

**Barriers of International Graduates seeking
Employment after graduation:**

A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Many international students are moving abroad to get higher qualification and obtain relevant field jobs, which help them get permanent residency. To get better study and employment opportunities, many international students have a dream in their mind when they pack their bags and want to come abroad with their many hopes and aspirations. Many international students come to New Zealand to improve their standard of living, obtain better qualification, employment, and settle into the country. A majority of overseas students select study option to migrate into the host country and then obtain employment related to their qualifications. However, this is not a true story of every international student who comes abroad to fulfil their dreams. The families of international students invested a large amount in their studies with the hope of getting a decent job to pay off their loans.

In international student' lives, the transition from completing the education to work is a critical phase in which they encounter several hurdles in the host country labour market. Gribble et al. (2017), suggested that the objective of the host country is to promote the growth in the enrolment of international students and at the same time, and they get support from the government to obtain work experience. For many developing countries, graduate employment is becoming a significant issue in the host country. This study focused on identifying the problems international students encountered while seeking employment after completing their studies in New Zealand. According to the statistics on international students, India is a leading country after China from where international students come to study and considered an important resource that benefits both the host country and the home country.

Much of the literature has discussed and covered international graduates' transitions into the education system in New Zealand and addressed their academic challenges, cultural shock, and workplace challenges (e.g. Furnham, 2010; Woodbridge & Bland, 2010). However, little research has been performed on the importance of international graduates' employment hurdle experiences after graduation. After China, India is becoming increasingly important as a player in the trade environment. In general, international students are considered an essential part of a country's social, academic, and economic growth. After having a rapid growth in the number of Indian international students, they often face many challenges while looking for post-study employment in New Zealand (Nanayakkara, 2018). They invested a huge amount by taking student loan for their tertiary education with the expectation of getting a job that matches their qualifications. The moment they graduate from university, their real struggle starts to look for a dream job that matches their qualification in New Zealand. Therefore, this research investigated the employment experiences and perspectives of Indian graduate students after completing their studies in New Zealand (Aotearoa) and identified the potential employment barriers.

The study's methodology employed a systematic literature review to answer the research question. The systematic literature review explored research problems by defining, reviewing, monitoring, and analysing all relevant studies published between 2009 and 2020 on the topic related to employment barriers and international students' experiences.

Thematic analysis was applied to develop the findings and revealed many themes and sub-themes that indicated the employment challenges faced by Indian graduates. Social capital (networks), local work experience, visa status, discrimination, language, skills, and qualifications were found to be crucial when seeking a relevant job after graduation. This study's findings have the potential to be a guide for novice international students seeking appropriate employment in New Zealand.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

OECD	Organisation for Economic and Cooperation and Development
IS	International Student
NESB	Non-English-speaking background
PR	Permanent Residence/ Permanent Resident/ Permanent Residency
NZ	New Zealand
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
Kiwi	Slang term for the people of New Zealand
SJS	Student Job Search

ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed by:

.....

Sugandha Sofat

Dated: 25th February 2021

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

New Zealand is considered to be of the few countries in the world to witness immigration from developing regions such as Asia and the Pacific Islands (Pio, 2005). According to Statistics New Zealand (2019), the estimates of migrant (on work visas and student visas) arrivals in the year ending January 2019 (compared with January 2018 year) were 151,600 ($\pm 1,500$), up six percent. In 2018, the number reflects that China is a leading country for migration arrivals around 17,500 (± 400) arriving in New Zealand, followed by India with 14,700 (± 200) migrants. With the increasing demand for higher education, a lack of local opportunities has led Indian students to pursue higher education abroad (Hercog and Van de Laar, 2016). For migrants from India, New Zealand has been considered a settlement destination; however, most Indian migrants still encounter challenges to the settlement that came out in migration process (Nayar & Sterling, 2013).

Migration is a two-way process, where the host society does not remain unaffected except the size and demographic patterns and which helps many migrants to enhance their standard of living and work-life balance, and develop skill sets and social mobility. It can also mitigate demographic pressures for destination countries, produce tax benefits, and foster cultural exchanges, and for countries of origin, migration can help through knowledge transfers, remittances, investments and strengthened trade ties (Suter & Jandl, 2008). For the home countries, migrants benefit them in the form of remittances, trade networks and with better skills, education and experiences gained during their time in host country.

Research has shown that many Asian international students come to host countries with high hopes of gaining permanent residency (PR) through the channel of a better qualification (Baas, 2006; Dyer & Lu, 2010; Joseph, 2016). However, they often encounter difficulties in adjusting to their new cultural environment. This dissertation begins with explaining the background of migrants, to provide a broad picture, as well as of international students, their learning experiences, and difficulties that they face while looking for jobs upon graduation. The study aims to explore the potential barriers to employment experienced by international graduate students. The findings of this research will be beneficial for myself as well as for other international students who face employment difficulties in New Zealand. Additionally, the findings will be useful for future Indian students who would like to explore the employment experiences recorded in previous studies, so they can more successfully undertake study overseas.

As per Statistics New Zealand (2019), there has been a substantial rise in the number of migrants and international students studying in New Zealand outside their home country. The trends have

shifted dramatically in terms of where they move to, and the combination of host and sending countries (Wadhwa, 2016). There are many motivation factors associated with international migrants' decisions to move overseas. The opportunity to obtain a higher qualification in an English-speaking environment, social media influences, improved standard of living, employment opportunities, and migration pathways are primary motivating factors (Stier & Börjesson, 2010). Currently, many international students are self-supporting and, in the host country they seek a return investment in the form of employment (Tran et al., 2020). Many factors attract and encourage international students in their selection and decision to study overseas. The factor that attracts many migrants is obtaining permanent residency to settle in the host country. NESB students can acquire a higher qualification in an English-speaking country.

In many host countries, the increasing demand for international students for jobs after tertiary study has become a significant concern. Now the concern has shifted to employment challenges instead of academic adjustments into the host country. Many recent graduates seek industry knowledge, attributes and skills that help them to participate in the host country labour market instead of focusing more on grades or degrees (Velasco, 2012). Because many employers in the host country are not even interested in looking for the grade, they need people who have industry knowledge and understand market dynamics which benefits to their company and to the country's economy. In a dynamic global labour market, foreign graduates are especially looking for employment opportunities after completing their educations (Ng et al., 2019).

The present study intended to explore the barriers around the employment of international graduates upon graduation by identifying and analysing the literature exploring the topic of international students' experiences on employment issues; the review was undertaken on research published in the previous ten years. The most appropriate approach to conduct this study was guided by Thomas and Harden (2008) who argue that the *systematic literature review* as it is a comprehensive and rigorous approach to review the literature that focuses on a particular area of study. This methodology is used to explain each step involved in a systematic literature review as defined by (Brereton et al., 2007). It involves the steps for researching, reviewing, assessing, recording, applying inclusion and exclusion requirements, and summarising the findings by employing thematic analysis (Staples & Niazi, 2007). The thematic analysis was conducted on data from journal articles published from 2009 to 2020, through which themes or patterns from the collected data were identified, analysed, and organised.

To meet the research goals, the study sought to address the main research question:

What barriers do Indian international graduates face while seeking relevant job after graduation in New Zealand?

1.2 Dissertation Outline

This dissertation is divided into five main chapters including an introduction, literature review, research methodology, findings, and discussion and conclusion.

Chapter 1 provides the background to this research, and the objective in relation to answering the research question. It gave a brief introduction of New Zealand immigration and highlighted migrant data and the growth of Indian immigrants in New Zealand.

Chapter 2 explores the literature related to the research topic, and covers many important factors about this research, using both peer reviewed and grey literature. The chapter describes and summarises the dominant literature on migrants, student migrants, and their employment barriers. Explanations of important terms such as “perceptions of international students and migrants”, “their experiences while seeking jobs” are presented in this chapter.

Chapter 3 presents the method adopted for the data collection and provide detailed information on the research design. The ontological view of relativism with the epistemological position of constructivism and interpretivism as preferred research paradigms are explained. This chapter explores how journal articles were found, categorised, and synthesised based on the primary findings. Further, this chapter explains the data collection process by using a systematic literature review. The section also details the process of conducting the systematic literature review and follows the guideline to ensure robustness (Okoli, 2015). Further, the section provides detailed information on a thematic analysis that was employed to interpret the data.

Chapter four is dedicated to the research findings of this study derived from the collected data. A thematic approach was applied to generate themes after analysing all the relevant data on students’ experiences and attitudes in New Zealand. This chapter summarise the process of systematic literature review and presents the researching findings. Further, the section introduced seven key themes developed during the data analysis in this study.

Chapter five presents the discussion of the findings within the context of the literature and considering future investigation and explaining the shortcomings of this research. The chapter also provides a summary that gives a brief overview of the research question, including the study’s relevance and limitations. Further this chapter concludes with the limitations of the study, recommendations to international students, educational institutions, and the government for future for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

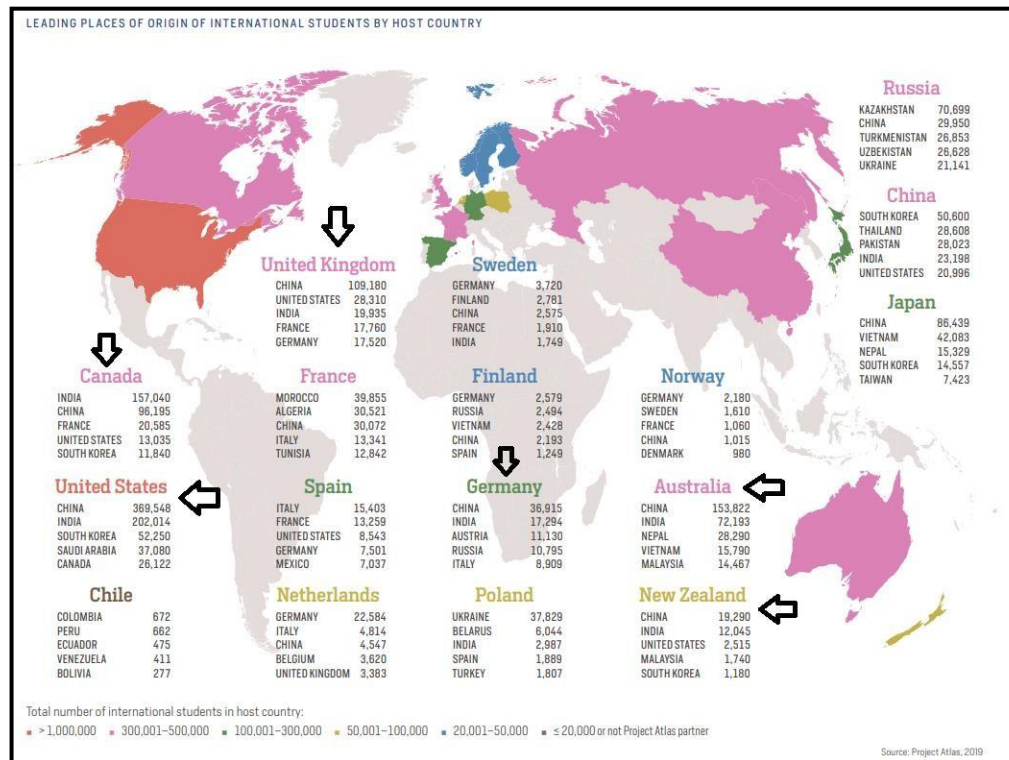
2.1 Introduction

This section provides a critical review of the extant literature on migrant barriers that migrants encounter and their problems in seeking a job in a host country's labour market. Migration is a two-way process, where the host society does not remain unaffected except the size and demographic patterns and which helps many migrants to enhance their standard of living and work-life balance, and develop skill sets and social mobility and also provides benefits to migrants, destination countries and countries of origin (Mutu, 2018). There are many factors such as social, economic, and political which influence the cross-border movement of migrant either in their country of origin or in the host country (Wickramasekara, 2002). In most cases, they cannot fulfil their aspirations or secure their desired employment because they face cultural and structural difficulties in language, social connections, employers discriminated behaviour, lack of market experience (Bass, 2006).

