics?