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of Glasgow

Understanding Employability Experiences of International Students in UK Universities

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BSc, Masters, MSc

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

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Abstract

The increasing number of international students in the UK raises the question about the universities' responsibility to support those lacking the cultural and social knowledge needed to navigate employability development. The aim of this study is to investigate the international student and staff perspectives on their employability experience and the role university services play in supporting their development. This aim will be achieved by addressing four research questions: (1) what does employability mean for international students, (2) what are the facilitators and inhibitors in their employability experience, (3) to what extent can the application of an employability model enhance our understanding of the international student transition to the UK labour market, and (4) what is the responsibility of the university in international student employability from the staff perspective.

Grounded in Tomlinson's (2017) Graduate Capital Model and Prell's (2012) Social Network Analysis, this research perceives international students' employability experience as a social process, which is impacted by the relations, interactions, and intercultural competencies of students and university services. As an extension of graduate capital during their studies at a UK university from the perspectives of both stakeholders, a mixed methods approach is applied to investigate the responsibility of international student's employability development. The use of multiple data collection methods captures the ways the individuals within the university approach and develop employability. This included semi-structured staff and student interviews, and a student survey. The research findings suggest there are differing views on employability development between university staff and international students, with cultural differences causing tension. Recognising the influence of cultural diversity and social networks, this study suggests the importance of intercultural competencies between university services and international students to empower students to be independently responsible in developing their employability. An analysis of the interviews and survey provided conceptual and practical implications for university service staff and international students to continue fostering a collaborative and culturally inclusive approach to employability development. Such an approach can ensure that international students are supported in the UK labour market while maintaining their unique cultural identities.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: __Lindsay Nygren____

Signature: __ _____

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Research Problem and Rationale

Globalisation has rapidly changed the higher education environment, encouraging students to pursue degrees overseas with the intention to migrate, gain skills and experience, and improve their employment prospects (Pham, 2021b). Host countries and their institutions welcome international students as valuable economic capital and may hope to fill skills shortages through their human capital should they decide to stay (Li, 2017). Graduate employability is becoming a core issue for universities and a priority for their stakeholders, but graduate employability remains vaguely defined as the attributes, which make one successful in the labour market (Li, 2017; Huang and Turner, 2018).

Previous literature has recognised that graduate employability is one of the most important aims of higher education, yet this has not been sufficiently conceptualised for international students (Okay-Somerville and Scholarios, 2017; Behle, 2020). The 2019 UK International Education Strategy Action 5 identifies employment of international students locally and abroad as a main signifier of internationalisation success. Internationalisation has been a key strategy in tertiary education the last few decades driven by political, social, and academic rationales (De Wit and Altbach, 2021). Internationalisation at the institutional level is defined by Knight (2003, p. 2) “as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education.” According to Goodwin and Mbah (2019) the approaches to internationalisation at the institutional level focus on six themes of activity, outcome, rational, process, as home and abroad. These themes include curriculum development, meeting certain goals such as student competencies, the rationales driving institutional efforts, and the policies put in place. At-home creates an ethos, culture and climate within the institution which supports the internationalisation efforts, where abroad contributes to the sharing on knowledge and education across borders (Goodwin and Mbah, 2019). Institutional and national policy have not reflected the growth in internationalisation objectives, creating a gap in addressing the experiences of international student perceptions of their employability (Fakunle, 2021b).

Enhancing graduate employability has become a priority for many stakeholders in higher education in recent years. With increasing internationalisation and marketisation of higher education, international students are becoming an ever more important niche in higher

education strategy development through attraction and recruitment (Woodfield, 2018). The increasing volume of students seeking education and opportunities abroad has resulted in a need to reimagine services offered by the university to benefit students' academic and cultural integration (Huang and Turner, 2018; Fakunle, 2021b). As internationalisation has continued to become a priority for higher education institutions globally, so has the development of employability skills and how these intersect. Although internationalisation is concerned with enhancement of the institution through its global reputation and the student's readiness to be a 'global citizen', employability is not exclusively tied to this strategy and only loosely mentioned to prepare students for a global workforce (Jones, 2013). In recent years, there has been an increasing call to enhance the integration of careers and employability within higher education institutions and identify the role of stakeholders (AGCAS, 2022). While there has been a move to integrate employability skills into higher education, the impact on the international student experience has attracted growing interest as student mobility continues to increase. As employability and the transition to employment continues to be a driver of graduate outcomes, the role of the university in developing employability for its graduates continues to be debated. For some scholars, the role of the university is to deliver and enhance educational knowledge (Lopez-Duarte, Maley and Vidal-Suarez, 2021), while others believe that institutions have evolved beyond educational outcomes to ensure their graduates develop skills to enhance their transition to employment (Tomlinson, 2012; Nilsson and Ripmeester, 2016). This responsibility has further been debated if the individual is responsible for the employability development or if universities should strive to embed employability curriculums. As the international student population continues to increase, there continues to be a need for higher education institutions to incorporate the voices of group members to reflect the current employability discourse within their policies and strategies (Fakunle, 2021b).

This study was inspired by my personal experiences of navigating my own employability skills and employment during my postgraduate education in the UK. During the academic year of 2019-2020, I completed a postgraduate master's programme. The course cohort was diverse, though mainly composed of international students from a variety of countries and backgrounds. Progressing through this programme, I was able to make friends and feel adjusted to student life within my universities. However, I felt I did not understand life or work life outside of the university in the UK. This became especially apparent at the end of

my studies when I began searching for full-time employment. I felt like I was constantly on a learning curve, attempting to adapt to a system I had limited knowledge of. Speaking with my other international classmates who had the ambition to stay, they voiced the same frustrations of being unsuccessful in their transition to employment. Perhaps this was similar to home students' perspectives, but with limited interaction I was not aware of their experiences and how they navigated their employability and transition to employment. We attended careers and employability workshops but the promises of a practical dissertation or assistance in understanding the process of seeking work in the UK was limited. As time went by, I began to be more successful in applications for part-time work in the UK. I attributed this to widening my social network to include local friends and to mimicking the styles of CVs and cover letters. I became more aware of my own cultural tendencies and had to make a conscious decision to adapt to the UK style. While I was more successful, I could not explain the mechanics or how these techniques applied to others in their own circumstances. My personal experiences and the experiences of other international students motivated me to explore the topic of employability and the role of the university in my thesis, as I felt myself and other international students could have been supported better.

1.2 Research Aim and Questions

The aim of this study is to investigate the international student and staff perspectives on their employability experience and the role university services play in supporting their development. Drawing on aspects of the Graduate Capital Model (Tomlinson, 2017) and applying it to the UK international student context, and utilizing lived experiences to further develop the employability framework (Huang and Turner, 2018). From previous studies in Australia, UK and US (McFadden and Seedorff, 2017; Huang and Turner, 2018; Cameron, Farivar and Coffey, 2019) it is evident that there is an expectation for some international students to transition to their host country labour market for a time, but successful employment obtainment and skills-relevant occupation is often significantly lower. The examination of university services alongside international student perspectives aims to fill the gap in understanding the impact of university policies and practices on international student employability in their transition to the labour market.

This aim will be achieved by addressing the following research questions:

- What does employability mean for international students at the completion of their studies?
- What are the facilitators and inhibitors to international students' employability experience at the university level when beginning their transition to employment?
- To what extent can application of the graduate capital model enhance our understanding of international student transition to the labour market in the UK?
- What is the responsibility of the university in international student employability from support staff perspectives?

1.3 Research Background

A review of the titles of existing studies relating to international student employability revealed that it is often examined from the perspective of international students' motivations for their mobility, experiences of adapting to a host country, and their post-study employment (Huang, Turner and Chen, 2014; Nilsson and Ripmeester, 2016; Dentakos *et al.*, 2017; Gribble, Rahimi and Blackmore, 2017). These prevailing topics indicate that there is an interest in understanding international student mobility and how they progress, but the primary focus on the student perspective tends to focus on the challenges and barriers faced. The existing literature has linked international students' agency of their employability (Fakunle and Pirrie, 2020) with the internationalisation agenda of universities to both enhance universities through recruitment while developing global citizens (Jones, 2013; De Wit and Altbach, 2021). However, the connection between international student employability and university support services has been limited. For international students, services offered by the university are often perceived as being "one size fits all" and ignoring the unique issues that international students face in their transition from study to employment (McFadden and Seedorff, 2017; Huang and Turner, 2018). The transition from university to labour market is a major event for graduates, often causing feelings of stress and uncertainty. As international students approach the end of their studies and begin looking towards career options, they are tasked with positioning themselves in the labour market. They must demonstrate their employability through their successful skills acquisition in the degree programs and navigate a foreign labour market. Previous research has highlighted networking as one of the most important methods in securing a job after graduation (Okay-Somerville and Scholarios, 2017; Tomlinson, 2017; Singh and Fan, 2021a).

For international students, the process of transitioning from university to work is hindered by their lack of a valuable network within their host country (Li, 2017). The lack of work integrated learning or useful career networking through events such as career fairs, has been a common theme in the literature of international student to perceptions of their employability (Ng, Menzies and Zutshi, 2019). Despite the diverse range of nationalities and cultures represented in UK universities, most experience similar difficulties in obtaining employment. While they are aware of career support services provided by the university, a majority do not perceive them as useful to their unique identity and unsupportive in their career development or employability (Fakunle, 2021b).

As the graduate labour market is becoming increasingly competitive, employability is no longer based solely on an individual's ability to demonstrate their skills and advantages over another candidate. But rather the labour marketplace is driven by forms of capital (human, social, cultural), where the individual demonstrates their employability through their ability to match their capital to the labour market demands (Li, 2017; Singh and Fan, 2021a). Grounded in the conceptual framework of the Graduate Capital Model (Tomlinson, 2017) and Social Network Analysis (Prell, 2012), this research explores the employability experiences of international students in UK universities. I focus on the interpretivist view to understand the international student employability experience through social network and social and cultural capital discussions. Tomlinson (2017) proposes that graduate employability is supported by the accumulation and deployment of the various forms of capital resources which encompass educational, social, cultural, and psych-social dimensions. This study perceives employability as an individual's skills, knowledge, and attitudes which are used to obtain and maintain employment throughout their career (Fakunle, 2021b). Through the analysis of the university service staff and international student employability experiences, this study examines the inhibitors and facilitators of employability development and the role of the university.

1.4 Research Context

When international students first make the decision to pursue education abroad, often they are choosing to leave their established support network of friends, family, and professional groups. The university, in turn, becomes the first point of contact for students. Universities are the first ones to provide an orientation for students, providing information for prospective students on their accommodation, fees, course schedule, and general everyday life in their new country. As students begin to adapt to their host community, they begin to learn the inner

workings and nuances and develop the knowledge, skills, and attributes essential to their employability development. This development is often at different levels to their domestic counterparts for who the employability development and support is framed (Huang and Turner, 2018). Individual responsibility is often placed on the student to adapt and enhance themselves, navigating the challenges and obstacles to learn the skills along the way (Quan, Pearce and Baranchenko, 2017). While domestic and international students both encounter a learning curve when beginning their higher education journey, a lack of social networks and localised knowledge can impact a student's ability to develop capital and interpret the value of their experiences towards employability.

Social networks and social capital are an integral part of understanding the dimensions of social interaction and the functioning of societies through the sharing of knowledge which validates social credentials (Rienties and Nolan, 2014). For migrants, entering a new society brings about challenges of integration and understanding the value of their capital from what it was to what it is in their new community. In the frame of cultural capital, individuals from different cultural backgrounds develop different forms and levels of capital resulting in less or more powerful outcomes in their academics and labour outcomes (Naylor and Mifsud, 2020). The process of recruiting international students to foreign universities sees them develop new networks, knowledge, skills, and attributes to progress in their education and eventual career. Their development and adjustment to their host culture relies on their competency to understand the cultural capital, often in a short amount of time. As internationalisation of higher education continues to grow in the UK and globally, it is therefore important to understand the process international students take when integrating into a new society. The experiences they have navigating networks, capital, and skills development can lead to an understanding of the competencies acquired and how universities support all their students in developing employability.

In higher education, the process of forming social networks between international students and their co-national and national peers is an accelerated process due to the demand to interact as a result of external circumstances and pushers such as being 'forced' to work together on group tasks (Rienties and Nolan, 2014). This accelerated process lends to an increasing need to conform and mould their capital to be 'culturally competent' which may only further segregate international students as 'others' in their host institutions (O'Sullivan, 2013). International students who seek to participate in their host community may begin to perceive their

differences and experience a sense of isolation due to cultural and language differences (Moskal and Schweisfurth, 2018). In many cases, unless an international student has friends or family already living in the host country, they are likely to turn to their peers within their groups as a first point of contact to learn about the host culture (Rienties and Nolan, 2014). There have been a limited number of studies which have moved beyond individual characteristics of international students to focus more on the social interactions and relations they form inside and outside the university. These studies have highlighted that international students often turn inwards towards their own cultural networks to navigate new settings, although the limited exposure to host students leaves them feeling isolated and unable to learn about their host culture (Schartner, 2015; Rienties and Jindal-Snape, 2016). When international students form relationships through continued interaction with other international students and local students, their personal and career development is positively influenced and they demonstrate a higher level of intercultural competence (Jon, Kim and Byun, 2020). While international students can adapt their capital and adjust to the nuances of their desired labour market, structural factors such as policies on work rights, post-study visas, employer perceptions, and supply-demand of the labour market move beyond the control of the individual. Employability becomes situated within the interaction of the individual, institution, and the structural conditions of the labour market which shapes their opportunities. The relationship of employability policy at the institutional level often fails to address the visa limitations that restrict an international student's access to work experience and further transition to the host labour market (Fakunle, 2021b). The intersection of international students' employability development and visa requirements provides an opportunity to upskill and enhance their network connections, but is often met with limitations set by employer perceptions and labour market conditions (Tran *et al.*, 2020a). Employability development through social and cultural capital and social network is situated within the individual, institution, and labour market conditions. International students' development of their employability and social networks have been largely regarded as an individual responsibility. Nevertheless, the university's role can be much more pronounced in their building of relationships with industry and embedding forms of capital which will enhance international student employability development and provide them with sufficient resources for their career journey (Pham, 2021a). The incorporation of social and cultural capital within the employability initiatives of universities offers a means for international students to gain essential skills necessary for their integration into their host labour market. While universities

work to implement employability policies, the coordination with visa policy highlights a significant challenge for international students. The integration of employability skills within the curriculum and promotion of individual responsibility is highly important. However, universities have demonstrated a limited response to assisting international students in overcoming visa limitations, employer perceptions, and adapting to labour market conditions. International students exhibited an understanding of how essential it is for them to prove how relevant their employability skills are for their desired labour market. As international education in the UK continues to evolve, it is crucial for universities to recognise the different forms of capital, and build and maintain networks of partnerships to aid international students in their employability experience and remain competitive on a global scale (Tran *et al.*, 2020a).

1.5 Research Design and Methodology

To respond to the research questions, I undertake a qualitative, exploratory approach to investigate the responsibility of international student's employability development as an extension of graduate capital during their studies at a UK university from the perspectives of international students and university services staff. Applying a triangulation technique, I used multiple data collection methods to capture the different ways in which employability is approached and developed by the individual within the university. This included semi-structured staff and student interviews, and a student survey. By focusing on the international student understanding of employability and comparing it to the expectations of staff delivering employability development training, I was able to observe the similarities and differences presented by each group. Through data collection and analysis, I was able to gain insight into the facilitators and inhibitors of employability. The international students were the main focus of the employability discussion to explore their graduate capital development through relationships with peers, lecturers, and services staff. The inclusion of services staff data was also collected to explore how international student employability was positioned and approached by university service staff members.

1.6 Ethical Considerations

In line with the British Educational Research Association 2018 Ethical Guidelines, considerations were made to address responsibilities to participants including: consent, transparency, the right of participants to withdraw, incentives, harm arising from participation,

privacy and data storage, and disclosure (BERA, 2019). Additionally, a responsibility to stakeholders and the community is an essential consideration.

Given the nature of this research and its connection with immigrants in the UK, participants may perceive that taking part in the research will hold benefits or consequences for their visa status or future employment sponsorship opportunities. The research was presented as independent from UK Border Agency and UK Visa and Immigration and expectations of participants were monitored and managed. It was made clear that the research is unlikely to directly impact participants and no incentives were given.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is significant in that it provides insight and understanding of international students' employability development journey in higher education, which has the practical implications for both students as well as institutions and their careers service providers. This research also makes an important contribution to the existing literature by examining the significance of intercultural competencies to enrich graduate capital literature, and the significance of social class to enhance the employability literature. First, although numerous researchers have explored student employability and graduate capital, few studies have focused on international students and the role of the university. By applying the perspective of international students to the conversation of employability development and their transition to the labour market in the UK, this research will achieve a comprehensive understanding of the challenges international students face when developing and applying their employability skills in a host country setting. Second, most studies have focused on the benefits and challenges international students face during their studies and in their transition to the labour market, while the role of the university has been largely unaccounted for aside from discussing the internationalisation agenda in higher education. This study explores how the role of university services is perceived from staff and international students across different disciplines, departments and teams to investigate the potential differences each group presents and provide insightful perspectives. Third, current research tends to focus on the student experience, neglecting the diverse and intercultural landscape of higher education. Many researchers have investigated international students' experiences from an individualistic perspective, highlighting the value fit and adaptability skills required of international students (Fakunle and Pirrie, 2020; Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen, 2021).

From this research, it takes into account the factors of social network relationships and how staff and international students interact and understand each other. This aspect of international student adjustment needs to be understood as international students navigate a foreign culture and adjust their employability development to fit the standards expected by their host culture. Therefore, it is necessary to examine how university services can be further transformed to support the diverse needs of international students in their employability development. This research examines the employability experience by both service staff and international students and provides recommendations to the university services staff to achieve an environment where intercultural competence is applied to achieve an equitable employability environment. This study's findings will offer strategic impact to policy and practice in terms of internationalisation retention and employability strategies of higher education institutions. This research will benefit higher education institutes to develop strategies and policies which align with internationalisation strategies, observing the unique nature of international student employability.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into nine chapters. In Chapter One, the context of the study has been introduced. The research objectives and questions have been identified, and the value of such research argued. The impact and ethical considerations of the study have also been discussed.

In Chapter Two, the existing literature is systematically reviewed according to guidelines provided by Xiao and Watson (2019) to identify key themes and current trends dealing with international student employability, and the role of the university in student development within the context of the internationalisation of higher education. The role of the university is explored in the existing literature on international student employability development, graduate capital development, and labour market transitions. This review explores how this topic has been analysed through various critical lenses and theoretical approaches to identify gaps in the existing knowledge.

In Chapter Three, the conceptual framework is presented to discuss employability within the current agenda of internationalisation of higher education. Employability development is explored through the theoretical underpinnings of social and cultural capital and social network analysis. The role of the university is then discussed to understand the impact of the university as a facilitator of international student employability within higher education. The chapter concludes by examining social network and social and cultural capital in relation to

the international student experience and employability development, setting the scene for the current environment international students navigate in their host universities.

Chapter Four provides the methodology of the study. This chapter provides the rationale for the exploratory mixed methods approach and discusses the data collection methods used as individual interviews, small group interviews, and a survey questionnaire. This chapter also described the data analysis process and ethical considerations that were made regarding the nature of this study and the participants involved to enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of this research. Finally, the researcher positionality and reflections on this study are provided.

Chapters Five through Eight provide the findings of this study. Each chapter discusses findings relating to the thematic themes identified in the thematic analysis. Chapter Five explores the experiences and perspectives of university service staff and international students related to the responsibilities of the university in student employability development. Chapter Six explores the findings related to the equity and equality associated with support in developing employability from the perspective of university service staff and international students. Chapter Seven explores the emergent themes of social networks and graduate capital development in international students related to their employability development experiences. Chapter Eight explores the cultural experiences of international students and how it relates to recognising their employability and transition to employment in the UK. These chapters are presented through this thematic analysis to demonstrate how employability development is impacted for students in a variety of ways.

Finally, in Chapter Nine, the discussion and conclusion are presented to synthesise the findings and deliver a conceptualisation of the findings of the study, providing theoretical and practical implications. Tentative suggestions are offered to university services staff, international students, and their institutions to enhance the employability development journey of international students. Limitations are addressed and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Chapter 2 International student's employability in the context of internationalisation of higher education: systematic literature review

2.1 Introduction

International student mobility (ISM) can be defined as the time-constrained, cross-border movement of individuals, driven by the intention of gaining better education and employment opportunities in a global market (Albien and Mashatola, 2021). Most of the international students are limited in their time allowance to be resident in their country of study under visa regulations. In this review, internationally mobile students are classified as degree-seeking in a country where they are not ordinarily resident or settled for an indefinite leave to remain. As ISM continues to gain momentum, a greater importance is placed on their recruitment and understanding their motivations to study. It is recognised that international students have become increasingly mobile for career development (Tzanakou and Behle, 2017), yet there is limited representation of the graduate outcomes related to their unique employability development and labour market transition in the research. Rather, it is more common to position international students in the graduate outcomes conversation as instead using the opportunity to delay the onset of a career post-graduation, preferring to have an adventure while living a care-free student life rather than transition to the labour market (Civera, Meoli and Paleari, 2021). Graduate outcomes in higher education policy documents are usually centred on an educational and economic focus while there has been little research done to explore the ways students understand and exercise their employability (Huang, Turner and Chen, 2014). Within higher education policy documents, little attention is given to the graduate transition or experience of adjusting, relating to the employment outcomes of international students.

Little research has explored the outcomes of international education for students in their career opportunities or the factors which influence their labour market transitions (Zhan, Downey and Dyke, 2021). The role of higher education in international student outcomes has been focused on the internationalisation strategies of universities and how their programmes impart knowledge and skills that can transverse borders yet these graduate attributes, whether social or cultural capital, or education transcripts, are not universally accepted (Collins *et al.*, 2017). Within the 21st century discourses, there are generic attributes that graduates are meant to develop through their education. These have included such skills as critical thinking, global awareness, intercultural understanding, good communicative and interpersonal capabilities,

problem-solving, teamwork and empathy which are meant to be durable and transferable in the transition from education to the labour market (Blackmore and Rahimi, 2019). The gap in both the literature and realisation of employability development for international students may be attributed to the misalignment of internationalisation agendas and employability discourses (Chien, 2020; Fakunle and Pirrie, 2020; Perovic and Komotar, 2020). This systematic review describes the current knowledge of international student's employability in the context of internationalisation of higher education to expand on the gap in research and apply in the conceptual chapter. A systematic approach was applied to answer the main question: how employability is studied in relation to international students and what main themes emerge from the existing research?

The sub-questions include: (1) How international student perceive, experience and manage their employability? (2) How do researchers measure international student's employability in the context of internationalisation of higher education? (3) How is the role of the university in international student employability represented in the research?

As there is not a unified definition of employability relating higher education, the sub-questions are included to help develop a definition of meaning when measured by different stakeholders. Additionally, a focus on transition as a stage in the international student experience is summarised to show the context of internationalisation of higher education though it is not a direct sub-question.

2.2 Method

This systematic review follows the guidelines for conducting a systematic review according to Xiao and Watson (2019). The details of the process are provided in the following sections.

2.2.1 Search strategy

English full-text studies published in academic journals and book chapters between January 2001 and July 2022 are included in this search. The search was conducted in the Web of Science (WoS) database. The details of the search strategy are as follows. The following restrictions were applied: (1) The publication years were limited to January 2001 to July 2022. (2) The publication language was limited to English. (3) Only articles published in academic journals and academic books were included. Opinion-based sources, conference papers, theses or dissertations, general sociological theory, and media or press releases were excluded.

The search teams are a combination of keywords related to “international student”, “transition”, “graduate” and “employability”. The search terms were:

1. “International student” + “transition”/
2. “International student” + “employ”
3. “International student” + “*employ*”
4. “International student” + “employability”

The main search was conducted in July 2022. Results were first screened by title and abstract, before a more thorough examination was conducted. The original number of search records was 638. Of these, the query of ‘International student’ and ‘*employ*’ was selected to narrow the article theme content, which returned a total of 416 sources. After removing duplicates, 355 items were included in the title and abstract screening. A further screening excluded 260 items based on their inability to meet the relevance criteria and were excluded due to their document type or topic relevance. The items were filtered for relevance, document type, date, and quality. To account for relevance, items were to exclude outputs relating to internships or work placements abroad, 1st generation students, Covid-19 focused studies, mobility at pre-higher education levels, virtual mobility, and transnational universities. Document types were filtered to exclude opinion-based sources, conference papers, theses or dissertations, general sociological theory, and media or press releases. To meet quality criteria, items included were to meet one of the following criteria: peer reviewed, included in key databases and journals, and published by a reputable publisher or organisation. A total of 82 items consisting of articles and book chapters were selected for eligibility in the full item reading review.

2.2.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The detailed inclusion and exclusion criteria are:

1. Participants are international students who are seeking a degree in a country they are not normally resident. International Student (or related concept) is clearly identified as a keyword, main concept, significant focus of the research question, aim and scope, or title. Additionally, degree mobility – those who study in a host country for degree was a relevant criterion for inclusion. Student transition (or related concept or specific dimension) is clearly identified as a keyword, main concept, part of the research question, aim and scope, or title. The study focuses on physical mobility at higher education levels. Studies with outputs relating to internships or work placement abroad

were excluded as these did not contribute to a full higher education degree experience abroad. Foreign students (1st generation) who are resident in their host country were excluded as they had permanence and were not subject to international student mobility. Studies with Covid-19 built into the design or purpose of the study were excluded as this was a singular anomaly of an event. Some studies that mention Covid-19 in the background or abstract to highlight contemporary relevance may have been included if the research questions are not specifically focused on Covid-19. Studies on mobility at pre-higher education levels were excluded. Virtual mobility, and transnational universities/education were excluded, though they pertain to higher education internationalisation.

2. The article document type should be reports, journal articles, and book chapters. Grey literature was considered, provided it was of high quality, described in (4). Empirical papers or reports of any methodology: qualitative, quantitative, or mixed were included. Theoretical & conceptual papers with an explicit focus on student/ graduate transitions were included. PhD theses were provisionally included, subject to review of numbers. Exclusively opinion-based or commentary sources, conference papers, masters or undergraduate student theses / dissertations, general sociological theory, and media/ press releases were excluded.
3. The documents included were to be published after 2000 up to publication by July 2022. Documents published in or after July 2022 could be provisionally included if additional documents were examined for relevance to the review.
4. The quality of items included must have met one of the following criteria: peer reviewed, included in key databases and journals, and/or published by reputable publishers or organisations including DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals).

In addition, 29 items with insufficient data or full texts unavailable for analysis were excluded. A further 6 items were excluded based on meeting the relevancy criteria during a more in-depth analysis.

2.2.3 Data extraction

Data extracted with the selected studies included author(s), year, publication journal, characteristics of participants (including country of origin and destination, year of study, and potentially programme of study), methods, theories, measures of employability and international student transitions, and findings of transition in international student outcomes.

Measures and findings of international student employability are summarised in the “Results” section. I was involved in the assessment of each document included while supported by my two supervisors to oversee the quality and applicability of the selected documents for data extraction.

2.2.4 Quality assessment

I assessed the quality of the identified documents based on quality checklists and criteria identified by Ruth Garside (2014). This tool was developed to assist qualitative researchers in assessing the strength, validity, and reliability of qualitative research articles. The checklist and criteria were designed for qualitative researchers across multiple disciplines to be able to use in their quality appraisals and support a quality of standard, leading to strengthening evidence-based policymaking.

The documents were assessed based on three overarching criteria themes: trustworthiness, theoretical considerations, and practical considerations. These three criteria considered elements under their theme to consider the range and variety of research methods available (Garside, 2014).

The inclusion or exclusion of items was determined based on consideration of the criteria and adapted to the individual specifics of the authors and their discipline. Based on this evaluation criteria, documents which indicated a consideration of these themes, and their elements were included.

2.2.5 Data analysis

An analytical synthesis of the included documents was conducted. The analytical framework was developed based on the research questions and the impact of internationalisation of higher education on international student experiences, including the transition experience, social networking, skills and knowledge obtainment, labour market returns, graduate capital development, and the role of the university in the international student employability experience.

In addition to the contributions of this review, there are some limitations as well. Firstly, only English book chapters and articles published in academic journals between 2001 and 2022 were included, while other types of documents and non-English articles were excluded. Second, this review focuses on the international student experience during their time at

university. In contrast, international student experiences in the host community as an expatriate, post-graduation, or after returning to their home country were not included. These could be considered in the future for a more in-depth review of the social network developments of international students during their time in a host country.

2.3 Results

2.3.1 Characteristics of the included articles

In total, 46 articles and book chapters published between January 2001 and July 2022 were included in the systematic review. These documents mainly examined the graduate transition to the labour market and the role of stakeholders in graduate employability within the internationalisation of higher education. In the first stage, keywords were pulled from the articles and chapters and fed into the table, then common themes were identified across articles. Key findings were then compared and synthesized in the table columns of “role of the university”, “employability” and “transition experiences”. The analysing process of this review consisted of reviewing the articles in full and making annotations through a thematic analysis to highlight the dominant themes.

2.3.2 Quality assessment of the included articles

The systematic literature review table included in the Appendix provides evidence of the themes and criteria quality of the items. Most article documents contained evidence of more than one dominant theme. 14 documents highlighted the transition experience, 6 focused primarily on employability, 5 focused on the role of the university and transition experience, 10 focused on employability and transition experience, and 11 were well spread across the three themes. One article was not included under the three themes due to being low relevance to the criteria. Among all documents, theoretical consideration was evident in 24 items. The remaining articles were led by policy considerations or as part of a wider literature review.

2.3.3 International student employability in labour market outcomes

Factors related to employability include: “transition experience”, “social network”, “skills and knowledge”, “labour market returns”, “graduate capital development” and “the role of the university”. The degree to which employability is measured is reflected by the stakeholder’s perception of what employability management means to students.

2.4 Themes

2.4.1 Employability

Under the theme of employability there were many takes on the experience of international students, the perspective of the university, and the role of policies and services. Some articles have focused on the employment aspirations and labour market outcomes of international graduates from the perspective of enhancing university attractiveness through push-pull factors and the exportation of a highly skilled globalised workforce (Furukawa, Shirakawa and Okuwada, 2013). Another take on experiences of international students and the mobility of their employability is the transference of degrees and qualifications across borders. Due to inconsistencies in the alignment of policies and regulations by governing bodies, the employment of foreign graduates is severely impacted (Perovic and Komotar, 2020). In specific cases such as the one presented by Perovic and Komotar, Italian students are ineligible to take a professional examination in Slovenia due to language qualifications even though they had completed their degree in a Slovenian university. This case is an example of the barriers to employment international graduates face, not only in gaining access to the host country labour market but also with transferring their knowledge to their home markets as well. Graduate employability is understood to be a graduate's ability to gain knowledge and skills which give them access to the labour market and prolonged career applicable to their knowledge (Tomlinson, 2017; Fakunle and Pirrie, 2020; Fakunle, 2021b). In the case when international graduates have an inability to utilise and mobilise their degree obtained from a foreign university after graduating, their international student mobility has not been viewed as successful. Focusing on the development of employability in international students, it is important that the purposes of internationalisation and student mobility in higher education are maintained and an equilibrium between their institutional objectives and policy development reflect their commitment to advancing global knowledge (Perovic and Komotar, 2020).

The employability discourse often focuses on the skills and attributes an individual needs to successfully obtain and maintain their career (Fakunle, 2021b). This discourse is often centred on a national driven policy to develop the skills and knowledge of home students through an investment in education which will yield a return to the state in employment and economic growth (Fakunle and Pirrie, 2020). Employability within internationalisation has been linked to curriculum development, finding that at a disciplinary level successful implementation was linked to the development of skills directly relevant to the associated profession (Jones, 2013).

For some, employability in the ISM plan is too grounded within a neoliberal agenda which ignores the humanist approach to education as a service for the public good (Lopez-Duarte, Maley and Vidal-Suarez, 2021). There is still an assumption that the results of ISM will lead to specific labour market returns, as a transaction of knowledge obtained will provide a higher wage or access into the specific career outcome. There is evidence to demonstrate the employment outcomes of international students as benefiting from gaining jobs in industries specific to their education when the labour market is aligned to operate on a merit-based system such as the UK (King and Sondhi, 2018). For these cases, researchers gauge employability measures by evaluating the level of employment gained after studying abroad, and the value of the international degree as a commodity in the labour market of the students' destination markets (Brooks and Waters, 2022). This valuation and career trajectory has been found to be dependent on the quality of qualifications and reputation of the institution which attracts international students and is then measured through economic outcomes (King and Sondhi, 2018; Civera, Meoli and Paleari, 2021).

Researchers have also focused their employability measures on the perceptions of international students and their experiences relating to their readiness to enter the labour market. For some studies, focusing from the perspective of international students' experiences, employability gained from experiences within the classroom is often overshadowed by those from outside the classroom. Experiences of cultural diversity and international collaboration are considered a benefit of internationalised education. In this case, employability is linked to future opportunities which will allow students to adapt and work in international teams. For students being encouraged to study internationally, the return on investment is often vaguely expressed by the sending country. The literature has identified aspects of the international student journey to employment, noting desires to stay in the host country or return home, and the anxiety experienced during their studies with regard to their employment prospects (Lee, 2016). In measuring international student employability, researchers have gathered experiential data, such as cultural and socio-economic perceptions of students with the intention to apply meaning to their achievement of employability. These studies have examined the motivations and outcomes of international students' time abroad through more internal indicators of value, focusing on stress associated with perceived barriers to entry and confidence levels in skills obtained (Khawaja and Stallman, 2011; Linkes *et al.*, 2018). The social network and relationship development of international students has been identified as a

measure of integration in the host community but has been lacking in its application to employability measurement. The unique position international students have in often navigating a new social environment without a social support network warrants a closer examination of its relation to employability development. It has been found that networks and the interactions students have within the university enhance graduate employability due to understanding what employers are looking for and learning the cultural nuances (Linkes *et al.*, 2018). Enhancing international student employability through supporting network development with stakeholders has been described as a side effect of studying abroad and has not been a key consideration in graduate employability (Mogaji, Adamu and Nguyen, 2021; Oldac and Fancourt, 2021). The concept of graduate employability is not singularly defined though it is often perceived to be the responsibility of the individual to navigate. Through the research, language ability or confidence in language and economic strength have been the main indicators of employability development for international students. International students are faced with interpreting what employability means in their home and host country, leaving them in a position where they may not know how to negotiate or manage these differing definitions (Huang, Turner and Chen, 2014).

2.4.2 Transition experiences

The transition experience of international students has been described from the different stages of their study abroad journey. From their transition from their home to host country, moving “East” to “West” or into an Anglophone society and negotiating their new daily lives. The transition of various aspects of their lives as students and foreigners within a new environment is apparent in their daily lives such as their use of a new language, a new curriculum and daily life, socialising, creating new friendship groups and networks, and handling conflicts and barriers as they arise (Civera, Meoli and Paleari, 2021).

As international students experience a range of new practices in their transition to studying for a degree in a new country, how they adapt and display their agency to overcome different aspects with facing different types of barriers becomes apparent. There are many decisions and activities that international students must make in their daily life as an incoming international student, during their studies, and in their post-graduation period. Among the included studies, the different takes from the transition experience related to experiences of international students during and after their study abroad include a range of outcomes.

The process of transplanting oneself into a foreign environment is daunting and can leave international students to experience loneliness, anxiety, and a combination of other stressors. For instance, for international PhD students studying at UK business schools, the stress of studying in a foreign country came in the form of financial pressures which were not acknowledged or validated by the university (Mogaji, Adamu and Nguyen, 2021). International students, especially those paying full fees often felt they were treated as a ‘cash cow’ which made them question their value as students, believing that the university recruited international students for the amount of money they bring in (Mogaji, Adamu and Nguyen, 2021). The financial stress further added to the emotional and psychological drainage, negatively impacting international students’ ability to learn and continue in their course of study.

In another study focusing on Turkish ‘New Wave’ graduates studying at prestigious universities in Germany, a common experience was a feeling of being treated as a second-class citizen due to preconceived perceptions by the local German population (Oldac and Fancourt, 2021). There was a change during their time in Germany in which the Turkish graduates came to a realisation that their transition to stay and work in Germany following graduation would result in them being treated poorly in their social and professional life and not recognized as a separate highly skilled group from the established impression of the migrant Turkish community.

For international students in the US seeking employment, some found it difficult to merge their home and host culture especially in nonverbal and verbal communications. Students expressed that they felt a need to hide or change their behaviour to ‘fit’ with a foreign culture and be perceived as normal and like their domestic counterparts in the eyes of the employer (Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos, 2011; Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha, 2021). As an illustration, one student conveyed how bowing and showing respect in their culture was viewed as strange and demeaning in the US culture, which made them conflicted which led to feelings of discomfort and awkwardness (Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos, 2011). This clash of cultural values and norms can be a difficult challenge for international students to overcome as they must navigate their new host community while balancing their ingrained social values.

Moving to a foreign country for studies is already a stressful factor for many international students as they must learn the cultural norms and values of their host country to lessen the

acculturative stress. An additional stress comes from the transition from education to the labour market, which is often pressured by visa limitations on stay and clauses limiting sponsored employment. A study by Seminario and Le Feuvre (2021) focused on the transition of Peruvian graduates of Swiss higher education institutions to the Swiss labour market. Their study emphasized the barriers to gaining employment through solely a student visa, suggesting that the family reunification route was used to maintain residency in Switzerland. Although this study cannot be generalised to all international students due to its scope, it did highlight that marriage to an EU or Swiss national acted as an additional resource to help graduates access the legal security of the labour market. For these graduates, marriage appeared to cancel out advantages of obtaining a Swiss degree which resulted in precarious and part-time work, or full-time domesticity (Seminario and Le Feuvre, 2021). While in Australia, international students felt there was a gap between their assumptions of not gaining employment compared to employers who had preconceived reservations about hiring foreign graduates. It was found that international students who stayed to work in Australia were less likely to work in a field related to their degree, which would then lessen their time in that position or permanency in Australia (Zevallos, 2012). In the Swiss case study, it can be presumed that the transition from graduate to securing employment was seen as enough risk to obtain the right to stay through alternative routes, even if this meant not being able to utilise their qualifications in the labour market to the fullest degree. While in Australia, the result of accepting lower skilled employment, while a successful transition to the labour market, was not viewed as a positive or beneficial experience compared to student expectations.

These challenges to transitioning to the labour market are not simply perceived by the students, but by employers as well. Sutherland et al (2021), investigated small business owner's perceptions of hiring international students. In a positive light, international students were seen to possess skills and knowledge that would be beneficial to organisational problem-solving capabilities and act as motivators for other employees. That being said, the study revealed that international students were often challenged to overcome perceptions employers have of them such as their perishability, acculturative challenges, and communication skills in addition to demonstrating their fit for the employment criteria to be on par with local British counterparts (Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha, 2021). This represents another barrier for international students to overcome as they need to not only demonstrate a clear capacity to

meet the employment criteria, but also demonstrate why they are equal to or more qualified than local graduates.

In addition to navigating the transition from education to employment, international students must navigate the complexities of their temporary stay which further adds to their stress. As an Australian study by Tran et al (2022a) highlights, international students are put in a precarious situation where they are unable to access or verify information to inform their graduate employment route to work in the host country. Clibborn (2021) revealed that international students in Australia were strongly represented in the workforce under low-skilled jobs. This was due to a dual frame of reference which suggests that an unfamiliarity with their host country's laws and regulations made them more likely to tolerate low pay and not enforcing their rights (Clibborn, 2021). As international students are often in a position of limited resources and power of negotiation, they are at a continued risk of being exploited during their transitionary period between education and graduate labour market entry.

2.4.3 Social networks

Another factor often associated with employability and stemming from the transition experience is the use of networking. This is how an individual situates themselves within the community they are seeking to integrate and obtain employment has been repeatedly linked to the networks they are able to form. For international students, the formation of social networks has been regarded as an essential need to overcome stressors associated with an unfamiliar culture or society (Khawaja and Stallman, 2011; Collins *et al.*, 2017; Kim *et al.*, 2021). Yet an inability to form these bonds is often seen as a barrier to their integration and access to knowledge or opportunities of employment, particularly in areas that are relevant to furthering their employability (Tran *et al.*, 2020a; Clibborn, 2021). The development of social networks can lead to cultural and social capital development by providing access to resources through membership to the network and becoming aware of culturally valued information (Tomlinson, 2017). Through the obtainment of capital, graduates become more aware of employment opportunities and increase their ability to express employability attributes in countries beyond their home country (Holloway, O'Hara and Pimlott-Wilson, 2012).

International students who have studied in host cultures and countries which are far different from their home countries in terms of culture and values, often have a desire to interact with home students as part of the acculturation process. A study in South Korea by Kim et al.

(2021) on Western students revealed the different types of groups and networks that students form, highlighting that the interaction with host students in a leisure setting broke down barriers and encouraged growth and understanding. This engagement with home students and other international peers helped international students learn how to interact with the host culture in an appropriate manner, alleviating some of the unknowns and stressors that come from being isolated in a new country and culture (Kim *et al.*, 2021).

In some cases, international students found it helpful to connect with others from their own country of origin who had gone through a similar employment process. They sought out this network because they trusted and valued their experiences, they are empathetic to their situation and willing to help them adjust to their host country (Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos, 2011). Developing this intragroup connection can lessen stress associated with acculturation and enhance the international student experience through shared knowledge of experiences. Although finding comfort within the network of co-nationals, networking with locals is seen to be crucial to enhance cultural knowledge and secure employment (Tran *et al.*, 2020a). The benefits of building social networks with local peers and other international students are the sharing of information and potential job opportunities. International students from the Tran *et al.* (2020a) study expressed an active investment and engagement in social network building during their studies and post-study period to have access to potential job related experiences. However, international students appeared to have trouble building professional networks which seems to be a common issue faced once they have graduated. Even for international students who do work while studying overseas, they are often unable to gain employment in areas that are aligned to their degrees or skills and will find themselves in low-skilled migrant positions (Clibborn, 2021). In this way, they find themselves in a position where their primary network in their host country is comprised of other low-skilled migrant workers who are loosely tied to the local society (Wilken and Dahlberg, 2017). This lack of a professional network limits the awareness of jobs available to international graduates, who are already at a disadvantage with employers. The disconnect of networks among international students and employers contributes to the misunderstanding of the value and legal status of international students. Employers are often hesitant to hire international graduates due to the assumption they will require extra support, training, and resources (Tran *et al.*, 2020a). They will instead seek out graduates who are more likely to integrate with their organisation seamlessly and maintain a particular social group status quo (Blackmore and Rahimi, 2019).

2.4.4 Skills and knowledge

The development of international students during their transitional experience is expressed in various ways when it comes to their expected outcomes. First and foremost, the skills and knowledge are seen as a personal motivator. The personal and cultural benefits expressed by international students often describe the skills and knowledge they perceive they gain from the experience of studying abroad. The personal outcomes international students have come to expect to be developed through immersion in the host environment are skills and knowledge related to self-confidence, communication skills, maturity, cultural awareness and intelligence, cultural sensitivity and empathy, adaptability, language skills, and intercultural competence (Civera, Meoli and Paleari, 2021; Fakunle, 2021b). Of these skills, English-language proficiency is often prioritised by international students and employers (Tzanakou and Behle, 2017; Linkes *et al.*, 2018; Civera, Meoli and Paleari, 2021). As the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes which contribute to the likelihood of obtaining and maintaining employment throughout their career is the definition of employability, the value in experience which contribute to this growth has been expressed as a crucial area of support for international students (Fakunle and Pirrie, 2020; Fakunle, 2021b).

Employability in itself has been a significant driver in national policy development to enhance educational and economic prosperity yet the governmental aim may be hindered due to inflexible national legal frameworks (Huang, Turner and Chen, 2014; Perovic and Komotar, 2020). In Australia, employability skills have been highlighted for at least two decades, while in the UK, employability related teaching has not been embedded into the curriculum in higher education as of 2008 (Jones, 2013). Although employability is included in the higher education internationalisation agenda in many countries, it is often left to the programme or curriculum development to develop the transferable, soft skills that will enable graduates to navigate their employability and graduate outcomes (Jones, 2013). The skills and knowledge acquired during a significant time abroad is a large draw for international students seeking a global career. As an international student there is often a learning curve when it comes to identifying the skills and knowledge required to be obtained for both your studies and labour market transition. International students were found to often lack the skills and knowledge to adapt and transition smoothly into their host society (Khawaja and Stallman, 2011).

International students are expected to adapt to a new environment without the social networks and support beyond those provided by the university. There has been an expectation that

obtaining an internationally accredited degree guarantees that the holder has acquired the skills and knowledge necessary to enable the portability of their education in social and transnational mobility after-study in careers (Collins *et al.*, 2017). As much as higher education is emphasised to supply the students with knowledge as learners, there is also an expectation that the skills and knowledge gained through the curriculum will be applied by graduates in their future careers.

Universities could continue to provide not only specialist knowledge in subject specific fields, but provide social skills training through programmes and activities that would encourage international students from different cultures and backgrounds to integrate into the university and their host society (Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen, 2021). The literature has described through multiple articles that the skills and knowledge learned outside the classroom are just as, if not more, important to graduate outcomes. Work integrated learning has been a focus of researchers in recent years to enhance graduate employability, but this discourse is often centred around the skills and knowledge development of home students as part of a national policy (Fakunle and Pirrie, 2020). As work experience is not always a necessity in students' home countries, when they choose to study abroad they lack the skills and knowledge to not only find a job but also carry out their placement successfully (Goodwin and Mbah, 2019). The ability to enhance their practical skills and knowledge through work placements in the host country serves to gain understanding, manage expectations, and feel sufficiently prepared and confident to enter the host country labour market. Work integrated learning is considered to be fundamental to enhancing graduate readiness and improving soft-skills such as cultural awareness and intelligence, adaptability, empathy, and intercultural competences among other benefits (Lopez-Duarte, Maley and Vidal-Suarez, 2021; Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha, 2021). The application of practical experience for international students during their studies has been shown to not only provide students with necessary skills and knowledge, but also to demonstrate to employers who partner with universities in the work integrated learning schemes the employability of international students (Zevallos, 2012). The partnership of universities and employers not only enhance in-country employability skills development for students, but also aid international students in overcoming challenges associated with conveying their skills and knowledge to employers.

2.4.5 Labour market returns

The changing political and cultural dynamics continue to motivate ISM, maintaining a population of mobile students who seek to gain a return on their investment in the global labour market (Rizvi, 2011). The motivations for student mobility are not only based in the exchange of ideas and intercultural learning, but with the potential for transforming social identities through future employment prospects (Rizvi, 2011). For international students, tuition fees can sometimes be more than six times that of home student fees (Mogaji, Adamu and Nguyen, 2021). Despite this high cost, the UK remains a highly popular destination for international students. International students' contribution to the UK economy in 2009, including tuition fees and living expenses, was an estimated £7.9 billion according to Universities UK, with future economic contribution estimated to be £16.9 billion by 2025 (Chien, 2020). The conversation of ISM has focused on destination countries and the personal, cultural, and career-oriented motivations of international students to pursue an education abroad (Furukawa, Shirakawa and Okuwada, 2013; Civera, Meoli and Paleari, 2021).

Although international students represent a significant contribution to their host country economy, their labour return on investment is not always realised. Wage and field or level of work are often used to gauge the employability outcomes of international students who have entered the labour market. Research has highlighted the struggles international students face during their studies and following graduation in gaining relevant employment. There were conflicting findings found in the literature related to labour market outcomes of international students following their graduation. In one case, international students found their international degree was more highly valued as a commodity in their home country, whereas in their host country their 'international' status often impeded their ability to transition from their degree to career (Brooks and Waters, 2022; Tinta, Ouedraogo and Thiombiano, 2022). In other studies, returnees expressed that their employment outcomes were not as positive as they had expected and sometimes even took longer to find employment due to not building and maintaining professional social networks at home (Tzanakou and Behle, 2017; Zhai, Moskal and Read, 2021; Zhan, Downey and Dyke, 2021). Due to the temporary nature of the post-study visa, the aspirations of international students were often not realised and have resulted in limited entry to their desired career (Tran *et al.*, 2022a). Those who received master's or doctorate degrees in high demand fields, such as engineering and law were found to have higher employment than those in oversubscribed fields such as IT and business-related

subjects (Zhan, Downey and Dyke, 2021). The labour market return of international students is often influenced by the country's current labour market environment being impacted by political climate and policy changes (Tran *et al.*, 2020a). In times of skilled labour shortages, countries recruit individuals to fill desired positions to enhance economic development, but this is not always aligned with government policies and expectations. While governments expect that a temporary post-study visa will allow graduates to test the local labour market, employers have expressed an inability to see the benefits of a temporary employee which disadvantages international students from securing employment (Tran *et al.*, 2020a). The labour market return is an important aspect of gaining foreign degree qualifications for international students. There is an expectation of a certain level of enhanced career obtained for their investment which has been measured in time unemployed, wage, and labour skill level yet the external factors of employer ignorance or government policies have impeded this transition (Brooks and Waters, 2022).

2.4.6 Graduate capital development

ISM and graduate employability have been emphasized in research and reports to encourage the mobility of students to enhance employability through the accumulation of multiple forms of capital – mobile, human, social, cultural, and eventually economic (Perovic and Komotar, 2020). The learning experiences and development of social networks are likely to be significant in graduate outcomes of international students as it not only includes the acquisition of education but the manner in which to interact within a particular place and its people (Collins *et al.*, 2017). The alignment of personal and professional relationships with the skills and knowledge obtained during an international student's time in a foreign university is crucial in graduate capital development yet its development is often maintained as a responsibility of the individual to have the motivation to overcome obstacles and barriers (Quan, Pearce and Baranchenko, 2017).

The graduate attributions of international students developed during their time at university appear to, at times, be misaligned with the requirements of the labour market, particularly when integrating into a local labour market. Cultural differences related to the norms, attitudes and values expected within a particular social group and capital obtainment can create a misalignment between the individual and the desired organisation, which is often based on their psychological and socio-cultural adaptation (Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen, 2021). In a study conducted by Huang (2013), it was determined that international students, through their

parents' behaviour, understood employability to be a personal responsibility. The international experience is associated with graduate employability development which influences the way students approach their management of their employability (Huang, 2013). Although this process is viewed as an individual responsibility, it is still shaped by the environment and structure of the university and its programmes (Huang, 2013). The way in which international students understand their new foreign environment can be seen to undermine the intentions of the university's efforts to internationalise the curriculum as a lack of cultural understanding leads to unrecognised relevance of opportunities for future employability development (Fakunle, 2021b).

2.4.7 Role of the university

The role of the university in student employability in general has been widely debated, from the perspective of the institution is merely for the obtainment of knowledge and learning to others which view its function as a developer of future employable individuals. As universities continue to develop their internationalisation strategies, it is important to clearly articulate the return on investment to recruited international students as tangible benefits. Appealing to the generic 'broadening of the mind' is not a compelling case for students to invest in studying in a foreign country when that could be achieved through personal travel (Nerlich, 2013). Instead, focusing on promoting curriculum-specific learning outcomes such as employment outcomes and intercultural competency evaluations strengthen why that programme abroad is worthy of their investment for the future pathways (Nerlich, 2013).

The role of the university in its responsibility to its student population has shifted with the diversification and internationalisation agenda of higher education. The increase of international students in the UK and globally has brought attention to the responsibility of universities to provide support for students who do not have the critical cultural or social knowledge of their host institution or community to successfully navigate their employability development. Although studies have shown that international students are mostly engaged and have a desire to increase their employability (Huang, 2013; Fakunle and Pirrie, 2020), there are inhibitors at both the institutional and national level which act as barriers in their agency (Fakunle, 2021b).

A main challenge has been the 'duty of care' responsibility of universities to provide not only education but also employability skills for their graduates. For some academic stakeholders,

this agenda takes away from the true purpose of higher education, which is to provide education for the public good (Lopez-Duarte, Maley and Vidal-Suarez, 2021). This can be where issues arise in national and higher education collaborative policy. As internationalisation continues to be a priority for many institutions globally. Stemming from this the internationalisation of the curriculum is needed to incorporate intercultural dimensions to recognise the impact of cultural background on a student's meaning-making, which prepares them to meet employer expectations on a global scale (Goodwin and Mbah, 2019). Employer and academic staff expectations in the role of the university have not fully aligned as academic staff may be reluctant to incorporate 'skills' at the expense of their subject-specific course content (Jones, 2013).

Within the university, career services are often viewed as the gatekeepers on information for career readiness and preparing students to navigate the transition from university to the labour market. Students, both domestic and international alike are directed to the university career services to discuss their future employment and employability. These services range from CV and cover letter advice to mapping out goals and identifying necessary employability skills and knowledge. While these are essential services, they can be homogenously delivered and not recognise the unique needs of the student population (Krsmanovic, 2021). In the case of international students, their needs often come due to acculturative stressors related to financial, academic, and cultural stress. As a service, the university offers different styles of counselling to students to realise and enhance their employability knowledge and skills. This is often through one-to-one advisory meetings but can be difficult for international students due to a lack of language proficiency in the host country language or differences in cultural nuances (Linkes *et al.*, 2018). Linkes *et al.* (2018) identified these unique needs of international students related to career service as a gap in the existing research exploring the experiences of students in the final stage of their education. A Canadian university sought to fill this gap through the development of group counselling for international students. This service came from the continued increasing demand of students on the career services as a way to meet the demand of international students while not having to proportionately increase in resourcing of staffing (Linkes *et al.*, 2018). International students have expressed needs to specific supports while at university which include gaining employment experience, having services available specific for international student needs, help with understanding the job search process, a better understanding of cultural nuances, concrete help to access the local labour market, and

identifying employers who are accepting of international students to name a few (Linkes *et al.*, 2018). Through a similar vein of research, a US university conducted a study which used support Groups to provide an opportunity to international students seeking employment in the US to reflect on their experiences and exchange positive and negative experiences, gaining perspectives from others which could help them comprehend and solve their problems (Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos, 2011). The group counselling offered by the Canadian university study resulted in benefits relating to reduced interview anxiety, enhanced knowledge and skills related to networking and understanding of interview expectations and understanding cultural differences in workplace norms and values, such as non-verbal communication. International students expressed that group counselling served to validate their concerns and needs through the offering of specific supports which would help them achieve their career goals (Linkes *et al.*, 2018). This adaption on career services to support the needs of the diverse student population is limited in its scope but offers a solution to the growing numbers of international students that continue to be recruited to universities globally. Group counselling in these Canadian and American case studies serves to encourage networking, sharing, and validating experiences between international students, while also providing them with professional advisor support (Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos, 2011; Linkes *et al.*, 2018).

In another study by Tran *et al.* (2022a), the role of the university as advisors in post-study work options were often hindered due to the regulatory nature of the Migration Act in Australia. This Act severely limits the ability of any staff to provide post-study work visa information assistance to international students entering the labour market. Migration agents, as the only ones legally able to give advice on the post-study work visa have become increasingly concerned as to the rigidity of the Migration Act which inadvertently limits international students' access to necessary supports (Tran *et al.*, 2022a). This strict regulation not only inhibits universities from supporting their international students through their transition to the labour market, but it also increases frustrations for international students and an increased workload for migration agents. In addition to the concerns of the migration agents, university staff felt that universities had an ethical obligation to provide all students with post-graduation support, especially if the post-study visa is used as a critical tool to recruit international students is through destination attraction (Tran *et al.*, 2022a).

2.5 Discussion

Although ISM has been covered extensively in the research ranging from motivations to pursue education abroad to employment outcomes and employability development in graduates, there is a limited scope in comparing the transition from higher education to the labour market as a role of the university in international student employability. This systematic review describes the current knowledge of international student's employability in the context of internationalisation of higher education through the perspectives of employability measures, transition experience measures, and the role of the university. These studies show how graduate transition to the labour market has been viewed in the ISM journey, and how different stakeholders approach graduate employability with the role of the university, employers, and international students.

Within the higher education policy scope, the internationalisation agenda is largely influential in international student recruitment, skills development and employability outcomes. The definition of internationalisation in higher education is broad as it proposes the integration of international, intercultural, and global dimension into the delivery of higher education (Jones, 2013). The transactional aspect of ISM has been the push-pull drivers of universities attracting the best global talent while students expect to receive an education which will give them advantages in their future career prospects (Civera, Meoli and Paleari, 2021). With international student numbers continuing to increase globally from 2 million in 2000 to 5.3 million in 2017, the volume of mobility remains the most visible aspect of internationalisation in higher education for policy makers (Fakunle, 2021a). A main factor of international student recruitment and mobility has been the drive for internationalisation of higher education, which has been regarded by institutions as a way to enhance their quality and elevate their reputation globally (Jones, 2013). This has been a motivator for university and policy stakeholders who see the recruitment of international students from an economic perspective. While prestigious universities, particularly those in the Global North, continue to attract international students, these students' representation beyond recruitment is limited.

This systematic review highlighted the vast amount of literature on the transitional experiences of international students, particularly as they navigate their skills development, value, and employability from their overseas education. Despite this, there is evidence that a considerable proportion of international students express feeling unsupported by universities in their integration to their host culture which was often paired with feelings of isolation and

discrimination (Khawaja and Stallman, 2011). In navigating employability, international students valued the soft and transferable skills they felt they obtained through their overseas degree, especially if they had studied in an English-speaking country such as the US, UK, or Australia as language proficiency was viewed as a highly valuable skill for their future career (Blackmore and Rahimi, 2019). In addition to language proficiency, international students expressed value in their experiences to gain intercultural awareness and critical thinking skills but were left in a difficult position to have agency to utilize these skills in finding a job in their host country which often resulted in an acceptance of low-skilled working conditions (Clibborn, 2021; Fakunle, 2021b). Although international students have gained the same academic degree as home students, they are often limited in local employment opportunities due to a lack of social networks and supports. As a consequence some former international students encouraged fellow international graduates to have ‘realistic’ aspirations for jobs and not pursue professional positions if their intent is to stay in the host country (Khawaja and Stallman, 2011). In line with this thinking, employers were found to often prefer local graduates due to hesitations surrounding foreign graduates’ legal rights to remain in the country and their unfamiliarity of the local workplace culture (Tran *et al.*, 2020a). From these discussions, the connection between international student intention and realisation of their employability is met with challenges based on employer understanding or validation of skills and legal restrictions. The employability experiences described illustrates an individualistic agency international students possess with the intention to seek out and develop their employability in their host university. While students attempt to navigate their employability and transition to the labour market, challenges associated with intercultural competencies leave them feeling isolated. As students attempt to navigate their new culture along with the values and norms associated, it is essential to understand the role the university plays in supporting the international student employability experience.

A significant part of this review considered the role of the university in international student employability. While some international students and university stakeholders did feel that their role was solely for educational purposes and that students had the individual responsibility to enhance their employability, others felt unsupported and recruited merely as ‘cash cows’ (Mogaji, Adamu and Nguyen, 2021). While the economic benefits associated with international student recruitment have been widely discussed and promoted for host countries, the literature on the careers support the international students have received remains limited.

The challenges and barriers that international students experience during their transition from university to the labour market are well known. These have highlighted social networks both within the university environment and professional environment. There have been calls to improve partnerships between universities and employers to not only give students the opportunity to gain valuable employability skills, but to dispel concerns and hesitations of employers towards hiring international students. The concept of building social networks for personal stability and professional advancement have been addressed in the literature, often citing those students gained or not through the networks they had access to in their host and home countries. Networking is perceived as being crucial to enhancing cultural knowledge and employment by international students, yet the emphasis of a practical approach to this need by universities is lacking (Tran *et al.*, 2020a). Small scale studies in the US and Canada explored peer mentoring and group counselling to build students' networks and break through feelings of loneliness and isolation (Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos, 2011; Linkes *et al.*, 2018). These studies demonstrated the positive influence group counselling can have on international students. They not only alleviated stress on university staffing and resources, but also allowed students to share their experiences and insights with others who had been through the same experiences. The approach of universities towards international student support in their employability and labour market transition has been limited in their understanding of the unique needs of this group. While the careers services are available to all students and in some cases alumni beyond graduation, the accessibility is sometimes a challenge for international students to make use of due to cultural differences and language barriers. Many factors come into play in graduate employability development and successful labour market transition. Inaccessibility of social networks within the host country is an area which continues to be prevalent in the literature as a barrier to employment for international students, but a solution beyond limited group counselling and self-initiated interactions with classmates and others within the communities has not been identified. Although social networking has been repeatedly regarded as essential to employability and job-finding, international students may not know how to form the networks that will put them in the best position to make the successful transition from education to labour market. The research examined in the following chapters will aim to fill the gap between the role of the university in the services and support they provide and address the unique needs of international students to enhance their employability.

2.6 Conclusion

The decision to take up a degree programme abroad has important implications for the employability development of students and their future career prospects. To better understand the state of the research, this systematic review summarises the literature on international student employability development experiences and the role of the university. The review revealed that the international mobility of students has positive and negative outcomes. International students highlighted the benefits to their employability of studying overseas through their skills and knowledge development, intercultural understanding, and language proficiency. Yet these benefits were met with challenges and barriers for international students to transition successfully into the host country labour market both during their studies and following their graduation. Differences in cultural approaches, unfamiliarity with the host society customs and workplace traditions, and employers' hesitations or preference for local graduates were identified in the literature as contributors to the difficulties faced by international students in successfully obtaining and integrating into the labour market in a fulfilling career. The literature reviewed focused on many elements of the international student employability experience and internationalisation of higher education.

While the literature has explored various elements of the international student employability experience, there is limited research that examines how these topics interact to shape the employability experience and outcomes in specific host country contexts. The role of social networks and graduate capital development has been discussed separately in the literature, but a more comprehensive understanding of how these elements interact to influence employability remains underdeveloped. Discussing social networks, there was evidence presented that signified the importance of social networks among international students when studying abroad to enhance their adaptation to a new environment. This focus found that students experienced challenges in integrating into their new host environment (Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos, 2011; Kim *et al.*, 2021) but there is insufficient evidence on how networks contribute to employability experiences and outcomes during and after their studies. Similar to social networks, the aspect of graduate capital development in the literature focused on the student experience of adaption and value alignment to navigate their way to employment in their new host country. Graduate capital has been maintained as an individual's responsibility, but within the context of student mobility, the impact of cultural

differences and intercultural competencies and institutional support structures on employability development has been limited.

This systematic literature review addresses this gap by focusing on the intersection of social networks, graduate capital development, and university supports in the employability experiences of international students in UK universities. Various factors impact the integration and employment expectations of international students. Their experience with university supports can positively or negatively influence how they perceive, experience, and manage their employability. By synthesizing the existing literature, this review provides a more nuanced understanding of the facilitators and inhibitors that shape employability outcomes for international students. The review contributes to the field by highlighting the importance of university engagement and intervention that aims to support network building and graduate capital development. This is particularly relevant in the context of international students facing unique challenges in understanding the cultural nuances and expected capital which would aid them in recognising their employability and further integrating into the host country's labour market. Moving forward, it is important to unpack the importance of social networks and graduate capital development in relation to the international student employability experience within UK universities. The following chapter will focus on the conceptual framework which has shaped this study to further understand how the employability experience of international students is influenced through networks and graduate capital development.

Chapter 3 Conceptual Framework

3.1 Introduction

The systematic review in this previous chapter highlighted the factors associated with the international student mobility journey and employability within the context of the internationalisation of higher education. The aim of this chapter is to explore the conceptual framework of how graduate capital, and social networks work together to build and develop employability in international students and the role of the university from the staff and student perspective. The lay-out of this chapter is first an exploration of the theoretical underpinning of social capital and social network analysis which is then applied in the context of international students. Next, the role of the university in employability development and how both stakeholders are presented in each other's social networks. The chapter concludes with a visual representation of the conceptual framework with an explanation of the integration of social capital, social network analysis, employability, and the role of the university in the employability experience of international students.

3.2 Social and Cultural Capital

To understand the social inequalities presented in the pursuit of higher education, Pierre Bourdieu looked beyond the socio-professional category of the parents. The cultures learned in school are often that of the dominant culture, creating a distance from inherited culture. Cultural capital appears as a mode of legitimisation of this social domination (Sapiro, 2015). During this same period, Bourdieu (1986) developed the concept of social capital which is defined as a network of long-lasting relations between people who are able to make symbolic and economic exchanges (Sapiro, 2015). This has been widely used to provide an insight into the reasoning for why certain actions are maintained. He reasoned that through the sustained shared beliefs there is a generalized sense of complacency to continue what has always been done (Agbenyega and Klibthong, 2015). When analysing and defining the world we all live and operate within, Bourdieu has used the term *habitus* which are the structures of what are known within the environment that enable one to cope with unforeseen situations in the future (Bourdieu, Passeron and Nice, 1977). The *habitus* one possesses is used to objectively deduce the reaction their actions will produce as a ripple effect. While the *field* is a concept which refers to the social, individual, and institutional systems which offer structures and practices that define roles and responsibilities (Agbenyega and Klibthong, 2015). The capital or social, cultural, economic, and

symbolic assets which are sought out to be accumulated in different fields by each class correlates to the differences in habitus. As they define a network of long-lasting relationships between individuals who know one another has relatable economic and symbolic exchanges (Sapiro, 2015). Capital is a resource that is only recognized when it holds symbolic value which imbues it with legitimacy within that field, and therefore denotes the position of an individual within it (Watson and Widin, 2015).

According to Tomlinson, Enders and Naidoo (2020), Bourdieu has referred to higher education as a social field consisting of defined systems and structures which create a framework for actors to operate within to create meaning and action (Tomlinson, Enders and Naidoo, 2020). Within the field, actors are differentiated on their possession of different forms of capital which are valued in the field and define their power and esteem (Tomlinson, Enders and Naidoo, 2020). Higher education continues to foster and grow its heterogeneity through widening participation and internationalization strategies yet its social fields within the institution remain slow to change, impacting the trajectory of individuals (Watson and Widin, 2015). The return for students transitioning to the labour market has been shown to depend on forms of capital graduates possess which enhance their employability, particularly the pre-existence of social and cultural capital. The possession of earlier connections or networks by graduates have significant impact on future labour market outcomes leading to higher earning and higher reward occupations (Tomlinson, 2012).

As international students interact with a new field which values experiences and capital that is different from what they own, there is already a deficit in capital value. From a 2009 study it was identified that international students formed a strong social group with those of similar cultural backgrounds to replace the social capital lost during their transition to their new host culture (Rienties and Jindal-Snape, 2016). Some international students may experience an inability to relate their habitus to the habitus of the group they are entering and are placed at a disadvantage of being unable to use what they know to accurately predict outcomes of actions.

The concept of social network theory is often articulated under social capital which embodies that an actor who is better connected in network structures does better, although there are varying opinions to the implications of network strength from an inside or outside structure (Yamin and Kurt, 2018). The strength of interpersonal ties and the measures and weight attached to each of

these determines the diffusion and dissemination of information among a number of network links which lead to integration or isolation (Granovetter, 1977). If social networks are considered to instead build capital rather than rely on pre-existing capitals to establish networks, then a better understanding of the formation of social networks among diverse groups is needed.

Through the limitation on network development, international students face a difficulty to form bonds with their host culture and often turn inwards towards their co-national peers therefore limiting the culture capital attainment. While turning inwards effectively reduces the stress of integration and provides a sense of adjustment to a part of the host environment, prolonged solitary contact with co-national peers is detrimental to the cultural learning and adjustment of international students (Rienties and Nolan, 2014). This lack of network formation disrupts the ability of international students to obtain valuable social and cultural capital. Different to the social and cultural capital defined by Bourdieu (1986) as being developed through membership to a particular group, Tomlinson (2017) asserts that these graduate capitals are formed during higher education and adapt to labour market opportunities. Through the formation of social networks with host nationals, cultural capital is enhanced through attainment of cultural-valued knowledge and social capital from network formations to give new dimensions to graduate employability (Pham, Lai and Vuong, 2019).

When this comes to navigating the route to employment, the experiences international students have from their home country does not always align with the standards of those in their host country and it can be difficult to fully realize their capital competence and value. As demonstrated by Butum and Nicolescu (2019) review, there are many employability models which have been used to measure graduates' employability impact. Focusing on the student experience, Tomlinson developed the Graduate Capital Model which identifies capital development as essential resources for empowering graduates to make the transition to the labour market (Tomlinson, 2017). Tomlinson's Graduate Capital model identifies five forms of capital: human, social, cultural, identity, and psychological and how they are related to graduate employability (Tomlinson, 2017). This model was selected in the conceptual framework due to the labelling of graduate capital as a form of development different to the traditional understanding of human capital and the specific attention on employability development of graduates. This concept moves beyond the traditional capital approach by demonstrating the

importance of how capital is developed and utilised by graduates to enhance their progression in the labour market (Tomlinson, 2017). A strength in this conceptual model is the incorporation of human capital as an essential element to graduate employability, enhancing occupational readiness (Benati and Fischer, 2020). Cultural and social capital under the Graduate Capital Model (Tomlinson, 2017) directly impact the employability and graduate career readiness of international graduates. The inclusion of these capitals identify a requirement of social interactions which contribute to other capital's development (Cook, 2022). While the Graduate Capital Model provides valuable insight into the factors influencing graduate employability and offers a comprehensive framework that has inspired many developments in the research of graduate capital development, there are several weaknesses and limitations that have been identified in its application. In their application of Tomlinson's (2017) model, Benati and Fisher (2020) argued that a weakness of the Tomlinson model was that the state of the labour market is not directly incorporated, meaning that the dynamic nature of employers and labour market conditions are not considered in the employability and capital development of graduates. Building on this criticism, the state of the labour market can also be influenced through the role of visa-frameworks which contribute to the employment opportunities available for international students and graduates. Similarly, as identified by Singh and Fan (2021b), Tomlinson's model focused on primarily on domestic students leaving the experiences of international students out of the employability discourse. While the graduate model did make reference to overseas students were captured in the original data used to develop the model, there was a lack of attention to how the backgrounds of students impacted their capital development, especially relating to social and cultural capital.