Over the past three decades, between 1998 and 2018, the number of overseas international students increased on average by 4.8% per year. In 2018 as per the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2020), the number had been increased and recorded as 5.6 million overseas students who crossed a border worldwide to study. From the Figure 1, it is evident that China and India are the two main central countries with contributing over 30% of all students who enrolled in OECD countries and contributed as the bulk of the Asian community in New Zealand. Figure 1 presents the majority of international students in the host country coming from China and India, and these countries are considered as leading countries in terms of student mobility.

Figure 1

Number of International Students in Top Destination Countries



From 2019 *Project Atlas Infographics*. (<https://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Insights/Project-Atlas/Explore-Data/Infographics/2019-Project-Atlas-Infographics>). Copyright 2021 by Institute of International Education, Inc.

Immigration laws shaped New Zealand contemporary culture, and therefore New Zealand is considered a leading country for many international students, travelers, and migrants with a diverse community (Butcher & McGrath, 2004). *Migrants* are individuals or groups who leave their home country and settle for a year or more (international) in another country as people can also migrate within that country (internal) (Geis, Uebelmesser & Werding, 2013). Besides being a geographically isolated small country, New Zealand is a developed English-speaking country and recognised as one of the main destination countries where international students can work during and after studies and opportunity to explore the job market and allowing them to bring their families (Immigration New Zealand, 2021). In addition, the policies that provide international students and migrants access to the labour market also provide opportunities for obtaining permanent residence (Lewin et al., 2011).

2.2 International Students and Migrants in New Zealand

New Zealand has a long history of settlers who populated these islands, including Māori and those before them. European arrivals were well before 1840 and established the Treaty of Waitangi to formalise a relationship between Māori and the Crown (Malinen & Johnston, 2011).

Being an international student is sufficiently challenging without the extra pressures of moving overseas (Mesidor & Sly, 2016). According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO n.d), an *international student* is an individual who leave their home country and crosses an international border between two different countries, intending to acquire a permanent residence in the destination or host country. However, international students from this generation are not very keen on limiting themselves to just to obtain a tertiary degree. They also invest in enhancing their skillset and getting a job experience that would benefit their career across the globe, including their own country of origin (Baas, 2006; Beine et al., 2014). Hence, the opportunities in terms of education that the international students are looking for, something that stands out in a large competitive market globally (Gribble et al., 2017). Migrants believe that it would be a bonus in their profile and increase their employment chances globally when they attain an international degree and have overseas work experience. However, their expectations do not match the demand for post-study work opportunities in a host country, which turns out to be a critical obstacle for them.

The education market has become an important research area after a spike in the number of international students worldwide. A large amount of revenue is generated by international students, which is advantageous for cities and communities, and it accelerates the development of real estate and trade markets (Abbott & Silles, 2016). Proactive policies, such as providing migrants and international students with a chance to explore the market conditions and option for obtaining a permanent residency that have been identified by host countries as significant pull factors for overseas students. These factors also provide a chance to explore a diverse community, make new friends, and develop their cross-cultural skills and knowledge (Beech, 2014). International graduates actively anticipate their first position in the real world, but often experience many labour markets challenges.

There are generally two modes of studying abroad. One is short-term in which only a few months are spent in another country, focusing on learning a language or gaining intercultural understanding. The other mode is long-term, that involves relocating entirely to a different country, with a focus on completing a degree to obtain permanent residence (Friesen & Collins, 2017).

Immigration New Zealand (2018) changed the rules for a post-study work visa in 2018; the

country experienced dramatic growth in international students because the length of a post-study work visa depended on qualification level, and the city that student migrants selected to work in for three years and explore the labour market. Because of this, the need for graduates who had specialised skills and related degrees increased in India and other countries (Rafi, 2015). With the growing geographical mobility of the Asian population, this study's focus is on Indians coming to New Zealand for education; the research explores the hurdles experienced when seeking relevant jobs upon graduation.

According to Joseph (2016), New Zealand introduced numerous initiatives to help and support international students in their country by designing programmes such as the Student Job Search (SJS) programme, and graduate programmes to help international students to find jobs upon graduation. Many universities and polytechnical institutions have offered numerous job openings and internship programmes to qualified students.

2.3 Indian Migrants in New Zealand

Many Indian migrants before entering New Zealand often perceive they will acquire higher qualifications, better living standards, employment opportunities, skills, and permanent residency at the host country (Lewin et al., 2011). Indian students in New Zealand have significantly increased in number as they are the bigger portions of that foreign population who look overseas study as an opportunity to obtaining permanent residence (*“Student numbers from India continue to rise,”* 2020).

The total number of accepted student applications to New Zealand for the three years of January 2017 to December 2019 was 42,646. This reflects a substantial increase of 33.3% compared to the numbers from 2014 to 2016. The number of approved student visas for Indians during 2019 was 14,751 compared to 13,450 in 2018 (*“Student numbers from India continue to rise,”* 2020). Based on these figures, it is evident that the average approval rate increased from 52% (2014-2016) to 79% (2017-2019).

The aim for host countries is to promote sustainable and economic growth in foreign student enrolment while creating opportunities for highly qualified students to acquire the work experience in host country's job market (Blackmore et al., 2017). Changing skills and expertise requirements are essential to the growth of knowledge-based economies. Simultaneously, graduates with tertiary qualification have increased in companies due to the ever-growing higher education market.

New Zealand attracts a significant number of students at the tertiary education level. Choosing New Zealand as a study destination, international students have diverse reasons to engage in study

abroad. New Zealand acts as attractive to potential immigrants who desire to become part of its system or gain experience abroad, i.e., obtain a high-quality education and contribute to the New Zealand labour market (*"Why Indian students picking New Zealand as a study abroad destination have increased by 63%,"* 2019). Second, concerning aspects that potentially influence the decisions of Indian immigrants about the duration of their stay in New Zealand, rationales might be related to economic, cultural, and social aspects or a combination of these factors (Jadhav, 2018). Immigration New Zealand (2018), the New Zealand Government relaxed its immigration laws to provide international students an opportunity to stay on post-study open work visas after graduation. This meant immigration policies became more open for skilled migrants. While high-skilled and student migration is often perceived as temporary in nature, there are increasing options for long-term and permanent settlement in New Zealand for those who can succeed in the employment market, especially in sectors that experience labour shortages (Lewin et al., 2011).

2.4 Common Barriers for Migrants Seeking Employment

New Zealand has designed a skilled and essential work visa migration policy (Immigration New Zealand, 2021), to recruit highly skilled migrants as an approach to improving human capital to combat skill shortages (Ho, 2015). This qualified migration programme is based on the principle of human capital theory. It suggests that professional migrants who have accredited skills are more likely to get employed in a role that will allow them to utilise their qualifications and skillset (Almeida et al., 2015).

Many studies have been undertaken on migrants and student migrants' adjustment and experiences in New Zealand, as well as of their higher education-related problems. Several studies have focused on international migrants, especially from countries such as Korea and China, that belongs to the eastern part of Asia (Marginson, 2012). This study explores the barriers of international students while looking for relevant jobs after completing their study. However, this section also explains some common barriers for migrants faced with formidable employment issues in New Zealand.

Many highly skilled and qualified immigrants who entered New Zealand under a points system have been unable to transfer prior skills and knowledge into employment in the country and were bound to work in roles where their work responsibilities did not use their prior experience and qualification. The other option for them was to be unemployed. The main obstacles for such migrants were the employers' lack of appreciation of overseas skills and experiences, and their unwillingness to recruit new immigrants from different ethnicities or nationalities (Kostenko et al., 2012; Akbari & MacDonald, 2014).

Prior research has focused on problems for migrants finding work, rather than explaining why migrants are not accepted in the New Zealand employment market. Little is known about the employment hurdles, and it is not clear what factors affect postgraduate students seeking suitable jobs in their relevant field. Therefore, this research will provide an understanding of the problems that international graduates face upon graduation. The following section discusses some common barriers to finding suitable work for migrants.

2.4.1 Visa Policies and Status

The biggest and most common obstacle for migrants is their visa status. Regardless of qualifications and skills, the visa status is often used to exclude applicants. In national debates worldwide, immigration policy is an ongoing issue that affects migrants in the job market. Several studies have indicated that temporary work permits restrict migrants from exploring the labour market opportunities in their relevant fields (Anderson et al., 2014). However, a substantial amount of literature on immigration policies and policy-driven factors affecting migrants or student migrants has been published. The USA and UK immigration policies are relatively strict, while Australia, Canada and New Zealand has immigration policies that are moderate and point based (Marginson, 2012; Chiou, 2014). Many studies have shown that individuals receive different treatments in their host country based on their visa status (Jackson, 2017; Li & Campbell, 2009). If someone is a citizen or resident in the host country, they can find work more quickly, as there are many residents' opportunities.

According to Howe (2019), in order to gain employment after completing studies, appropriate visa (with working conditions) is a significant factor for international students'. It is considered tough process for employers to recruit migrants or international students as there is no guarantee that they will stay in the country. Because of that, many employers refuse to invest in graduates who might leave the country. However, a positive aspect of hiring graduates is that they are entitled to get three years of post-study open work visa in New Zealand, which is intended to give employers some certainty. At this point, it is uncertain if the employers in New Zealand find this aspect acceptable enough to recruit graduates in their firm.

The New Zealand policy for obtaining permanent residency is based on the criteria of achieving a minimum of 100 points under the point-based system designed by immigration (Immigration New Zealand, 2021). There are various factors, including full employment, professional work experience, location of the job, age, and qualification as per New Zealand standards, that are included in the requirements. To secure employment in their relevant field is more challenging for migrants. Hariswamy (2019), explained the temporary work visas that issued to migrants and student migrants often come with various restrictions that force them to work from a specific location in a particular role. Sometimes the most significant restricting factor is the shorter length

of their visa. Therefore, when moving to a host country's labour market, migrants, (including student migrants) face obstacles such as those in immigration policies.

2.4.2 Language and Communication Skills

A further barrier experienced by migrants in New Zealand, is that of language or communication issues. Many studies show that poor language proficiency is correlated with poorer job outcomes (Hebbani & Colic-Peisker, 2012; Aure, 2013). Migrants who did not have English as their first language faced potential problems in New Zealand. Some studies have found that advanced language skills are essential factors for immigrants to get a relevant job (Abdelkerim & Grace, 2012; Li & Campbell, 2009). Kostenko et al. (2012), explained after a comprehensive assessment of migrants' experiences and capabilities, English speaking migrants are more likely to gain employment in a field matching their skills as compared to migrant who come from a NESB (non-English speaking background).

The primary skill for gaining employment is being proficient in English language. International students' English skills have been a topic of concern and debate for several decades (Mahmud et al., 2014). This suggests misunderstanding, discrimination, or even outright racism occurs against international students who are not native English speakers. Employers in all fields look for graduates who are proficient English speakers and are comfortable in diverse environments to openly share their ideas (Butcher et al., 2015). Maydell and Diego-Mendoza (2014) noted that some migrants from English-speaking countries speak English fluently, but with their own accents, such as Nigerian and Zimbabwean. They felt that Kiwis did not understand the accents of migrants, but some migrants found it difficult to understand the Kiwi accent when they arrived. Not surprisingly, a recent newspaper article indicated that speaking skills and language were identified as the main obstacle for migrants (Jones, 2018). According to Ho (2015), migrants struggle to gain employment or earn better due to their lack of English language skill.

A New Zealand study claimed that accountancy recruiters looked for strong oral communication skills in new graduates, indicating a problem encountered by accountancy graduates when searching for a relevant job in their field (Gray, 2010). Indeed, a headline in the New Zealand Herald newspaper claimed that "Students flee NZ over job fears" (Binning, 2012). According to a Colmar-Brunton online survey, 21% of the 1000 international students' participants claimed that their primary fear was that they would not find a relevant job. One female respondent from Auckland said she struggled to find a job after completing her four-year physiotherapy degree. Fouché et al. (2014), argued that there is obvious discrimination in New Zealand labour market against migrants even if they had excellent language skills.

2.4.3 Lack of Kiwi Experience

Several studies have shown that employers in NZ often do not hire migrants, citing the excuse of a lack of Kiwi work experience, making it difficult for them to find work (Trlin, 2010; Lewin et al., 2011). Similarly, North (2007) analysed that in New Zealand, most employers do not provide migrants with the opportunity to join the New Zealand workforce based on their work experience from their home country. Therefore, NZ employers must understand that they must give a chance to migrants to obtain experience through employment as it cannot be bought. Maydell and Diego-Mendoza (2014) observed that having no local experience means no relevant jobs for migrants. Studies have shown that a requirement for New Zealand experience is discriminatory and a vague employment criterion (Nanayakkara, 2018; Hariswamy, 2019)

As mentioned, qualified Indian nationals are often overlooked because of a lack of local experience, qualification, and skills (Qureshi et al., 2013). Gendall et al. (2007) argued that employers consider education qualifications for employment, however, some authors disagreed that non-recognition of qualification and industry experience is one of the biggest hurdles to unemployment or underemployment of migrants (Sobrun-Maharaj et al., 2008; Adelowo et al., 2016). There have been many newspaper articles on the hurdles of migrants in finding relevant jobs due to their lack of New Zealand experience. These migrants faced rejections due to a lack of local expertise, although they were qualified and had overseas experience with recognised qualifications (Anthony, 2018).

When recruiting, employers generally consider overseas education and work experience less valuable than that available locally (Syed, 2008). In New Zealand's employment market, Indian work experience is irrelevant, as employers also seek New Zealand experience. As per the study conducted by Pio (2005 and 2007), Indian women started their own business on a small scale in New Zealand. This happened as they were ignored in the NZ job market. She claimed that the reason behind women starting a business was primarily due to prejudice, lesser employment opportunities, lack of language proficiency, and no acknowledgement of their overseas qualification and work experience.

According to North (2007), claimed that NZ employers neglected migrants by demanding local work experience and NZ qualification from them, knowing it was not possible as they have not worked or studied in New Zealand. Therefore, it seems discrimination is problematic; when there is a lack of local experience and skills which are not relevant to the job, it is unfair to reject potential employees based on these criteria.

To understand a host country's system, Kaur (2017) has identified that many migrants opt to study in the host country, but soon discover that having New Zealand qualifications does not guarantee

their entrance into the New Zealand labour market. Since migrants are unfamiliar with the employment market, they often accept piece work that is not relevant to their fields, and the skills they develop in these jobs are of little use (Anderson, 2014). Many migrants take contract jobs to acquire local experience, keep themselves in the market, develop local contacts, and obtain employment references.

Therefore, a lack of job market knowledge and experience reveals another barrier for migrants: not having exposure to professional networks could lead to employment opportunities, not having references that are available locally, and not having self-confidence due to being in a foreign environment (Abdelkerim & Grace, 2012). Migrants have qualifications accredited to obtain permanent residency, and then find that a prospective New Zealand employer will not employ them because they do not recognise those same qualifications (Ressia, 2010).

2.4.4. Discrimination

Discrimination in employment refers to the unequal behaviour of potential candidates according to demographic criteria such as gender, sex, non-recognition of qualification and education and age (Wilson & Parker, 2007). Wilson and Parker (2007) observed that studies conducted in the USA and UK explain that Asian and other non-White candidates are marginalised when compared to non-minority Whites in terms of employment opportunities. Similarly, in New Zealand Omisakin (2016) articulated that in New Zealand culture, racism still exists, and many migrants are discriminated against because of their skin colour and accent. Volery (2007) identified the factors that are disadvantages in the labour market of host countries for migrants seeking jobs. In the study of Kaur (2017), the most common discrimination experiences while seeking a job by migrants are accent, names, colour, no local work experience, and religion. International studies indicate that immigrants are discriminated against by potential employers during job selection, based on migrants recognised overseas work experience and qualifications (Butcher et al., 2006; Li & Campbell, 2009; Maydell & Wilson, 2009).

Discrimination and prejudice are common problems facing migrants living abroad (Collins & Reid, 2012; Pilott, 2016). In the New Zealand Herald, Tan (2011) reported that Indian migrants struggle to gain relative employment and have to settle for low skilled job due to discrimination. According to Kaur (2017), discrimination has become a national issue, and the level of racism has not decreased by the governing system and society. The main problem determining the migrant recruitment process is that of ethnic identity. A study showed that racial discrimination in New Zealand is a social issue.

Employers generally consider overseas qualifications and work experience less worthy than local qualifications and experience, particularly for those from developing countries (Björklund et al.,

2012; Syed, 2008). The recent legislation (Human Rights Act 1993) protects people in New Zealand from discrimination in many areas. The objective of the Act is to give equal opportunities for all and prevent unequal treatment based on irrelevant individual characteristics. The purpose of the Act is to stipulate the grounds of discrimination such as sex, race, age colour, employment status, and so forth. A striking observation is that the more qualified and skilled migrants are, the less likely they are to find jobs, relative to their local counterparts.

Employers and recruiting managers have been found to be those most likely to be biased towards migrants, mostly against Asians, yet the applicants held similar qualifications and experiences as did the native-born candidates (Oreopoulos, 2011). It has been documented that Asians are the ethnic group that faces the most discrimination. However, the study disagreed that Asians have better-coping techniques, and that they preferred to overlook bad experiences (Daldy et al., 2013).

2.4.5 Networks

The lack of appropriate networks, whether formal or informal, is another aspect that has made it difficult for migrants to gain decent job in New Zealand. Knowing useful people in the labour market in which they intended to be employed, was also seen by migrants as an opportunity that could enable entry into the workforce (Maydell & Diego-Mendoza, 2014). Therefore, migrants need to become acquainted with the “right” people. It has been deemed necessary for migrants to learn to socialise with New Zealanders and understand the right people. This is a significant obstacle for new migrants who do not have any local contacts and who mainly depended on the qualification and skills gained in their home country. This may also have a gendered dimension as well, although this research does not explore that.

According to the New Zealand Government careers website, 30% of jobs are filled through advertisements (including newspapers), social media, or recruitment agencies. However, 70% of jobs in New Zealand are filled through the hidden job market, where jobs are filled through networks instead of through advertising.

Many Indian migrants expect to find more employment possibilities by moving to New Zealand; however, a lack of contacts creates barriers to finding appropriate work, even if they hold a recognised qualification and work experience (McDonald et al., 2009; Joseph, 2016). Hariswamy (2019), explained networking where people meet and develop connections to gain more knowledge about employment opportunities.

Oreopoulos (2011) observed that networks are essential to overcome employers' discrimination and prejudice towards migrants. However, dependence on an ethnic network was found more vital

for people migrating from countries such as Asia than for people migrating from English speaking countries.

Similarly, Phillimore et al. (2018) pointed out that social networks help create social capital by breaking barriers and building trust between the migrant and host society. Without proper language skills, it is difficult to make formal and informal connections. In New Zealand, networking is an essential part of a job search. It is challenging for migrants to enter the labour market and get a job relevant to their skills and qualifications.

2.5 Chapter Summary

The chapter identified five common challenges that migrants face when moving to New Zealand. The first challenge for migrants is their visa policies and status. Based on their visa status an individual receives different treatments in their host country. Second challenge for migrants is language and communication skills. The primary skill for obtaining employment is being proficient in English language. Many migrants felt that Kiwis did not understand the accents of migrants, but some migrants found it difficult to understand the Kiwi accent when they arrived. Because of lack of local experiences, qualifications, and skills many migrants faced rejections due to lack of kiwi experience. Another most common barrier for migrants is discrimination. Migrants are discriminated against by potential employers during job selection based on their recognised overseas work experience and qualification. Lack of appropriate networks is another aspect that has made it difficult for migrants to gain decent in employment.

Factors such as a competitive labour market, discrimination and bias in recruitment processes, and the challenge to match qualifications, skills, and experience to areas of vacancy and need within the labour market of the host country were all addressed. The work experience and qualification of migrants are not recognized in the same manner as they are in the country of origin of migrants. To overcome this factor, migrants take on higher education and begin a new cycle of work. They put their efforts and valuable time into working without pay to gain local experience in a foreign country. However, they often fail to get the same recognition and acceptance as local citizens (Li & Campbell, 2009).

Generally, in all countries where English is the first language, migrants face similar obstacles in finding employment. Employers in such countries are known to have a negative attitude towards applicants with unfamiliar names. The language skills of these migrants are not considered up to the mark. All these barriers are interrelated in the labour market for immigrants and migrant students seeking suitable jobs. There are ample studies that reflect that migrants have a disappointing experience in New Zealand and other such countries (Pilott, 2016). Employers have legitimate reasons for not taking on people with no local experience, or poor language skills that

cannot be understood by customers.

The next chapter describes the research design choices, including the research methodology used to guide this study. It also justifies a systematic literature review as a methodology for the research objective of identifying the barriers that international graduates face while seeking employment after completing their studies.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains choice of research design, including the research methodology used to guide the study. This section explains why the chosen framework was the suitable approach for this study. Therefore, this dissertation used a systematic literature review approach to explore the barriers experienced by graduates seeking employment after completion of their course in a host country. This chapter explains why how a systematic literature review was a justified research methodology for the research objectives identified in Chapter 1. A *systematic literature review* is a comprehensive approach to review the literature in a rigorous manner that considers a specific aspect of research (Thomas & Harden, 2008). This methodology includes structured milestones of specifying the research objective by locating, filtering, defining boundaries of the study, outlining criteria of what can be included and excluded, and documenting important results from the thematic analysis (Staples & Niazi, 2007). For each methodology stage of this study, the design and implementation are described, including information on the data gathering techniques and data analysis.

The following section traces the philosophical background of the researcher by explaining the ontology, epistemology, and paradigm of the research to clarify the objective of this dissertation. Towards the end the chapter sketches how the research is designed and conducted, the research design is described along with the strategies used to analyse the relevant articles of this research. The section also explains thematic analysis in detail by providing a thorough process of the data collection.

3.2 Philosophical Background

After analysing the literature on problems that migrants (including students' migrants) face while finding jobs (see Chapter 2), a contemplation phase began, in which further attention was given to what was to be studied based on the selected topic. This segment defines the research paradigms by identifying the factors that influenced the choices for selecting methodological and method under this study.

The *research design* is (explicitly or implicitly) placed within a research paradigm for any given research study that the researcher identifies or decides personally as the most suitable for the research (Davies & Fisher, 2018). The philosophical framework behind research arises from the research' stance on ontology, epistemology and the research paradigm. Gray (2018) defines *ontology* as a system of thoughts that reflects how a person interprets a thought to be a fact, and it functions in real-time. Ontology is both a branch of philosophy and a study of what might exist

(Scotland, 2012). An ontological perspective could be of a realist or a relativist prism (Gray, 2018). The process of finding one truth which is the basis of reality of life is known as realist ontology (Gray, 2018). On the other hand, a relativist ontology refers to an approach where multiple realities exist due to personal experiences, beliefs, and perspectives reinforce different meanings about the same things (Gray, 2018). A study where people interpret reality in their own distinct way is called a “relativist study,” which is the ontological position of this research. The development of an epistemology for the analysis was based on the integration of such an ontological perspective.