Graduate career readiness is a concept which captures the different capabilities and attributes required by graduates to successfully navigate the labour market (Jackson, 2018). This readiness is acquired through various activities such as work experience, and curriculum based, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities which enable students to build their networks and gain insight into their future employment (Jackson and Tomlinson, 2022). For international students, it is highly important to develop social networks with key stakeholders such as supervisors and mentors who help connect them to employment opportunities and help broker significant knowledge required to negotiate (Pham, Lai and Vuong, 2019). As this connects to graduate career readiness, social and cultural capital relate to a proactive approach graduates need to

establish when navigating the labour market and identifying themselves as a future employee (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2022). International students have expressed a concern in their deficit of cultural capital leading to a shallow understanding on understanding their employment field (Pham, Lai and Vuong, 2019). Possession of graduate capital enhances their employability, but without effective means to make connections in the social network of their institution there is a loss in the ability to fully realise this capital's potential. Understanding how these social networks are formed and maintained over the period of study is needed to support university services in connecting to students' networks. In building and strengthening networks, international students' graduate capital is acknowledged and empowered contributing to their growth in competencies and employability development. Social network analysis is a useful tool for understanding how these competencies and employability is developed.

3.3 Social Network Analysis (SNA)

As the previous section laid the groundwork for understanding social and cultural capital, this section explores the development of international student social networks which work to provide a sharing of information, knowledge, and experiences to enhance their capital development. Social network analysis (SNA) is concerned with identifying the social structures and norms which are hidden in the social ties (Mu, 2020). Social networks are diverse, and change based on who you are connected to and the durability of the connection. A social network according to Prell (2012, p. 9) is "a set of relations that apply to a set of social entities, and any information on those actors and relations." An individual can hold multiple networks such as a friendship network, an advice network, or even an avoided network (Prell, 2012). Within SNA there are often multiple terms used to describe the network. Different disciplines will associate different terms, such as *actors* or *nodes* and *vertices*. Actors, usually used in a sociological term are all the people listed in the network, while graph theory uses the term nodes and vertices (Prell, 2012). Within a network there are various components. The *ego* is the focal actor of interest, in which the *alters* are the actors tied to the *ego*. A *tie* is the connection between actors and a *relation* is the set of ties among those actors (i.e., family, friendships, etc). Each of the actors has information associated with them known as *actor attributes*. Finally, an *ego network* is the social network of the ego, illustrating their alters, and the ties linking them all together. The ego network can also be defined in its permanency as either a *state* or *event relation*. A state relation is much easier to detect and is often more durable leading to a development of trust, belonging,

and friendship among actors. Event relations are much more temporary and often associated with loose ties such as acquaintances met at an event, giving advice, or making a phone call (Prell, 2012). To summarize SNA focuses on the connections people (actors) make within their different relations. Incorporating social capital into SNA allows for a deeper analysis of the interactions and practices which cause certain networks to form.

A Bourdieusian perspective rebuts the application of network analysis due to his belief in capital, habitus, and field to be the shapers of social positioning, which cannot be broken down into interactions and practices (Mu, 2020). Within the social capital discussion, Putnam (2000) made the distinction between bridging and bonding social capital which related directly to network structures. Bridging social capital is made of weak ties and open network structures while bonding social capital is made of strong ties and dense networks. Bonding is often developed between highly intertwined while bridging social capital exists through a large number of weak ties and heterogeneous links which provide new and insightful information (Heidari, Salimi and Mehrvarz, 2023). The introduction of social capital in network analysis has sparked a new area of work to utilize SNA to understand networks, their structures and benefits over time (Prell, 2012). Social capital is the value found within social networks based on the structural features of the network which correspond to a variety of outcomes (Prell, 2012). According to Mu (2020), Bourdieu asserted that network theory often sacrifices the study of the underlying social structures, focusing more on the demonstrated relationships and information flows. In the case of SNA, the analysis is focused on the structural relations and the implications these have on the individual or group dynamics and behaviours within the social system (Mu, 2020). From an SNA perspective, social capital is accumulated through social interactions and relationships over time which outline the stories, narratives, values, and rules through which we live our everyday lives (Lee, 2014).

The strengths of SNA, particularly qualitative studies provide insight into the role of the lived experience in changing and developing the network composition and content and accessing the meaning attached to the social ties and potential barriers to social capital (Sommer and Gamper, 2021). Utilising social capital and SNA together allows for a more in-depth understanding of the development of social capital in relation to the integration and adaptation of individuals or groups in a particular environment. The use of SNA when looking at how organizations and

groups pass along information across ties is a strength in being able to determine the skills and knowledge which are obtained as capital by actors within the network, how they are obtained, and where the inefficiencies are within the network information distribution (Han, Chae and Passmore, 2019).

While SNA can be applied to understand the social network development of the targeted group, there are alternative factors which can also impact the development. It can be effective to associate the environment a group of actors is in as the sole impacting factor for the social network and capital development. However, there can be a variety of demographic factors which can have an effect on the bridging and bonding capitals (Ryan, Erel and D'Angelo, 2015). What also must be accounted for is the limit is size of the population studied in the SNA and caution must be taken when making generalised statements about the ties and social capital results (Han, Chae and Passmore, 2019). It is challenging to account for all variables within a network which would impact the outcome of dynamics within the network and how ego and actors work together.

As international education continues to grow in the UK and globally, it is important to understand the process international students take when integrating into a new society and the experiences they have navigating networks, capital, and skills development. Social networks and social capital are an integral part of understanding the dimensions of social interaction and the functioning of societies through the sharing of knowledge which validates social credentials (Rienties and Nolan, 2014). For migrants, entering a new society brings about challenges of integration and understanding the value of their capital from what it was to what it is in their new community. In the frame of cultural capital, individuals from different cultural backgrounds develop different forms and levels of capital resulting in less or more powerful outcomes in their academics and labour outcomes (Naylor and Mifsud, 2020).

3.4 Graduate Capital and Social Networks among International Students

Past research and literature which has applied and examined the application of social network theory and social capital theory has provided compelling evidence to its strengths when understanding the trajectory of international student employability. The strength of using Bourdieu's theory of social capital (1986) with Granovetter (1977), Tomlinson (2012), and others take on social network theory and graduate capital is the ability to examine social capital

as a tool to access and form networks. Through understanding how networks are formed, the role of capital may be positioned to be strengthened through the networks as opposed to the influencer to their formation. It has been shown that international students are not passively experiencing culture, but actively choose ways to interact for cultural adaptation (Rienties and Jindal-Snape, 2016). The use of the Graduate Capital Model (Tomlinson, 2017) and social network analysis (Prell, 2012) allows for an examination into the formation of networks and reproduction of social and cultural capital which lead to perpetuated inequalities and differentiated fields of power (Tomlinson, 2012). The application of social network analysis as a developer of social and cultural capital offers an alternative perspective which views the actions of the individual as the developer of capitals, rather than established capital being the drivers, which allow access to certain social networks. The higher education environment itself is important to understand as external factors can impact patterns of networking and relationship building. By understanding the international student experience and how they form networks, institutions can be better situated to support international students in overcoming challenges they face when integrating into the university and in developing their employability and facilitating their employability and readiness to enter the labour market.

The formation of bridging and bonding social capital is prevalent when it comes to the mobilities of individuals, whether it be social or physical mobility. The education setting offers an opportunity to alter the mobility trajectory through the identification of groups and individuals who offer a chance for outsiders to identify their place in the society and networks to access culture and social capital (Ayentimi, Hinson and Burgess, 2021). International students have to overcome intercultural adjustments as they transition from their home countries to their host environment, which involves psychological and sociocultural adjustments (Cheng, Meng and Liu, 2018). The various interactions international students encounter through meeting co-nationals and local students in the higher education environment have been shown to not only increase independence, confidence, and self-formation but students also gain employability skills and career direction (Jon, Kim and Byun, 2020). The social capital development of international students through their local, co-national, and international social networks can be attributed to embedded resources which can be attributed to the sharing of ideas and contribute to a sense of belonging (Rienties and Nolan, 2014). As international students form these cross-border networks their communities expand, and they can diversify their social capital through the

formation of bonding and bridging social capital and begin to understand the complexities of their host environment.

In higher education, the process of forming social networks between international students and their co-national and local peers is an accelerated process due to the demand to interact because of external circumstances and pushers (Rienties and Nolan, 2014). This accelerated process lends to an increasing need to conform and mould their capital to be 'culturally competent' which may only further segregate international students as 'others' in their host institutions (O'Sullivan, 2013). There have been a limited number of studies which have moved beyond individual characteristics of international students to focus more on the interactions and relations they form inside and outside the university. These studies have highlighted that international students often turn inwards towards their own cultural networks to navigate new settings, although the limited exposure to host students leaves them feeling isolated and unable to learn about their host culture (Rienties and Jindal-Snape, 2016). Although international students may initially be motivated to make ties with locals in the host community, many are left feeling frustrated and segregated due to the lack of contact with the host community (Schartner, 2015). Some students have reflected on the highly internationalised setting as a perceived barrier to meet locals and feeling that being placed in an 'international' accommodation or social activities only serves to further separate them from forming ties with the host community (Schartner, 2015). While the university attracts a diverse range of students, their integration with each other can be limited.

Social network formation that is embedded into the academic curriculum has been shown to enhance social inclusion and intercultural competence of international and local students (Resch and Amorim, 2021). The curriculum creates an environment where encounters between all levels of peers, staff, faculty, and alumni can become acquainted with each other on a regular basis to achieve common goals and objectives over a continuous period. The time to interact with others within the university network is an important factor for international students to strengthen their ties, enhancing their graduate capital and employability (Taha and Cox, 2016; Goodwin and Mbah, 2019). The facilitation of diverse networks within the university environment can work to reduce the social and cultural isolation and help prepare students for the market they will be entering (Rienties and Nolan, 2014).

3.5 Dynamics of Social Networks in the International Student Community

The dynamics of social networks in the higher education setting can help shape the perception of supports available through weak and strong ties which aid in reducing stress when encountering a new environment. For international students, the benefits of forming connections with domestic contacts especially in their peer group is the higher level of informational support (Cheng, Meng and Liu, 2018). Domestic ties, or weak ties within the international student's network, are more familiar with cultural norms and rules, and international students perceive this availability of informational support as a way to clarify expectations for how they should proceed in the local community (Cheng, Meng and Liu, 2018). The international students' social networks not only aid in cultural adjustment, but can also encourage students to explore the local culture (Cheng, Meng and Liu, 2018). This should not be limited to just the university environment as a study by Jon et al. (2020) revealed that international students who participated in external off-campus activities were more likely to form connections and friendships with locals beyond what was available on campus.

The process of forming networks across the international community has been shown to be varied based on the cultural background. The Confucian communities from Asian countries have been documented to form strong network ties with those of the same culture, relying on other international students to form the bridges between them and the local students (Rienties and Nolan, 2014). While there may be access to build ties with locals and other international students, some international students may instead rely on the internet to provide them with information rather than form in-person connections (Cheng, Meng and Liu, 2018). The availability of digital resources such as social media and the internet means that international students can be less likely to reach out to locals to navigate social and cultural competencies, stunting their integration and inhibiting their social inclusion and capital gain (Resch and Amorim, 2021).

Previous studies have shown that the networks made by international students hold various functions. Where the formation of co-national networks are used to maintain the culture of origin, networks with host nationals (students, staff, etc) are necessary to facilitate learning and growth within the host community (Schartner, 2015). Even in culturally diverse environments such as classrooms and the university campus, research has shown that the interaction and

network formation of international students is limited. Both international and home students will tend to form co-national working groups due to different timings each student group has when forming networks. As international students come to study, they are at a stage where they need to build new networks in a community where many peers from the host culture have already formed their networks. These differentiated times can result in a lack of access or ability to form new networks with their local peers (Taha and Cox, 2016). Due to home students forming networks early on, before international students have even registered or arrived in the host country, there is already a barrier to forming intercultural networks. The differences in information received through the distinct networks has also been apparent, especially in choosing which network to seek advice from.

Language, age, culture, and having experience in the host country have been shown to be important factors for international students when forming co-national networks. Through the basis of a common language, international students can feel more comfortable and able to communicate easily, leading to more bonding ties (Taha and Cox, 2016). While this is a way for them to feel supported and build trust, it can further distance them from the home country's culture and lead to isolation. This can also be said for home students interacting with international students whose culture is significantly different to their own. The more culturally distant an individual's culture is to the host country's culture, the less likely they are to be viewed as socially competent and unable to form ties (Chadha, Kleinbaum and Wood, 2023). Intercultural competence has been shown to be a positive influence on international students' personal and career development through increased interaction with both host and intercultural networks which encourage students to learn the host language and important nuanced behaviours (Jon, Kim and Byun, 2020).

The impact of social network diversity in enhancing employability has been found to be important for graduate success through developing relationships with key stakeholders (Pham, Tomlinson and Thompson, 2019). Relationships at various levels from co-national, to family, to supervisors and mentors aid in informing international students of opportunities in their host and home countries and help them navigate barriers. Although it has been shown that these diverse social networks can benefit international students, many students will maintain co-national relationships due to the familiarity in culture and language limiting their intercultural encounters.

Exposure to internationals and locals within the host community does lend itself to enhancing the social capital of the individual, but it takes the individual exercising agency and proactiveness to recognise the need to gain the social capital required for them to succeed in their personal and professional communities (Huang and Turner, 2018; Pham, 2021a). Networking is understood by international students and the university to be an important component of employability development in higher education (Montgomery and McDowell, 2009; Gribble, Rahimi and Blackmore, 2017). Although the intention for pursuing employment in the host or home country may vary, the ability to develop social networks is significant to build and demonstrate employability to significant others within the network, offering opportunities and novel information (Pham, Tomlinson and Thompson, 2019).

The skills, knowledge, and attributes associated with graduate employability is often centred around soft or hard skills with perceived value towards future career prospects. Soft skills such as language proficiency and intercultural competence are often perceived as barriers by international students who find it difficult to decipher what attributes are expected of them (Pham, Tomlinson and Thompson, 2019). These softer skills are often learned through social networks and provide knowledge of the ‘unwritten rules’ of society, particularly the codes and norms of the workplace. International students who have not formed social networks can often be deficient in these alternative communicative competencies leading to a perception of ill ‘fit’ by recruiters and employers (Pham, 2021a). While language proficiency may be at an acceptable academic level, the communicative skills associated with daily life in the host community or general knowledge of how to interact with students, staff, employers outside of a co-national network is a gap in capital resource obtainment and employability development. Relying on English tests such as IELTS and embedded academic language within the curriculum is inadequate to prepare international graduates for employability (Pham, 2021a). To further understand how international students develop their employability within their host country, we must look at their host institution to unpack the range of support services which can limit or enhance international student employability.

3.6 The University as a Facilitator of International Student Employability

With the increase of international students seeking to enhance their competitiveness in a global market, universities are challenged to ensure that all their graduates possess skills which enhance

their employability. There is no singular definition of employability, though some have narrowed it to the concept that it is an individual's skills and ability to obtain and maintain employment throughout their career (Fakunle, 2021b). The individual nature of employability development has been continually mentioned and framed within the existing strategies and policy initiatives, but rarely applies the impact of the labour market context (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005). The employability discussion has moved toward a micro-level view which has shifted the responsibility from the organisation to the individual (Clarke, 2018). As McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) discussed, there is a tendency for employability to assume there are specific types of demand which change based on the evolving labour market. Employability development has been positioned to hold the individual accountable to adjust their skills to fit the current nature of the labour market, with policies focused on filling skills gaps of the current labour market (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005). A potential outcome of this is an inability of some individuals to successfully find employment despite possessing the employability attributes which would normally allow them to be highly employable (Clarke, 2018). While universities can provide the services and curriculum to enhance graduates employability, the student must engage and work to develop their own employability identity beyond the embedded skills curriculum (Jackson, 2015). The level of individual responsibility in the development of employability skills relies on the student pursuing their skills development in a way that aligns with what is expected of employers in the labour market. For international students, the prospect of aligning their identity to demonstrate their preparedness to enter the UK labour market is influenced by their preexisting social and human capital. Beyond demonstrating their alignment and preparedness, international students must navigate existing legal frameworks such as visa policy. There is a gap in the approach to employability development to address the specific concerns related to visa limitations that restrict access to the labour market and employment opportunities (Fakunle, 2021b). While universities do not inform immigration policy, with employability being under the internationalisation agenda, there is a need to address the implications of visa frameworks in shaping employment opportunities for international students who intend to transition to the UK labour market. Employability initiatives within universities tends to focus on the individual's responsibility to develop their skills. While the individual agency of all students is expected, the ability to understand the context of the labour market needs are impacted by the cultural diversity and student's intercultural competencies. There is a shared responsibility of stakeholders to

enhance the employability experience of international students, recognising the heterogeneity of this group of students and how they approach their employability development.

Literature has tended to homogenise international students into one group who is attracted to international education for the improvement and investment in capital, however it has been demonstrated that this group is diverse in their forms of capital and experiences in building graduate employability (McGrath, Madziva and Thondhlana, 2017). Tomlinson (2017) emphasized the significance of the various forms of capital which are acquired and deployed through relations of domestic graduates' employability. The international student perspective offers an additional layer of application of the graduate capital model to understand how international students gain social and cultural capital to enhance their employability through social networks within the university (Pham, Tomlinson and Thompson, 2019).

An emphasis on embedding collaborative learning environments inside and outside the classroom acts as an additional level of support for international students, encouraging them to engage with weaker ties in their social networks. The application and learning of hard skills during their degree is a curriculum objective, just as the intent to build transferable skills such as communication, work ethic, time management, and teamwork is also expected (Valencia-Forrester and Backhaus, 2020). Intercultural ties fostered by host institutions through the incorporation of multicultural team activities inside and outside the classroom enhance not only international students' but all graduates' transferable skills (Schartner, 2015). Within the university, interventions made to enhance the internationalised learning environment extracurricular activities and support services can be controlled, monitored, and altered to adjust to the needs of international and local students. This serves to equip them with the employability skills desired in globalised work force.

In addition to integrated classroom initiatives, extracurricular activities implemented by the university have been shown to enhance inclusion through programmes focused on bringing international and local students together. Through facilitating interactions, students from both groups enhance their intercultural competence (Resch and Amorim, 2021). The engagement in classroom learning is academic learning, whereas the facilitation of learning outside of the classroom is a social phenomenon (Montgomery and McDowell, 2009). An emphasis is usually placed on organising these activities in the beginning of semesters but not as continued or

encouraged throughout the rest of the year. Language exchanges and extracurricular activities require the self-engagement of locals and international students yet the strength of these encounters can be hard to maintain due to low frequency (Resch and Amorim, 2021). The value of opportunities outside of the classroom lead to improved skills and insights into the local and intercultural knowledge. Engagement by international students in peer-led activities such as being mentors or advisers provides a more spontaneous environment where the ability to interact with students and staff from a variety of backgrounds contributes to enhanced communication skills and language proficiency, and an increase in confidence (Delly, 2021).

Universities continue to play a significant role in developing graduates' employability as they empower graduates to transition into the labour market. Through their experience in higher education, graduates are able to develop their graduate employability through a practical application where their capitals are nurtured prior to applying them in the labour market (Tomlinson, 2017). While many universities have adopted a focus on graduate employability to be embedded for all students, very few offer specific employability support for international students to conceptualise their employability in the host or home context (Huang and Turner, 2018).

Within the university, most international students are aware of the support services available such as work-based learning, employability training workshops, and modules related to employability development which are often embedded into the curriculum with a high willingness to take part in these as they perceive them to be useful. However, the perceived usefulness of extracurricular activities and careers services has been rated relatively low. This lack of engagement with these services and activities may be due to a difference in cultural values or an unrecognised level of value which may contribute to the disengagement of international students with support services (Huang and Turner, 2018).

3.7 Conceptual Framework: Integrating Graduate Capital, Social Network Analysis, and the Role of the University in the Employability Experience.

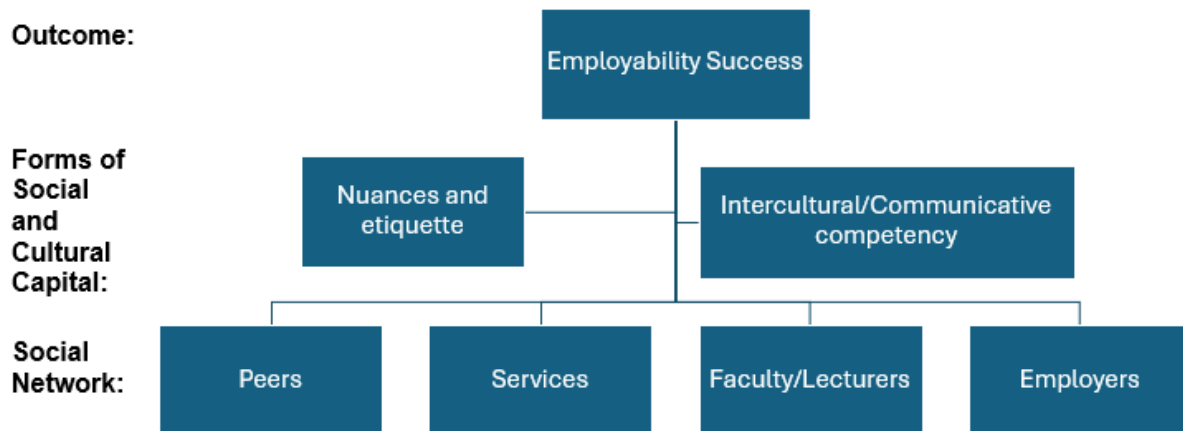


Figure 1 Role of Social Networks and Capital in Employability Success of International Students adapted from Mishra (2020)

This conceptual framework visualisation is adapted from Mishra's (2020) framework and presents the social networks of international students, the different forms of capital they acquire, and how these networks contribute to their capital attainment and contribute to successful employability development. Social Networks are represented in Figure 1 as the connections international students form as a new student within the university. Previous literature has conceptualised that social and cultural capital are established and further strengthened by the social networks (Agbenyega and Klibthong, 2015). This framework demonstrates that the forms of capital are developed from the connections formed with new social networks. The social networks international students form with their peers, support services, lecturers and employers contribute to the knowledge and skills obtained to successfully navigate their new environment. The social and cultural capital that international students have is more limited than home students in terms of their awareness and confidence to navigate the cultural nuances in their transition to employment in their host country. If the social networks such as the support services and peers are able to understand their intercultural competencies and pass on their knowledge resources to international students, then international students who are aware of their cultural differences can experience successful employability development.

3.8 Conclusion

To explore the development of the conceptual framework, this chapter examined how the integration of graduate capital, social network analysis, and the role of the university influenced the international student employability experience. Each conceptual element was explored to understand how each has been applied in the literature. Tomlinson's Graduate Capital Model (2017), as a continuation of Bourdieu's Social Capital Theory (1986), focused on the graduate attributes or capital which enhanced their employability. The focus of this model was on the interconnected capitals which highlighted the complexities students face when perceiving their skills and knowledge within the higher education landscape contributing to their labour market transition (Tomlinson, 2017). Social networks are often considered to be within social capital as they help individuals identify resources and information available to them which would enhance their chances for employment. Social networks within this conceptual framework were discussed as the essential links students use to gather localised resources and knowledge with employability in mind. Although social network theory and the graduate capital model focus predominately on the home student or local individual's experience in employability, international students are increasingly being added to the conversation. The importance of developing social networks for the development of social and cultural capital was recognised by international students but the intercultural competency to distinguish between capital valued by their home and host countries was less apparent. The conceptual factors explored in this chapter highlighted their applicability to frame this study on employability development and the international student experience. While the responsibility of developing social networks and capital is maintained by the individual, it has been important to distinguish the cultural and social differences international students experience which impact their employability. By applying this framework, we can conceptualise the role social networks and social and cultural capital play in understanding how international students develop employability and transition to the labour market. The following chapter details the methodology used to explore the employability experience of international students in the UK and the role social and cultural capital, and social networks play.

Chapter 4 Research Methodology

4.1 Overview

This chapter sets out the research methodology and methods used to address the research questions posed in Chapter One. First, the research design is described and participants for this study are introduced. Next, the timeline for the data collection is established and each method of data collection is further described. The next section presents how the data was analysed under thematic and narrative analysis. Finally, the ethical considerations and the researcher's positionality are discussed.

4.2 Exploratory interpretivist study

The nature of this exploratory study could be presented within the interpretivist paradigm. The study applied an exploratory research design to explore the complex processes international students face when interacting with university service staff and engaging with services to enhance their employability in a UK university (Polkinghorne, 1989; Groenewald, 2004). Although the use of mixed methods has been described as being problematic to align with a paradigm (Hall, 2013), the use of holistic or single-paradigm stance provides a basis to include both qualitative and quantitative methods to determine the types of questions asked and then how they are understood (McChesney and Aldridge, 2019). The value of understanding and generating data through interpretation while observing the cultural differences can lead to alternative social realities of those within the study (Goldkuhl, 2012; Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). Qualitative methods was used to collect rich data on international student experiences and their link to how social networks grow and evolve to connect communities and develop social capital within the confines of the university community setting as part of the initial exploratory design (Prell, 2009, 2012). The interpretivist paradigm arises from research, which is integrally linked to the participants and making meaning of their socially constructed realities (McChesney and Aldridge, 2019). The qualitative data helped inform and construct the quantitative measures, which were used in the information gathering process from the survey questionnaire (Almalki, 2016). This study focused on the international students' and university service staff lived experiences and perspectives to gain a better understanding of how each group approaches student employability development. The application of multiple data collection methods on the same phenomenon was used as methodological triangulation. Diverse perspectives on employability development in higher education were observed as the student interviews were

applied as a methodological tool to observe social interactions among international students. The use of small groups provided the methodological tool which provokes the social interaction of the targeted participants and allows the researcher to observe the social interactions relating to the specific area of focus (Caillaud and Flick, 2017). In this study's case, student participants were focused on their experiences related to their experiences and interactions with the university services in seeking to develop their employability. The use of small groups which encouraged the international students to interact with each other not only allowed for students to answer the questions, but for the researcher to gain insight into the group dynamic. The further use of the survey and staff interviews were used to expand on the role and responsibilities of stakeholders in employability and understand how actors viewed themselves within that event.

The methods employed for data collection were used to answer the research questions posed in the previous chapter to focus on the responsibility of the university in international student employability and how stakeholders view their role in its implementation and development. Questionnaires were designed for a survey, and interviews with international students, and interviews with professional services staff. Questions were posed to these groups of participants to understand what the responsibility of the university is in the employability development of international students, and how each stakeholder views their role in employability development.

4.3 Mixed methods approach

The use of interviews among staff and international students combined with the survey targeted towards international students was designed to provide a comprehensive outlook of the student and staff perspective of the role and responsibilities of the university in the international student employability development experience. The mixed methods design of this research was selected to address the research questions: (1) what does employability mean for international students, (2) what are the facilitators and inhibitors in their employability experience, (3) to what extent can the application of an employability model enhance our understanding of the international student transition to the UK labour market, and (4) what is the responsibility of the university in international student employability from the staff perspective. The use of mixed methods allowed for a convergence of findings to observe if both methods lead to similar results.

The use of interviews and survey data was used in triangulation to contribute to a more in depth and nuanced understanding of the themes which emerged and apply them to a broader

international student population in the UK (Turner, Cardinal and Burton, 2015). Using triangulation allowed for the use of findings from one method to determine the validity of findings from the other method (Lam and Green, 2023). In this case, the use of the survey and interviews assessed student participants' employability experience in UK universities. Additionally, the use of mixed methods fulfilled a complementarity purpose through the use of the survey to elaborate and enhance the findings from the interviews, providing a rich base of data (Lam and Green, 2023). The interviews provided a concentrated representation of international student perspectives, which the survey then provided a more precise method of measurement to compliment the themes presented in the interviews. Similar to the methods presented by Turner et al. (2015), I was able to go between the interview and survey data for further interpretation and insight into the conceptual framework and identify the overarching themes that emerged. The use of the qualitative and quantitative methods in this study were used to triangulate causation and reasoning students give towards their employability development and higher education experience in the UK. The interviews and survey with international students was applied to explore the agential causation which accounts for how individuals act and situate themselves within norms and practices of their environment (Howe, 2012). Student interviews provided the individual reasoning through storytelling and sharing of experiences, which then allowed for the survey to flag key areas of interest in the causal process such as student demographics, cultural background, how they interact with university services, and who they build relationships within the university. An additional verification function of the triangulation method was the collection of responses from students and staff to discuss and observe the same phenomenon (Lam and Green, 2023). The use of this data collected allowed for a degree of validity of responses to measure the employability experiences of international students.

The diversification of data through the use of mixed methods adds to the validity and reliability of data. The recruitment of international students who represented the population distribution in UK universities by country of origin and level of study contributed to the validation of the research (Lam and Green, 2023). Surveys are powerful tools for providing evidence of association, while methods such as interviews delve deeper into the causes and mechanics responsible for the association (Lam and Green, 2023). Discussing the employability experience of international students, the interviews provided a story of how students process their

experiences in UK universities when it came to navigating their employability. The survey then provided more clear associations of influential networks, skills developed, and confidence in their transition outcomes to the labour market. The use of mixed methods used thematic analysis from the interviews in the final development of the survey, enhancing the validity of relevant data (Lam and Green, 2023).

The application of the staff interviews in addition to student interviews in this method draws on data from multiple data sources by gathering different perspectives. Natow (2020) described elite interviews as being from those who hold a position that has afforded them unique knowledge or experience they can provide to researchers that would not otherwise be obtainable. University staff members would be seen as the elite interviews in this study as they provided the insider information of the inner workings of the university and how employability is approached from the providers perspective. The use of elite interviews from staff members was useful in the triangulation of data as it provided another perspective to the concepts presented and the understanding of the realities faced. From the constructivist and critical perspectives, the use of elite interviews and non-elite interviews provide insight into the views of each group and how these views are formed, to better understand how each group responds to the circumstances of their environment (Natow, 2020).

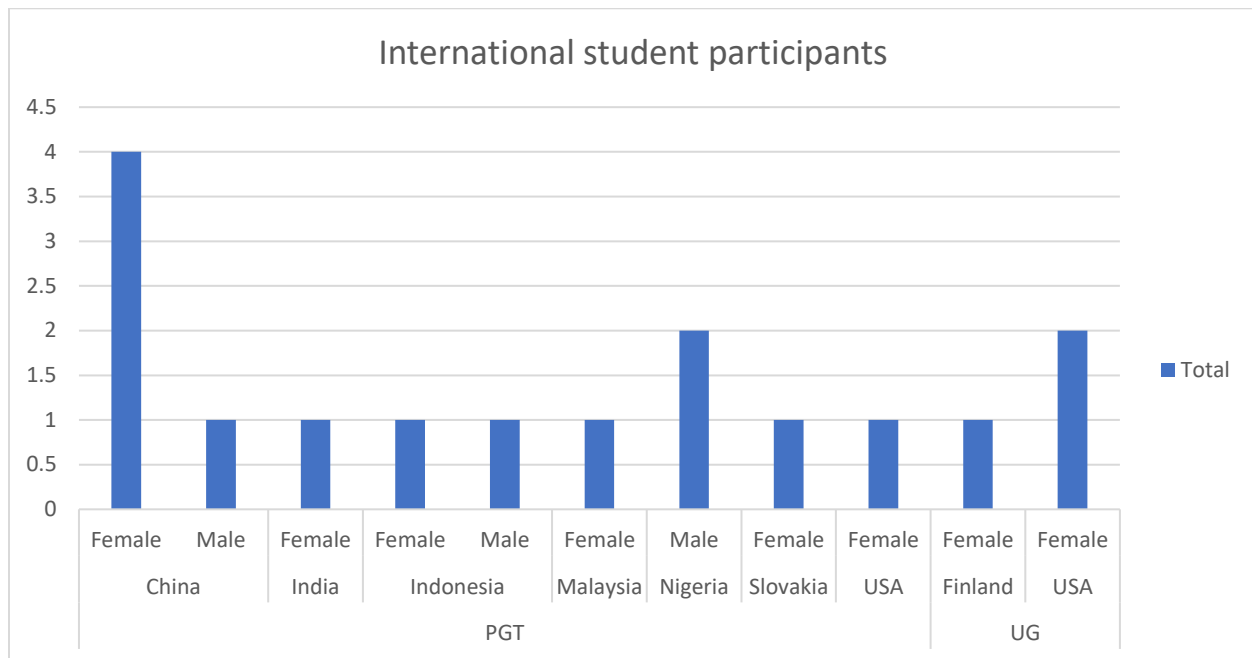
4.4 Participants

This study consisted of two groups of participants. Participants were international students and staff who work with international students from UK universities, University A and University B. The rationale to focus on two universities was based on the time available and while also giving heterogeneity to the sample. The two universities were selected for this study primarily on access and known association with international student experience initiatives. Both institutions are part of the Russell Brand group and highly ranked, with University A being in the top 100, and University B being in the top 150 of the QS World University Rankings (2024). University A was selected as an institution with a large international student population of just over 36,000 total students with a non-UK domiciled student population of 48% (HESA, 2023a, 2023b). Compared to just under 30,000 total students with a non-UK domiciled student population of 24% at University B in the 2021/22 academic year (HESA, 2023a, 2023b). University B had an international student population roughly half the size of University A but was also selected for

use in this study due to being highly active in international education engagement and being awarded for its dedication to positive and impactful internationalisation.