This study is relativist in nature as it gathers the different experiences of graduates towards a common goal of seeking a relevant job after graduation. The motivation to conduct this research is primarily focused on the thought that individuals seeking a job after graduation have different experiences according to their own beliefs, values, and understandings. These individuals' approaches to finding a relevant job could be different due to their motivations and perspectives. Therefore, this study investigates all the relevant studies on employment barriers that graduates commonly face while seeking a job in a relevant field.

Gray (2018) detailed two main methodologies that a researcher may follow: inductive or deductive. An inductive method starts with the collection of data that is relevant to the research topic or question, whereas a deductive methodology allows a researcher to create a hypothesis based on previous theory that pre-exists, to gather data to test the hypothesis, and then finally interpret them (Saunders et al., 2007). If there is not enough literature existing on a subject for some reason, a common approach is to conduct inductive research as a hypothesis does not exist to test. This research is also inductive in nature, as after setting the objective, it collects data from secondary sources consisting of experiences and facts. Silverman (2013) referred the inductive study as an approach that uses comprehensive data readings to extract themes, ideas, patterns, or models through interpretations made from the raw data. This research was based on exploring different aspects of reality that have been conducted by various authors. Once a considerable amount of information has been gathered, the researcher then takes a break from data collection to step back and look for the patterns and develop a theory. The data used in this research was derived from the relativist ontological belief existing under more than one truth that questions the epistemological relations between researcher and research frameworks.

Grant and Giddings (2002) explain the term *epistemology* refers to the belief about knowledge, what is acceptable, reasonable, legitimate knowledge, and how that knowledge can be conveyed to others. In simple terms, an epistemology method is based on the ideas, perceptions about the state of knowledge, what makes knowledge acceptable is valid, and how the acquired knowledge is confirmed as knowledge (Petty et al., 2012). In this research, the constructivist method is appropriate because the study is not primary research. This method allows investigating

graduates' experiences of seeking relevant jobs to identify the common concepts and analytical themes. In simple terms, constructivism is known as a part of knowledge that raises the point that individuals create understanding and derive meaning from communication between their thoughts and experiences (Davies & Fisher, 2018). A *research paradigm* is a set of values used to interpret the truth and procedure of assumptions, including the ontology and epistemology (Grant & Giddings, 2002). A *paradigm* is a way to understand the world that expresses a researcher's belief about knowledge and how it is best acquired (Petty et al., 2012).

The paradigm is another crucial aspect for a researcher to consider before deciding on the research methodology (Gray, 2018). There are five main paradigms in research identified by Grant and Giddings (2002): positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, critical theory, and pragmatism (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The researcher must provide a clear picture of the research paradigm guiding their study and build a framework for their methodology. So, based on a relativist ontology with a constructivist epistemology, this research was underpinned by an interpretive paradigm. The interpretivist paradigm was recognised as the most suitable for this study, and its principles also suit the researchers' own beliefs about research (see Grant & Giddings, 2002). The discussion around ontology and epistemology provides in-depth information about the researcher's beliefs about the nature of the truth, the nature of the world, and ways of being in the world. However, one of the challenges with a systematic literature review is that the studies included in the search will have different ways of investigation and different philosophies underpinning them. Because I did not conduct primary research, this study interprets other researchers' interpretations.

My main goal in doing this research is to understand the studies conducted on a similar topic to grasp their outcomes and understand what is known or recorded about the experiences of international students upon graduation. The motivation for doing this research came from my personal experience of seeking relevant jobs in New Zealand. I have observed that many fellow Indian friends are still seeking relevant field jobs after completing their studies in New Zealand. Many graduates have completed their education but are always looking for field jobs. This research is expected to assist international graduates in identifying the challenges while seeking relevant jobs, and their solutions.

3.3 Research Design: Systematic Literature Review

A *research methodology* refers to the unique procedures and steps used by the researcher to collect the data for their analysis. It is a strategy that is used to study the design of the research process. (Ritchie et al., 2013). A systematic literature review was employed as the research method to address the research question, what barriers do Indian international graduates face while seeking relevant job after graduation in New Zealand? According to Williams et al. (2020), a systematic

literature review provides a comprehensive overview of literature related to a research question and synthesizes previous work to strengthen a particular topic's foundation of knowledge while adhering to the concepts of transparency and bias reduction.

A systematic literature review is more comprehensive than a traditional literature review, as it includes both published and unpublished literature. Grey literature in this research can contribute to a systematic literature review, as it provides data not found in academic journals. It can include theses and dissertations, websites, news, committee reports, government reports, and conference papers that fit the pre-defined inclusion or exclusion criteria to answer the specific research question. It uses detailed and systematic procedures to minimise bias during searching, identification, appraisal, synthesis, analysis, and summarising of studies (Okoli, 2015). Grey literature is an important element of a systematic literature review because it is often more current than published literature and has less publication bias (Mahood et al., 2014). A systematic literature review helps to identify, evaluate and summaries the findings of all the relevant individual studies and thereby making the available evidence more accessible (Staples & Niazi, 2007).

I looked for other countries along with New Zealand to understand the broad issue under study, to identify the gaps in postgraduates' job-seeking experience. The selected methodology allows researchers to take stock of the bulk of previous studies, thus drawing a conclusion from the current status of the knowledge, highlighting the areas that require further investigation in the literature on a particular topic (Liao et al., 2017). This research used the methodology designed by Brereton et al. 2007 which explains each section by describing its steps in detail and elaborating the techniques used to gather data and the approach to analyse the data.

A systematic literature review was selected for this study, as past studies are chosen subjectively, and the information is presented partially to support the researchers' position. It offers a detailed and extensive summary of the available research with minimum bias (Okoli, 2015). Another reason for selecting this method is that it uses high-quality assurance procedures such as clarifying the review boundaries, identifying the relevant articles transparently, justifying why papers are excluded or included, setting a vigorous coding with the help of excel spreadsheet, synthesising protocol, appraising the research quality, and importantly, clearly identifying where any research gaps exist (Gough et al., 2017).

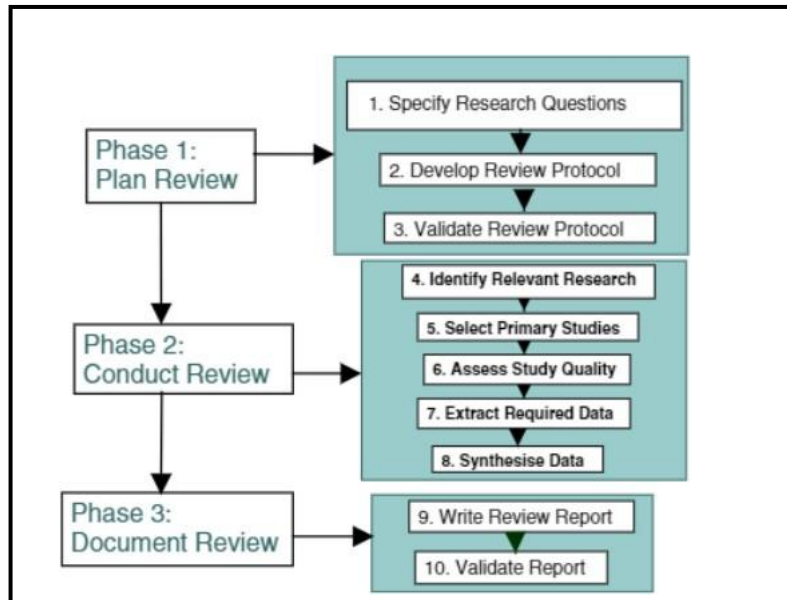
3.4 Process of Systematic Literature Review

As suggested by Brereton et al. (2007), this section outlines the three phases of a systematic literature review method used in this research. The purpose of describing the phases is to encourage the transparency of methods. Each phase and stages were discussed in the next section

in detail (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

The Process of Systematic Literature Review



From *Lessons from applying the systematic literature review process within the software engineering domain*. (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jss.2006.07.009>). Copyright 2006 by Elsevier Inc.

3.4.1 Phase 1- Plan Review

The first stage of the plan review phase is to specify the research question that aims to answer the question with clear understanding on the topic. The first step explains the aim of the research and describes how the review was performed. The research objective was formulated by designing a structured review protocol (Lavallée et al., 2014). According to Williams et al. (2020), developing systematic literature protocol is an “iterative process,” a cycle of “definition, clarification, and refinement”. As a vague research question which may generate indistinct outcomes whereas narrow questions are easier to address and provide more specific answers. Therefore, it is important to have systematic literature review plan which entails, developing a clear question, a search strategy, and the criteria for deciding an article from a search merits inclusion in the review. The research question was introduced and discussed in Chapter 1.

The second stage is develop a review protocol, which involves designing a framework for performing a systematic literature review of the research. This stage also discusses the important components including the research objectives, strategies to identify the relevant articles to the topic, to use search strings, evaluation criteria of quality, extraction of data, synthesis of data are discussed in this stage. Before conducting a systematic literature review, it is essential to design

a set of rules that minimises research bias (Brereton et al., 2007).

The last stage, validating the review protocol, requires evaluating and rationale for the review protocol itself. Brereton et al. 2007 suggested how a review protocol could be defined using a limited number of known resources. As suggested in the study, if obtained outcomes are not suitable, then the review protocol can be reviewed and revised.

3.4.2 Phase 2- Conduct Review

During this second phase of the review, pre-identified search engines such as SCOPUS, EBSCO, Eric via OVID and Google Scholar perform a search as per set rules to find journals and articles. The findings from these search engines are then analysed as per the criteria of the selection. After identifying the studies, it is ensured that each determined research item's quality meets a defined quality standard. Relevant data is then extracted from each identified study that helps answer the question/objective of the research. In a final step, synthesis is performed on the data extracted to answer the question of the research appropriately.

In this phase, the first step is to define relevant research, which refers to searching and extracting relevant articles, studies and journals from pre-identified search engines. While performing this step, each search engine (SCOPUS, EBSCO, Eric via OVID and Google Scholar) is used with a modified search string to fit them. These search strings were identified in the review protocol. Modifying search strings is necessary as the search engines understand different logical operators with keywords and their combinations. For each search engines, different queries were run as per the need.

The following step is to identify the articles based on primary studies. It describes which primary papers were chosen and included to answer the question of this study. To reduce the risk of selection bias, it is recommended that a second checks and reviews the selection process of the study (Lavallée et al., 2014).

To ensure the review's outcome contains a minimum level of quality, the third stage, assessing study quality, includes evaluating each defined preliminary study's quality. Since the review's development is based on each primary research analysis, the review's result will be biased if the preliminary study contains bias (Staples & Niazi, 2007). To eliminate the bias in the evaluation, each study's quality should be reviewed.

The next stage is to extract the data from the primary studies identified. Once the selected relevant studies' quality is evaluated, relevant data could be extracted from each defined class to answer the research's question. This section's final step is to perform synthesis on data, which included using an appropriate method to organise the gathered data and deciding concepts or themes.

3.4.3 Phase 3- Document Review

The final step to perform systematic literature involves document phase, which includes two stages: writing and validating the report during the process of finding the relevant information on the topic related to employment barriers that graduates face while seeking job. The step involved to capture all the details related to the topic and document all the relevant details. The last step to conducting the systematic literature review is to document the search string date, the search string, and the procedure. The findings related to the research topic collected in a structured and organised manner with the help of excel spreadsheet. According to the peer-reviewed academic journal articles, includes an abstract, methods, results, and discussion. The process must record in enough detail to be accurately documented and allows researchers to monitor their literature search (Okoli, 2015). The process requires a comprehensive record of the decisions taken during the review process. After that, the record should be independently examined once the systematic review is recorded. Also, it is important to provide a list as an appendix with all the information incorporated in the review (the articles met the inclusion standard). To provide a clear picture, this study used appendix include each article, the author(s), journal title, country and date of publication, findings, methodology, and themes (see appendix A).

3.5 Research Method

The qualitative method based on secondary data needs a precise selection of empirical literature and systematic review procedures (Harden & Thomas, 2008; Corbin & Strauss, 2014). To answer the research question with all relevant information, this study used quantitative analysis of the statistical results in all the published articles related to the topic. It requires the researcher to analyse primary qualitative and quantitative data to identify trends, numbers, and percentages by employing thematic synthesis.

3.6 Research Strategy

This section describes the strategy used to identify the relevant articles related to the topic and to answer the research question.

3.6.1 Databases for Literature Search

This study systematically gathered relevant and available articles on the experiences of Indian graduates in seeking pertinent jobs in New Zealand. There are six primary sources of literature: (1) SCOPUS; (2) EBSCO; (3) Eric via OVID; (4) Google Scholar; (5) Grey literature, and (6) AUT open thesis and reference searching which involves the references or works cited in an article. A comprehensive search of the literature was undertaken to answer the research question

through a review of the title and abstract in the following electronic databases: SCOPUS, EBSCO, Eric via OVID, Google Scholar. These online databases were chosen because they store an enormous collection of international and academic publications. Since global mobility and postgraduates' experiences have been studied in various fields such as business, management, tourism, and human resources, accessing the different databases allowed the researcher to extract relevant articles from numerous reputable scholarly journals. Also, to obtain a full list of literature, a forward and backward search of various journal articles (of reference lists) was conducted to identify work cited in the articles (see Webster & Watson, 2002). A quick way to locate the articles is to use the references listed at the end of an article. This process was performed to ensure all relevant studies would be identified through an efficient and systematic approach. Reputable websites, newspaper articles, and news websites were also searched.

3.6.2 Keywords used for Research

The keywords for the search were extracted from the research question. The keywords that I used initially were "barrier," "international students," and "New Zealand," but with these combinations I was not sourcing sufficient articles to answer the research question. Few articles were related to academic barriers for international students in New Zealand only. Due to insufficient number of articles in New Zealand, I therefore decided to broaden my search and started searching with "graduate," "employment," and "barriers": this produced more relevant articles.

The most logical key words and databases were selected for this research, but there still may have been a significant limitation caused by the constraint of time. I used the keywords as listed in Table 1 to run the initial search. In each iteration of the search, I used the different combinations of the key terms from the Table 1 to identify the more results. This search strategy used a variety of controlled vocabulary and free text terms based on the following key terms: "migrants," "workers," "immigration update," "recruitment," "employer's perspective," "student's perspective," "barriers to gain employment," "attributes to gain employment," and "work experiences." These terms were used interchangeably.

The Boolean operators "and" and "or" were applied to search for the article titles, abstracts, or author specified keywords that contain the search terms "graduates," "barriers," and "employment." Boolean and proximity operators and truncation symbols used were specific to the database searched.

Table 1*List of Search Terms*

	Barriers	Graduates	Employment
Search Keywords	Opportunities Hurdles Obstacles Difficulties Issues Experiences Problems	Immigrant Postgraduate International student Migrants International Graduates Student mobility Overseas student	Jobs Experience Attributes to employment Relevant job Student's perspective Field job Post-study employment Employer's perception

To obtain multiple variations of results, the asterisk symbol (*) was added at the end of each keyword when searching specified keywords that contained search terms (graduates* AND employment barriers*). The “or” connector was also used to look for alternative words among the second key search (employment hurdles* OR employment opportunities* OR problems in seeking jobs* OR relevant field jobs* OR employment difficulties*). In total, more than 46000 articles were found from the keywords search. The number was too high for a review, so I screened them for relevance. Articles were selected if they included the keywords (or different forms of the key words or alternative spellings). The titles and abstracts were manually scanned and eliminated based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria mentioned in the next section (see Table 2). In the initial search, 3871 records were generated: 35 from SCOPUS, 233 from EBSCO, 56 from Eric via OVID, 3502 from Google Scholar, and AUT Open Theses/Reference lists and grey literature, 45 (see Figure 3).

3.6.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The set a rule of inclusion and exclusion criteria for the articles were based on the following order. Articles written in English were included and those articles were excluded if they were duplicates from other sources (1800 articles), not in English (or not translated into English), or not primarily related to the research question (1053 articles) (see Table 2). The extensive primary results were due to overlaps across four databases, grey literature, reference lists and unrelated search outcomes produced by the keywords “migrants or international students” and “employment opportunities or barriers.” The review also considered the grey literature (e.g., recruitment agencies, theses paper, working papers, company reports, government data, reports, etc.) to ensure high-quality output. It was decided to review articles published only from 2009 to 2020 because a systematic literature review aims to obtain sufficient papers to synthesis from which to draw a

conclusion in the time allocated to complete this research. I limited the time frame to 10 years because the area of international students' employment barriers is relatively developed, and I studied relevant and sufficient papers to validate a conclusion. All the search results were downloaded and imported into EndNote X9. Once all the search results were stored in EndNote, the exclusion criteria were applied. After that, articles were excluded that did not have full text available or were not related to my subject. The final set of data generated 80 papers, including all the factors and excluding the criteria (see Figure3).

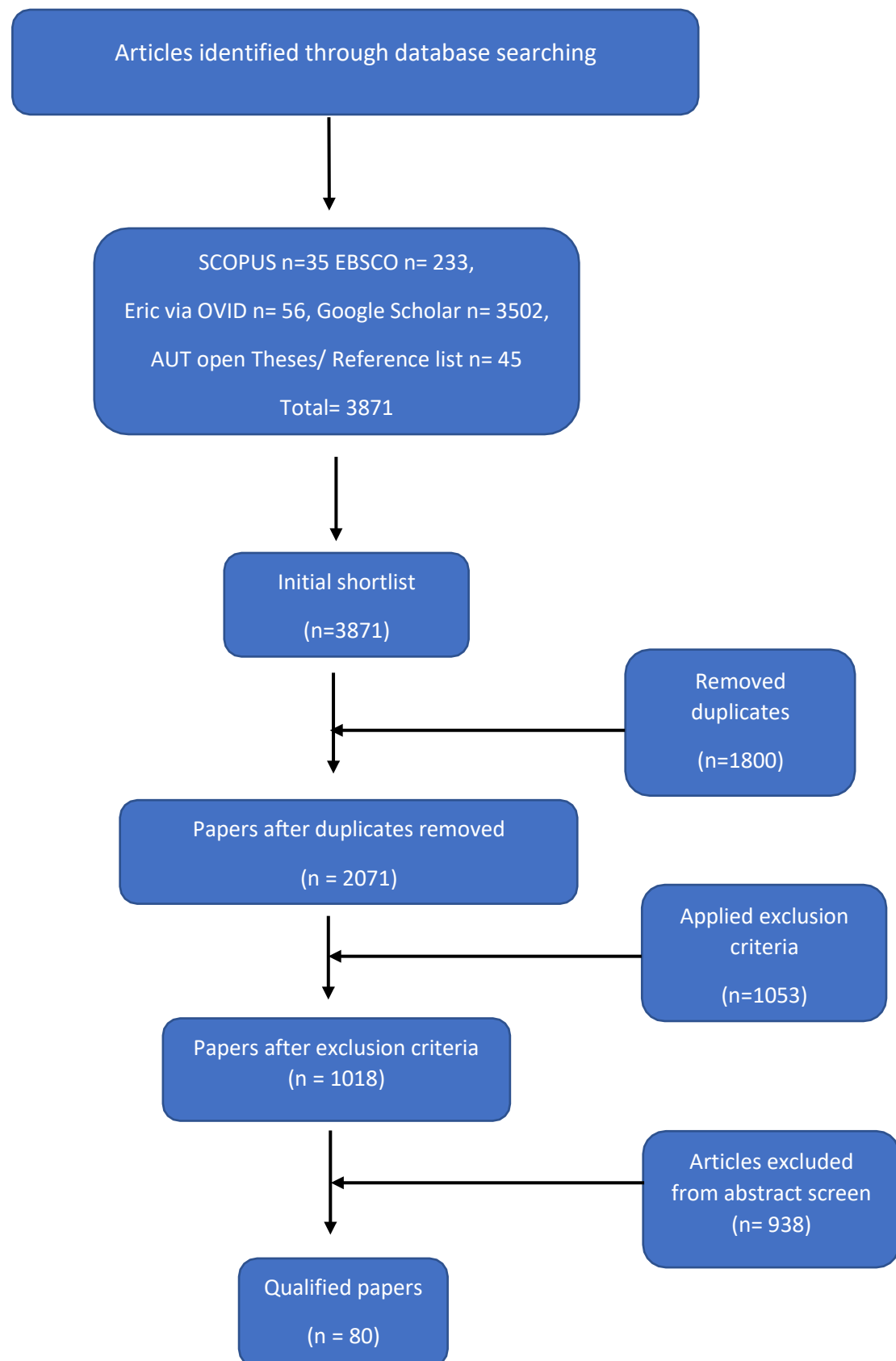
Table 2

Criteria for Data selection

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Publication language in English	Not related to employment barriers, opportunities, and experiences of international graduates
The published the year 2009-2020	Did not provide a reliable information to answer the research question
Grey Literature	Full texts were not available
Published in scholarly, peer-reviewed Journals	Experiences of graduates upon graduation
No restriction regarding the country	Did not have international graduates/migrants/students in the study
	Not related to employment or employment challenges/barriers/opportunities

Figure 3

Flow chart of searching process and selecting relevant articles.



3.6.4 Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis

This study was informed by the interpretative paradigm, using thematic analysis to review, evaluate and synthesis all the relevant literature published from 2009 to 2020. *Thematic analysis* is described as a process through which themes or patterns from collected data are identified, analysed, and organised (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Thematic analysis is a way of understanding data by performing analysis and discovering the raw data patterns. This analysis technique is versatile and useful for providing a rich and comprehensive account of collected data (see Braun & Clarke, 2014).

I used thematic analysis for my research as a novice researcher. I found this approach more transparent for generating qualitative data by documenting the process of collecting, coding, and categorising and storing on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (see Thomas & Harden, 2008). The process began with first sorting all the journal articles into a folder. The extracted data were logged into tables for ease of comparison between the different studies. The spreadsheet was a beneficial way for me to comfortably organise a large amount of data that I collected. It helped to perform essential operations such as managing, sorting, storing, searching, and retrieving texts and words. Thematic synthesis helped me to stay focused on the research conducted in the past with the aim to develop themes predominant in the literature. (see Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). A thematic synthesis aims to analyse, and synthesis research conducted in the past to develop themes predominant in the literature. To answering the research question, I found this thematic approach most suitable for this study related to graduates' perceptions and experiences when seeking field jobs.

3.6.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis specifies how to summarise the data gathered from the primary studies. The data analysis stage involved interpreting the data rigorously after organising the data into common themes and summarising the findings. The thematic analysis offers a robust and sophisticated approach for analysing qualitative data, making it easier for audiences with non-academic backgrounds to understand the conclusions. The data were analysed as per the three stages suggested by (Thomas & Harden, 2008).

1. The coding of text line by line;
2. To develop initial codes or descriptive codes; and
3. The development of analytical themes/main themes.