This study recruited sixteen international students, nine from University A and seven from University B. The criteria for participant selection were that the student has the intention to remain in the UK for work following their graduation and that they are not domiciled in the UK. Students were allotted times to be interviewed which resulted in one-to-one interviews or group interviews. Two students, one from each university were interviewed individually, while the other fourteen were interviewed in small groups. The international students selected were enrolled in degree-seeking programmes and in the final year of their undergraduate or postgraduate taught course. Purposive sampling and convenience strategies were used to recruit international student participants. Purposive sampling was applied as this select group of students was the focus of this study and required to inform on the phenomenon of international student employability being studied. The categories of gender, country of origin, and level of study were chosen to further analyse findings provided and identifying a base reasoning for differences among international student experiences. International students were recruited from all schools and departments and have been in the UK since the beginning of their current studies. The table below illustrates the international student demographics of the small group interviews based on gender, country of origin, and level of study.

Table 1 Student interview participant demographics



For the staff participants in this study, a purposive sampling strategy was used to ensure that all participants were members of categories which engaged with international students and/or delivered careers and employability services (Robinson, 2014). The second group of participants selected were careers service, international student support staff, and professional service staff from each university who interact with international students in their daily work in some capacity. Staff from each university's career service, employability offices, internationalisation, and international student support offices were invited to participate in interviews to discuss their interactions and involvement in careers and employability advice specific to international students. Convenience and snowball sampling methods were used in combination with the purposive sampling to recruit staff members to participate in interviews. The first round of participants was recruited by the researcher or other acquaintances who then volunteered to participate. From this first level of participants, they recommended other persons who fit the selection criteria to participate. This strategy worked well to recruit members of staff who may have otherwise not been included as I did not have access to all the necessary networks. A total of fourteen staff interviews were conducted, ten from University A and four from University B. Staff were interviewed individually, online, and at times suitable for their schedules.

Table 2 Professional services participant demographics



Survey participants throughout the UK were recruited through social media, word of mouth, and university outreach. The population was defined as international students pursuing a full-time undergraduate or postgraduate degree in the UK, and in their final year who are not resident in the UK. A total of 58 out of 105 respondents completed the survey, resulting in a 55% completion rate. The survey was distributed widely across universities in the UK to represent the targeted population due to a small monetary incentive. Unfortunately once this had expired, the response and completion rate fell resulting in a small sample size. The response and completion rate are relatively low to represent the entire population of international students in the UK, but using the 58 responses out of 105, I can use the data to triangulate the focus group data. The survey participants were largely recruited from Scotland and England with a small number from Wales. A majority of respondents were postgraduate taught students. There was a diverse range of country of origin with 26 countries represented. This diversity of students captured within the sample size does well to represent the target population of international students in the UK despite the fact that the sample size is smaller than what was originally desired. According to HESA (2024), in 2022/23 non-UK resident students accounted for 16% of undergraduate and 58% of postgraduate students. The top sending countries of Non-EU international students in 2022/23 were India (26%), China (23%), Nigeria (11%), and Pakistan (5%) (HESA, 2024). This

is reflected in data as the highest responses rates were from these four countries. A complete table of the survey participants can be found in Appendix Thirteen.

4.5 Data Collection

Interview and survey questionnaires were designed at the same time with the intention to elaborate on findings from the interviews through the survey answers. Interviews with staff at both universities began in December 2022 and ran until February 2023 online. Student interviews were conducted February to March 2023 face-to-face at each university's campus. With time and experience, I was able to adjust questions and apply follow-up questions to the conversations held with the students and staff. The interviews followed the outline of the pre-written questions which highlighted key themes but as I became familiar with the conversations, I was able to adjust the questions to delve more into the areas of interest for this study. Once the interviews were completed, the survey was readjusted to account for themes that had come up during the interviews. The survey was open for ten weeks from May 20, 2023.

Transcription of staff and student interviews was completed by December 2023 through the Microsoft audio to text tool and further manual cleaning of the data. Once the transcripts were completed, all participants' data was anonymized, and they were given pseudonyms for their university and name. Participants were labelled as 'University (A/B) position, group number, and gender. Following the completion of the transcription and anonymization process, all documents were uploaded to the web application of Quirkos under a password encrypted project page. All staff interviews were uploaded under one project mapping page, while the student interviews were uploaded under another project. The stages of the Quirkos analysis were broken into two stages. The first stage categorised the transcribed data under themes and subthemes based on my interpretation of the data. This initial stage began with my familiarisation with the dataset to begin searching for patterns and meanings. The second phase involved the initial production of codes, which allowed me to simplify and focus on specific characteristics or phenomenon occurring in the data (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). The process of coding required systematically working through the data and identifying areas that related to the research questions (Braun, 2021). This process required that each time something was viewed as interesting or potentially relevant to tag it with a code. It was also important to consider if an existing or new code would be required to capture the data. Following the categorisation, a 122-page staff and 57-page

student Word document were created which included key quotes and my interpretation of the student and staff interview data.

Following this categorization and initial thematic analysis of the interview data, a findings project map was created on Quirkos to compile the staff and student data under the central themes that had emerged as Responsibility, Equality vs. Equity, International Student Experience, and Social Network Development. While the codes identified the initial reflections and interaction with the data, the process of developing the themes are to capture and unify the nature of the experience into a whole (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). As this was an inductive approach, the themes identified were strongly linked to the data themselves and avoided fitting into a preconceived coding frame (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). Each of these themes had respective subthemes as well to help refine and frame the story in a meaningful way by bringing analytic attention to that specific aspect under that theme (Braun, 2021). The thematic coding of the interview data provided the base insight of the findings which were then applied against the survey data results.

4.5.1 Qualitative Measures

Student Interviews

The aim of the student interviews was to draw connections of networks between students and the services or individuals they avail of when seeking out careers advice in the UK using name generation. This technique is commonly used by asking participants to identify people or services with whom they share certain criteria with, who are then presumed to be within the participant's networks (Marin, 2004). Interviews conducted as interviews and small groups were applied as the chosen method to encourage interaction among the students to share experiences and insight during the discussion. This method was beneficial in previous studies which focused on group counselling for international students to share their experiences (Linkes *et al.*, 2018). In the study by Linkes et al (2018), group counselling was offered based on the unique needs of international students which suggested that group settings normalised feelings and decreased feelings of isolation, increased social supports, and promoted the sharing of information for problem-solving without the fear of judgement. This rationale was applied as a method of data collection in this study. The benefits of group interviews were seen to enhance the researcher's understanding of the current context of international student employability and allowed flexibility to analyse the language and terminology that emerged which may not have been

known or acknowledged by the researcher (Currie and Kelly, 2012). International student interviews that were conducted in a group setting flowed more naturally and did encourage students to share more of their experiences. In individual interviews, student answers were more tailored to the interviewer's questions and appeared more guarded with their responses.

To gain insight into experiences of international students on UK campuses, a semi-structured interview was designed to allow for students to create an environment for students to narrate their experiences answer without constraint (Galletta and Cross, 2013). The interview questions were designed around the research questions to gain a deeper understanding of what employability means to international students and the factors which influence their employability. The interview questions were divided into segments which began with a broad series of questions designed to allow participants to describe their personal experiences of why they chose to study in the UK and opinions of their cultural adjustment in the community and labour market. This segment of questions was designed with the intent to set the stage for narrowing down the focus of the study and develop the participants narrative through their experiences while giving them space to elaborate and share experiences which could be discussed in relation to other questions later in the interview. The middle section of the interview was designed to narrow in on the research topic and explore student experiences related to employability and careers services use at their university. These questions were designed to ascertain the international student's perspective on how they interact with university services and take responsibility for their personal development in employability. The final segment of the interview questions was designed to be more theory-laden and engage participants in reflecting on their use of social networks to develop graduate social capital. This segment encouraged students to think about how they engaged with services with the intent to enhance their employability for their future careers within the UK.

Following the design of the interview questions, a pilot was conducted with a group of three international students external to the two institutions targeted for this study to ensure validity of the content and address any gaps, inconsistencies, issues of clarity or vagueness in the questions. The aim of conducting a pilot study prior to collecting research was to increase the research quality and enhance the reliability and validity of the research (Malmqvist *et al.*, 2019). The use of a pilot study in this exploratory research was beneficial to increase confidence and

trustworthiness in the data collected and to ensure the quality of the research would enhance the understanding of the topic (Malmqvist *et al.*, 2019). As this study focused on exploratory research, it was essential to conduct a pilot study to ensure the research questions were addressed in participant interviews and could provide high quality research to enhance depth of understanding. The rationale for interviewing small groups was due to the unpredictable nature of recruiting international students to participate in the data collection without a monetary incentive. The interviews allowed for data collection in one-to-one interviews and in small groups of two to five participants. During the interviews, light refreshments were provided.

Using a roster provided by the international student support service and careers service at each university, international students were invited to participate in individual to small groups to discuss their interactions with university services. Seven interviews of up to five participants were conducted at each university using semi-closed and open-ended questions, four at University A and three at University B. The interviews were recruited from email and social media invitations distributed through the international student support office. If the participant chose at any point to leave the group, the data was not used. All participants remained for the full duration of their interviews.

Interview participants were selected based on filtering criteria: they are foreign nationals and not domiciled in the UK, they have obtained or are in the processes of obtaining a degree from a UK University, and they are seeking to or may seek to remain in the UK after graduation to work.

Audio recording of the small groups was contingent on the agreement and consent of participants to voluntarily participate in the study. Participants were not asked to identify themselves during the process.

The student interviews were conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2022/2023. The purpose of the interviews was to provide an opportunity for international students coming to the end of their degree programmes to share facilitators and inhibitors. This encouraged them to share their experience at the university level when beginning their transition to employment, their perception of their own employability, and their experiences with university services with a focus on employability (Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos, 2011). Interviews with international students were to understand the approach of students to support services and how they engaged in their employability during their studies in a host country.

Participants were asked to reflect on and share their personal motivations for seeking employment in their host country, their journey to understanding their employability, and how the networks they have formed have influenced these experiences. Participants were asked to discuss their perceptions of themselves in their current host country labour market, their personal strengths and uniqueness which enhances their employability, challenges or difficulties faced or that they anticipate, and strategies used during the job searching process in the UK context. Interviews were conducted face-to-face to enhance comprehension and meaning through visual cues and non-verbal elements. Face-to-face interviews provided an advantage to online forms of communication through being able to observe body language, voice, and intonations (Irvine, Drew and Sainsbury, 2013). The dynamic of the group interviews did lend to conversations among the international students. Most who participated were not familiar with each other and so were able to give their unique lived experiences of how they navigated their employability development within the university. International student participants were asked a series of 15 questions that ranged from their motivation to study in the UK, to their confidence in their employability skills developed, their networks, and how they avail of services provided by their university with employability in mind. The questions posed were open-ended and guided the conversation. I posed the questions to the students interviewed in the small groups and allowed for the conversation to develop among the participants. Allowing for this free flow of conversation allowed for topics outside of the realm of the identified outline to be raised and for students to discuss their unique experiences among each other. Typically, the duration of the interviews was longer when conducted in a group of three or more students. In interviews with one or two students, the interview lasted on average 30-40 minutes, whereas with groups of three to six students the duration of the interview was closer to 90 minutes. The dynamic nature of the student group interviews also led to a fluidity in the questions asked. The original questionnaire provided a roadmap to guide the discussion, but the group interactions allowed for me to adjust and ask follow-up questions based on the conversations.

Staff interviews

Staff were selected based on their school or area of focus, ranging from arts and humanities, and social sciences to natural and life sciences. I contacted staff from various departments in the career's services and international student support team. From this initial wave of interviews,

they recommended other staff to be interviewed in a snowball effect. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview which allowed for free responses from participants. Interviews with staff were used to understand how they conceptualised the role of the university in international student employability and what the facilitators and inhibitors are for students during their employability development experience.

This method was chosen to gain a more in-depth context of the experiences of service staff and international students and their interactions with one another. This provided the opportunity to gain an understanding of their social interactions, which advice students seek out most, how international students approach career services and their employability development, and the feedback staff provide, or students are provided with. Interviews with individual students in addition to Groups offered an opportunity to probe deeper into a student's unique experiences and understand their perception free from the influence of staff or other students being present.

Interviews took place via Zoom with audio recording and transcription and staff committed no more than an hour to the interview process. Staff were asked a series of 14 questions ranging from broad service level questions, international students' seeking guidance, and the ways services reach out and benefit international students in their employability. Continuing to use name generation, a narrative was produced on how networks are formed and create influence, particularly in assigning purpose, meaning and knowledge to who they interact with (Marin, 2004; Dobbie, Reith and McConville, 2018). The interviews were transcribed and analysed myself using the Word audio to text and manual cleaning. A thematic analysis using the software Quirkos was used to identify codes and categories with previous data from the literature review in mind.

The use of interviews among the professional services staff was beneficial and provided a diverse range of data from services across the university departments. Upon reflection, this method would be viable again for this research but increase the scope to include a more diverse population of professional service staff within the university. The population and demographics captured in this study provided a solid foundation to address the research questions but there would be more benefit to ensure all colleges and teams who are involved in employability development be involved in the discussion.

4.5.2 Quantitative Measures

Questionnaire Survey

A survey was designed using the Qualtrics software provided by the University of Glasgow. The survey was developed using a series of scales to ascertain the importance and knowledge of core areas of employability and career awareness by international students. These core areas were identified through previous studies and the literature review, focusing on identifying areas of adjustment and intended career outcomes. In addition to career outcome intentions, quantitative measures were used to identify network relations, the obtainment of information within that network using an ego-network sampling strategy. Setting the boundary of this analysis was essential to capture the desired data relative to the research questions. This survey questionnaire was designed to capture the network relations international students have with their peers and university service staff. As international students were identified as the central focal point, they were asked about their ties to specific groups and services to generate a picture of the network immediately surrounding the individual (Agneessens and Labianca, 2022). The purpose of the survey questionnaire was to identify how international students defined employability and how their interactions with university services acted as facilitators or inhibitors in their employability development experiences.

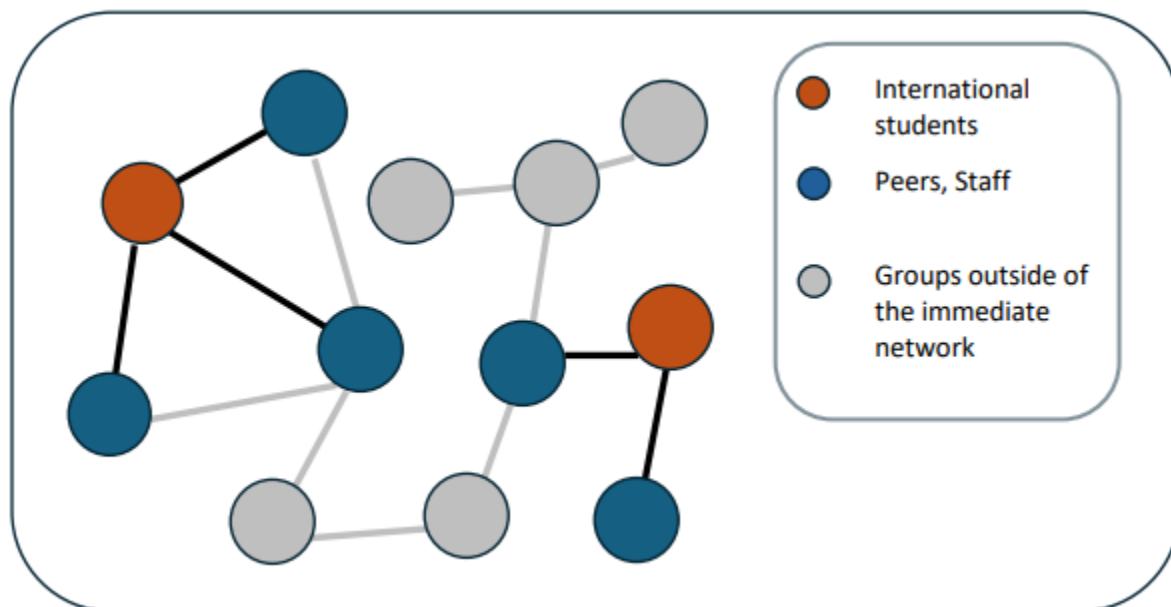


Figure 2 Ego Network Sampling adapted from Agneessens and Labianca (2022)

When developing the survey questionnaire, specific groups were identified for international students to describe their relationship and refine their network. This study was interested in the interactions and flows that occur between international students navigating the university environment, which involved the communication and transmission of information. The network analysis of common behavioural interactions included seeking advice, support, and helpful gossip and how often these interactions took place (Agneessens and Labianca, 2022). In addition to these interactions, cognitive perceptions, or how an individual evaluates specific aspects of another person compared to themselves is another area of interest. I was interested in the cognitive perceptions held by international students of themselves compared to their peers and service staff. Kim and Glomb (2014) suggest that when individuals are asked to compare the abilities or performance of others against themselves, they will generally be involved in an upward comparison and identify others who are higher-performing than themselves for comparison. I was interested in conducting research on who international students identified as being experts and trustworthy to receive information from within their social networks with the intent to improve their employability and career prospects in the UK. These cognitive perceptions of network ties were found by Marineau et al. (2018) to relate to an individual's desire to utilise networks for career advancement. Applying a similar approach, this survey sought to identify how international students form their network ties, and how their perceptions of the usefulness of these ties impacts them interacting and building ties with the goal of employability development in mind.

The survey was applied in this study to capture a broader demographic of students to balance out institutional opinions provided by the student interviews. The measures taken from the survey were used to analyse the different characteristics of international students to measure against the concept of employability in the qualitative analysis. Through the online survey, a demographic questionnaire was included at the beginning of the survey. This was sent to international students via email and social media through access provided by the international student support offices at the universities. The demographic information collected included age, sex, country of origin, time spent in the host country, languages spoken, university services used and their frequency. For this survey, the method of name interpreter was chosen, which clearly identifies other actors and asks the individual to assess their relationship with the individuals listed (Hasegawa, 2019).

Based on the network data desired, the survey questions were designed to centre around specific types of relationships (e.g., Who have you spoken to for advice on employment after graduation?). This is then followed with questions to determine the frequency of interaction with these network ties (e.g., How often have you used your career services in-person resources to enhance your employability?). While these questions can often be subjective, they allow for insight into the network ties of international students as perceived by them (Agneessens and Labianca, 2022). Descriptive questions were applied to capture the desired network ties and perceptions. The benefits of this style of questioning were that it limited the subjective interpretation by the participants, however it may also have imposed specific interpretations of the concept and prevented other responses (Agneessens and Labianca, 2022). When defining the answer categories, the use of scales such as a Likert-scale were used to access answers in a controlled manner using exclusive answer categories. Using scales to determine frequency or usefulness of services to students provided a more structured way to test the robustness of the survey results than open-ended questions.

Similar to the student interviews, following the design of the survey, a pilot was distributed to a group of four international students to ensure validity of the content and address any gaps, inconsistencies, or vagueness in the questions (Malmqvist *et al.*, 2019). The survey was open online over the course of ten weeks from May 20, 2023, and distributed through mailing lists from career services and international student support offices, social media, and snowball distribution through personal contacts to international students across the UK. Participants of the survey were entered to win £10 shopping vouchers. Due to the voucher expiration date, this incentive was concluded at the end of June 2023. The purpose of this method was to capture a wide representation of the demographics of international students at UK university campuses. Participants were filtered using demographic questions to recruit international students who are in the final year of their degree programmes and expecting to pursue employment in their host country. Multiple choice and scale weighted questions were used to gather experiential and perception data.

The survey received a total of 105 responses, but the rate of completion was significantly lower with nearly half of the respondents not completing all questions on the survey. After cleaning the data for complete responses and data that met the criteria, a total of 55 responses were collected.

Although the data can be used to substantiate the qualitative data collected from the student interviews, the overall completion rate was reflective of previous studies which associated longer surveys with lower completion rates (Liu and Wronski, 2018). According to the review conducted by Liu and Wronski (2018), the number of questions, pages, and response options per page negatively impact survey completion rates. Upon reflection, a shorter survey questionnaire may have been more suitable for the target audience to encourage completion of all questions. A further pilot study may have been beneficial to decrease the number of questions to omit potentially irrelevant data. Additionally, economic incentives available for a longer duration would have been beneficial to encourage participants to complete all questions in the survey. Due to self-funding this was not a viable option during this study.

While the survey contained a total of 36 questions, 16 of the questions were used to substantiate the themes which were presented during the interviews. The questions used from the survey in the data analysis were both open-ended responses and closed answer, multiple choice questions. The questions used focused on the demographics and visa status of international students, their plans after graduation, confidence in their employability skills and gaining employment after graduation, who they seek career-related advice from, and how they felt the university could better support them to enhance their employability skills. From the student interviews, survey questions were formatted and adjusted to include responses which had been frequently expressed during the interviews. This included questions and responses that focused on where and who students received their employability information from, how likely they were to use different university services, and their impressions of the usefulness of the services they had used.

4.6 Data Analysis

The data analysis was inductive and sought to draw out findings and concepts from the data regarding the employability development of international students to answer the research questions: (1) what does employability mean for international students, (2) what are the facilitators and inhibitors in their employability experience, (3) to what extent can the application of an employability model enhance our understanding of the international student transition to the UK labour market, and (4) what is the responsibility of the university in international student employability from the staff perspective. Data were recorded and transcribed following the interviews with participant information being de-identified by use of codes to maintain

anonymity. To ensure credibility in the study, a triangulation method was used: recruitment of diverse group participants, multiple data sources for a better comprehension of the phenomena being captured, and checking data with participants to verify the accuracy of the data (Alasuutari, Bickman and Brannen, 2008; Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos, 2011). Following the transcription of the interviews, the Quirkos software was used to categorize and further thematically analyse the interview data.

A reflective thematic analysis was chosen for this study due its flexibility in design and conceptual approach (Braun *et al.*, 2022). This allowed for a more flexible approach to the design scope, which enabled me to address research questions addressing the phenomenon of the international student employability experience. The thematic analysis of the interviews followed the six phases of conducting a reflexive thematic analysis: familiarising oneself with the data, coding, generating initial themes, developing and reviewing themes, refining, defining and naming themes, and writing up (Braun, 2021). The initial phase of analysis was the cleaning and anonymising of all data sets. The second phase began once the dataset was cleaned, and I had familiarised myself with the data. This stage was about the process of reflection and interacting with the data to focus on specific characteristics of the data (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). The evolution of these codes evolved as I worked my way through the information. As I worked my way through the initial coding of the data, the number of coded labels increased, and the names of labels changed until the precise language was chosen (Braun, 2021). All transcripts were uploaded to Quirkos where coded category bubbles were applied based on the research questions. Analysis of the transcripts was straightforward, and I applied the data to the coded category bubbles point by point. The category bubbles were inductively derived from points that were mentioned during the interviews. Similar or related points were combined in overarching categories such as challenges and barriers for students included points related to work experience, visas, and knowledge of local culture. The first phase of this analysis maintained a separation between the staff and student interviews. In this first phase the student and staff interview data was analysed using a thematic and narrative analysis approach to understand the perceptions and experiences of participants (Alasuutari, Bickman and Brannen, 2008). The figure below demonstrates the codes applied to the student interview dataset in conducted in the second phase of the thematic analysis.

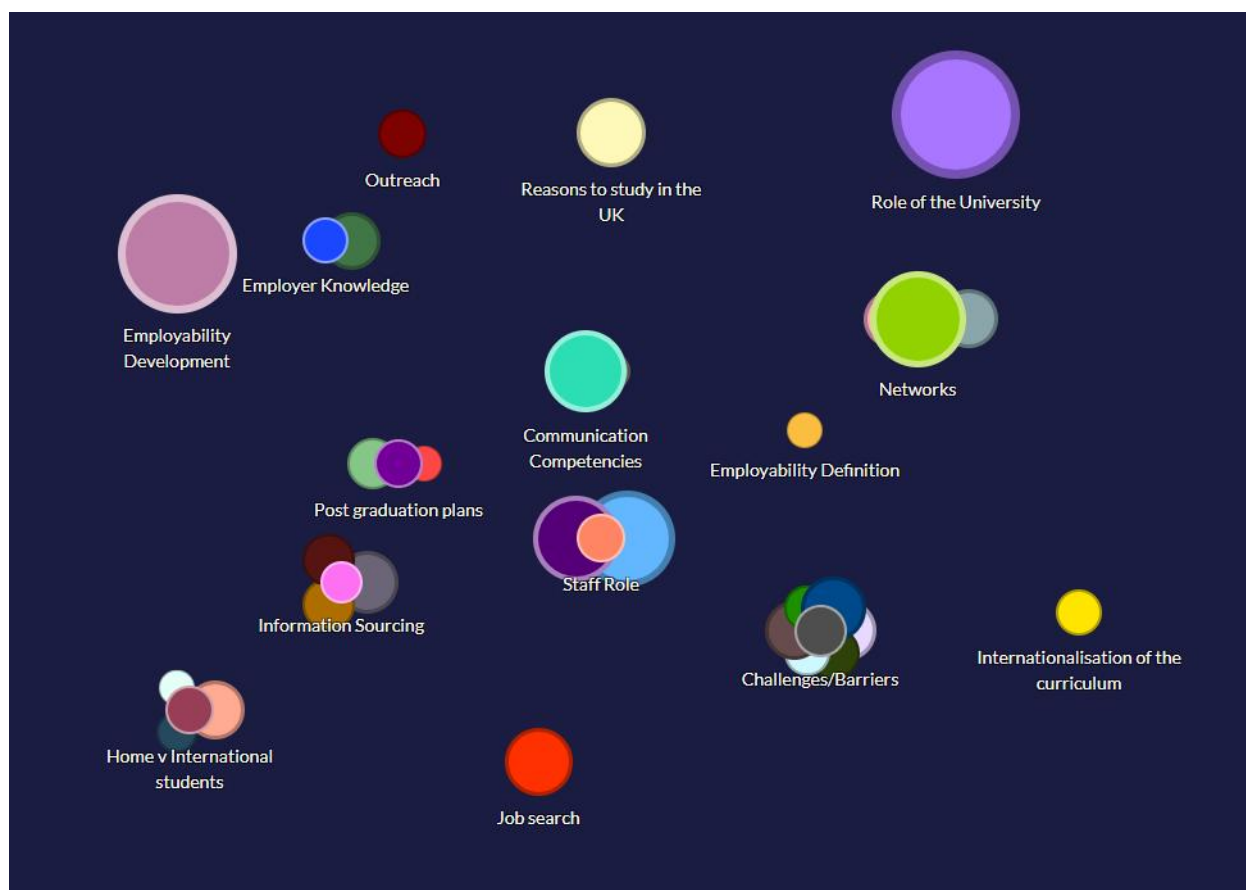


Figure 3 Student Interview Codes

Once the staff and student interviews had been reviewed, the third phase was carried out to combine the data sets into one comprehensive set that applied to the specific themes identified which captured the experiences expressed into a meaningful whole (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). In the approach to this thematic analysis, the conceptual framework discussed in Chapter 3 derived from Tomlinson's (2017) Graduate Capital Model and Prell's (2012) Social Network Analysis, played a crucial role in finding how graduate capital, social networks, and the role of the university were described in the data. Drawing on the conceptual framework, I was able to focus on how international students and staff expressed their experiences and how this aligned with the study's aims. The conceptual framework contributed to the coding process by directing the scope to identify key concepts that aligned with the graduate capital model and social network analysis. The main themes identified were Social Capital and Social Network Development, Equality vs. Equity, International Student Experience, and Responsibility in Employability Development. The framework highlighted the importance of the Graduate Capital Model and Social Network

Analysis, which informed the identification of patterns related to these themes. Each of these themes contained subthemes which were inductively identified as the analysis progressed. The subthemes were applied to focus on a particular aspect of the theme under which it was nestled. Subthemes were created due to the amount of data that sat under each theme. During the theme development, the conceptual framework served as a guide for identifying patterns and commonalities in the data. By focusing on the social and cultural capital as well as social network analysis, I was able to focus my analysis on the networks developed during employability development and how intercultural competencies impact participants' narratives. The fourth phase considered the coherency and relevancy of the themes. Through this process it was determined that the theme of International Student Experience was not relevant to the research questions and the data could be applied to the other themes. The final labelling of the themes was completed in phase five, before beginning the final analysis and write-up in phase six of the thematic analysis. The final phase of the thematic analysis was to clearly and concisely present an account of the data across the themes. In this analytic process, I engaged with the data to demonstrate the significance of patterns found in the data and their interpretations in relation to existing literature related to international student employability, social networks, and social capital development (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). The four Findings Chapters describe the data content, supported by existing literature, while the Discussion and Conclusion Chapter expands on the theoretical contribution and implications of the research. The application of the framework in the synthesis of this analysis aided in drawing connections between the themes and situating them within the conceptual models of the graduate capital model and social network analysis. This became especially apparent in the recognition of capital development and application in the transition to the labour market from the perspectives of staff and international students. In this example, the conceptual framework highlighted the importance of cultural and social capital in the development of culturally relevant skills and attributes which fit the UK labour market, highlighting both the theme of Equity vs Equality, Responsibility, and Intercultural Competencies. Without the framework, these themes might have been interpreted differently. However, the application of the framework provided the lens under which I was able to examine the data and understand how employability is experienced by international students in the UK through the perspective of staff and students.

Table 3 Thematic Table

Theme	Characteristics
Responsibility	Attitudes aligned with individual or curriculum embedded role in the development of employability
Equality versus Equity	Two types of support styles identified among the staff samples; homogenised service support which delivers services to students in a singular way regardless of background (i.e., equality), and a diversified level of services which recognises the differences in student knowledge and understanding (i.e., equity)
Social Network Development	The social links formed during the stay abroad which are used to share information relevant to skills, knowledge, and culture
Intercultural Competencies	The use and understanding of cultures as individuals encounter familiar and unfamiliar circumstances within their environment

The results of the thematic data analysis directed the survey analysis. As the themes revealed perspectives and lived experiences from international students from two UK universities, the survey further captured a more diverse population of international students in the UK. The survey analysis chose select questions to analyse against the data collected from the transcripts. Using the Qualtrics report tool, cross-tabulation of the survey data was possible. Demographic information was compared against answers given which discussed topics of network formation, skills development in the UK, use of services, and preference to in-person or online services.

While the country of origin and gender were included with the student interviews, and staff position was included in the interview data, anonymity was maintained, and the personal information of the individuals was not disclosed during the analysis. Demographic information was collected through the survey, but student information was not matched to specific individual

responses nor was an individual singled out during the data analysis due to their response. The intention of these methods of data analysis was to illuminate how staff and students perceive the responsibility of employability development during the higher education experience and raise questions about what additional considerations may be necessary in the future to account for the difference in perspectives.

The thematic analysis of the student and staff interviews provided insight into answering the research questions. Staff and student interviewees were asked to describe what employability meant to them. Staff were asked to describe how their perceptions of employability fit within their concept of the university's responsibility in international student employability development. The addition of international student interviews to the staff interviews contributed to understanding the facilitators and inhibitors experienced during the employability development experience as both groups of participants described what they viewed as most influential. The interviews and survey were used to expand on the application of the graduate capital model to enhance the understanding of how social networks and forms of capital are developed and utilised in the transition to the labour market. Finally, the student interviews and survey were used to respond to the research question exploring what employability means for international students. The use of the two groups of interview participants explored the same phenomenon through the alternative lenses. The application of mixed methods helped to answer the research questions by using the survey to expand the responses of the target population of students captured in the interviews. The distribution of the survey to UK universities beyond the two utilised for the interview groups contributed to the reliability of findings in understanding the perceptions international students have on their employability development and their confidence in transitioning to the UK labour market.

Following the completion of data collection and analysis of the interviews, upon reflection both online and in-person groups may have been used to increase participation of students. The over saturation of information and emails students receive from their universities may have impacted the desire for students to participate without economic incentives. Additionally, for larger spaces two recording devices located in opposite areas would have been preferable to record a clearer conversation among the students and ease transcriptions.

4.7 Ethical considerations

In line with the British Educational Research Association 2018 Ethical Guidelines, considerations were made to address responsibilities to participants including: consent, transparency, the right of participants to withdraw, incentives, harm arising from participation, privacy and data storage, and disclosure (BERA, 2019). Additionally, a responsibility to stakeholders and the community is an essential consideration.

Given the nature of this research and its connection with immigrants in the UK, participants may perceive that taking part in the research would hold benefits or consequences for their visa status or future employment sponsorship opportunities. The research was presented as independent from UK Border Agency and UK Visa and Immigration and expectations of participants were monitored and managed. It was made clear that the research is unlikely to directly impact participants and no incentives were given with the expectation of information or assistance with UK visas or immigration related advice.

This was a low-risk project focussing on international higher education students' employability. Consideration was given to ways to respond should participants become distressed due to personal issues being discussed. The risks around misunderstanding of the purpose of the study and the impact of their participation were mitigated through the participant information sheet and consent form provided to all participants. Participants were asked to confirm they have understood the study information sheet prior to commencing interviews.

Finally, race and ethnic identity as a demographic factor to ensure diversity in the data was mitigated through the removal of identifiable information of the participant such as name or city origin. The use of interviews may lead to participant identification due to the small sample size. This was mitigated in the report by coding any personal identifiers and making participants aware of the possibility of identification in the consent form.

4.8 Researcher's positionality

Within qualitative research, researchers commonly have used reflexivity as a method to legitimise, validate, and question research practices to acknowledge their position and how it contributes to understanding knowledge as well as insight into how that knowledge is produced (Pillow, 2003). This section reflects on my lived experiences and critically evaluates their influences on this study from the formation of the research aims and objectives to data collection,

analysis, and discussion. Using reflective techniques addresses the positionality of the researcher by turning the lens back on themselves to take responsibility for their position within the research and the effect it may have on the people being studied or questions being asked, and how it is further interpreted (Berger, 2015).

Firstly, within this study, my personal experiences and values and beliefs that have been developed through these experiences has in no doubt influenced the study. Coming from a shared experience position with other international students, I am familiar with the content of the study and better equipped to offer insights (Berger, 2015). As an international student with experience navigating the higher education system in the UK, my experiences in the use of university services and applying my own employability in the labour market transition motivated me to pursue this research topic. Although this is an exploratory study aimed at understanding the perspectives, experiences, and challenges of participants in employability development, I have recognised that my own experience within the UK higher education system, educational background, and nationality have impacted my study's focus. I am aware of the effect these personal experiences have had on the choice of the conceptual framework of graduate capital and social networks in international student employability development.