To begin the analysis process, I started reading articles to highlight the important points, understand the problems that researchers addressed, their findings, how the articles were

structured, and their methodologies. The coding procedure started with entering all the journal articles and the main points of the articles, abstract, title, year, methodology and findings and conclusions in an Excel spreadsheet. To develop descriptive themes, I highlighted and gathered all the initial codes from all the relevant articles and bifurcated them into different themes. To minimise bias of the information, I highlighted the main points on the articles and pasted these on to the spreadsheet to paste exact information. I then inspected the similarities and differences across the textual summaries to avoid contradictions and reduce the number of themes developed. The data extraction and synthesis process utilised thematic analysis; themes were extracted from the literature and eventually synthesised into analytical themes. For example, code such as “social and professional network,” “references,” and “contacts” then theme that emerged in the thematic process was “social capital” (see Table 3). The themes or patterns were generated and maintained on the Excel spreadsheet as they may have related to answering the objective of the main question. A group of categories or codes established from data that refer to the exact meaning is known as a *theme* (Braun & Clarke, 2014). The next step was to reduce the list of codes by grouping the repetitive and common codes to make it more manageable and transparent (Braun & Clarke, 2014). While this was a time-consuming and challenging process, capturing all the main patterns explained in the articles and analysing which code comes under which theme. However, later the analysis became more presentable and sorted when codes or sub-themes and themes captured differently.

These broad themes were further divided into sub-themes based on the responses used during data collection. A group of categories or different codes established from data were combined, that explain the same meaning is to manage a smaller number of key themes. While gathering and coding the data from the journal articles, my focus was to answer the research question. Initially ten themes were produced, but subsequently reduced to seven main themes.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter detailed a summary of the research design and methodology used for this research. The section described and justified selecting a systematic literature review methodology as a suitable approach to answer the objective of the question. The chapter identified the relativist ontology applied in this study underpinned by an interpretivism paradigm. The different phases and stages of the methodology and data collection method, and analysis tool, were outlined in detail with explanations. The chapter also detailed the searching, selecting, and sorting of articles published in the literature with the help of an Excel spreadsheet. This chapter provided a sequential summary of the systematic approach used in the thematic synthesis. It is noteworthy that a systematic literature review has not previously been used to synthesise the literature on this topic. This methodology employed to cover a wide variety of sources and materials was necessary. The following chapter presents the themes identified from the analysis.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the philosophical overview of this study. It gave a review of the research paradigm, ontology, and epistemology, which acted as guidance for this systematic research (see Grant & Giddings, 2002). The chapter also highlighted why an interpretive methodology was chosen, followed by explanations concerning the selection of journal articles on international students/graduates and employment challenges upon graduation. It described the design used in this research, along with the data collection and thematic analysis (see Braun & Clarke, 2014).

This chapter reveals the findings of the data evaluation and thematic analysis described in the previous chapter. Based on this, my objective in the following pages is to avoid presenting my findings in too broad a manner, but instead to anchor the themes of employment barriers for international students after graduation in the personal/professional experiences, circumstances, and background. Many interviews and surveys were conducted as primary research; however, my focus is to explain their findings instead of explaining their backgrounds, as this study is based on secondary sources. Therefore, I tried to provide an adequate personal context for the participants, so that the individual experiences did not get lost or overlooked in the study. The seven main themes on the topic- barriers of international graduates seeking a relevant job- are explored in the next few sections to keep them embedded in the participants' lived experiences. The seven key themes and their sub-themes were identified from the data during the thematic analysis. This chapter presents each in turn.

4.2 Themes

This section presents the overall findings to focus on the research question derived from the data using thematic analysis (see Thomas & Harden, 2008). The themes are presented in Table 3 and the following section described each theme in depth.

Table 3*List of Themes and Sub-themes of Employment Barriers*

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Social Capital	Social and professional network References Contacts
Intersectional Identity	Racism and discrimination Foreign sounding names and name based discrimination Gender and appearance Nationalities/ ethnicities/ skin colour
Transferable Skills	Soft skills Fluency Communication - oral and written Generic skills
Language Proficiency	Country specific
Immigration Policy	Government policies Visa status Sponsorship
Lack of Work Experience	Field experience Internships Course related internship Mismatch of experience
Employability Competencies	Professional skills, Employer's requirement Job market requirement Recruitment practices Work-readiness skills Teamwork Problem solving Decision making

4.2.1 Social Capital

Social capital or networking (personal, social, and professional) or social ties or referencing, was a significant theme identified in the data collected from different countries (i.e., Australia, Canada, USA, UK, Finland, and New Zealand). According to Joseph (2016), social capital is about the value of social networks, bonding with similar people and ties between international students and their personal and social networks such as family, friends and acquaintances.

Networks have an essential role for international students in their job search after graduation. Other names for networks were “social networks” and “social ties”; these terms were used interchangeably. In most countries (e.g., Finland, Australia, and New Zealand), networking was the most important factor for international students for seeking jobs after completing their studies (Blackmore et al., 2017; Ferm, 2016; Joseph, 2016).

A study by Wang et al. (2018) found that overseas students struggled to develop connections with local community in the destination country but build connections with international groups from their native countries or home regions. Social networks are helpful for international students to find a job in their migrant community, which was considered a positive factor (Wang et al., 2018). However, some findings suggested that social networks could be a negative factor and limit the acquisition of skills and knowledge required to find skilled employment outside the migrant community (Wang et al., 2018). Two studies divided social networks into co-ethnic networks and inter-ethnic network (e.g., Patacchini & Zenou, 2012; Tselios et al., 2015). It appeared that contact with local people produced positive returns because it provided migrants with information on work opportunities about quality job offers, and assistance in assimilation, helping them with initial settlement. While networking with co-ethnic networks builds ethnic solidarity, it also creates disconnection with the wider host community. For example, someone interacting with their own ethnic network may disconnect from the host community.

Study from Australia found that international students saw networks as a means of accessing work opportunities and securing employment (Ng et al., 2019). Tran et al. (2020), recently reported that graduates seeking post-study work visa opportunities in Australia had a shared common perception about their experiences for expanding their social networks while studying, to access the job market upon graduation. Their research observed that international students developed connections when working part-time, even if in unrelated jobs. For international students, work helped them to meet and connect with many people where they worked and helped them to make connections with people from diverse background who could share job information and refer them to employers.). It also provided time to build connections, especially for people working in their own field. Students who graduated with an Australian degree were also able to enrich their studies by gaining work experience.

Several studies explored the experience of Chinese graduates on social networks. Many of the Chinese graduates were familiar with *guanxi* in the Chinese community (Blackmore et al., 2017). This term was explained in several studies and depicts the social ties among the same community. They found it difficult to connect with people beyond the Chinese speaking community due to the language barrier. One of the research participants Mei commented:

“When I come to Australia, I didn’t expect actually in this country you need relationships as well, I mean, to get the job. People value reference so much, and then I didn’t know

that. I thought as long as I am qualified, I can get a job, but actually, I cannot” (Blackmore et al., 2017).

Blackmore et al.’s (2017) study indicated that networking is useful for job seekers whose networks contain strong connections (Van Hove et al., 2009). Also, findings suggested that job seekers gathered information about employment opportunities and used various sources such as employment advertising, job sites, and networking.

Similar findings were evident in Finland, where participants spoke about their sense of having the right networking or referencing for finding a relevant job upon graduation. They explained that if you have enough competency and are sufficiently literate for your job market, then it is vital to have a network for finding a job. One of the projects named “VALOA's research” in the study, interviewed eight international students, and indicated that the deficiency of language skills affected the ability to find work for international students (Shumilova et al., 2012). To securing a job in Finland, right network was one of the main obstacles, particularly for international graduates, which was also mentioned in other studies. Networking was the main factor for seeking a career in the Finnish labour market, especially for hidden vacancies.

Other studies from Finland commented that companies usually try to fill a vacancy using their own networks; this creates hidden vacancies that are not publicly advertised (Alho, 2020). Therefore, using a network of fellow students, friends, acquaintances, and ex-colleagues was necessary for finding otherwise hidden job openings. Other channels, such as hobbies and extracurricular activities provided easy connections to Finnish networks. Networks were recounted to be one of the main elements in securing relevant jobs and could be accessed through any kind of activity.

According to Flynn and Arthur (2013), who interviewed 14 international graduates from a Canadian University for their study, social and professional networks were the primary factor that restricted international graduates from gaining employment. Their study reported the social and professional contacts for international students, which helps them to find the hidden information related to job market and employment opportunities. One study showed that USA employees were mostly White, and employers’ first preference was most likely to hire or refer White applicants. They were more interested in recruiting people from the same background and from their own ethnic or racial group (Xie & Gough, 2011).

Maydell and Diego-Mendoza (2014) also found that the absence of networks was a barrier for graduates seeking work in New Zealand. In the absence of a strong network, student migrants experienced great difficulties entering the workforce. Despite their qualifications in New Zealand, they needed strong social networks to finding suitable jobs in the labour market (Joseph, 2016).

4.2.2 Intersectional Identity

Intersectional identity refers to an individual's identity which consist of unequal behaviour of potential candidates according to demographic criteria such as gender, sex, non-recognition of qualification and education and age (Wilson & Parker, 2007). Australian labour market discrimination was the main focus of Cameron et al. (2019). Their study was from two Australian universities where participants indicated that labour discrimination was one of the biggest challenges for graduates to obtaining work. Graduates encountered unfair behaviour and biased hiring practices, as employers were found to hire graduates based on the names that suggested their ethnicity, such as Chinese, Indian, or Middle Eastern. Participants from the study suggested the second most potential barrier was discrimination and bias (Coffey et al., in press). Such behaviour was encountered across a wide range of areas. One commerce male graduate in the study expressed his feelings on this:

“No recruiter/employer wants to recruit a graduate who is not either Australian or Kiwi. That is the only true barrier I encountered” (Coffey et al., in press, p.14).

Other female participants from the engineering field indicated the presence of a strong gendered bias that meant employers hired males rather than females because they thought male applicants would perform better than would females in fieldwork.

“Being judgmental as [they] think that every female candidate would underperform when it comes to field work is rather bias and unfair” (Coffey et al., in press, p.15).

In one of the surveys conducted in the same research, 91% indicated that Australian employers were happy working with local Australian graduates. Another survey contradicted that 83% employers were comfortable to work with Australian educated international graduates.

Similar behaviour was seen in several studies from Canada, where one of the biggest obstacles for international students seeking employment after graduation was discrimination. One of the studies was undertaken at two Ontario institutions, where most international students revealed that discriminatory behaviour and prejudicial perceptions were the most significant barriers to seeking jobs in their professions (Scott et al., 2015). Participants claimed it was biased behaviour because they believed that potential employers were not hiring international students because of their lack of local experience.

Some were resistant to hiring international students due to the perception that international students are a regulatory burden due to administrative and government requirements to deal with their permanent residency. A participant in a study by Scott et al. (2015) was suspicious about the limited opportunities that existed in Canada for international students:

“I find that really strange [that we can't find adequate work] because Canada is

underpopulated and...really multicultural, you know...[W]hy would you guys do that? You know...I don't understand...[w]hy would you restrict us? I just don't get it; it kind of conflicts for what they stand for" (Scott et al., 2015, p.12).

In the study conducted by Scott et al. (2015), focused group participants were commented about discrimination against them as they were international students:

"We have that extra step, because...jobs are hard to get. Plus, you're not a resident. So, it's like that extra burden that is placed on us. So, we know we are like two times as likely to not get that job, because of that status that we probably have" (Scott et al., 2015, p.12).

Moreover, from the same study, international students did not appear to attribute employer prejudice to deliberate intent:

"It's not like they are being racist or something but it's actually easier for them to hire someone that is used to their [cultural] system; it's like they don't have to spend extra money or time training you. Thinking of it as a company they don't have the obligation to hire us" (Scott et al., 2015, p.13).