Second, within this study I have acknowledge my sense of being both an 'insider' and 'outsider' to the communities of focus in this research. Holding both of these positions has allowed me access to the particular groups and context in which to collect data as an insider while also maintaining a degree of objectivity and ability to critically observe situations as an outsider, which insiders may consider unquestionable truths (Hellowell, 2006). My identity as an international student made me an insider to the student participants of this study. However, there were additional levels of this community in which I was also considered an outsider. Although, I was an international student and related to the experiences of coming to the UK and adapting to the higher education system, my native language is English. For many student participants of this study, English was not their first language. Although I had my own experiences as an international student studying in the UK, identifying myself as an outsider during interviews allowed me to observe their behaviours and interactions with existing structures within the university. During the interviews I tried to avoid interjecting my own opinions or feelings on the subject, instead I tried to use neutral language and open-ended questions to avoid leading the

participants to say what they may have thought I wanted to hear. There was a possibility that given the topic of the research presented to the international students they came to the interviews with a position in mind that they wanted to voice. Being another international student in a more senior position to the participants, I was asked to pass along recommendations made by the students to university staff members to improve their experiences. Although student participants were informed that their involvement in the study would not impact their job seeking or provide tips for how to secure a career in the UK, there were students who approached me after the interviews to ask for professional advice or how to make themselves more competitive in the UK labour market.

Finally, my position as a researcher participating in ‘elite’ interviewing of staff members of the university is another area I have reflected on during this study. Similarly to how Mason-Bish (2019) perceived their interviewees as elites with special access to knowledge they desired, I viewed these service staff members as ‘elite’ because of their perceived influence and knowledge in the application of employability development in students. As the staff members interviewed were viewed as experts in their fields, they often were enthusiastic to talk about their role and give their views on the topic discussed. As a researcher, I had to adjust my position to be more receiving. I felt that I let my interviewees talk at length about their experiences and opinions on the subject matter, which I could then keep on course with the list of questions I had prepared. Although, I achieved my research aims and answered my research questions, I found that I was often aware of my own status in relation to my interviewee. I considered myself to be an outsider to the inner workings of university services and therefore gave the staff the power to tell their story from their own point of view. While I did share similar positions of privilege such as coming from an English-speaking country with similar cultural values, this at times made it feel that they believed they could share their viewpoint on student actions with me even though I am part of that group. To conclude, I have learned that as a researcher I am placed in many positions of being an insider/outsider or of powerful/powerless but that I should not let this construct the direction of the research and only look to extract information from the participants. Moving forward in research, it is important for me as the researcher to maintain the participants as the subject of the study.

Chapter 5 Equality versus equity of employability services provided by the university to its international students

5.1 Overview

To address the overarching question of how universities can support the international student employability experience, findings in this chapter discuss two contrasting approaches observed in the data: equality and equity. The equality focused approach was evident in the homogenous delivery of support services provided by services and observed by students. While the equity approach involved diversification of services to account for cultural diversity and unique needs of international students. The layout of this chapter is as follows: 5.2 equality focused approach, 5.3 equity focused approach, ending with 5.4 conclusion. When approaching how to support their students, university services create and deliver their services in a targeted manner. For some, the approach is unified and treats all students the same in an equal opportunities approach. This standardised, one-size fits all approach aligns with the idea that all students, regardless of their background, have equal access to develop their graduate capital. This base of equality thus assumes that international students start from the same baseline as home students, which then fails to account for their social or cultural challenges and barriers. For others, international students are recognised as having circumstances which place them in a position of possessing different skills and knowledge which impacts their ability to successfully avail of services as they are developed for home students. To account for these differences, some services opted to develop services aimed at creating an equitable experience for international students to reach the same base level as home students when addressing their employability development. This differentiation in services through an equity-based approach acknowledges that international students may have different levels of social and cultural capital compared to home students. By tailoring services to the unique needs, universities help international students develop their necessary graduate capital required to enhance their employability, creating more opportunities for equal access and transition to the labour market. Through expanding on the concepts of equality and equity of services provided by the university, this chapter explores the reasoning behind why services are differentiated when supporting employability for international students.

5.2 Equality-focused approach

The equality-focused approach stemmed from a narrative presented in the interview data which saw staff and students from both universities identify the individual responsibility of students to

utilise the services available. This was reflected in the standardised approach which saw support services delivery of material and information undifferentiated based on students' challenges or unique needs. Staff from University A commonly stated throughout multiple interviews that employability development was essential for all students and their services reflected this approach. This compliments literature that previously found that the majority of what is currently known about the impact of internationalisation strategies and the student experience is focused on the UK home student experience (Fakunle and Pirrie, 2020). This equality-focused approach has called into question the effectiveness and appropriateness of these practices in international student employability (Huang, Turner and Chen, 2014; Goodwin and Mbah, 2019). Most University A staff took the position that all services were to be administered equally and all students were the same, with individual issues being dealt with on a case-by-case basis. As one staff member stated, their responsibility was to enhance a student's employability but they could only make them aware of the services.

“I think it's our duty as a university to enhance all student's employability... It's that whole thing. You can lead a horse to water sort of thing. Students have to take personal responsibility in developing their own employability skills as well” (University A Careers Manager 5).

In an effort to maintain equality among the services provided, this staff member explained that their responsibility was to provide a service to all students, regardless of if they were an international or home student. It is not expected that the careers services would prefer one group over the other. However, the grouping of these students together under one level of service relies on that student's ability to align their understanding with their personal experiences to develop their graduate capital. One career manager at University A described a time when they had offered distinct services for international students but shifted away from that as they didn't want to place international students in a category separate from home students. While this sentiment reflects the unity the staff wish to portray with their services, the singularity of services does not recognise the cultural differences and challenges international students may face.

“We pivoted away from putting them in a separate category. Oh, you're international student, you're separate. We're like, no, you're here. You're part of our student cohort. We treat you all the same until you present with your individual issue which we will then deal

with you in a personalized basis and the services that we offer are for all of our students and it's the quality of opportunity, right across the board” (University A Careers Manager 8).

Some students agreed with the career manager’s position above that there was not a need for a specialized service for international students, but still felt that services should be well versed in international student needs. As one student from University A explained:

“There's no need for multiplying entities. There’s no need for that. I would say that the career services that the school has to just get more experience, more exposure and do the work, you don't need to create another entity” (University A Group 4 – Nigerian M).

When addressing their role in supporting international students, most careers staff at University A used a homogenous approach to their student support. They provided the same knowledge and information for international and home students, focusing on the skills and attributes employers would desire. By focusing on all students in a one-size fits all approach, these services maintain the importance of employability skills development to transition to the labour market but lack an acknowledgement of the differences international students encounter when navigating their host labour market transition. This standardisation of skills assumes that all students have the same base level capital, not recognising the challenges international students face in learning and demonstrating a ‘fit’ to potential employers (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2022). As University A Careers Manager 6 described supporting international students is the same as any other student. Their employability journey was seen to be the same as home students and therefore treated the same unless specific questions arose. As another member of staff highlighted:

“International students’ concerns and questions and needs are no different to our home students or European students... you may have some specific questions are relevant to you as an international student, which we will deal with on a case-by-case basis, which is no different to another student having an individual question on their particular need” (University A Careers Manager 10).

Staff provided education and raised awareness of the importance of researching and knowing skills employers are looking for and that students should engage with opportunities they provided. This sentiment of the equality of service provided was felt by international students.

Echoing a previous study by Fakunle and Pirrie (2020) with no difference being made between home and non-UK students, some international students felt it was unwelcoming and did not provide an equity of opportunity. One student expressed her frustration with her experiences dealing with the careers service, saying:

“It is not that welcoming or if it is making a difference between a home student and non-UK students is not a concern because they're definitely not doing it. They are treating everyone at the same level” (University A Group 2 – Indian F).

Similarly, a student from University B highlighted that the careers service was useful, but its main objective was to support home students. The equality approach to services described by this student left them feeling like they were having to adapt to tools which were not designed for them. They explained how they viewed the use of the career's services.

“[The careers services are] very useful for domestic students and they equally deserve better opportunities. But maybe there could be an aspect of the career service for example specific to international students” (University B Group 1 – American F).

For the student, the awareness of this equality approach left them feeling that there were gaps in their capital development, especially with adapting to the nuances which would be known by home students. This student continued to highlight the disconnect between the recruitment of international students and the support they receive from the careers service. While the individual responsibility was still placed on the student to access the supports, the resources available for international students were viewed as being less than what was available for home students. Although the university did offer employability support through their services, their role was minimal in supporting the enhancement of international student employability. With the increase in international student recruitment, the level of services to support the current international diversity of the student population was not apparent to students who wished to enhance their employability.

“If the university is going to make that push, they should make the push to support the students with their needs, especially because there's so many options available for domestic students wanting to pursue careers in their fields and they're very supported. Whereas international students are supported, but very limited with their sources because

we are using sources that were made for domestic students such as the career service, which is very helpful and very useful. But I don't believe international students were considered when making this service” (University B Group 1 – American F).

This sentiment was echoed by another student from University A who explained how they felt they were not supported enough by the existing services to overcome barriers to be competitive in their transition to the labour market. This sense of preparedness highlights the critical role graduate capital plays in enabling graduates to apply their capital skills and empower them to successfully transition to their desired labour market (Tomlinson, 2017).

“Maybe because as an international applicant I think I have more difficulties and there's more barriers for me, but they didn't give me a lot of useful suggestions to tell me how that I can yes, how that I can remove those barriers or how that I can be competitive as an international student” (University A Group 3- Chinese F).

International students at times felt the suggestions were “a generic offering” and lacked substance to help them overcome their unique barriers (University A Group 4 – American F). The homogenous approach was also described as being unfair by some international students coming from cultural backgrounds which were significantly different to the UK social and workplace culture. This is similar to findings by Goodwin and Mbah (2019) who explained that the interpretation, meaning, and use of services may be dependent on an individual’s cultural background. For international students with a preconceived cultural capital, there is a challenge to demonstrate their cultural fit and understanding of cultural context. While Tomlinson et al (2022) highlight that less advantaged students such as those from a lower socio-economic status require additional supports to navigate the complexities of cultural signals, the same can be applied to the understanding of international students. Without understanding the preconceived beliefs and cultural differences, the effectiveness of services intended for international student use may be impeded (Goodwin and Mbah, 2019). An Indonesian student explained that coming from a different culture created challenges in her initiative to approach services and find information.

“From the collectivism society it's really hard for me to find ‘Ohh there is a service like this’ ...and when I use this service, it's not coming from my initiative. It's coming from the project of the class. If the lecture did not mention this kind of service I wouldn't know

because I'm not the kind of initiative person to find out, OK I have to be ambitious because I just think of OK, my friends will tell me. But it's not how so I just miss out if it's not in the lecture and it's not fair" (University A Group 2 – Indonesian F).

This student has demonstrated how their cultural background has created a misalignment with understanding how they are expected to use the services provided by their university. As an individual, they admit they are not the kind of person to take initiative. This frame of mind is contradictory to the employability skills of problem-solving and learning independently that Russell Group universities strive to teach their students (Russell Group, 2017). While university strategies may focus on teaching students to learn independently, if an international student is not familiar with how to use the services provided there may be a gap in advancing their skills for future employment in the UK. This highlights the critical role the university plays in developing all students' employability to meet their strategic goals and how their approach to the unique challenges and barriers impacts a student's ability to independently navigate their employability. Many University A staff noted that although the employability services were not targeted specifically towards international students, a large majority of international students attended the employability workshop courses which showed an interest and dedication towards learning how to develop their own employability using the services available to them. As one careers manager described:

"Some of my sessions have got an assessment aligned with them, not that many and that's you know something that gives the students a bit of motivation as they don't prioritize it. Funnily enough the international students often prioritize it more. They prioritize this sort of work more" (University A Careers Manager 10).

From this careers manager it is seen that international students have a desire to enhance their employability skills and will attend courses, workshops, or other sessions which advertise teaching the skills and knowledge they will need. Although international students were motivated to enhance their employability, the usefulness was not as reciprocated. As University A Career Manager 6 described, there was a disparity between the use of services by international students, especially in attending recruitment fairs, and employer knowledge or awareness. This staff member noted that employers were not as aware of the international student population or their desire to engage with them as employers. The disconnect between international student

expectation of employers, and employer awareness of international students reveals a gap in social capital. It has been shown that social capital is an exchange between employers and those seeking employment, with trust and awareness of skills and 'fit' facilitating a successful transition to the labour market (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2022). The student and staff perspectives that have been articulated are similar to previous research (Fakunle, 2021b) which suggested that the homogenous approach of the services and events presented by the university created a gap in the awareness by both employers and international students of expectations resulting in a feeling of disappointment from the students.

While offering group based and one-to-one services was considered part of the job for the careers staff, the approach aligned with the view that although students are within their network of information and support, the staff preferred to be perhaps one directional in the information exchange. When describing the employability development support provided to students, staff within the central careers service at University A described mass delivery and reserved the personal, one to one interaction to a privilege due to limited resources (University A Careers Manager 10).

The perspectives and literature examined in this section reveal a complex discourse on the equality of services applied in enhancing international student employability. In this focus, most University A staff contended with balancing a homogenous approach that treated all students equally, while still addressing the unique challenges faced by international students. As some staff described a shift away from offering distinct services for international students due to limited resources, this elicited a mixed response from many students. The narrative from many staff members described a standardised service which applied to all students. Although this equality-focused approach seemed intentional, a lack of human, time, and budgetary resources significantly impacted the university's ability to accommodate the cultural diversity. From a graduate capital perspective, this approach may hinder international student's development of social and cultural capital need to successfully transition to the labour market. While a one-size fits all approach was viewed as being accessible to all students, some students expressed a lack of institutional awareness for the unique challenges they faced, limiting the effectiveness of the employability support available for them. These challenges included establishing and engaging with valuable social networks which would further their understanding of their new environment.

This approach to services did not account for the cultural differences which impacted an international student's ability to make meaning out of the information they received. Without tailored support for international students to integrate into their new communities, it remains difficult for them to fully recognise and leverage their capital in their employability development. Although the services provided employability information and students were receptive to engage with services, the cultural barriers impacted their confidence in the usefulness of services as an international student.

Taking this into consideration, the role of the university in enhancing the employability development of international students goes beyond simply providing a baseline of support services. While there was evidence of an acknowledgement of the cultural barriers which impacted international students, the perspectives expressed in this section focused on the equality approach. This approach relied on an international student's ability and interest to engage with the services, often leaving out intercultural understanding of why and how a student would expect to make use of the services. The perception of equal treatment was viewed as unwelcoming by some students as they expressed that by the university not acknowledging their diverse backgrounds, they were not aware or raised to the same level of access to opportunity as home students. The engagement of services to create opportunities for international students to bridge cultural gaps and enhance their social networks to enhance their employability moves beyond the equality approach. The commitment to equality of support was made evident from the interviews with staff and students but highlighted the complexities and limitations of a homogenous approach to employability development in students. As we move into the next section, a more equity-focused approach will be examined to address the balance of equality with equity strategy approaches within the career's services.

5.3 Equity-focused approach

The equity-focused approach became apparent through the same interviews with staff and students from both universities. Different to the perspective described in the previous section, many staff and students recognised the unique social and cultural capital, embracing the cultural differences and worked to adapt services to better support international students in overcoming their unique challenges. While the previous section saw a focus on an equality-based homogenous approach by some staff members and students, this section reflects another

dimension which encourages support for the unique challenges international students face. Comparable to a previous study, University A Careers Manager 5 recognised that international students were not a homogenous group and so to approach their employability development equally to home students or other international students would be a challenge (Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen, 2021). This recognition signalled that there was a need to enhance employability development initiatives which account for the diversity of cultural and social capital. Similar to a previous study (Dentakos *et al.*, 2017) many service staff cited the different circumstances which create challenges for international students such as language, culture, and work experience. When comparing a home student to an international student on their employability journey, a careers manager described the differences they perceived between home and international student experiences. Particularly when it came to work experience, there was an assumption as to why some students would have experience while others did not. Although the careers manager acknowledged the challenges these students would face, a deeper understanding of the student's home culture or socio-economic background was not in the forefront of many conversations.

“They’ve got lots of work experience and then you’ll have another student who’s come straight out of their undergraduate degree to come who doesn’t have as good English. Perhaps no experience. So, the journey that both of those students are going on is very different and their needs are very different as well” (University A Careers Manager 5).

Work experience, particularly in the UK context was viewed as essential, yet with a lack of understanding the UK work culture international students may find it difficult to access a successful work placement or feel sufficiently prepared to undertake a work placement (Goodwin and Mbah, 2019). This links back to the need to develop social and cultural capital through work experience to access networks which enrich employability development (Tomlinson, 2017). To address the lack of UK work experience, several University B careers staff were in the process of developing opportunities for international students.

“Reinforced opportunities just for international students, not necessarily paid, but things like work shadowing, et cetera. Just so that they can put something on their CV that might then help them get things like customer service jobs or part time jobs etcetera” (University B Careers Manager 4).

Within the specific context of international student employability development, some staff at University B noted that supporting international students was a particular area of focus which required an adaptation of their resources and support to adapt to life in the UK. This observation echoed the findings of a previous study by Gribble, Rahimi, and Blackmore (2017) which found that the formal training provided by the university for international students specifically does improve their opportunities and skills development when introduced early in their studies. When discussing employability development promoted by the university, some students felt that the certificates and courses offered did not contribute to their employability beyond having a certificate. They wanted tangible evidence of how the course would help them and what skills they would obtain. Within a group interview, some students at University A addressed these extracurricular courses.

“Saying that you’ll be getting this badge if you complete all this whole thing, but I looked for it, like how it will increase my chances for employability, and I could hardly find anything on that. So that was just one thing which has nothing to do with anything but is, it’s just something going on by the university” (University A Group 2 – Indian F).

While some students demonstrated initiative to engage with their host culture, Gribble, Rahimi, and Blackmore (2017) found that developing a unique set of supports for international students to create meaningful connections within the host community enhanced their skills and employability development. This notion of enhanced social networking to increase opportunities for international students is an essential aspect of the social capital relation to graduate employability (Tomlinson, 2017). Many of the staff interviewed at University B described services they provided which were tailored to their international student body. Staff demonstrated an awareness of the difference in the approach to job search and a lack of knowledge and skills students had of how to approach the UK labour market. One staff member stated that their specific focus on supporting international students was designed to provide extra resources and support students in aspects of life that home students were not as affected by. In job searching specifically, they developed a series of workshops about how to find a job in the UK.

“[It] encompasses not just like generally where to find it, but all of the kind of surrounding things about how do you approach this in the UK market. How do you

understand kind of the different regulations and rights” (University B Careers Manager 2).

This encompassment of cultural acknowledgement within the curriculum framework recognises the cultural contexts which are required beyond the generic skills and competencies taught (Clarke, 2018). This integration demonstrates the culturally valued knowledge which staff viewed as being essential to the cultural capital development their international students would need to align themselves with the UK labour market (Tomlinson, 2017). The need to address the increased demand by international students for support services has been documented in previous studies. Attention has primarily focused on their cross-cultural adaptation, while the unique needs related to their careers development have not been as prevalent (Linkes *et al.*, 2018). Staff from both universities developed services which enhanced the experience of international students by understanding their unique needs and tailoring services which would be applicable to them. These service staff ran workshops, at times in collaboration with other teams, specifically for international students to understand how to approach the UK market, understanding the different regulations and rights, and specifics that would be unfamiliar to those who were not from the UK (University B Careers Manager 1 & 2, University A Careers Manager 5).

In diversifying how services were developed and made available to international students, a staff member described how they were able to obtain data on the impact of their interventions to inform their future developments (University B Careers Manager 1). Similarly, some staff at University A provided targeted support for international students through college specific inductions with the ISS team. These staff discussed how the ISS team assisted international students through their stay in the UK focusing on the policy and visa regulations.

“Visa routes and visas and how many hours they can work here, what the sort of process is for after and then we’ll talk about the sort of UK market, tell them about some of the terminology they’ll come into. So, we do that basically right from the start” (University A Careers Manager 5).

An international student agreed with this distinction and highlighted:

“There are many things that for home students perhaps are common sense and they just don’t need to be told that while international students might need to be told like, OK, you

know, this is not needed. So, I think the advice will vary, but I would hope that it doesn't vary for the wrong reasons. You know, I would hope that international students are not given advice in a way that makes them feel incompetent” (University B Group 3 – Slovakian F).

This ‘common sense’ idea was also demonstrated in previous literature which asserted that international students recognised the difference between themselves and home students, particularly in understanding the nuances and formalities associated with applications and demonstrating their employability in the UK labour market (Goodwin and Mbah, 2019). For some international students, they made the distinction between themselves and home students and felt they needed additional advice from the services to enhance their competitiveness.

“They can, maybe give us more advice or maybe some tips to make us, I mean outstanding from the local students” (University A Group 3 – Chinese F).

This student used the term ‘outstanding’ but in the context expressed a desire to make themselves competitive in the labour market. For this student, the concept of cultural capital development was essential for them to become competitive and prepared to transition to the UK labour market. There was a sense that the role of the university was to provide the steps and knowledge which would empower them to develop their graduate capital and employability. For services to be supportive of their unique needs, the participating international students felt specialised services would be beneficial. One student felt that having a specialised service would lessen the demand on the central careers service if they were able to target international students separately.

“I wouldn’t mind seeing another kind of offshoot of career and international services to be able to like focus very directly because I feel like there are so many students to who are all trying to use the career services. And I think that would probably be helpful in kind of sifting through that and sifting through people's maybe specific questions” (University A Group 4 – American F).

While this student’s statement does not fully demonstrate the achieved equitable approach to careers services, it notes the desire of this student to receive support from a dedicated service in an equity-focused approach. University B Careers Manager 2 acknowledged the diversity of the

international student body, speaking to the challenges associated with supporting all students but that it was still not acceptable to provide a ‘one size fits all’ service. Instead, they developed themes which would impact most international students. As Chien (2020) observed, international students felt they were at a disadvantage after choosing to pursue a Master’s degree in the UK due to the one-year time limit which did not sufficiently support the development of support networks or understanding of the host culture. There was an acknowledgement that when international students were developing their employability skills, they not only had to become aware of their employability skills, but they had to learn how to apply them under the circumstances of being in a foreign country which they had not had to navigate before, often with additional time pressures. This signified an essential aspect of graduate capital, where students transitioning to the labour market must have the knowledge and awareness to adapt oneself to the job profile (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2022). As one staff member explained:

“International students have...increased needs compared to their home student counterparts. So particularly for those who are on one-year postgraduate programmes, one year is not a huge amount of time to have to come to the UK, adapt to life, work, study in a different country” (University B Careers Manager 1).

This sentiment was expressed by some careers managers who felt that international students could use extra support due to “aspects that affect them that perhaps don't affect UK students” which they felt the university should provide resources and cater for (University B Careers Manager 2). This resonates with previous student statements, emphasising the need to recognise the differences between how home and international students seek out and process supports. Recognising that the cultural and experiential differences of students can further improve the delivery of supports available to positively enhance the employability development experience. Providing a customised system of supports for international students has been encouraged in previous studies which suggested that by identifying deficiencies and weaknesses early on, universities are better able to help international students integrate and develop their employability skills (Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha, 2021).

For international students, their employability development during postgraduate taught programmes was viewed as a short time to adapt to the UK market. They felt they needed additional support to overcome challenges by further adapting their social and cultural capital

and become as compatible and competitive in the UK market. When discussing their employability development, a student explained that they knew the development of skills was their responsibility, but they needed help to bring them to the same level as home students.

“It tends to depend on our own personality and our own skills, but I think there may be some tips or advice or some skills that can help us to increase our compatibility or employability in short time. Yes, because compared with the local students, we need them more. Yes, we need more that coaches or lessons to increase them in a really short time because we only have one year in my master class” (University A Group 3 – Chinese F).

Similar to previous studies, international students compared their experiences to those of home students and explained that their lack of cultural understanding and language ability disadvantaged them in their employment search (Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos, 2011). The distinction made by international students between themselves and home students within this chapter’s findings and previous studies reiterated the desire for international students to receive customised support for their unique circumstances.

International students from both universities had equal access to the same level of careers support as home students, but in addition to this University B careers managers also offered additional support specifically for international students. This ran throughout their student journey from pre-application through to graduation to help them feel confident in preparing for their career in the UK or further overseas (University B Careers Manager 1). In addition to employability specific services, University B Careers Manager 3 addressed the importance of assisting international students in overcoming mental and physical health issues. As a service, the careers team offered activities during the summer period in a more informal setting because they recognised that international students could be feeling isolated. In providing a social element combined with careers support, this staff member felt it helped students overcome isolation and promoted their employability development by being able to stay connected with the careers service team (University B Careers Manager 3). The support provided by these services highlighted the role of the university in maintaining social networks to enhance international students social and cultural capital adaptation. The maintenance of these networks not only

helped students combat isolation, but provided a setting which encouraged them to engage with services to enhance their employability.

Although some University A staff maintained that all students were treated equally, they highlighted that when addressing careers concerns with international students they needed to dig beneath the surface to really understand what students really came to them for help. They realized that students do not always have the knowledge or insight to know which questions to ask beyond the ones which offer tangible results (University A Careers Manager 6 & 8). This highlighted the difference in baselines between international and home students when approaching employability and their transition to the labour market. A point that was discussed as an area for improvement was the need to bring in specialized services for international students. At University A, some staff explained there was previously a dedicated position for international student careers and employability management, but it had been discontinued. University A Careers Manager 1 felt that this position should be brought back, which indicated a level of need to support international students in an alternative capacity to home students. And although University B careers services did have supports in place for international students, they still felt this needed to be made available university wide. The desire to provide specialised support for international students demonstrates that for some members of staff the university does play a role in supporting international student employability.

In supporting international students specifically, University B staff initiated the China Career Gateway, a dedicated program for their Chinese students to access information, effectively creating a new line of connection within their network. This was unprompted by the university and developed by the careers service staff with the mindset of their responsibility to support all students in their employability development by giving them the means to access information in a way that would be understandable to them.

“From doing nothing for Chinese students to just creating a program, seeing how it works to run that program for five years now and have that, you know 1300 students nearly take part, you know the feedback and the impact of that program. We have a lot of evidence just to kind of highlight the value of that experience. So, I think for us that is something that we're doing well” (University B Careers Manager 1).

This differentiation in service delivery was developed on the fact that staff at University B recognised that not as many Chinese students were engaging with the services and staff felt there was a lot more information that they needed to be made aware of to help them prepare for their UK or China based career (University B Career Manager 1). This choice to offer alternative delivery of services was decided based on the careers service staff examining their international student engagement numbers and taking an initiative to support all their students through equitable means.

Careers services at both universities also collaborated with other teams, such as the visa team to develop a pathway specifically for international students. The information available was tailored for international students on items such as visa regulations and options. Using Target Connect pathways, University B curated information in one place specifically for international students to be able to find and access the information they needed. This pathway was designed to help international students with careers related queries based on what students frequently asked which also served to alleviate the resource pressure on the careers services.

“There are kind of sections for the students to work through videos for them to watch, etcetera. So, I think we've been trying to do that as a way to sort of kind of alleviate the pressure of the fact that we can't do a program for Indian students or Malaysian students or US students because we just don't have that resource” (University B Careers Manager 1).

Careers staff delivered information sessions online and in-person with the visa team to students to give them the space to ask questions. Some staff at University B felt this was one of the “things that [they] do that are a bit more bespoke for international students” (University B Careers Manager 4). Similarly, the central career services at University A were also in the process of developing a pathway on Target Connect for international students which they felt would be a beneficial resource, but it has been delayed in its completion (University A Careers Manager 6). While the addition of this new resource was not yet implemented, the action of developing pathways to specifically support international students in enhancing their employability was significant in recognising the equitable application of services.

Most University A staff acknowledged the need for understanding and providing for communicative competencies that students experienced. Their role involved not only providing

information but making it available in a way that was accessible and comprehensible to all students regardless of their background. Careers Manager 5 explained that for international students who came to university in the UK and whose first language was not English, adjusting their service's language level and tone in their communications was key.

“There is a lot that we could actually do in terms of just the communication piece and streamlining that in terms of helping students navigate their journey” (University A Careers Manager 5).

To make communications accessible to all international students, a University A staff member explained that their use of language was adapted to be easier to comprehend for students.

“The communications that we send tend to be adapted so that it could appeal to any student, but the language tends to be paired down so that it's easier to process depending on your level of English ability and there do tend to be some” (University A Internationalisation Manager 7).

University A staff addressed their tone when addressing students from diverse backgrounds to be more inclusive and accessible. This was to change the narrative that the university was maintaining a particular socioeconomic status of its students. As the student population continues to diversify, the role of the university evolves to support the levels of graduate capital international students need to adapt as they seek to transition to the host labour market. The employers they engaged with, and promotional material were developed to showcase more diversity at the university to change the perception of Russell Group universities being only for middle class, majority white students (University A Careers Manager 6). This observation by some of the university staff echoed findings by Brooks and Waters (2022) which indicated that although international student mobility was primarily undertaken by privileged groups, there was an indication that international students from lower-middle and working class backgrounds were pursuing their education abroad. Although the space is continuing to open to a wider range of social backgrounds, there is a continued need to support the range of experiences of international students.

5.4 Conclusion

The findings discussed in this section have revealed the challenges faced by international students and support services in developing employability skills while attending university in the UK. University staff acknowledged that international students were not a homogenous group. Due to their varied languages, cultural backgrounds, and prior work experience it was seen as a necessity to tailor support services to equitably support their employability development. Two narratives were presented, one favoured a more equal approach to services while the other favoured a more equitable approach. While both staff and students recognised the benefits and challenges associated with employability development, the acknowledgement of the unique needs of international students was significant. The individual student's responsibility was still maintained, but in providing bespoke support tailored to known challenges international students face, university services are enabling students to take control of their employability development and strengthen their graduate capital.

Both universities demonstrated their uniquely tailored services which focused on navigating the UK labour market and cultural differences. These services were aligned with the challenges expressed by international students in these findings who felt their level of cultural understanding and work experience was often not equal to home students. While international students have access to the same supports as home students, there was a clear acknowledgement from students and staff that they benefited from services specialised for them and recognising the additional barriers and challenges international students face. The role of the university is therefore essential to provide the supports that will allow international students to develop their employability skills while also fostering social networks that enhance opportunities. Enhancing services which support international students in developing networks with employers and others can help bridge the gap in accessing the labour market through strengthening relevant social and cultural capital.

The equality and equity approach of employability services provided by the universities demonstrated how limited resources were allocated to accommodate all students. Both approaches were applied to the employability development of international students and demonstrated how cultural awareness and intercultural sensitivity influenced the student experience. While resources available for careers services are significantly limited, it was

apparent that as international students are increasingly recruited, providing intercultural support and adaptation to life and work in the UK is necessary. As universities provide a link between students and future employers, it is important for them to become a trusted resource which assists international students in navigating entry into the UK labour market (Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha, 2021). Universities hold a role in facilitating the development of graduate capital, through their initiatives to enhance student's social and cultural capital and deliver a positive employability development experience. From these findings it has been demonstrated that UK universities have increasingly recognised the unique challenges faced by international students and are continuing to implement initiatives tailored to their experiences to enhance their employability development. The following chapter delves further into the influence of intercultural competencies, highlighting the impact on work experience and student experience of employability development.

Chapter 6 Impact of intercultural competency and work experience on student employability development

6.1 Overview

This findings chapter will discuss the cultural influences, which impact international student employability development during their time studying at a UK university. Intercultural navigation was described by both staff and students as a challenge which impacted the integration and successful implementation of employability development. While a significant driver attracting international students to study in the UK was the university's reputation, finding a job in the UK after graduating was a strong motivation of most students. Securing relevant work experience in the UK was a significant barrier for international students due to the value of localised experience being preferred by employers. By applying the Graduate Capital (Tomlinson, 2017) framework, this chapter will explore how international students develop social and cultural capital to enhance their employability. The role of social networks in providing opportunities, connections, and cultural knowledge will be explored to reveal how these networks support employability development and transition to the labour market. Additionally, the role of the university in supporting international students' intercultural and professional development will be discussed to address barriers. As international students work to develop cultural competencies to develop their employability and transition to the UK labour market, consideration must be given for their home country experiences and the impact of the intercultural adjustment. The following sections will discuss how international students navigate cultural and linguistic challenges, university support structures, the impact of needing UK work experience, developing intercultural competencies, and the impact on employability development.

6.2 Cultural and linguistic adaptation challenges

A significant theme that emerged during the data analysis was the adaptation and development of employability, framed within the conceptual framework of the Graduate Capital Model (Tomlinson, 2017) and social networks (Prell, 2012) which emphasise the development of social and cultural capital is essential to employability and successful transition to the labour market. This development of employability skills while navigating cultural and linguistic differences between a home and host country demonstrated how international students overcome barriers of cultural and language differences. This adaptation was described as a cultural fit and a student's

ability to integrate into the UK daily and workplace lifestyle. Staff and international students at both universities shared their perspectives on the complexities of navigating a new culture and social system, which for international students was often without the social network supports which would assist them in their integration. Staff at both universities described the challenges they perceived international students to have when developing their employability. One was the adaptation that international students must go through in addition to the typical pressures of being a student. They adapt to a new culture, language, and way of life, on top of their studies and finding new friends or a network of support. These observations by staff echo findings by Dentakos *et al.* (2017) which described the barriers to cross-cultural adaptation international students perceived to contribute to their difficulties in learning social norms and customs of the host country. It was found that international students were a group who not only had to transition into university, but also navigate a foreign country, often without a support network, compared to their home student counterparts which some students viewed as a disadvantage (Dentakos *et al.*, 2017; Chien, 2020). One staff member described the difference in adaptation between home and international students coming down to the challenges of understanding life in the UK in addition to the typical pressures associated with being a new university student.

“A lot of the students we’ve seen have come here for the first time. They’ve not been in the UK before, so they’ve got a huge amount to adapt to just in terms of their course you know understanding, you know, like living here, settling in, making friends, and getting used to a completely different way of life. And so, I think that one of the challenges that they face is that it’s probably they’re having to adapt to all of that as well as the typical pressures of being a student” (University B Careers Manager 2).

As these staff members have emphasized their awareness of the challenges international students face, it is also apparent that the cultural differences need to be addressed when providing support for their adaptation. International students were subjected to critical assessments of their ability to culturally fit in with their host culture, especially as they looked to transition to the labour market. Although students were educated within the local environment, their ability to successfully demonstrate their culturally adapted social, cultural, and communication skills inhibited their successful integration and transition (Zevallos, 2012; Blackmore and Rahimi, 2019). This barrier in demonstrating their adaptability highlights the gap in capital development

international students face and the challenge associated for universities to provide support structures to help students navigate their employability development.

Language development and cultural understanding were often described as a challenge by both staff and students. The importance of providing services to support international students was reinforced by multiple study's findings which demonstrated that students who lacked English language proficiency often felt isolated and insecure about their intercultural competence (Khawaja and Stallman, 2011; Valencia-Forrester and Backhaus, 2020). Language proficiency did not act solely as a barrier to communicate, but contributed to feelings of inequality and inability to integrate due to a lack of local 'taken-for-granted' knowledge already privy to home students (Valencia-Forrester and Backhaus, 2020).