Oreopoulos (2011) sent mock resumes to some recruiters and interviewed them to understand how they hired immigrants. The shocking outcome revealed that recruiters discriminated on the basis of the name mentioned in the job application. Employers often treated a name as an indication that a candidate lacked appropriate communication skills for the job, and they focused more on the Greek language even if the migrants had a strong command of English.

Discrimination was identified in the USA study by Tuttle and Chang Hwan (2019), who explained two types of structural and institutional racism. The study's structural discrimination indicated that discrimination still occurred even after attaining a college education or working in a related business, as organisational rules may reflect embedded biases that affect recruitment of international graduates. This study concluded that employment in the USA was mostly based on discrimination. Racial or sub-themes related to discrimination arose in the example discussed in the study. Two applicants, one native-born and one foreign-born, appeared equally eligible; employers were found to prefer to recruit native-born applicants, based on their resistance to employing someone with a foreign-sounding name (Lee & Zhou, 2017).

A variety of perspectives were expressed that showed that native-born Asians and Asian migrants would appear less disadvantaged than Blacks and Hispanics in the USA labour market. Compared to other migrant groups, Asians tend to arrive in the USA with a higher level of qualification and work experience from many years (Xie & Gough, 2011). The results, according to Lee and Zhou (2017), suggested that if immigrants have higher education and higher incomes, a "bamboo" ceiling effect created a barrier for Asian migrants to qualify for positions in the USA.

Maydell and Diego-Mendoza (2014) highlighted that another issue for getting employment in New Zealand was a non-New Zealand accent. A Russian respondent complained about the stigma

of the Russian accent, which was highlighted as a problem for prospective employers. Another participant with strong English skills, observed a similar problem while seeking a suitable job, but having a foreign accent.

4.2.3 Transferable Skills

Another theme identified in the data was that of transferable skills such as soft skills, generic skills, communication skills (oral and written). Many international students were from non-native speaking countries, where English was not their native language. This barrier prevented international students from applying for jobs; a study from New Zealand showed accountancy employers required graduates who had excellent speaking abilities skills (Gray & Murray, 2011). According to the accountancy institutes in New Zealand indicated that to obtain an accountancy job, candidates should have both written and oral communication skills. The findings generated at a broader level indicated that oral communication skills were essential for New Zealand accountancy employers (Gray & Murray, 2011).

Smith et al. 2018 found that Chinese accounting graduates commented that a lack of generic skills, such as communication skills, problem-solving, and flexibility were the main obstacles to gaining reputed accounting jobs in Australia. The standard issue highlighted by Chan and Ryan (2013), was that international students may lack in understanding of employers' skills and attributes that required in the job, especially communication skills. A similar study also highlighted communication skills as a barrier. Students needed transferable skills, such as oral communication; because some jobs were not technical or computerised work, sometimes students needed assistance. Another study interviewed employers, stakeholders, and students, and found that communication was the primary skill required for the Australian job market. Australian employers expressed that they were least interested in hiring international graduates due to many concerns, and verbal or written communication was the greatest of the concerns when recruiting a non-Australian citizen (Jackson, 2017).

Another Australian study was undertaken by Gribble et al. (2017), who showed that a lack of communication skills was a major challenge for international students. One Chinese female participant shared her experience of Australia and explained that before arriving in Australia, she was under an impression that she had good communication skills, however, after arrival she found it was very difficult to communicate in English with Australians living there.

4.2.4 Language Proficiency

A frequent theme emerging from the data analysis was that of language proficiency. Although it was not surprising to see this employment barriers in the interviews, the participants expressed

that language proficiency was a particular problem. The study's findings showed that an international graduate has three kinds of language competencies: English fluency, home country language, and Host country-specific language. Ferm (2016), explained that Finnish employers made hiring decisions in relation to international graduates based on their language skills, which the graduates apparently lacked. The findings suggested a Finnish language skill for international graduates was the biggest issue in finding employment (Pahkasalo, 2019). A similar study by Cai and Shumilova (2012) in Finland found that most respondents suggested that the lack of country local language skills was the greatest hindrance to getting work. From the interview outcomes, it was evident that even in the companies where English was the company's working language, the employers were still reluctant to hire non-Finnish speakers. Several studies conducted in Finland showed similar barriers for international graduates: poor Finnish language skills were the most repeated problem when recruiting foreigners (Bett, 2017).

The results also commented despite studying a specific language, there were cases where international graduates required assistance (Bett, 2017). As per the study conducted by Cai (2012), the findings showed employers' perspective and expressed that language was the main barrier. The research conducted interviews with 16 Finnish companions based in China, and results revealed that employers are more inclined to hire Finnish educated Chinese graduates. English was the working language in the company and sometimes both English and Chinese; however, the findings disclosed if graduates possessed good Finnish-language skills, it would be a big plus for them.

Similar findings were seen in the Russian and German job market for international students because Russian-based companies claimed a lack of Russian language in an international student (Shchegolev et al., 2016). In Germany also, international students were facing severe problems when they do not know German. The study's findings concluded that an international graduate has three kinds of language competencies: English fluency, home country language, and Host country-specific language. Language proficiency was significant for international graduates to obtain employment upon graduation.

International students, mostly from non-English speaking countries, were faced with more significant difficulties in seeking post-graduation full-time employment. However, other studies from Australia countered this opinion, which revealed that language proficiency is not the primary cause. There are other reasons, such as discrimination and racism that impacted employment outcome (Arkoudis et al., 2009). The author conducted interviews with 20 international accounting graduates from different countries (including some graduates from previous quantified studies) and two managers from a local accounting firm. To answer this, the previous study's contribution was verified by the managers of the accounting firm, who said that language is one of the significant problems in the Australian labour market. The study has stated that migrants from China, North-East Asia, India, and Bangladesh struggle to find jobs because of their

language proficiency.

An Australian study summed up the findings that lack of language, jargon and foreign accent and slang was the significant barrier in the employment process (Hebbani & Colic-Peisker, 2012). One participant spoke that they (participant) can understand employers; however, sometimes Australian, they do not understand the black people because of their spoken language. Also shared the telephonic interview experience that African participant never received a call back from the employers due to lack of accent as they have a thick accent. The study also indicated the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) report that identified accent to be a barrier to employment for African Australians.

The findings came from Canada by Oreopoulos (2011), was same with the above findings where author commented that recruiters rejected an applicant due to language issue-based their name on their application (resume), which reduced the chances of a call back to the applicants. In this study, recruiters differentiate substantially by the name of immigrants.

4.2.5 Immigration Policy

As important as networking and language proficiency skills which caused barriers for seeking relevant jobs, another central theme that emerged during data analysis was immigration policy. According to Pham et al. (2019), participants from Asian countries in this study revealed that permanent residency (PR) was found to have significant concerns to secure employment. The findings indicated that having PR does not guarantee a decent job; however, it was a clear indication for migrants and student migrants who think that having PR guarantees employment.

Similarly, findings from the study Cameron et al. (2019) showed that applicants not having Australian citizenship or permanent residency are among the main reason for organisations not to hire graduates from overseas. However, the main potential barrier was immigration policy citing the visa status. The frustration of one of the international graduates in his interview described in quotation as follows:

“No one wants to meet you until you have at least a residency visa” (Coffey et al., in press, p.14).

Also, another graduate from management field described the anger behind their visa status while seeking employment. Many International students wanted to showcase their skill set and potential towards employers however, they were caught in the immigration bureaucratic barrier which was related to the visa status.

Similarly, another participant from the same study Coffey et al. (in press) from accounting and finance field also expressed their feeling in the quote as follow:

“Employers only look for Australian candidates or Australia PR. International fresh graduates are hardly given any chance. Almost all employers mention that Australian citizenship and PR status are the key for applying [for] any job in Australia” (Coffey et al., in press, p.14).

The study was conducted in Australia and explained three employment stages, where participants experienced multiple challenges in stage two which was “looking for a job” after graduation (Ng et al., 2019). All research participants expressed that PR was the only factor restricting them to obtain employment in the market. The participants lamented not getting a relevant job because “no PR means no work” said by one participant in the study of (Ng et al., 2019). However, the participant explained further that international students may get jobs, but it was not relevant to their field.

4.2.6 Lack of Local Work Experience

Several important themes emerged during data analysis, and the most important theme that came from the results was lack of local work experience. The study conducted by Oreopoulos (2011) and their findings showed that Canada employers, while hiring consider candidates who have Canadian expertise; they did not consider their local qualification. A similar case is seen in Australia where a survey conducted in the study of Zevallos (2012), resulted from the majority of international graduates lacking adequate local experience, permanent residency status to secure a decent job.

Another reported problem from the study Ng et al. (2019), was international students' work experience. Some participants were worried about their work experience rather than academic achievements. On the other side, some Chinese participants expressed their willingness to study more and collect as many degrees as possible so that their academic skill complement real outcomes of having a better opportunity to obtain decent job as they gain local work experience.

Cai and Shumilova (2012) findings suggested a strong frustration level among international students as they possessed the qualified skills. International students in Finland felt hardship when it comes to employment opportunities because of their language skills and considered themselves an underprivileged group. Furthermore, the argument on this was supported by study respondents that the labour market is not ready to hire overseas students, or there are chances of not having sufficient jobs to support international groups.

This was also supported by Maydell and Diego-Mendoza (2014), in New Zealand, where two examinations were conducted, one focus group from five different ethnic groups: Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Zimbabwean, and German. The second study showed interviews who were of Russian ethnicity. The Zimbabwean participant spoke there was no clear picture of what the New Zealand

experience was and what employers were looking for. Because the participant explained, if employers were not giving them any chance, how one could get a local experience in New Zealand in the first place. Another participant from Russia with professional experience in her home country was not counted in the New Zealand job market.

“And he said to me very honestly, the fact that your CV (curriculum vitae) says that you had been working in some international organisations is absolutely not interesting to anyone here. You do not have any local experience, that’s why. And I was so stunned because even in Russia when I was looking for work, everyone knew that if I come from the World Bank, it’s good! But here... nobody is interested in this. You are of no value for us” (Maydell & Diego-Mendoza, 2014, p.15).

Other studies from New Zealand found that employers often required candidates to have local work experience, which was challenging and unreasonable for migrants who had just arrived or graduated in New Zealand (Li & Campbell, 2009).

4.2.7 Employability Competencies

During the data analysis, many themes emerged in which one theme enchanted against other themes, such as “employability skills.” The concept of ‘employability’ is vague and contested and refers to an individual’s ability to obtain jobs suitable as per their educational level (Gribble et al., 2017). It is now widely acknowledged that employability is a group of important skills and competencies that extend beyond discipline-specific knowledge. Several concepts were noted during the data analysis, such as professional competencies, graduates’ competencies, and work-readiness skills. The participants spoke about their sense of not having field jobs after graduation.

The study of Blackmore et al. (2017) suggested that accounting employers need graduates who managed to obtain practical experience along with their studies. The study suggested that Big Four companies, while recruiting accounting graduates are more focused to recruit a graduate with relevant work experience during the academic performance. Cheng et al. (2009) discussed three main factors that contribute to the growth of accounting graduates are: technical attributes, participating in extracurricular activities which shows student abilities and aptitude and to attain practical knowledge to understand the real meaning of business operation. Also, the study's evidence identified that many companies were looking for graduates with an excellent academic background as a criterion to understand their soft skills (Cheng et al., 2009).

Many discussions centred on the knowledge, skills, and attributes that employers needed and the best way to educate graduates for the contemporary workplace. While recruiting graduates, many employers look for skills and competencies rather than their academic background because practical skills help them in daily work life than theoretical knowledge. The findings have shown that soft skills are the most important and required attributes in the graduates' selection process (Velasco, 2012).

4.3 Chapter Summary

To conclude this chapter, the findings revealed seven main themes and sub-themes developed from the data collected in this research. When transitioning into a host country labour market, many international students faced distinct barriers upon graduation. Strong networks therefore had a vital role for graduates entering the labour market. Graduates' non-citizenship status resulted in difficulties finding work in host countries. In a foreign country, lack of professional networks was significant barrier to international graduates seeking a relevant job, as were a perceived lack of communication and language skills. Local work experience was important barrier for international graduates after completing their studies.

The following chapter discusses the findings with relevant literature to answer the research question and conclude this study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This section discusses and concludes this research and reflects the shortcomings of this research, suggestions for future research, and recommendations. Many international students have skills, education, and work experience in the host country, but still face challenges while seeking relevant work after completing their studies. To understand the experiences and challenges for international students, a systematic literature review is the best methodology for determining the problems international graduates face when finding work. A systematic literature review identified the problems recorded over a period of ten years, and the results can guide new international graduates seeking work after completing their studies. The data found several significant barriers for graduates to obtaining jobs after completion of the study programme: 1) a lack of professional and social capital networks; 2) discrimination; 3) transferable skills; 4) language proficiency; 5) international visa status; 6) lack of relevant work experience; 7) employability competencies.

Looking for a relevant job was a stressful experience for many international postgraduation students. New Zealand that values local experience over an international degree (Li & Campbell, 2009). Another factor that disconnected international students from employment opportunities was the lack of local work experience. In such a labour market, employers seek local work experience in graduates. However, although many Indian graduates have appropriate Indian work experience, they face rejections in the labour market due to a lack of local expertise. Having a New Zealand qualification is just an additional step for graduates to obtaining employment, but employers are still looking for local experience. Previous studies suggested that many employers in New Zealand do not provide international candidates a chance to join the workforce based on their home country's work experience. In New Zealand, many employers reject international application by saying no New Zealand work experience means no job and it indicates obvious discrimination (Li & Campbell, 2009).

Previous studies also explained that New Zealand employers look for candidates with local work experience even if international students hold recognised qualifications and industry experience. Due to that, migrant students found their Indian work experience inappropriate as per the host country market demands. To attain New Zealand permanent residency, most Indian students come to New Zealand to get higher education and achieve New Zealand relevant work experience to migrate completely (Anderson et al., 2014). Therefore, many immigrants opt for the study option to enter and explore the host country; later, they realise their position that New Zealand education does not guarantee their entrance into the labour market. Studies from Australia, Canada, and Finland also showed that employers value industry experience (local experience) far more than they do local qualifications, when hiring international students (Velasco, 2012; Tran et al., 2020). The overall study indicated that host country employers always asked for the local experience

from international graduates however graduates wondered how they would gain local work experience when they could not get a job after completing their studies.

The findings showed that employers want international students who have done something outside the universities, not just good academic grades, however, they want recruits who can work with different communities and have local work experience (Blackmore et al., 2017).

Many studies conducted over the past ten years found that social capital was the biggest and most significant barrier that international graduates faced while seeking employment. Hariswamy (2019) finding suggested that networking was a major barrier for job seekers at each level of employment stages that explained in the study. The author explained that networking and establishing relationships with the host country and their community members assisted migrants and student migrants to gain appropriate work and settle in the host country. Networking and making connections were a prominent theme relating to employment in every country, and the most significant barrier that international graduates, even migrants on work visas faced, while seeking relevant jobs. Networking involved referencing, socialising, building relations, making connections, and participating in events, activities, career fairs, and seminars.

Making contacts and establishing a strong network is also advantageous to skilled migrants and graduates to gain direct entry into the job market. It helps in sharing hidden information related to employment and helps to make connections to get a paid and field job (Hariswamy, 2019). From an employers' perspective, references provide an easy and time-saving process when recruiting graduates. As noted in studies by Qureshi et al. (2013) and Nayar and Sterling (2013), with the help of networking with their Indian community, many Indians obtained initial jobs, which increased many opportunities for them. Many international students faced challenges in their job searches due to the lack of network and faced rejections because they failed to provide good references in their job application.

Evidence in the study by Joseph (2016), showed that social networks are essential for migrant students seeking suitable jobs, and explained that social networks provide a bridge from research to employment. However, it was also found that there is a negative aspect to building networks amongst their own community, as these disconnected migrants from the host country community. Joseph (2016) revealed that most international students who had help from networks, secured full-time employment in New Zealand.

The main reasons international graduates are not preferred by employers are language and communication barriers, discrimination, and lack of local work experience and networking (Cai & Shumilova, 2012; Hariswamy, 2019). Another barrier found during the data analysis was a lack of communication and language proficiency in host country. Language barriers are an issue,

because graduates from countries such as India, struggle with their language skills in countries where English is the main language to communicate with the locals (Cen & Cai, 2012; Coffey et al., in press). English is not the first language for Indians. According to Joseph (2016) and Kaur (2017), New Zealand work experience provides more opportunities for international students and in addition, qualifications offer additional skills for those who worked in India because their experience from their home country was considered as inappropriate in New Zealand.

From these findings, it was evident that some international students could understand employers, but at some point, employers did not understand their accent, so based on their poor communication skills, many graduates faced rejection in the labour market. Gray and Murray (2011) showed that in New Zealand, accountancy firms recruit employees with excellent oral and written communication skills, because it is not just technical skills or computerised work that is undertaken, so sometimes the new recruits need help from co-workers.

Some graduates had to manage with their English when communicating with Kiwis but had very strong accents that made life more difficult for them. Many studies published findings on the topic of academic challenges, which included communication or language barrier. However, many graduates developed their skills, but somehow, still faced hurdles in the employment market because of the New Zealand accent. This shows that one of the biggest challenges for postgraduates is the adoption of a New Zealand accent. Many employers look for students with an excellent command of English. However, due to lack of English proficiency and New Zealand accent, many international students, especially Indian postgraduates, having English as a second language could pose a problem in New Zealand labour market. However, even with good communication or language competence, graduates still faced problems when seeking jobs due to discrimination.

In many countries, several studies claimed that international students' discrimination or racism was a significant issue when seeking suitable work. A non-New Zealand accent among international graduates also incurred higher levels of discrimination in the New Zealand labour market (Coffey et al., in press). International graduates are being discriminated against by potential employers during the hiring process despite their recognised overseas work experience and qualification. Even if Indian graduates are more experienced than local graduates, they have fewer chances for get hired because of their ethnicity (Hariswamy, 2019). The findings also showed that New Zealanders had negative perceptions when hiring Indian graduates because there is no assurance that they will stay in the country. Due to negative behaviour of employers, international students feel excluded and sometimes they feel discriminated. Accordingly, many employers did not want to invest in graduates who might leave the country. While the positive aspect of hiring graduates is that they are entitled to get three years of post-study work visa, allowing them to work and stay in the country, after three years, some need assistance through a

visa that entitles them to settle in New Zealand. Therefore, this leads employers to think hard before hiring international students.

From the findings, it was evident that some graduates felt they were overlooked for positions and treated unfairly by managers despite their qualifications and experience. Due to discrimination, many graduates had to accept lower-skilled jobs, part-time jobs, and jobs which were not relevant to their degree, because they still had to pay off their loans and living expenses in New Zealand.

Oreopoulos (2011) claimed that recruiters discriminated on the basis of the name on a job application, rejecting applicants from India. Discrimination is considered the most significant barrier for Indian postgraduates in New Zealand. However, another major obstacle for graduates seeking relevant work, was the lack of local work experience, i.e., "Kiwi experience."

Many universities provide internships and promote job fairs, to help students find work, even if this is unpaid. Some international students suggested that doing volunteer work might help them gain references, and learn the New Zealand working style, experiences, and rewards. Gribble et al. (2015) extended this understanding in explaining that New Zealand employers were not ready to offer placement, industry internship and less likely to provide a chance to explore and gain local experience to international students. New Zealand employers often considered Indian students who were highly skilled and experienced as over-qualified and over-educated.

To conclude, the purpose for conducting a systematic literature review for this research was to identify the evidence on the barriers that Indian graduates faced while seeking relevant employment in New Zealand. From the systematic literature review of research on this topic published over the past ten years, it was evident that there are many problems for international graduates however, the main problem was their lack of Kiwi experience and professional networks (e.g. Li & Campbell, 2009; Joseph, 2016). Thematic analysis was applied to data from 80 journal articles and grey literature from 2009 to 2020.

According to "*Researching job opportunities in New Zealand*" (2020), 30% of jobs are filled through advertisements, social media, newspapers, and approaching agencies. The remaining 70% are in the hidden job market, where jobs are filled through networks instead of through advertising on a website. This demonstrates the importance of networks as the best way to find opportunities in the hidden job market.

In New Zealand, good networks provide insider advantages to new graduates. Educational organisations, universities, and part-time work are the areas where graduates can increase and develop their diverse Indian and non-Indian networks. However, sometimes ethnic networks are exploitative and do not allow migrants to fully explore the market and meet different people from another community. Therefore, the overall analysis indicated that networking is a valuable tool

after local work experience, for international students' career development after post-study. Many studies published around these two major themes were found in the systematic literature review conducted for this research.

5.1 Research Limitations

While the study sought to provide a systematic literature review on the topic of the hurdles that post-graduation students face in job seeking, several constraints meant there were limitations on the extensiveness of the search undertaken. As noted in the methodology where the key words were listed, the search results captured a large number of both included and excluded articles. There was however a time constraint of conducting a small research study for the purposes of completing a qualification. This meant that a wider range of key words and databases beyond what were used were available, but not studied. The most logical key words and databases were selected for this research, but there still may have been a significant limitation caused by the constraint of time.

5.2 Recommendations

This research explored international graduates' employment barrier experiences while seeking a job in New Zealand. The study makes the following recommendations.

1. Recommendations for international students and educational institutions

Tertiary institutions can help students find part-time work opportunities during study. They can offer career counselling and employment search workshops, and teach international student their rights, particularly around the New Zealand Human Rights Act

(1993) and where to seek help. International students can build professional networks to gain credibility among employers by attending job fairs and undertaking volunteer jobs to start their job-hunting journey.

2. Recommendations for the Government

Work with institutions to provide assistance and pathways to post-graduation employment opportunities and provide more robust messaging to businesses about the immigration plans of international students and what they offer. Explain or streamline visa processes so hiring processes are easier and develop policy to improve ways to utilise international graduates' skills and qualifications.

3. Recommendation for employers

Learn about and adhere to the Human Rights Act (1993) and stop racism in relation to international talent. The recruitment team should employ international students who are already in the country or have completed their studies instead of outsourcing jobs. Support international students financially and offer them jobs after graduation.

5.3 Future Research

The current study utilised a systematic literature review to explore international graduates' experiences around employment challenges and identify the factors affecting Indian graduates while seeking suitable jobs after completing their study programme. According to Immigration New Zealand (2018), the New Zealand Government wants international students to stay in the country and fill the gaps in the labour market by providing three years of post-study open job search visas. However, there are many jobs posted on Seek, Indeed, and other employment portals that match graduates' skills and qualifications, yet they still face rejection. Many jobs advertisements state that candidate should hold New Zealand residency or citizenship. Therefore, further research will be in the interest of the Government, as this condition restricts international students from applying for suitable jobs. It would be interesting to know and understand the Government's and employers' perspectives through primary research.

This research may be useful for new international students who hope to find relevant jobs after completing their studies, as they can modify the findings of job-seeking approaches in this study to help their job search by conducting primary research through interviews and to understand their views and experiences in-depth.

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