English language proficiency was an area which both staff and student perceived to be a barrier which impacted a student's ability to demonstrate their employability fit to employers. While language ability was seen as a prominent barrier, Valencia-Forrester and Backhaus (2020) offered that language concerns acted as an umbrella reason to capture other underlying cultural issues. Complimenting these findings, a careers manager felt that some groups of international students, especially those from the US, Canada, Australia, or any other English-speaking country had an advantage in coming to the UK purely due to their native language ability. This awareness highlights the gap in cultural capital international students experience, ranging from language ability to the intercultural competencies which enable them to successfully interact and engage with their community and demonstrate their employability. Although staff expressed these groups of students were in a more advantageous position than non-native English speakers, they still addressed the cultural challenges most international students face to understand the workplace cultural and nuances that would be expected of them by employers.

“The conventions and business etiquette and business culture, that's very different from what [they've] experienced before. It is really tough” (University A Careers Manager 2).

Staff recognised that some groups of international students would have more trouble than others in their language confidence. This was reflected by some international students as well whose native language was not English. The language ability of international students was brought up frequently by staff at both universities. Most staff acknowledged that international students who did not speak English as a first language were already at a disadvantage due to employer bias and

not understanding the colloquial use of the language. The difficulty in navigating cultural nuances and demonstrate communication competencies establish the context in which social and cultural capital emerge as important factors for students to demonstrate their employability skills (Pham, 2021a). This echoed a study by Chien (2020) in which international students described their personal disadvantages with having imperfect English in their academic performance and job searching. A University A Employability Manager explained:

“[An international student’s] English language almost has to be more word perfect than anybody else’s. And anything that stands out in an application or an e-mail, you know that does not scan well, is likely to disadvantage you in that process” (University A Employability Manager 9).

This staff member expressed a worry they had was the ability of international students to be equal to others when competing for a position against native English speakers and locals in their host community. Although international students would have gained the same educational experience, their ability to communicate fluently or in a way that contextually fit in with the cultural norm was a significant barrier. Adding to this thought, another careers manager explained the differences between academic English and communicative competencies that would increase their competitiveness against locals.

“If they’re coming from a country that isn’t historically linked with English, English can often be a big problem. They might have enough to get them through a degree. But in terms of actually getting an interview and to be equal to someone next to them, that’s definitely a problem” (University B Careers Manager 3).

Staff continued to discuss the barriers of being a non-native English speaker seeking employment in an English-speaking country.

“The biggest barrier is always English language. I think that’s always the biggest barrier because I don’t think that qualitatively, intellectually, and definitely not motivationally, because typically they’re more motivated than our home students that there’s really any difference. And if there is a difference, it’s probably more positive in favour of our international students. So really the issues where they exist are around English language” (University A Employability Manager 9).

University B Careers Manager 2 described the English language ability of international students as being vastly different depending on their confidence level in using the language. The significance of self-perceived language ability and confidence has been found to be critical in an international student's adjustment and overall willingness to learn the host country's culture and practices (Dentakos *et al.*, 2017). Another careers manager expressed concern over the level of language proficiency and competence in international student ability to succeed beyond their educational goals.

“I've had students come in whose English is probably good enough to do a degree in, but probably not good enough to work in the marketplace and you know this, that there are different levels of that. And so I'd be concerned about that even though they might not be concerned about that” (University A Careers Manager 3).

The recognition of the way graduate capital in the form of cultural and language competency impacts the employability development and transition to the labour market continued to highlight the challenges international students encounter. Other staff from University A felt that international students who struggled with comprehension found it difficult when they would discuss employability skills development.

“I often find myself in front of students who find it difficult to either understand what I'm explaining to them about their development professional skills and or to communicate anything massively meaningful about their own professional development because of their English language” (University A Employability Manager 9).

As university staff attempted to support international students, there was a limitation in overcoming communication barriers and expectations. This language barrier was expressed by mainly Chinese students who were concerned that their English language ability would hinder their employment in the UK. Many Chinese students from both universities expressed that language was a barrier, but also highlighted the gap they felt in understanding the UK labour market.

“It's a little difficult because I didn't know about the UK job market before I just this year to decide the find the job here and the most and the biggest problem for me is the language” (University A Group 1 – Chinese F).

There was a feeling that students were being excluded from the selection process for not being local enough for employers. This sentiment supports findings by Blackmore and Rahimi (2019) who argued that the cultural capital of international students was unconsciously de-valued by employers due to cultural bias that excluded international students, especially those of Asian descent, from the recruitment process.

“Every company they require one of the requires is requirement is fluently speaking and writing English. Is not friendly to the international students, especially from Asia. Some you know that don't use the English country” (University B Group 1 – Chinese F).

While some might be academically good at English, the ability to communicate socially was often seen to be less which from an employability point of view was seen as a challenge for interviews. Some staff commented that the lack of confidence students experienced then led to them not using English to communicate and stunted their development of communication competencies which would see them understand how to communicate effectively in their host community and demonstrate their capabilities to employers. A Careers Manager at University B addressed this gap:

“They’re very aware of, they know that they need to get experience. But there can be kind of challenges within that as well, I think. So, I guess barriers to that can often be for some international students just about like communication sometimes as well and kind of how they sort of put themselves across in in that recruitment process sort of typically” (University B Careers Manager 4).

This Careers Manager also observed the impact of cultural differences which impacted student’s social and cultural capital development. While the difficulty in enhancing their forms of capital was realised, the responsibility of overcoming these challenges was left with the individual student to enhance themselves. Referencing Pierre Bourdieu’s work, they felt international students had a higher learning curve to adapt their cultural knowledge to transition to the UK labour market.

“It’s the whole social capital and cultural capital and you see that very much in working with students that their awareness of, the markets, their awareness of culture. Home

students understand the UK market more, they understand what it's like to work here. It's easier for them to adapt” (University B Careers Manager 4).

In addition to the cultural challenges, intercultural communicative competencies played a major role in international student employability. From the perspective of staff at both universities, international students who struggled with English were already at a disadvantage in their employability skills if they were targeting the UK market. As one staff member explained the approach to language beyond proficiency in speaking.

“Sometimes quality can be an issue and not just in terms of English language, but in terms of just the quality of perhaps reflection and analysis in applications” (University B Careers Manager 1).

Language as a cultural competency was highlighted by staff and students during this study as a significant challenge and barrier to overcome when learning to apply employability skills to the transition to employment in the UK. While language proficiency was cited as the most significant barrier, intercultural and communicative competencies began to come through in the narrative. The use of English in an employment setting was the most prominent in distinguishing an international students’ ability to demonstrate their employability but underlying cultural nuances impacted their confidence. As international students and service staff described the challenges there was minimal mention of the ways in which university services supported students in overcoming their linguistic and cultural differences. Within the graduate capital framework, language and intercultural competencies contribute to cultural capital while access to networks influences social capital. The role of the university is essential in fostering opportunities to develop intercultural competencies and networks which enhance an international student’s graduate capital. As Zevallos (2012) stated from their findings, higher education institutions have a responsibility to incorporate linguistic and intercultural training to better prepare international students to transition to the local labour market. Looking beyond language comprehension and proficiency to understand the role intercultural competencies play in employability development was beginning to be seen as a contributing factor in the transition of international students to employment. As we move into the next section, university supports, and the perception of their staff will be examined to understand how these challenges and barriers are managed to enhance the employability experience.

6.3 University support structures and perceptions

The discussion of the role of university support in employability revolved around the systems in place or the need for them in aiding international students' adaptation and employability. This included the perceptions of staff and students regarding the adequacy of available support services and the potential gaps that exist, particularly in addressing intercultural competencies and managing international students' expectations.

Employability has been regarded as one of the most important aims for higher education, yet it has been weakly conceptualised making it difficult for higher education institutions to implement initiatives let alone discuss employability as more than an employment outcome (Behle, 2020). This weak conceptualisation can be further addressed through the Graduate Capital model which conceptualises that employability is a combination of capitals which are acquired throughout a graduate's experiences and further utilised to enter the labour market (Tomlinson, 2017). From this perspective, the role of the university is essential to provide not only the necessary skills but also support network development and experiences to enhance international students' graduate capital.

While the development of employability skills has been recommended in previous studies as a dimension of internationalisation of the curriculum, within its 10 drivers employability was only hinted at within one (Jones, 2013). Jones (2013) identified that the UK Commission for Employment and Skills in 2008 recommended that employability related teaching should be embedded into the curriculum to encourage learning through authentic learning though it had yet to be fully embedded. Since the 2008 report, the Department of Education released an updated report on the employability programmes and work placements in UK higher education. This report described an increase in embedded employability programmes and integrated work placements, but the measurement of student employability results was still considered a significant challenge (Atfield, Hunt and Luchinshaya, 2021). This highlights the importance of universities in supporting students' access to social networks that will enhance their employability development beyond the standard curriculum. The development of 10 skills courses for employability was introduced by University A to embed skills development for students. The courses were developed to support students through the process and help them understand essential employability skills and their value such as teamwork and communication

(University A Employability Manager 9). These employability courses were targeted towards their social science students, but similar to findings by Fakunle and Pirrie (2020) the employability discourse was often framed to develop the knowledge of home students. Similarly to the equality discourse in the previous chapter, the development of this course focused on the entire student population. This mostly homogenous approach lacked an intercultural understanding which meant that how international students were expected to utilise the material did not consider how cultural differences would influence their understanding. Aligned with the recommendations by Chien (2020) an additional element of this course did combine support for international students in their communication competencies, such as English language support. The services provided by this team of employability managers within a small group of the university acknowledged the need for international students to have additional supports so that their skills developed to the level needed within the UK labour market. In addition to the reflective activities, there was an element of language support where international students were made aware of the communication and presentation skills in English in a competency-based way (University A Employability Manager 9). The service elements were designed to assist students to develop their employability skills and although they did incorporate English language, support in meaning making of the skills was left to the international students to navigate.

Universities have been successful in developing core professional skills but have fallen short in providing supports which enhance the skills and competencies of international students required to make meaning of the local labour market (Gribble, Rahimi and Blackmore, 2017). When discussing the way international students navigate their new university environment, University A Internationalisation Manager 7 described this point of initial adaption highlighting the cultural challenges and the need for university infrastructure to support their transition.

“They're adjusting to a new culture, that's the time that it's most important and the infrastructures you've got to support them” (University A Internationalisation Manager 7).

The success of these international experiences require reflection to articulate their skills and knowledge within their targeted market. Cross-cultural adjustment was influential in how well a student was able to fit in their new environment, especially how they conceptualised their own cultural values within a foreign context (Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen, 2021). University B Careers

Manager 1 highlighted the cultural differences they had noticed in their Chinese students when approaching careers guidance.

“I think sometimes that career guidance and the nature of our one-to-one interactions in itself can be quite alien to some international students who aren't used to being asked for their opinion or, you know asked you know what do you think, what do you want?” (University B Careers Manager 1)

This difference was not just about the reflective nature of UK careers guidance, but also the social dynamics which some students found challenging. Framing this perception within the conceptual framework, many students have to contend with their original social and cultural capital when navigating their new environments. The same can be said for university staff members approaching international students' capital with their own engrained capital knowledge. Some University B staff described how older Chinese students found it difficult talking with a careers manager who was younger than them and avoided having individual meetings because it was drastically different from what they were comfortable with.

“One to one because they don't want to waste [the staff's] time, even though [they're] there to help that the cultural difference is, I don't know. It's an Asian cultural thing, but it's that can be quite difficult” (University B Careers Manager 3).

The cultural alignment or misalignment was similar to findings presented by Garcia, Garza and Yeaton-Hromada (2019) and Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen (2021) which highlighted the problems that can occur in an international student's cross-cultural adjustment if culturally they cannot relate to their host culture. An international student from Indonesia spoke to this point as well and highlighted the cultural differences which created challenges for them to engage effectively with the careers service. They compared the UK with their home culture:

“Here is obviously very individualistic, so if you need that you will e-mail them and they were like 1 on 1 approach, including like for the lecture is 1 on 1 approach. But back then in Indonesia, my university, there isn't any like kind of this. So it's more like the information coming from your friends. So that's the collectivism use to me. And so it's kind of hard to adapt in the beginning, because how can I know this kind of, for example, for the knowledge in the class, I hardly used to understand that. But I don't know that I

can e-mail the lecturer. I don't know that I can use like one-on-one approach because in my understanding friends will help but here it's no" (University A Group 2 – Indonesian F).

Although most University A careers staff stated they offered a homogenous approach to all students, there was still an acknowledgement that there were deficiencies in cultural nuances and know-hows by international students. The staff often had to adapt the information they provided to be the most useful to international students, without the expectation that they would have the same knowledge and networks as home students. An example given was the difference between an Indian student and a home student's expectations for how to find a job, highlighting again the differences in original capital to their adapted capital necessary for navigating the UK labour market. The difference from their home way of approaching careers through family and networks in India was vastly different from the competitive nature of the UK job market and they had no way of knowing how to approach this new market. The careers staff would then have to pivot the conversation to help the student begin to understand the differences between their home country and the UK to help them apply their employability skills in the best way possible (University A Careers Manager 8). As another member of staff from University A explained:

"Previous expectations and or experiences of what a career service is or should do can really vary a lot and arguably more so from international students' perspective than others" (University A Careers Manager 6).

The example of Indian students was given again to highlight the difference in approaches between the UK universities and other countries careers approaches. Many staff felt it was a fundamental part of the international student experience to build self-efficacy and understand how to effectively utilise their skills to understand how to function in the UK. The adaptation international students exhibit can be significantly influenced by their motivation to adjust to the academic, social, institutional, and emotional domains of their host society (Dentakos *et al.*, 2017). The role of the university is crucial in developing international students' graduate capital, by providing supports to enhance employability, intercultural competencies, and enhance their ability to successfully transition to the labour market. The support of university services and the perceptions of how international students navigate cultural differences demonstrates unmatched expectations in how employability development is achieved. The willingness of both staff and

students to understand each other's expectations is a key element of improving supports which incorporate intercultural competencies. The application and perception of university service supports assists students in strengthening their graduate capital which are essential for developing their employability skills. In the next section I will explore how students then apply this knowledge and support towards their work experience in the UK.

6.4 UK work experience

Work experience was a consistent topic of conversation among staff and international students, emphasising its essential role in developing graduate capital to enhance the employability experience. The need to gain relevant work experience was highlighted from both perspectives. Staff addressed the cultural and socio-economic backgrounds which potentially hindered international students' attempts at transitioning to employment in the UK. International students acknowledge the need to develop their social and cultural capital to enhance their employability through relevant UK work experience but encountered cultural and structural barriers. When it came to developing relevant capital applicable to the host country labour market, time was seen as a main barrier for international students. A University B master's student described that for the one year they had in the UK, they were not able to enhance their language and cultural comprehension which is a critical element of cultural capital.

“Because sometimes people may have potential meaning or something that is really you. You can get a lot out of from the two years' experience and it also if you just push yourself to improve that, you can learn from different areas, I think yeah, it's good enough to help you to improve your experience” (University B Group 1 – Chinese F).

In a comparison between postgraduate taught and undergraduate international students, undergraduate students were able to adapt to the UK easier than their postgraduate taught counterparts. This concept of time plays a role in the development and practical dimension of cultural capital. The different times undergraduate and postgraduates had available to learn and reinforce cultural capital was dependent on exposure and awareness of cultural knowledge and practices of their host communities (Tomlinson, 2017). An undergraduate American student explained that because she had started her university career in the UK, she was more prepared to transition to employment in the UK than the US.

“I don’t have the American University experience. So, I came into university with the knowledge of the UK University, so I was able to adapt as the student increasing their education would have to do normally” (University B Group 1 – American F).

They felt they did not have to adapt from a previous higher education experience, unlike other students who would potentially have to re-learn how to operate within the university and labour market. They instead received the same baseline knowledge as local UK undergraduates attending university for the first time.

For many postgraduate international students especially, the challenge was for them to demonstrate applicable employability skills to UK employers. The short length of the master’s programme at times acted as a barrier to gain relevant UK work experience, which posed a challenge for international student’s whose programmes did not offer alternative work integrated learning (Fakunle and Pirrie, 2020).

“It’s a challenge for international postgraduate students who are only here for one year to demonstrate their employability to UK employers when the big barrier to overcome is that they don’t usually have any UK working experience and that can be a real challenge” (University A Careers Manager 2).

As highlighted by Blackmore and Rahimi (2019), employers can present an unconscious bias which favours those who would be seen as being the ‘best-fit’ culturally. This notion of employers desiring employees who fit their organisational culture serves to maintain stereotypes and ignore the skills and experience of international students (Blackmore and Rahimi, 2019). A student from University A described how they understood the impact of their lack of UK experience as a barrier set by employers.

“Because I’ve heard from people, you know the national particularly about the UK experience irrespective of their wealth of experience of bringing from your own country, they are insistent on UK experience” (University A Group 2 – Nigerian M).

In this context, UK work experience was viewed by the student as being superior by UK employers which left students feeling that their own experience from their home country experience was less valued. This recognition of differences in valued work experience demonstrates a gap in the social and cultural capital acknowledgement by both students and

employers. Some employers possess preconceived perceptions of the suitability and cultural fit an international student would have as an employee and have often reported dissatisfaction with their communication skills compared to locals (Zevallos, 2012). As Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha (2021) described in their findings, international students began to face an even greater challenge following Brexit as this decision signalled that employers prioritised a local workforce. For international students who were able to secure part-time employment, there was often a cultural learning curve associated with the workplace culture. A Chinese student described their part-time work and their difficulty to be able to relate to their local co-workers.

“It's hard for me to feel like to get familiar with some people especially like the volunteer shop back doing the stuff like that. They're quite older than me and I don't really know what topic like I can talk with them. And then they're like they're speaking so fast, and the accent is hard for me to understand as well” (University B Group 2 – Chinese F).

Although there were challenges recognised by international students, there was also a positive difference between their home and the UK workplace culture which contributed to their desire to stay in the UK. For international students who had successfully secured employment in the UK they expressed a level of dignity and respect which made the work experience in the UK desirable for them. Some students felt that even working in lower skilled jobs they were still treated well and found this to be better than opportunities they would have in their home country. During an interview, one student shared:

“There is dignity and respect. It's not like that in my country. Here they see those are the lowest help of life doing the kind of job which you are insisting is dignifying here and what you make out of this is enough to live an average life” (University A Group 2 – Nigerian M).

For another student, apart from the salary, the experience of interviewing and working in the UK as a cleaner was positively different from their experience in their home country.

“They interview me, and I feel like the CEO. I mean like they open the door for me and they're like you know very respectful. I was just like amazed and wow I'm applying for cleaning. So yeah, OK, I'll definitely choose this job. So, it's totally flattering” (University A Group 2 – Indonesian F).

While some international students did focus on their English language ability as a barrier, most staff at both universities noted that for some international students, a lack of confidence played into the development or demonstration of employability skills. Some international students perceived that their lack of UK work experience left them unable to demonstrate their full capabilities to UK employers in a way that was expected.

“Because I don't have the work experience so I can't make the pretty cover letter”
(University A Group 1 – Chinese F).

While some international students recognised this gap in their cultural capital, there was not a clear expectation of how to bridge the gap through individual means. This mindset created a challenge for them to recognize their own employability. For most staff at University A, international students’ self confidence in their employability skills was viewed as a main challenge.

“They don't recognize they actually do have the skills employers are looking for. They don't understand always the nature of transferable skills” (University A Careers Manager 1).

Although some international students did lack confidence in their skills and experience, a student from University A felt they had relevant experience from their home country but found the UK employers did not find it as valuable. They felt there was a difference between their work experience in China and the UK.

“So, I think I have to find them and to find work and more connections between them so they can know how I promote myself when I attend the interview. Yes. So, I think I have to still to prepare more about it” (University A Group 3 – Chinese F).

Culturally, there can often be a very different mindset for international students when it comes to how they build their employability. Coming from a different culture that values education over practical work experience, their understanding of why they would need to find work experience may be limited due to an already insufficient amount of experience. A staff member explained how these cultural variances impacted how students adjusted to their host culture when they had the intention to transition to employment locally.

“Where culturally academia is a lot more important than like getting actual practical like or it’s valued more. So, they haven’t prioritised getting work experience, so very different to the UK. And so, for example for those groups of students who find it very difficult to get work experience or even a part time job because they’ve not got very much on their CV” (University B Careers Manager 2).

Staff at both universities observed that their international students often did not understand why work experience was essential to employability value in the UK labour market context. A University A Careers Manager explained the disconnect between academic and work experience of international students as being uninformed about the experiences and initiatives that are expected of students to present themselves as employable.

“They have zero experience and then outside of university, no extracurricular stuff. They think it’s all about the degree. So, when you’re explaining about employability and the fact it’s about a 360-degree person that employers are looking for, they will ask you what you do in your spare time. Your interests. Time, time and time again they can’t quite get it why that matters” (University A Careers Manager 10).

This staff member’s perspective highlights their knowledge of the process and expectations of employers in the UK and gap in knowledge and experiences of international students. Although they have comprehended this local knowledge, they do not demonstrate an attempt to understand why some students do not engage with services and extracurricular activities like home students now how to do. Some staff explained the cultural differences between home and international students understanding of what contributes to valuable employability skills. One Careers Manager described that in the UK, “a lot of emphasis put on things like part-time jobs, but also on outside interest as well” (University A Careers Manager 1) contrary to how international students understand employability development in their home countries. Other Careers Managers at times described a narrative which grouped international students together as coming from privileged backgrounds.

“Quite often they come from families for they've not had to work, they've not been like a lot of our home students who don't come from wealthy families and they think, ‘well, I have to go and work because I need to have money’” (University A Careers Manager 10).

By focusing on the perceived socio-economic background or linguistic abilities of international students, this creates a barrier for staff to be able to relate to international students and assist in their successful integration into the UK culture and labour market (Brooks and Waters, 2022). This narrative reflects the findings of King and Sondhi (2018) that demonstrated access to international education has been biased in favour of students from more privileged and wealthy backgrounds, whose families are able to pay the cost for their education outside of their home country. Some University A staff went on to describe how from their perspective international students would see their UK peers holding part-time work or volunteer positions whereas they would not have that same desire to pursue opportunities to grow their experience. These staff stated this was due to the culture of the UK, which local students understood.

“The UK students get it because they've had it drilled into them as a matter of their, just as part of their development” (University A Careers Manager 10).

From this statement it was apparent that some staff at University A acknowledged the cultural differences between home and international students. The experiential development of one group was different to the other based on their lived experiences and what they had been taught was valued towards their employability skills development. While these staff members highlighted the differences they viewed between home and international students, the university's role in enhance the employability experience was not as apparent. There was a lack of cultural empathy to allow both staff and students to apply intercultural competencies. An Indian student discussed the expectations and pressure to have previous work experience in the UK when they came from a culture which did not value part-time work. They explained:

“I'll be getting restrictions from my own family like, why do you want to work in there? We are good household. We or your father weren't good enough? Why do you want to do such kind of jobs? And they would like if you want to look for a job, get a degree and get the job that actually suffices your degree and actually has something which has to do with your degree rather than doing the part-time” (University A Group 2 – Indian F).

This student described the cultural struggle they experienced knowing that part-time work was not a culture in their home country but necessary in the UK.

“So that is why the differences lie. Of course, the thing I am facing here is that I don't have any part-time experience. So, when I apply for part-time jobs here, I'm facing a lot of rejections because I don't have similar kind of work experience and there is hardly possibility that any Indian guy who comes here would be having part time job experience because we don't have that culture back in our home country” (University A Group 2 – Indian F).

For international students, it was found that challenges related to work experience significantly impacted the overall student experience. As in previous studies, international students had been tempted to come to the UK for the one-year master's programme due to the efficiency to complete the degree but often described the time as being insufficient to fully enhance their language, cultural, and employability skills (Chien, 2020). This limitation inhibited their ability to adapt to the UK and its labour market expectations. The perception and experiences demonstrated that UK employers valued UK work experience, which significantly challenged international students and placed them at a disadvantage in the UK labour market. The findings highlight how international students face disadvantages due to a lack of graduate capital relevant for the UK labour market, especially in social and cultural capital to gain access to relevant networks and understand workplace norms and expectations.

The cultural differences in how work and academic achievements are valued in the UK was a notable concern for international students. For many, the language barriers and unfamiliarity with the local culture and customs made it difficult to secure work or demonstrate their adaptability to the UK workplace to employers. Social capital in the form of social networks plays a crucial role for international students to access opportunities to build experience and future employment, yet time is a significant barrier for students. Universities play a role in supporting international students in facilitating these networks and developing their intercultural competency. Cultural exposure builds confidence and self-perceptions of value to provide graduates with a stronger understanding of the expectations of their targeted employment (Tomlinson, 2017). Balancing cultural and familial pressures were a challenge for international students to navigate due to not fully understanding the value of graduate social and culture capital expected in the UK labour market alongside their home culture. As we have examined the perceptions of international students navigating their UK work experience, a further need to

explore the development of intercultural competencies is needed. The intercultural competency development from the international student and service staff perspectives will be further investigated in the following section.

6.5 Developing intercultural competencies

Social and cultural alignment or misalignment were frequently referred to by international students and staff. The understanding of experience that was valued in the UK was at times difficult to relate to home country experiences for international students as these would differ from their home countries experiences. The navigation of cultures from applying lived experiences to then making sense of new experiences is integral to graduate capital development, especially as international students must develop social networks and bridge cultural gaps to enhance their employability. Additionally, the university plays a key role in providing services which develop a level of intercultural understanding from not only students but from supporting service staff as well. A University B staff member explained that for some international students the initiative to seek out support from the university services was not their realm of ‘normal’ knowledge.

“Culturally, maybe that’s...not something that they would have done in their home country...from the university for [part-time work]. So, I think that’s really difficult to shift that mindset a little bit” (University B Careers Manager 4).

The framing of cultural differences by university staff identified a mindset expressed in the concept of cultural and social capital development. As Naylor and Misfud (2020) expressed, individuals from the ‘dominant’ class are better able to succeed in their environment, whereas international students who come from different cultural backgrounds are less able to benefit or succeed due to difficulties in adjustment. The staff sentiment expressed by University B Careers Manager 4 above serves to support this position from an external perspective. Some Careers Managers have observed the difficulties associated with international students navigating their own and host culture differences, impacting their ability to successfully demonstrate their employability. The cultural differences and ability to understand and adapt is linked to a form of cultural capital discussed in Chapter Three. The link of intercultural competencies within cultural capital provides perspective into how an individual understands and adjusts to new circumstances.

During interviews, some international students mentioned they did work part-time in the UK and found it to be rewarding but could not connect how their experience in a job unrelated to their degree would enhance their employability. A University B student talked about their part-time work within the university and getting a job.

“It has nothing to do with what I study. It's just a little way to make some extra money, so I couldn't tell you what my experience would be like applying for jobs that relate to my degree” (University B Group 1 – American F).

While the work experience was valued by students, the applicability towards what they perceived as being essential employability skills was not always met. The experiences gained through exposure to the many dimensions of internationalisation create opportunities for intercultural development in students but can often be limited if an appropriate university policy is not in place (Fakunle, 2021a). Many staff at both universities highlighted how international students differed culturally as well in their recognition of how to proactively develop employability skills. As some staff described how students from diverse cultural backgrounds approached their employability development but the discussion how the university might encourage less engaged students was not as apparent.

“European students who often take positions of responsibility on there, which develops excellent employability skills, whereas stereotypically, some of ours like Chinese students, for example, are a bit more reserved and don't tend to get involved in those clubs and societies as much. So probably wouldn't develop their employability skills as much because they're not actively getting involved in some of those things” (University A Careers Manager 5).

The need to network and learn how the market works, and how to develop employability to fit in with the desired market was sometimes lost on international students. This resonates with a study by Collins et al (2017) who found that the portability of education credentials and situated learning is not automatic and it is essential for graduates to be able to advocate for their skills independently. To be able to advocate for themselves, international students needed to become aware of the cultural differences and how they could navigate their cultural understanding to make sense of the expectations which would allow them to demonstrate their employability.

Cultural differences were very influential challenges for international students to overcome because it was essentially relearning how to function within their society. This awareness of cultural differences refers to the mobilisation of cultural capital to adapt themselves to their target workplace and community (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2022). They had to adapt to what was considered normal in their host society to acclimate to daily life. For international students, this was a barrier that took self-awareness to overcome as they would not be explicitly told how to act within the UK yet expected to know and apply that social and cultural capital. A student from University A described the cultural differences they had to navigate in the classroom.

“For me it's not what I was used to. E-mail lecturers and all that. In fact, if you send an e-mail to lecturers, it's as though you're challenging their authority one way or the other because they see that as a formal platform. So, I was trying to cope with that. And so it's just part of the shift and some of the dynamics” (University A Group 2- Nigerian M).

When sourcing information, utilising social networks by going through peers whether it was friends or classmates was described as a more casual way to disseminate information to each other. This is supported in social network analysis to suggest that informal networks are essential avenues of information, especially among students (Prell, 2012; Collins *et al.*, 2017). An American student observed that even though they were from an individualistic culture, they understood that others would not feel as comfortable and so sought to accommodate and support them. This demonstrates how social networks can be utilised to bridge gaps in communications and support.

“Feel comfortable reaching out to the lecturer can just ask us in the WhatsApp group and those of us who are more like, yeah, I'll just e-mail [the lecturer] you know, can then help kind of include everybody in that dynamic and that's worked well, but that's also been like a student-led, that we've done initiative. Not something the university did for us” (University A Group 2 – American F).

This reflection demonstrates how within their cohort, this self-organised social network enhanced the dissemination of resources and information to facilitate knowledge exchange. This perspective appears to be supported by the student survey responses demonstrated in Figure 4, in which most respondents had approached their friends and peers from the UK for advice on employment in the UK. This further highlights the role of social networks in information seeking

and demonstrates that even in professional settings, peer networks are an essential source for gathering information.

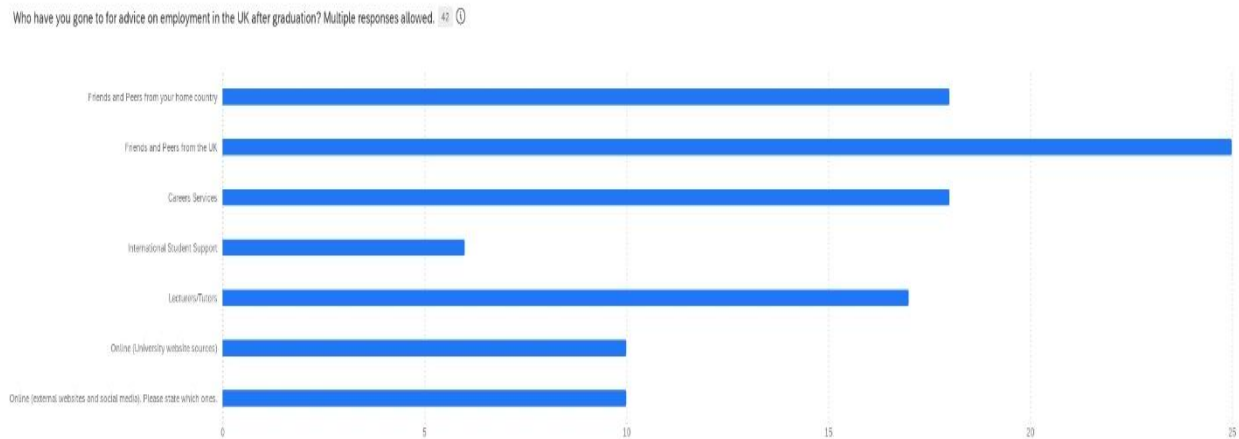


Figure 4 Advice network of international students

While most staff highlighted the challenges international students face when attempting to understand their host culture, they also began to acknowledge the necessity of being aware of the UK culture and how to encourage intercultural competency development. When giving employability advice to international students they must also be aware of the UK culture and be able to explain to students the reasoning behind the certain nuances and etiquettes. Upon realising that there were unique approaches to the UK labour market, some students found that by utilising the resources available at the careers service they were able to understand how and why employers expected student applicants to act. One student explained that when they first came to the UK, they had approached the job search process how they would have in their home country.

“My CV was not edited for the UK market and so I went to the career service, and I asked them for some guidance because I didn't really know what was expected and I didn't even think that there were differences in how you present yourself work wise in different countries. So, I used the career services a lot” (University B Group 3 – Slovakian F).

This engagement of university services connected with the student's social network, providing them with local understanding to further develop their graduate capital and employability. While

most students recognised what valuable employability was, there was a feeling that they needed to demonstrate their similarity to home students rather than the value of their unique international experience. A student from University B described that more cultural understanding from the university would be beneficial, explaining they felt pressured to adapt themselves to a UK model rather than demonstrate what they could offer in diversity.

“I know that I found in my experience, whenever I use the career service or any kind of you know, learning about the UK job market. It's been a lot of you know not so much push, but a sort of implementation that I will have to become as similar to a UK prospect as possible whereas or as opposed to you know, being able to come to the table and offer what I can offer as someone from somewhere else” (University B Group 1 – American F).

Some students expressed this as well with their style of communication, different to their language proficiency. The experiences of these students demonstrates that the communication skills associated with employability must be understood from not only linguistic and grammatical, but also the sociocultural influences (Pham, 2021a). There was a difference in the social and cultural capital that international students brought compared to home students and international students recognized this as a need to understand that balance and learn to communicate effectively in their host country. Students from the University B group 2 discussed the cultural and social capital as an exercise in adaptation and adjustment.

“There's more things we might not know if we never like to get into the culture before. And that being how to get that kind of information” (University B Group 2 – Chinese F). Students felt that success in the UK market “depends on if you like can adapt to that environment, yeah, you can try to socialise more” (University B Group 2 – Malaysian F).

The perception of cultural differences by these students demonstrates their awareness of the cultural nuances. Although they did acknowledge these differences, there was still a gap in how they could access that intercultural knowledge and apply it in a way that had meaning to them. For international students, there has been evidence that exposure to their host culture through locals is beneficial to their intercultural development allowing them to gain insights into the cultural nuances and etiquette they may not have had otherwise (Delly, 2021). For these students,

there is a desire to socialise and adapt to the market but expressed uncertainty about how to enhance their intercultural competence.

This section has revealed that the social and cultural alignment significantly influences the experiences and how international students navigate their employability in the UK. A recurring theme was the challenge students face in relating their home country experiences to their host environment due to differing cultural norms and values which affects their ability to successfully demonstrate their social and cultural capital in transitioning to the labour market. To address these challenges, universities must work to develop graduate capital through the integration of intercultural understanding for both university staff as well as students to bridge the gaps in understanding. While both university's staff described the supports they offered students navigating the UK labour market, there was a lack of opportunity which encouraged students to value their unique experiences and cultural capital. Furthermore, social networks are an essential aspect of employability development, but international students often struggle with forming these connections. Universities have a role to foster these connections to ensure that international students have the capacity and confidence to navigate these connections for their transition to the labour market. Successfully navigating cultural differences to enhance employability development for international students requires not only their individual adaptability but also support by the university and its services to recognise and address the intercultural competencies needed. Considering what has been covered in the previous sections, the next section will explore the impact of linguistic and cultural barriers, university supports, UK work experience, and intercultural competencies on employability development.

6.6 Impact on Employability Development

The cultural challenges and perceptions of university supports impacted employability development of international students. Cultural differences and language proficiency affected students' ability to develop their employability skills, particularly in aligning their skills with employer expectations. From the perspective of the conceptual framework, international students faced many difficulties in developing social and cultural capital. This included barriers they faced in aligning their skills with the expectations of the UK labour market. There was a necessity described by both service staff and international students to understand the UK labour market and its nuances which was seen as a significant challenge for international students.

Most staff identified the cultural differences, which created barriers for international students to develop their employability to the same level as home students. Continuing off the need to adapt in a way that is different from their home student counterparts, a careers manager expressed that international student employability development faced additional challenges due to cultural adjustments.

“They’ve got the additional hurdle of not really necessarily always understanding the UK job market and how things work here. So, it’s almost as if there’s a bit of kind of extra pressure there” (University B Careers Manager 2).

The cultural adjustment described by this Careers Manager was similar to findings by Tran *et al.* (2020b), which found that many international students were not aware of key employability skills needed during their studies, and only realised them after engaging with the host labour market. However, during group discussions, most students demonstrated awareness of the need to adapt their employability skills to the UK market, as with any foreign market they may want to enter. As one student explained:

“In any job market there are certain maybe steps or expectations. So, I feel like if you don't really look into it and amend your CV in a way that is expected in a specific country like the UK then it wouldn't really be good for employability” (University B Group 3 – Slovakian F).

Survey data collected from international students across the UK supported findings by Civera, Meoli and Paleari (2021) which found that the main motivations to study in an English-speaking country, was due to high reputation of the institution, the reputation of the UK, and being career oriented.

Q13 - Why did you choose to study at your university in the UK? Multiple responses allowed.

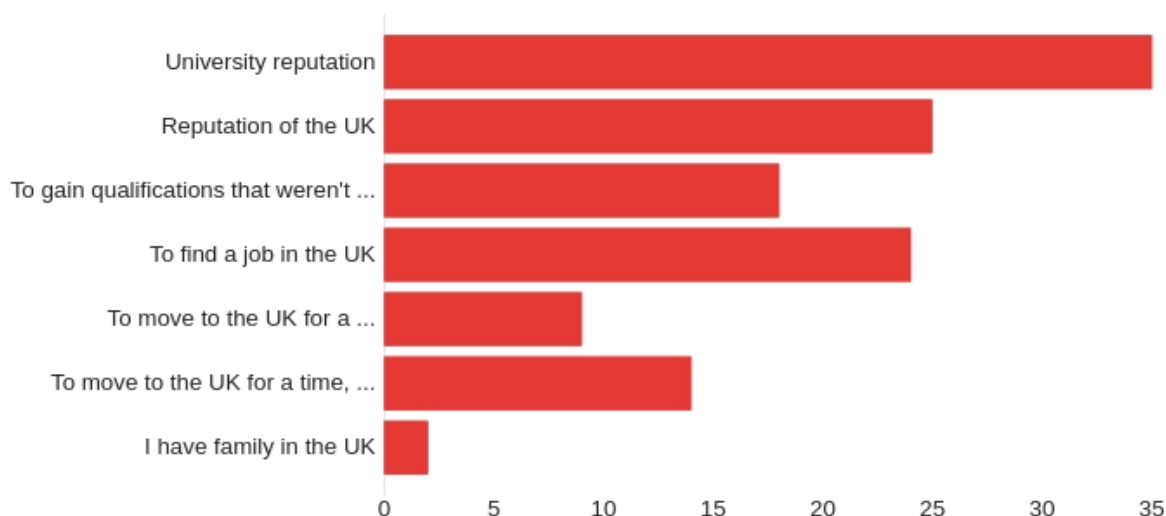


Figure 5 Reason to study in the UK.

For many students, the expectation to further their career encouraged them to pursue an education outside of their home country. Fakunle (2021b) highlighted international students in their study opted to study in the UK in the hopes of either getting a job or using the reputation of the university which would be recognised by employers. Some staff who participated in this study observed a fixation by international students to stay in the UK beyond graduation but described barriers students faced, which often involved issues in understanding the rules, language, or navigation of cultural norms. While students desired to stay in the UK to transition to the labour market, there was a gap in their understanding of how to manage their transition from the home culture to the UK. For one careers manager, this created a sense of worry because they realised that their international students may have unrealistic expectations, which could hinder their transition to employment in the UK.

“[They have] misunderstood the rules ...[because] that's a level of nuance of really understanding the rules and how to navigate them that understandably not everybody's getting it. You know, it's complex” (University A Careers Manager 2).

For staff, there was an understanding of the local graduate capital skills needed for students to succeed in the labour market, but for international students the adaptation of nuances was a concern. Many staff at University B discussed the complexity students faced in navigating the

differences in their host and home country cultures. This echoes findings by Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen (2021) that an international student's adjustment is largely impacted by their alignment or misalignment between their home and host country values. One staff member described a meeting they had with an international student on job interviews in the UK which highlighted the cultural differences that can severely impact the student's interaction and integration with the host culture.

“This student...was really worried about asking certain questions at the end of the interview because he was saying ‘in my home country that would be considered really offensive’ which is really quite interesting. So, I think it's kind of they've got all of the same challenges as a home student. I think it's also kind of understanding sort of the subtleties as well, particularly if they're postgraduate taught and haven't spent a lot of time in the UK before, around about just understanding and getting up to speed with graduate recruitment timelines and various other things that they kind of might not have been exposed previously” (University B Careers Manager 4).

While international students have dealt with navigating the news and narrative of visas and immigration in the UK being a barrier to employment and employer knowledge being less than adequate, the staff supporting student interests and employability development have had to dispel these concerns and convince students that their skills and experiences are valuable. When described by many international students, employer knowledge or willingness to engage with hiring of international students was often viewed from the perspective that most employers were not willing to hire international students. For international students, their visa status made them perceive they were less valuable to hire than local students. As one student described:

“If they ask you during your interview like do you need a visa? If you say yes, then they will like reject you. Something like that” (University B Group 2 – Malaysian F).

Most University A staff acknowledged international student concerns that their home country experience is not as valid in the UK market. While students appeared to have the experience to demonstrate their employability, there was a need for the staff to encourage and assist students in recognising their skills. The individualistic approach to a student's employability development required additional support by staff to adjust for their current false expectations.

“Some of them will have fantastic international experience and it's trying to say to them that that actually still does matter. But I think there is sometimes false information or narratives or knowledge and false expectations sometimes as well” (University A Careers Manager 5).

The reality of recruitment by local employers was highlighted by Blackmore and Rahimi (2019) who found that Australian employers felt international students did not ‘fit’ their organisation due to communication skills, visa costs and then a loss of investment, and that they may not fit in with the work culture. This sentiment of useless home country experience was furthered by the narrative given by a University B student who felt their previous experience was not valuable to employers in the UK.

“First you need to gain experience and understand the culture here because as a foreigner, although you have work experience, it is useless in this new country and you know, the language is the first barrier and second one is culture. And the way they do things is totally different from your country” (University B Group 1 – Chinese F).

For many international students, the visa posed one of the largest challenges. The visa requirement or having employers specifically state they do not sponsor was like an automatic discreditation for international students who then felt they were not as competitive against home students simply by not having the right status to be employable. As one student from University A explained:

“I think they maybe want to find the applicants who has the local work experience or internship experience, maybe because they may think that those applicants may better adapt to the full time jobs because they have the local experience and also they don't need sponsorships because, you know, maybe some are there some criterias and they will just post them on the website and say that they don't offer any sponsorship” (University A Group 3 – Chinese F).

Some University B staff noted that international students were aware or had become aware of the differences in applying for jobs or having the desired employability skills in their home country versus UK and sought out the careers service to make up for this lack of knowledge. Students were engaged with the services to further enhance their employability and capital development

through understanding the specific needs of integrating into the UK market. University B Careers Manager 1 discussed that of the tools and resources they had available for students, an estimated 90% would be international students looking to tailor their skills and experience to the UK market. Students at both universities mentioned that they saw the process of interviewing for positions outside the university as beneficial to their employability development. One student spoke about the interview process, highlighting the practical experience and how it made them aware of what was required when they began the process to transition to employment in the UK.

“Very rigorous and interesting. Very interactive too. Again, so it opens my eyes to the fact that it's not just about what you know in your field, it's also about how you can work as a team. You know, relate with people. They thought about here. So, it's an interesting. Yeah, I enjoyed the interviews even though I didn't get any of the jobs, but they helped me” (University A Group 4 – Nigerian M).

Although students may not have been successful, they found the process helpful in their graduate capital development. They not only gained knowledge to understand what employers were looking for and how they could apply their unique experiences and skills in a context that was appropriate for the UK market they wished to enter but also developed key networks. As another student described:

“It was the experience of actually doing it, so you know when you have to apply for jobs and you either get rejected or you get invited for an interview. That, in itself, is a good practice of preparing for the real world especially during your studies, I think that's the best time” (University B Group 3 – Slovakian F).

The employability development of international students in the UK has been shown to be significantly impacted by cultural challenges, language barriers, and unfamiliarity with the UK labour market. International students and service staff described the additional hurdles international students must navigate compared to their home student counterparts, including a need for them to adapt their employability skills and navigate visa requirements. While many students acknowledged the need to align their employability skills with local expectations, there was a persistent gap in the intercultural competency which would allow them to make meaning of their employability experiences in the UK. From the graduate capital model perspective, employability development is strongly linked to the development of social and cultural capital.

This capital development is often hindered by a lack of local networks and tailored support which leaves many students to struggle with integrating and managing their post-study expectations.

The university and its services play a crucial role in supporting international students to develop their skills into a context valued by UK employers, but there was limited evidence of them providing culturally tailored supports to overcome the challenges experienced by international students. The challenges faced by international students impacted their employability development as they attempted to align their knowledge and skills with the UK labour market. As many service staff acknowledged, there was an awareness of the cultural differences between home and international students which at times created a barrier to their employability development. While these differences were recognised, there was still an individualistic approach by many staff and students which maintained it was the individual student's responsibility to develop their employability.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a detailed description of the perceptions of intercultural competencies, work experience, and university service supports impact on employability development and the influence on navigating the transition to employment for international students in the UK. English language proficiency was a predominant concern expressed by international students and service staff. The ability to communicate effectively and beyond an academic level was highlighted by both sets of participants but the narrative described competencies beyond language level. While language proficiency was a dominant concern, the underlying reasoning for international students and staff to be so conscious of language was the awareness of communicative competencies. These presented themselves as the knowledge to navigate the social norms and etiquettes of the community (Pham, 2021a). The adjustment to life in the UK and further transition to employment revealed the essential role of intercultural competencies and adaptability which contribute to international students' social and cultural capital. As staff and students described adjustment to life in the UK and the student transition to employment, intercultural awareness and the level of tolerance and adaptability became apparent.

While some staff highlighted the equality approach developing employability skills, there was a common narrative highlighting the differences between international students and home students. The challenges associated with navigating employability development also focused on gaining relevant UK work experience. The discussion demonstrated the cultural differences which impacted a student's previous ability to gain work experience and their future intent to gain work experience. Social class and family circumstances framed the context of work experience but demonstrated how differently cultures affected a student's experience. Staff highlighted social class and family as a privilege of wealthy students to not have to work, applying stereotypes and misconceptions without understanding the student's cultural background. The disconnect between these two perspectives resulted in a lack of intercultural understanding and challenges for international students. This misalignment highlights the need for universities to actively work to bridge social capital to help international students develop key networks and realistic expectations for transitioning to the UK labour market.

As discussed above, social and cultural capital alignment remains a challenge for international students when developing their employability. Students have demonstrated they possess the knowledge, skills and experience to transition to employment but still require support from university service staff to bridge the gaps between their home and host culture of what is expected within the UK labour market. Without the inclusion of culturally tailored support services, university service staff and students continue to experience challenges in making meaning of cultural experience through their personal perspectives. The exploration of these findings has reinforced the necessity of universities to facilitate graduate capital development. By doing so they are ensuring that international students and staff can successfully integrate intercultural competency and awareness to bridge the gap between home and host cultures and navigate the complexities of employability development.

Chapter 7 Social network development among international students

7.1 Overview

This findings chapter will discuss the concept of social network development among international students, focusing on the challenges and benefits associated with network development in a host country. Drawing on the conceptual framework, this discusses how social capital gained through social networks plays a crucial role in an international student's employability experience and transition to the labour market. This chapter explores the perspectives of international students and university service staff on the influence social networks provide in developing their employability and transition to employment. The implications of having access to certain social networks when in the host community setting towards adjustment and employability will be described. I have attempted to reach a general understanding of how international students approach networks with employability in mind without compromising on the individual cases which may impact any unique circumstances. In this chapter, participants will speak to the theme of social networking within their specific contexts supported by empirical data.

7.2 Use of networks in information gathering and adjustment

For international students, the successful transition to their host university community was often navigated without the help of their personal support network. This lack of support has been found to result in international students facing greater challenges and stressors related to their adjustment than home students (Dentakos *et al.*, 2017). From a graduate capital perspective, the ability to build social capital in the way of relationships and networks to gather information and develop employability is essential for international students. Developing networks was acknowledged by most staff at the universities, especially considering the cultural and social differences international students have compared to local students. Many of the university staff anticipated that international students not only had to deal with the stresses of entering university as a new student, but that they were starting from scratch with their social networks and learning about their new community both inside and outside the university. As one careers manager expressed:

“[International students have] to try to adapt to absolutely everything, like your new course, new program, new way of life, different type of accommodation, different facilities, making friends, not knowing anybody” (University B Careers Manager 2).

There was a difference identified by many staff members between home and international students due to the existence or lack of existing social networks. Similar to previous studies, university students experience a range of stressors associated with their adjustment to a new education and social environment (Khawaja and Stallman, 2011; Dentakos *et al.*, 2017; Linkes *et al.*, 2018). For international students, they are met with these stressors in addition to others such as culture shock, discrimination, isolation, and a lack of social support networks (Khawaja and Stallman, 2011). For many staff at University B, they felt that when international students came to them for help it was because they did not know where else to turn or did not have the established local network to help them navigate their challenges. Similar to Khawaja and Stallman (2011), international students in this study were unfamiliar with the local culture or how to navigate their daily lives which exacerbated stressors in areas different from what home students encounter. A careers manager gave the example of an international student not being familiar with the NHS as a stressor of not having access to social networks which would provide relevant support to adjust to their new circumstances.

“For home students, it might not be as bad because they have other social networks. For international students, it can be a particularly rough ride, and that's where we often see them turn up on our doorstep because they don't know who else to go to. They're not familiar with the NHS. You know, they maybe go to a GP and maybe not be as listened to as they would if they weren't international or whatever kind of other you know, bias, they might be up against” (University B Careers Manager 3).

As international students adapt to their new environments, they are met with a need to understand the existing norms and knowledge that would allow them to integrate. Through the conceptual framework lens, social and cultural capital are enhanced through social networks which allow them to gain awareness of resources to help them succeed in their community and future employment (Tomlinson, 2017). Supporting international students throughout their university journey was viewed as essential by many university staff. For many staff from University A, there was an understanding that for international students when they first arrived in

the UK they are adjusting to a new culture and at that point it is crucial to have infrastructure to support them (University A Internationalisation Manager 7). This need for community was also expressed by most international students but was seen as a challenge due to cultural differences. A student from University A described their observations from living in the UK on how they found their adjustment.

“This individualism living here in UK is evident and people are just minding their own business that has the good side of it because you have time to also think for yourself. But on the other way around it's a bit difficult for people like me because I'm used to that community setting and it hasn't been difficult for me to find myself in a community. But here in the UK I'm struggling with it. I'm just trying to fit in and trying to make this work out” (University A Group 2 – Nigerian M).

This student's experience is similar to the findings from Bui, Selvarajah, and Vinen (2021) which found that international students can have difficulties relating to their host culture if their home morals and cultural values are not aligned. A main barrier to cross-cultural adjustment of international students has been the difficulties associated with learning the social norms and customs of the host country. The student's willingness or unwillingness to seek support in their transition significantly impacted their perception of their university and host country (Dentakos *et al.*, 2017). This misalignment can cause students to hesitate to seek help from staff or others outside of their immediate network because they do not want others to become aware of their struggle with cross-cultural adjustments (Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen, 2021). The next section will explore the internal university networks developed by students and the impact on their employability development experiences.

7.3 Internal university networks of students

The way international students collect and apply knowledge to enhance their employability and transition to the labour market is impacted by the networks they form during their university studies. As previously described, often international students do not have an established support network or frame of reference to apply their previous employability skills in a way that is applicable to the transition to employment in the UK. Social networks play a key role in bridging this gap by offering international students the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge which enhance their employability experience and expectations. This section continues to discuss the

networks students form within the university to further enhance their knowledge and experience in their employability development.

Forming networks for students was viewed as an important aspect by staff for the enhancement of student employability. The benefit of peer networks has been shown to enhance situational learning where international students encounter and interact with a particular place and become more accustomed to the culture and everyday practices (Collins *et al.*, 2017). Similar to these findings, the formation of connections and language acquisition in a local setting was seen as beneficial by many staff and at times facilitated by the university. The acquisition of language and cultural norms serves to strengthen graduate capital development as international students form networks to understand the local environment.

Highlighting the role of the university, some staff at University B commented on student confidence with using language and the benefits of integration programmes run by the university. These were programmes where international students would have informal socialising with UK students to not only enhance their English in a non-academic setting but also help them build contacts (University B Careers Manager 2). University B Careers Manager 2 explained their services were available to help students adapt to the university and build their own networks. The use of the university services acted as a first point of contact to support students in their development of essential skills and knowledge for their life in university, the UK, and their professional development. University B Career Manager 3 felt that the reason university services existed was to give international students wider context to help them build peer groups and networks. Many Careers Managers recognized the importance of networking for their students and how their own connections with other departments were beneficial in forming these networks through the services offered. Many staff felt that it was important for international students to have the chance to build their confidence and interact with more people who were not from their home country (University A Careers Manager 1). International students were also aware of the usefulness of their social networks, especially when it came to understanding cultural and workplace differences. Previous studies have shown that employers are especially wary of hiring international students due to concerns they are unfamiliar with the local workplace culture, hindering their progression (Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha, 2021; Tran *et al.*, 2022b). This perception of employers and unfamiliarity with international students

highlights this gap in capital development and value. For international students to develop graduate capital, social networks are essential to give them access to opportunities. Similar to findings by Tran *et al.* (2020b), international students perceived networking as essential for enhancing the workplace culture but the formation of these networks was often a challenge. Many international students had an awareness that specific skills or other competencies would make them competitive in the UK labour market but expressed difficulty in finding the time to form networks. A student from University A explained how their university course schedule created a challenge for them to go out and make connections to build their network.

“I didn't have a lot of people to network. So that's the thing that I plan to. Yes, because now I'm doing my essays so that after that I think I have to find more person to make networks and to learn that if there are some differences about the work culture and yes, and if there are some specific skills that have to develop to make me more competitive in the job market in the UK, so that's the next stage that I think to improve, that I think I have to do” (University A Group 3 – Chinese F).

The connections students form was viewed as beneficial to reduce stress that they experience when adjusting to a new place. Having connections and enjoying their host community was seen as an enhancement to employability simply by being happy and content in their host environment enough to develop their employability. Social interactions have been viewed as being highly important to the international student learning experience to improve their confidence in building relationships across cultures (Valencia-Forrester and Backhaus, 2020). A careers manager observed the benefits that come with a student feeling connected to their host community and feeling supported.

“Somebody's confidence can be improved through things like having the right kind of connections and feeling happy in the place that you are, and that can really boost someone's employability because they're then less stressed when they're making applications and so on and so forth” (University B Careers Manager 2).

Many staff at University B encouraged their international students to build networks to enhance their employability and accessibility in the labour market. Similar to Tran *et al.*'s findings of students interacting with friends to share information (2020b), when many international students described the connections they had made or who they felt they could go to for help with their

course work and support, some preferred to connect with peers at the micro level for the dissemination of information. A student described how they had connected with their class representative which had enhanced her experience.

“When I mailed her, she was courteous enough to have a word with the professors and ask for the deadlines. So, we really got deadlines for three of the six assignments that we were having. And so, she is my point of contact for anything and everything if I want to talk to her about what is going on in my mind, what I think should be there in the course, which is missing out or something which I was keen on learning, but I couldn't find til now” (University A Group 2 – Indian F).

Despite evidence that international students were aware that networks were important in their development, there was a feeling expressed by the many staff where they felt students didn't always see the benefits of developing networks within or outside the university. This was disappointing for staff and created a challenge for them to overcome. Some staff explained that they tried to make international students understand the importance of networking and that it's more than about someone offering them a job.

“It's a chance to learn about the market. It's the chance to learn about how things work, learn the different businesses, learning opportunities” (University B Careers Manager 3).

Similar to Pho and Schartner's (2021) findings, international students maintained relatively limited and superficial connections outside of their co-national and international groups. Encouraging international students to network was a challenge for staff as international students seemed to not always grasp the importance of the opportunities, they made available for them. Confidence level and poor English language proficiency may be a contributing factor which makes international students more reluctant to interact with locals and seek out support (Pho and Schartner, 2021). Some staff at University A discussed the importance of international student networking with their peers and recognised the necessity of interacting with clubs and societies to develop confidence and learn local social etiquettes. Many service staff encouraged their international students to participate in clubs and societies, and other networking events coordinated by the university but felt certain groups culturally did not understand the concept of networking outside of their own groups.

“Join a student club and join competitions and go to Ted X talks and that sort of thing. And for those that you know the Chinese students, to be honest, whether they need to try things on their own and just kind because they go in groups, they go in groups everywhere and they don't learn English” (University A Careers Manager 10)

Although many staff discussed the importance of these networks for all students, Chinese students were pointed out as having more difficulties engaging. This echoes findings by Valencia-Forrester and Backhaus (2020) which articulated the cultural differences in learning and interacting within higher education that limited their confidence to engage in a more ‘Western’ setting. When broadly discussing how international students form their social networks while at university, there was a desire to interact and make friends with home students. Although many students wished to make connections with locals in their host community, there was an expectation to go with co-national peers. This was especially apparent for Chinese students but evident with other nationalities as well. One University A Chinese student talked about their classroom demographics:

“I have a little chance to meets local students in my major because there are lots of Chinese students. When you go to the class, you will think I come back to my hometown” (University A Group 1 – Chinese F).

This was a challenge for many students as there was an expectation to meet and interact with locals within their classroom and to have that international experience where they could build their social networks and capital, but most international students felt that they were still within their country or excluded from local interactions. This lack of network development hindered their employability development as international students were not able to access networks to develop cultural capital. As one student from University A expressed their desire to form personal connections outside of their co-national group.

“I prefer to communicate with some foreigner students, not the Chinese students, because I think I connect with the Chinese people for 20 years, it’s enough. I can get some foreigner, they come from different countries to make friends with them” (University A Group 1 – Chinese F).

When asked if they would have liked to interact more with home students, one student from University B desired to make friends with locals but felt they were not able to breach local networks.

“Yeah, but don't have the chance cause they have their social circle” (University B Group 2 – Malaysian F).

For a Chinese student from University A, group work offered a glimpse into the network development dynamics within the classroom.

“Now it's mainly Chinese. But I try to find the local friends...I have two group project and the one project is it's really interesting that we have seven people, but five Chinese students” (University A Group 1 – Chinese F).

An Indonesian student from University B expressed that they had previously had ambitions of meeting and befriending local students in the UK but came to find their courses were not as diverse as they had hoped. This student was not able to form friendships with locals which they felt was a disadvantage when they were living in the UK.

“There are a lot of Indian and Chinese and but I have only like 3 close friends, but it's from my country so I only communicate with them with my own language, so I don't really study about the culture here, but luckily in my flat, my flatmates they're all home students, so I gained my knowledge for culture with them. But I joined the society. Again, I joined the Society of my own country. So that's yeah, that's quite disadvantage” (University B Group 1 – Indonesian M).

For all of the students interviewed above, there were perceived benefits to develop their social networks with locals, but the amount and frequency remained relatively low and superficial which did not contribute to the support they needed at the university (Pho and Schartner, 2021). As social networks developed between home, international, and co-national peers were identified, the value of these friendships was seen as beneficial for students to gain insight into their skills and employability. As one student stated,

“Even consulting your friends and family and classmates and all that might be very helpful too, because they know you personally so they might be helpful in terms of being

able to maybe articulate your skills and you know all the things that are not really visible to people who only see you in, I don't know at uni or at work" (University B Group 3 – Slovakian F).

Another challenge associated with international student networks was the development of conflicting networks of trust and information. International students would sometimes rely on their friend networks to provide them with information. This could at times be conflicting or inaccurate which imposed challenges on not only the students to progress in their employability development but for the staff as well to correct the misguided information. Clibborn (2021) described the issues that can come as a result of international students trusting their 'peer frame of reference.' Their peers can set their understanding of what to expect, justifying circumstances such as tolerating underpayment or their unsuccessful employment attempts as their trusted frame of reference (Clibborn, 2021). While university services are available for international students, their usefulness can be overshadowed by a student's closer network which has the potential to provide misinformation. As an ISS staff from University A described there have been instances where an international student will come to them seeking advice and the staff come to find out that student has been misinformed. Here the role of the university is essential to be a central link of information for students navigating new concepts and environments. The challenges of the close friendship networks and passing information is the trust in that frame of reference.

"It's natural for people to just accept what their friends say. But if their friend's wrong and it's to do with visas that can go badly very, very quickly, sadly" (University A ISS advisor 4).

The information exchange between peer groups of international students was addressed by international students who expressed that they would seek out lived experience advice from friends, but often trusted the careers service more when it came to employability and careers advice. For a student from University A, they wanted their information to come from a local's perspective to help them understand what others had done to succeed in navigating employment in the UK.

"I would want to talk to like a career counsellor or something to see kind of like especially for my like cohort who are Americans. And then maybe try to apply here, I

think I would rather have somebody who's maybe from here because I think it might be different” (University A Group 4 – American F).

In addition to the classroom and service networks, those linked from past association with the university were highlighted by staff and international students. Some staff described that University A has over 150,000 alumni on LinkedIn which connects students to a vast advice network which is much more directly applicable to them than any information or advice the university staff could give them (University A Employability Manager 9). Alumni networks were seen as very beneficial by many University A staff to enhance university strategies and work as another linkage with international students on a more peer-to-peer level. Most staff found that international students related to alumni better than they did to staff. As one careers manager explained,

“Any sessions involving alumni they say exactly the same things that we do, but students it just hits a lot better when its alumni because it's more relatable. They're like ‘I was where you are a couple of years ago. And yes, this is what I went through’” (University A Careers Manager 6).

Online social media platforms were also seen as beneficial by many international students and a positive way to meet individuals beyond the university. One student described using LinkedIn to connect with other individuals to share knowledge and information they hoped would enhance their employability development.

“Maybe I can find some person that I can network in through LinkedIn so that they can give me some advice” (University A Group 3 – Chinese F).

While some students preferred to make connections online, previous studies by Fakunle (2021b) highlighted that international students also appreciated the benefits of engaging with in-person activities as it made the difference for them between studying online and in the host country. As one student emphasised their preferred way to connect and learn how to develop their employability skills was through in-person meetings because they could build a connection beyond surface level.

“1 to 1 meeting, which I prefer because you know the person has time to go through your needs and what you need in particular” (University B Group 3 – Slovakian F).

Many staff felt that the network formation between students was more prevalent and preferred in their in-person events, which increased engagement in their employability. University A Careers Manager 2 felt that the process of bringing people together in-person was not only beneficial for distributing information, but the value of meeting and talking with people attending sessions resulted in enhanced networking and engagement levels. When building networks, many international students echoed that sentiment to receive information in-person either through their lecturers or cultural societies. One University A student felt that the relationship they had developed with their lecturer gave them access to information and opportunities they may not have had otherwise.

“All the professors are very open. Like if you go to them and say, oh, like I'm looking to do like this volunteer work or this kind of like experience, and they would definitely be helpful in getting you there, like finding that experience, helping you find that experience if you want” (University A Group 2 – American F).

This student’s sentiment was also reflected in the survey data of international students in the UK. When asked how important it was for them to develop a relationship with lecturers and staff, 78% of respondents indicated it was very important to extremely important.

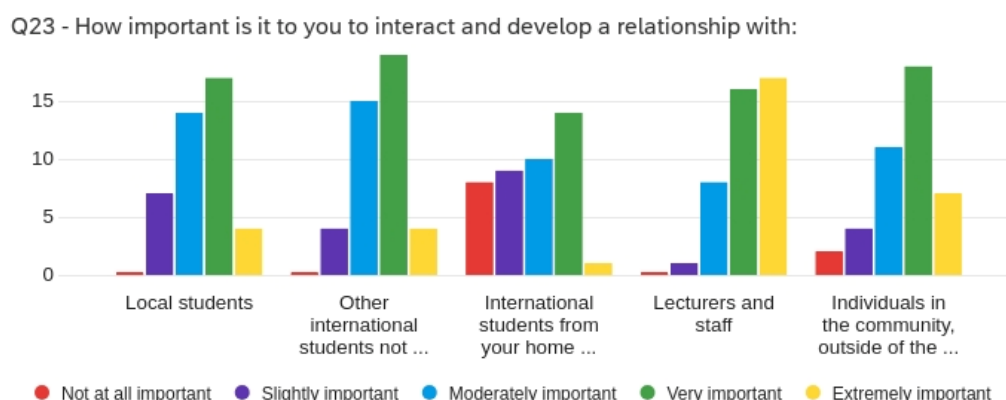


Figure 6 Importance of developing relationships for international students

In addition to in-person events being conduits for students to meet other students, some staff described situations in which international students had become familiar with them through these events or other workshops, leading to a form of social capital. The students recognized them by name or had a personal connection and so preferred to get their information from a specific

member of staff rather than through the shared inbox or website. This demonstrated the role of trust and familiarity students have in seeking information. Multiple staff from University A highlighted the relationships that international students built with them, building their social capital. But also explained how the added workload to the individuals of the team and their resources was an extra pressure.

Although resources were limited, some staff at University A described their network differences between the central careers team and their smaller team. The relationship they were able to form with their smaller cohort of students was seen as more beneficial because they knew their students and the students knew and trusted them to offer them support. This was difference to the wider central careers service which had greater reach but was not able to personalise their support for students. One careers manager explained the benefits of working outside of the central careers team and being able to form connections with students.

“Where you're part of a bigger central careers team and you don't have that relationship with the individuals, so they might see you once and they might come to the service for support once and then not come back or they might come and see several different people, but they're not building that kind of relationship of trust” (University A Career Manager 2).

The relationship between staff and students was also referenced by international students who found they had formed a level of trust with members of staff and could communicate with them directly even if they recognised they were using limited time resources. A student from University A described the relationship they had formed with a member of the careers staff:

“He's really friendly and he is based in the Adam Smith school and because actually I'm the student of the College of Arts, so maybe I don't have the access to that lesson but he so friendly and he helped me book the appointment so that I can have the lesson with him” (University A Group 3 – Chinese F).

The desire by international students to have a relationship with staff was also observed by some University B staff. Even though self-service online tools were available for students, talking in-person and building tangible connections with personalised feedback was more desirable for students (University B Careers Manager 1). Despite feeling encouraged and supported by the

careers service staff, there was an underlying sense that some students did not know if staff were being sincere in their encouragement. This was a challenge for some because of the differences in their learned social network interactions. This feeling expressed by students was similar to the acculturative stress international students developed in a study by Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen (2021) which found that the differences identified by students about their host culture versus their home culture made it increasingly difficult to adapt. How international students perceived people from their home country would act could be considerably different from how those in the UK acted towards them. When describing this difference, they observed in how people expressed themselves and interacted, a student spoke of how they perceived the interactions with individuals from the UK.

“[They are] more polite and sometimes they may not express a lot about themselves, they just smile at you and ask how are you and something like that, but maybe I don't know what about their real feelings, because they may not express them, or they may just be polite to all the strangers. Yes, but in my country, in China I think people may express them more” (University A Group 3 – Chinese F).

While this student had formed a social network with the service staff in their university, their cultural knowledge was limited and revealed a gap in their capital attainment, limiting their access to understanding and opportunities. This student continued to explain that during her job search process she asked her careers advisor why she had been unsuccessful getting called for interviews. Her interpretation of his response did not seem to be convinced of his sincerity in his reasoning which stemmed from not fully understanding how to engage and interpret meaning in a foreign context.

“Maybe because I'm still in study and the earliest available time for me to start my full time job is September 2023... So maybe that's the reason why I didn't get the interviews, but actually I don't know the real reason... but I'm not sure if they just my teachers... so that they just want to encourage me so that they want to give me some confidence or they really think that I'm a competitive applicant. So I cannot tell” (University A Group 3 – Chinese F).

While the relationship between staff and student assisted students in their employability journey, the development of peer networks within the university was seen by many University A staff as

beneficial to international students to meet their demand. They recognized the need for students to have someone they could relate to not only in experience but in culture and provide their lived perspectives, aligning with the concept of social and cultural capital in the graduate capital model (Tomlinson, 2017). Collins et. al., (2017) described this experience as ‘situated learning’ which stated that learning is a social process rather than individual, where knowledge is gathered through communication with peers. Similarly, many staff at University A felt that peer networks gave international students a different perspective and allowed staff to think about the services they offer and how it feels to be a student on the receiving end (University A Careers Manager 6).

The opportunities and challenges associated with international students and their networks described in the findings has highlighted the complex issues international students face and the role that university services, peers, and alumni play throughout their development and transition to the labour market. International students have continued to face challenges which exceed those experience by home students, which have included a new educational system, adjustment to social and cultural values, and managing stressors associated with culture shock, discrimination, and isolation. The lack of a social support network within the university left many students to navigate their adjustment and transition on their own which impacted their overall success and expectation of their experience in the UK. This experience underscores the importance of the role of the university in fostering inclusive student networks to enhance graduate capital, and further support international students’ employability development. In the next section I will examine the networks formed between international students and UK employers.

7.4 Student – employer networks

The relationship between students and employers was a topic that came up frequently in student and staff interviews. Many of the services staff described the relationships with employers formed by the university to facilitate meetings with students as beneficial. Having the university acting as the liaison between the employer and students’ networks encouraged students to begin building on those connections and their employability. The relationship staff explained between themselves and employers in the study are reflective of the findings from Jones (2013) which argued for enhanced awareness within higher education to collaboratively develop employability

skills within graduates through the curriculum. This connection highlights an element of social capital development, through the university fostering networks to connect students and employers. One careers manager explained that by working closely with employers they were able to bring in guest speakers, mentors, and alumni to offer real-world support for students in terms of employability (University A Careers Manager 2). Although some University A staff did occasionally work with employers to form collaborative projects with students, it was not a uniformly delivered service. Many staff recognized the need for students to interact with employers to develop their employability skills and develop valuable network links with individuals outside of the university. Previous local work experience and networks with employers has been found by Khawaja and Stallman (2011) to be a determining factor for students to gain work experience. For many international students, not having the connection to past employers within the host country created barriers for international students to successfully secure work experience (Khawaja and Stallman, 2011). Several staff at both universities wished that the university would hold a more significant role to facilitate real-world work experiences for students that would build stronger relationships (University A Careers Manager 2). Through the small group interviews, it was apparent that many international students felt it was beneficial to build networks with the careers service as a starting point, but expressed:

“They only have limited sources available in terms of, for example, networking with companies and stuff like that, like they can signpost you, but you know to actually get to people and all that you need to develop your own network and you need to I think speak to more people” (University B Group 3 – Slovakian F).

The use of services by international students observed by several University B staff indicated that international students were at some level aware of the need to network and gain local knowledge of employers, especially in meeting in-person. While this has been noted as a positive way to transition international students from their university to the labour market, the collaboration between higher education institutions and industry networks has been a challenge to develop and maintain (Lopez-Duarte, Maley and Vidal-Suarez, 2021). Some staff reported that most recruitment events and fairs where there were opportunities to meet employers were heavily attended by international students, with staff acknowledging that the students were very interested in meeting employers and talking face-to-face with them (University B Careers

Manager 2). Although several students did share they attended careers fairs, one student felt they would rather go directly to the careers service because they “don't really know what to ask in the fairs, so [they] prefer to do it online” (University B Group 1 – Indonesian M). The usefulness of in-person interactions with potential employers was perceived by some students as being less valuable than information they could source themselves. This could be due to their own perceived level of English language which would make them less competitive if employers knew they were international (Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos, 2011). While the actions of students deciding how to engage with employers aligns with the individualistic approach, it does not match the proactive individual nature that many staff hoped international students would take away from the employer networks to which they gave students access. While the employer networks were made available for international students, the ability to leverage this social capital and demonstrate cultural capital was a challenge. As some students felt more comfortable seeking information out on their own without utilising the available employer and university networks, there was a chance that they would lose out on valuable employability knowledge (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2022).

As international students develop their employability skills and progress on their employment journey, they often lack the knowledge to educate themselves on not only the host country's culture but also the complexities of the workplaces within this new culture (Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha, 2021). In their study, Sutherland, Thompson, and Edirisingha (2021) noted the importance of networks and how universities should be proactive in establishing networks with employers for international students in a way that genuinely seeks to find them opportunities where they will succeed. Networks were highly acknowledged by several staff, but they also pointed out that although they gave students access to networks the university staff had already formed, they would potentially lack the knowledge to navigate those networks. As one staff member described:

“We have a network, and we refer students, and we formally thinking through the strategic approach to making that network visible to students...The problem is, we're developing the networks. It's not the students that are developing networks, I mean so students who know how to navigate the networks, I would say probably have better employability skills” (University A Employability Manager 9).

For a majority of staff at the universities, they recognised the necessity of networks in employability development for students but worried that by connecting students to networks already well formed by the university, students were then missing out on that key experience of connecting with others and building their own networks. The usefulness of existing networks was still beneficial for international students in gaining cultural capital to help them understand the UK job market. LinkedIn was mentioned as a main contributor in linking student and alumni networks via networks that staff had already curated.

“International students who are new to the UK job market, either making contacts with former students who are domestic students but working in organizations they're interested in, or even students who are much more like themselves, who've done the same programs themselves and have managed to achieve what they're trying to do, and then they can actually have those conversations with questions directly” (University A Employability Manager 9).

As international students begin their transition to the labour market, social networks and graduate capital play a significant role in their employability development. Their connections with employers were viewed as being highly important to expand their network connections and navigating employment opportunities. Students were aware of the importance of connecting with employers but at times felt they did not possess the appropriate knowledge to make the most of the encounters. The need to fit-in and understand the UK work culture was essential for international student's transition, but likewise the employer perception of international students requires intercultural competency to be inclusive of diversity (Blackmore and Rahimi, 2019). For students with limited time, networking with employers and gaining enough knowledge to develop applicable employability skills was a challenge. Service staff recognised the importance of connecting international students with employers to enhance work opportunities, but voiced concerns over the process of networking and students not understanding the benefits of being proactive in building relationships with employers. While connecting the networks of employers with students has been intrinsic to careers development, for international students, the use of these networks to ascertain the essential information to develop their employability requires further adjustment.

7.5 Collaborative Efforts to Support International Student Networks

The collaboration of teams across the university was described as highly beneficial for service staff to positively support international students in their employability development. The utilisation of social networks to support the international student employability experience included not only student networks but staff networks to share essential knowledge to build graduate capital. During interviews, staff at both universities described how they work with other teams across the institution to share information and practices to better support international students. By working closely together with other teams, staff felt they were able to utilise knowledge and connections to advance their own learning. Careers managers worked jointly with the visa teams to offer support specifically for international students. Many of the careers managers at University A expressed that they had been trying to link up resources instead of working independently but it was still a work in progress. Most of the careers managers at University B felt they were doing well in their current relationships with stakeholders and not working in silos (University B Careers Manager 2). The careers team at University A felt their network bond with academics outside of the careers team was an essential relationship which enhanced the information and employability development that international students received. University A Careers Manager 10 explained that having an enthusiastic academic who supported the efforts of the careers team was one of the best ways to get to international students to build their employability.

Many of the teams within University A who worked with international students often maintained distance between each other, specifically the ISS, Employability, and Careers services. Their roles were contained within their own networks and only crossed paths when there was a need to signpost or if there was a technical related question. ISS focused on visas and immigration such as requirements students needed to meet, careers advised on careers guidance, and the employability team focused on skills development of students without specifically coaching them on careers. This separation of services created a division in networks and knowledge in how international students and staff were able to share knowledge. Although several University A careers managers mentioned they worked with the ISS office to deliver a session on career decision making specifically for international students, the connection and services did not appear to be maintained. From the student perspective, a study by Fakunle and Pirrie (2020) described how students felt the support provided by the university was insufficient to navigate

visa regulations with career transitions. A careers manager described an acknowledgement of a need to provide additional services for international students was apparent in previous years but not seen as an essential service to provide for international students (University A Careers Manager 6). The employability team specified clear boundaries in their support work where their remit was to help students reflect on their skills.

“To reflect on their communication and their development of professional skills...and also to think about how they communicate those professional skills. So, our focus and our remit is much more around skills and graduate attributes than it is around career transitions” (University A Employability Manager 9).

Resources available for staff and the size of their teams contributed to network building staff could do among other institutions and the targeted services they were able to provide for their students. A careers manager at University A who was able to work in a smaller team was also able to offer more targeted services for students in their programme. University A Careers Manager 2 was able to collaborate with external institutions to develop joint events for their programme. One was a networking evening, and the other was an all-day employability conference for their programme’s students. Having the available resources enabled the staff to increase their capacity to develop their student’s employability.

Additional external networks contributed to staff training and development. Staff at both universities participated in training and development through external organisations such as AGCAS (The Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services) and UKCISA (UK Council for International Student Affairs) to understand international students, diversity, and cultural needs. Staff participated in formal and informal trainings, which tended to be more to share best practices and information.

“Sharing of information, a little bit more informally, rather than kind of sort of sort of mandated or specific training on that person...any official training, no. In terms of learning on the job, yes. That just we're we have a very, very good network and there's a very healthy emphasis in University B in terms of professional development both formally and informally” (University B Careers Manager 3).

There was also reference to the network of careers professionals throughout the UK who are connected through LinkedIn or other common organisations where they can share best practices to support international students and do joint research (University A Careers Manager 5). Most staff who were considered senior members at University B who had been working predominantly with international students gave training to their fellow service members as they found there was a “big gap in terms of working with international students... We create kind of training resources” (University B Careers Manager 1). These careers managers proactively created services and information to aid international students in navigating their transition to employment in the UK.

A challenge expressed by several staff members was associated with trying to reach all students. The level of trust and familiarity of students with school departments meant that students would value information from sources within their close networks such as lecturers or those whose names they knew rather than emails from generic services. University B Careers Manager 2 explained that international students were much more likely to value the resources they wanted to see. In the case of students, if it came from a lecturer, they were more likely to engage rather than if they received information directly from the careers service. This echoes a similar finding to Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos (2011) which found that international students were more likely to turn to lecturers or other students who had a similar job search process because they trusted their experience over the generic offering of the careers services. Many students from University A emphasised this relationship as well, highlighting the cultural differences students faced in sourcing information.

“The better approach is not by emailing or not just putting on the website but it’s more like the lecturer for example, like giving the information in the class or maybe through the Society. Society of Chinese people, of Indonesian people, of African people. It’s more be useful for us” (University A Group 2 – Indonesian F).

This emphasises the perceived cultural differences which can impact the attainment and development of relevant cultural capital needed when developing employability skills through these network connections (Dentakos *et al.*, 2017). Another stakeholder relationship that staff at the university had to build and maintain was that of employers. Previous work by Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha (2021) emphasised the need for universities to build the network

between international students and employers. Although this network link was essential for international students to gain access to employers, it was seen as a challenge by many staff due to limited time and energy resources needed to source and develop networks. As University A Careers Manager 10 explained, the university wants staff to go out and find employers to build partnerships with but did not consider the time it takes to cultivate relationships and trust. From the international student perspective, many students felt that the role of the university was to form partnership networks with potential employers, mainly to address sponsorship concerns and pave the way for international students to have more successful employment opportunities in the UK. A University A student felt the university staff should:

“Engage the employers and tell them to make the available opportunities known and communicate better to the students” (University A Group 4 – Nigerian M).

Some University B careers managers made a point of using connections to build their own knowledge and learning to support international students. They acknowledged that other departments or individuals would be better suited to support different aspects of the student experience, and they should not ‘recreate the wheel’. University B Careers Manager 1 explained:

“We don't wanna work in silos, we don't want to do the work that other people are in a better position to do so...the university needs to think about the human kind of resource and financial resources, but equally think about joining up you know, colleagues that work across other aspects of the international student journey. Because for me that is a big gap at the moment” (University B Career Manager 1).

From these findings it is apparent that university service staff are essential to developing graduate capital through building effective social networks to support international students’ employability. Many careers’ managers emphasised the importance of collaborative efforts across departments and teams to enhance support for international student employability. Most University B staff appeared to have a more cohesive approach to their collaboration and internal networking, while many staff from University A struggled to form cohesive collaboration among its internal departments and teams. The approaches of staff who worked consistently with international students demonstrated how the networks of teams within the university were essential to utilise available resources. For staff, the sharing of information across the various

university teams which provided services for international students increased their intercultural confidence and reduced the strain on limited resources.

Initiatives such as joint sessions between careers services and visa services had been delivered, but several University A staff struggled to maintain them which led to a siloed effect of services. Although the university services staff did not approach networks across their departments in the same manner, there was an agreement that the teams who worked with international students needed to develop and maintain networks which would enable collaborative efforts to support international students. Additionally, while international students relied on the university services to develop the networks between students and employers, the university's role in this was an area of concern for many careers managers. Although many staff had developed relationships with employers, there was a lack of meaning and connection between the employers and international students which contributed to the stress of transitioning to the UK labour market. As university service staff act as the liaison between employers and other services teams, their collaborative efforts to form strong networks are important to understand and acknowledge in employability outcomes. The links among services, alumni, and employers provided stepping stones for international students to further their employability development. The cooperation among services was observed to be essential to reduce the strain on already limited resources, while continuing to support students to independently manage their employability.

7.6 Conclusion

International students voiced the challenges they have experienced during their time in the UK, which highlighted the struggle of cultural differences between their home and host cultures. The difficulty in adapting to their new environment led to difficulties in integrating, leaving some feeling unable to connect with their peers and host community (Dentakos *et al.*, 2017). Most university service staff recognised the unique challenges international students faced and felt it was essential to have infrastructure supports in place to help students adjust to practical matters as well as cultural integration and wellbeing. While individual initiative was viewed as important for the student to enhance their own skills and networks, collaborative experiences such as group work and peer mentoring facilitate networking and employability skill development among international students (Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha, 2021).

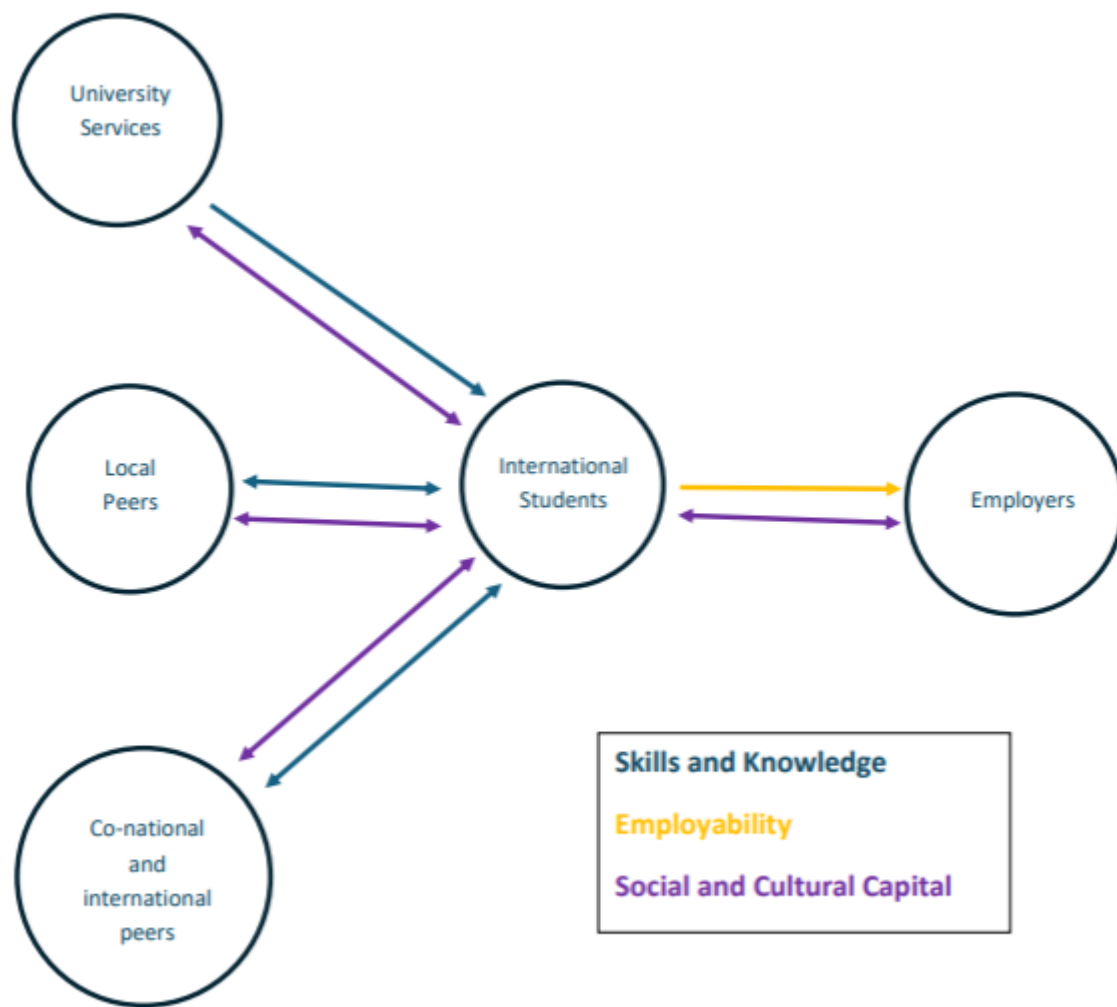


Figure 7 Social Network and Employability Experience

Using the social network concepts described in the previous sections I have synthesized the components of social networks and information exchange into a social network model presented in Figure 7 to visualise the network connections which contribute to the employability experience. I have implemented a social network map to capture the nodes, edges and relationships with an employability focus. To demonstrate how these relationships develop employability, I highlight how social and cultural capital, and skills and knowledge contribute to increasing employability. Cultural capital enhances employability by providing individuals with cultural knowledge, nuances and other soft skills relevant to their settings, signalling their attractiveness to employers (Pham, Tomlinson and Thompson, 2019). Social capital expands

networks providing knowledge of job opportunities and avenues to accumulate knowledge (Tomlinson, 2017). Skills and knowledge directly impact employability by equipping individuals with the competencies needed and keeping them informed of the skills needed to perform better in their roles (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2022). The nodes of this map contain University Services, Local Peers, Co-National and International Peers, International Students, and Employers. University Services, Local Peers, Co-National and International Peers, and Employers are connected to international students as the focal point of this map. Employers are connected to international students to demonstrate the flow of employability. International students gain employability enhancing social and cultural capital and skills and knowledge from university services and their local, co-national and international peers. International students share capital and skills and knowledge with their local, co-national and international peers. University services are also mutually influenced by the social and cultural capital of international students as they interact and adjust for cultural differences. The culmination from these three outer nodes into the international student develops their individual employability which is then demonstrated to employers as they transition to the labour market.

The role of students' networks is crucial for their employability development, yet international students face many challenges in developing networks due to cultural differences, language proficiency, and an unfamiliarity to the host workplace culture. Within the conceptual framework, social capital plays a significant role as international students navigate social networks between peers, staff, and alumni networks to enhance their employability. The university service staff has demonstrated the supports they offer which aid in network development among its students. Employer, peer, and alumni connections were all viewed as being valuable for international students to enhance their employability. Through these partnerships, universities help foster student networks which enhances international students' employability and capital, preparing them for a successful transition into the labour market.

For staff, limited resource availability impacted their ability to effectively build networks and provide targeted support for international students. In addition to internal limitations brought about by limited resources, the universities faced challenges in developing external networks with employers to facilitate work experience for students. The time and resources required by staff to build and maintain relationships with employers willing to employ international students

was seen as a significant challenge. Both universities recognised that how information was distributed to international students very much depended on their cultural values. An understanding of the cultural and diversity needs of international students was expressed as being crucial to effectively support their employability development. Through understanding the importance of cultural capital and providing catered support based on a student's cultural value fit, university staff are better able to support international students in their employability journey.

The findings illustrated in this chapter demonstrated that while universities are working to support international students, the effectiveness depends largely on the internal and external networks, tailored communications, and sufficient resources to cater to the unique challenges and barriers presented in the international student employability journey. The development of social networks impacted the employability experience of international students as they navigated their graduate capital development to understand cultural nuances and adjusted to life in the UK. As international students utilise their social networks to source information to enhance their understanding of employability, it is important to consider the intercultural influences which can enhance or diminish their employability experience. University service staff likewise play an essential role in sharing and understanding the intercultural experiences of international students to appropriately assist in giving them the tools to individually enhance their employability. In the final findings chapter, I will examine the responsibility of the university in international student employability development.

Chapter 8 Responsibility of the university in international student employability development

8.1 Overview

This chapter devotes its attention to the responsibility of the university in international student employability development which was expressed by both staff and students during the research. The results presented help to explain the subsequent attitudes of staff and students towards the level of responsibility a university must develop employability skills in students. There was an indication of both a neoliberal and an integrated approach by staff and students. The neoliberal position was presented as an individual's responsibility to develop their employability through their own proactive initiative. While the integrated approach emphasized embedding employability development within the curriculum in an effort to capture those who would otherwise fall through the cracks. Both groups were asked questions to disseminate their feelings and understanding of a university's role and responsibility in international students' employability. Central to this discussion is the role of social networks, which as addressed in previous chapters is a significant influence on a student's access to opportunities to develop their employability. This chapter considers how the responsibility universities have in facilitating international student employability through their services and engagement, thus impacting students' ability to build social and cultural capital. While this study was not a comparative of universities in the UK, the two institutions presented in this study did at times provide alternative perspectives on responsibility and their approach to student use of services.

8.2 Expectations, challenges, and institutional roles

Throughout the interviews, the responsibility of the university was a significant theme that came across though the interpretation of how involved and what responsibilities the university holds varied. The expectations, challenges and role of the university were discussed among the university service staff and highlighted how they interpreted their responsibility in the international student employability experience. University A Career Manager 2 described a duty of care associated with university responsibilities to ensure that students and graduates were supportive of employability development, not employment outcomes. This was further echoed by University A Employability Manager 9 who stated that a university's responsibility:

“Is to provide the higher education, which has academic integrity but is also relevant to the real-world destinations of our students and has applied elements to it and that includes a focus on employability” (University A Employability Manager 9).

From a social network perspective, University B Career Manager 2 positioned the university as having the responsibility to ensure that opportunities were provided for students to know about their opportunities and can make a choice to enhance their employability. This reflects the university’s responsibility in fostering social capital through network development among students. Through the concept of graduate capital, this responsibility comes through as an extension of the services staff perceived students to want and need throughout their student journey, extending beyond recruitment to enhance their social and cultural capital.

Careers Manager 7 from University A perceived the students as customers based on their tuition fees and discussed the obligation of universities to support their employability development. Several staff felt that students were often attending university to enhance their career prospects, which echoed the student responses of a previous study by Fakunle (2021b). Similar to a study by Lopez-Duarte et al. (2021) some institutions maintained a reputation and identity as being ‘academic purists’ yet there was an obligation to support student development. From a more transactional approach, a staff member described:

“I think if you're selling what you offer as something that is gonna help people's careers, then you have an obligation to support them with that...if that's what you're selling, then you need to support it” (University A Career Manager 7).

Many staff in their perspective understood that international students were often coming to the UK with an expectation for enhancing their employability. At the university staff level, there was an expectation that students attended university just for education and the shift to inject employability skills was separating itself from the true nature of higher education (Lopez-Duarte, Maley and Vidal-Suarez, 2021). Most staff members in this study argued that this has clearly changed but the university’s role and support in this evolution of the responsibility of the university in student employability has not. Many staff felt that the university maintained a position that if a student is attending university, it is solely for education, when this is a different narrative than what is used to recruit them. The transparency provided by the university to prospective incoming international students was seen as essential to familiarise themselves with

the host culture and manage their expectations (Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen, 2021). Several staff at both universities highlighted the challenge of managing student expectations which were presented to them through recruiters. Staff then must manage those expectations of students, which presented a challenge of having to disappoint them with the realistic expectations they could expect in their future transition to the labour market. University A Careers Manager 6 suspected “that international students maybe particularly, are often sold some sort of utopia thing, and actually it's quite different to the reality.” This difference of expectations reflects how for incoming international students there is an expectation that their original capital will be enough to transition to the UK labour market. This presents a gap in perceptions which must then be managed by the university. The Employability Manager 9 at University A and Careers Manager 4 at University B also highlighted the transactional process promised by recruiters. They discussed the expectations international students had from completing their degree in the UK to guarantee a successful employment outcome, but many staff held a different opinion of the reality.

“I've got a degree in obviously in the labour market in the UK, unfortunately, it's going to not necessarily, I guess to be enough to employers” (University B Careers Manager 4) and “I buy a master's program or buy a degree and that will mean I will get a better job” (University A Employability Manager 9).

The significance of gaining education in the UK or other countries which hold prestigious reputations associated with their higher education were seen as motivators for students to move abroad. The financial and time investment was viewed as being ultimately beneficial to their employability skills development and eventual employment (Tzanakou and Behle, 2017). Several staff at University A felt that the university as an institution has a responsibility to be transparent with students of how coming to study in the UK will enhance their employability.

“There's an expectation that they are just coming for education. No, they're not. Of course, they're not. They're coming for the hope that they'll get employment here. And how much information is given about that?” (University A Careers Manager 10).

The reliance on reputation and accreditation to attract international students was described by a careers manager at University B as a bit arrogant to assume that students will come regardless of their employability outcomes. While reputation continues to serve recruitment, the sustainability

of this tactic is not without the internal support provided by the university services to its international students.

“We've got Russell Group or we've got a triple accredited business school, students will come, but actually that isn't going to be enough...I think there's a lot more that universities kind of should be doing and it is their responsibility to kind of support that” (University B Careers Manager 1).

The discussion of what the university is supposed to provide for its students was touched on by the staff interviews. This shifting view of the university responsibility reflected how universities are becoming embedded in the employability development of students through supporting students in enhancing and adapting their graduate capital. There was an awareness of the differences in opinion between the academic purists and internationalisation strategies pushed by governments or those at the top level of the institutions (Lopez-Duarte, Maley and Vidal-Suarez, 2021).

“The UK educational system I guess and you know you have that tension still between you know, I mean the academic purists, if you like, have an education is for education sake, it's not about getting employment” (University A Careers Manager 6).

They discussed how with the push for individuals, especially home students, to take up higher education courses for the purposes of career progression, technical and vocational schools had been in decline in the UK. This then creates a vacuum of work-related experience that universities may or may not embrace to fill. While vocational schools were more receptive to incorporating employability skills within their programmes, research-intensive institutions such as universities struggled in this transition (Huang, Turner and Chen, 2014). Many staff from both universities offered alternative views of the university responsibility. Some staff at University A felt that with the closure of technical training and vocational schools, the university was now trying to be all things for all people, but ultimately many staff still did not believe that the university was responsible for preparing students for the workplace. Rather, they believed that they should be upfront with students about the realities of what a university degree will offer them.

“[Universities should] support and...particularly educate students and be upfront about what [the university] is trying to provide, you know, in terms of offering them a degree or whatever, it is that we're trying to do” (University A Career Manager 6).

From this standpoint, the university is an educator that lives up to the degree objectives that are set out in the curriculum, but there is no obligation on the part of the university to provide anything outside of that realm. University B Career Manager 2 responded to this vacuum by acknowledging that work experience and understanding the UK market were crucial for an international student's employability and expressed that these should be areas which are supported. This aligns with the conceptual framework which highlights the role of the university within an international student's graduate capital development. University careers services are valuable networks for international students to gain knowledge and relations to enhance their social and cultural capital (Tomlinson, 2017).

The recognition that students desired work experience was expressed by a majority of staff interviewed. This sentiment aligned with previous articles which outlined the rationales of students to undertake education overseas. In a study by Fakunle (2021a), they found that students expressed four rationales for studying in their host country: educational, experiential, aspirational, and economic. Under the educational rationale, students expressed the use of filtering to determine where they would study often considered the availability of work-integrated learning and practical work experience during their studies (Fakunle, 2021a). There were challenges several staff felt that international students faced that they were not able to help them overcome which left the responsibility to the individual. This aligns with previous study observations that employability and career progression were determined by the individual graduate themselves rather than the university (Huang, Turner and Chen, 2014). Although many staff expressed a concern over the challenges international students faced, it was generally thought to be their personal responsibility to use the resources available to enhance their employability.

Many staff at University B expressed a feeling of almost helplessness to not be able to support international students with circumstances that are out of their control. They supported international students in their employability development to the extent they felt they could but

employer knowledge and willingness to engage was a barrier in international student progression.

“We do know that there are employers out there who just don't really kind of understand the visa process and perhaps a little bit I wouldn't say necessarily frightened of it, but maybe a bit kind of like apprehensive of it or a bit kind of, you know, nervous of doing something wrong or perhaps not up to date with it. So I think that can be one of the challenges with supporting international students is that we see sometimes you've got a student and they've done absolutely everything. You know, that we would expect. They've gone over above and beyond. But then sometimes they do hit a bit of a wall when it comes to, you know, the employers and not necessarily understanding that and that's a bit of a that you know that is a challenge because it's not really something that's in the students control and it's not necessarily something that's in our control, although we can help them to try and strategize ways around that” (University B Careers Manager 2).

Employers have been shown to value graduates from the home culture as they view international students as being risky and may not fit in with the organisational culture. Due to this underlying bias, employers have avoided hiring international students over home students making it harder for international students to prove themselves to employers (Blackmore and Rahimi, 2019).

Some staff strategized with students, giving them tools to apply to overcome these challenges but ultimately it was left to the student to convince the employer and navigate the barriers to adequately demonstrate their employability and value to the employer. This mentality was consistent with other findings from Jones (2013) which highlighted the significance of international students being able to articulate their skills to employers, yet many found that students struggled to express their experiences or skills obtained. This struggle demonstrates the challenge international students face when bridging their home developed capital to their new environment. Although staff were aware of the barriers international students faced in demonstrating their employability to employers, there was little mentioned on their responsibility to assist students.

This level of individual responsibility was also demonstrated by some international students in their desire to remain in the UK without fully understanding their experience or employability. Many of the careers' managers met with students and made them aware of the barriers they faced

in entering the UK labour market, yet they still described instances where international students were more invested in staying than understanding how to overcome their challenges.

“It worries me that people put too much emphasis on that stay for too long. It's costing them money to live here and they're finding it too difficult to navigate” (University A Careers Manager 2).

The expectations and challenges the university is tasked with overcoming to support their international students' employability development is not a uniformly accepted approach. As many staff in this section testified, the responsibility of the university and staff's role is to assist international students in their transition by setting their expectations. While most staff encouraged the evolution of the university to move beyond the academic purist mentality, there was a distinction in how employability was to be included within the curriculum and support services. The university's role within the graduate capital model is essential to helping students develop their social and cultural capital necessary for their successful employability development. The university has a responsibility to prepare graduates for their future employment by bridging the gap from education to employment. The next section will examine the neoliberal individualist approach students and staff take when developing their employability during their university experience.

8.2 Neoliberal individualist approach

Balancing university support and international student expectations

Through investigating the employability experience and the associated responsibility towards its development, most international students and service staff expressed that the responsibility was with the individual. While all participants acknowledged the role universities play, some argued that the majority of the responsibility laid with the individual (the neoliberal approach), while others ascribed a more pronounced role to universities (the integrated approach). The neoliberal individualist approach will be covered in this section, while the integrated approach will be covered in the following section.

The neoliberal individualistic approach was taken from the perspective that the individual was responsible for their own decisions, research and understanding. From this approach, by an individual navigating their own agency they were also responsible for the development of their

graduate capital. Many of the service staff and international students expressed this view of an individualised responsibility for employability development. But the viewing of employability in isolation from other factors excludes it from recognising the inequalities presented in students (Huang, 2013). This highlights the varying degrees of capital among home and international students that was recognised by service staff. As some careers managers pointed out, home students were aware of the labour market landscape, international students felt the additional stress of needing to adapt their skills, knowledge, and capital to the host community and market (Khawaja and Stallman, 2011). This gap in understanding led to a disparity in the expectations of the services' role in the employability development and support by international students. Many of the careers managers described the challenges they experienced in managing international student expectations of what the careers services provide. They found that the expectation of international students was often different from that of home students who grew up in the host community. This perceived difference by some staff members was contributed to a privileged upbringing of international students, where they would not have been expected to gain experience from part-time work or extracurricular activities (Brooks and Waters, 2022).

“[Home students] come to school here and they have been told from an early age go to brownies. Go to scouts. Do this. Do that. Get a part time job from as soon as you can so they know the score, whereas international students don't necessarily, and if they, I suppose if they have a more sort of privileged view. They then expect a bit more than we can provide” (University A Careers Manager 10).

There was a perception by some staff of the social and cultural capital international students possessed compared to home students. These notions viewed international student's cultural capital as ill-adapted to the UK environment. As referenced in Chapter Six, Section Four while some international students do come from wealthy families with socio-economic advantage which allow them to study in the UK (King and Sondhi, 2018), their lack of work experience can often be due to cultural upbringings which have prevented them from working. As the Careers Manager above identified the cultural differences between home and international students which contribute to their level of work experience, universities could do more to support international students in bridging the cultural gap (Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha, 2021).

Career Manager 6 from University A expressed that students should have the proactive tendency to understand cultural expectations and to understand what is needed and how things work in their chosen host country. Most University A staff presented a position which suggested that the individual student is responsible for seeking out support and services to develop their employability. While many of these members of staff were inclined to feel it was the individual's responsibility to carve their own employability path, Fakunle and Pirrie (2020) stress the need for universities to develop support systems for international students to overcome their cultural barriers. For several international students this was seen as a disadvantage as the barriers they experienced were not applicable to the same support as home students. A University B student explained from their perspective:

“Where do we start which direction we're going into? We don't have those kind of answers the same way that domestic students have” (University B Group 1 – American F).

For many students, the prospect of developing their graduate capital for the UK market was a challenge because they realised the differences between their home understandings and that of the UK. While the individual student has the agency to develop their own graduate capital and employability, the university hold a key responsibility is giving international students the direction they need.

Student's economic rationale for studying in the UK viewed the high tuition fees as a necessary cost yielding a return on investment through their degrees in the form of employability and a signal of competence to employers (Fakunle, 2021a). Referencing their consumer status, several staff at University A had the perception that international students paid to be in the UK and in turn expected that their time and experience would lend to their employability development and future employment. This presented a challenge for many of the careers managers for how they managed student expectations of graduate outcomes. A careers manager expressed those high expectations from international students often related to the high cost they paid to attend university in the UK.

“The high tuition fees that those international students pay and that perhaps sometimes being seen as a consumer and you know, wanting to see that return on investment and increasingly that return on investment means employability outcomes. And again you

know for us this is where as a sector we struggle because international graduate outcomes you know don't count... as a sector we have very limited data on what our international students go on to do” (University B Careers Manager 1)

Bringing this consumer expectation to the forefront also begins to highlight the tensions between the government agendas of supporting internationalisation of higher education and how these institutions are then assessed. This expectation of employability development was linked to the amount of money international students paid to attend university in the UK. The customer expectation was echoed by a Chinese student who stated:

“I think the university can do more because especially for international students, your tuition is higher than local students” (University B Group 1 – Chinese F).

The cost of studying abroad, financially and emotionally impacted students. The cost of tuition may well be seen as a proxy for the potential future career as student perceive the cost associated with a cost of living and education are associated with the career they will achieve for themselves (Civera, Meoli and Paleari, 2021). While some students felt they deserved a level of support from the university, other students felt the financial pressures of studying in another country, emphasising they needed to study hard and achieve a good career so as to not waste their or their family’s money (Fakunle and Pirrie, 2020). The customer expectation contributes to the tensions universities must navigate to maintain balance. While international students have begun to be featured in graduate outcome data and surveys (Universities UK International, 2024), their representation is still limited. For universities they face a struggle whether to maintain education for the sake of education or respond to the argument that education has shifted to support employability and employment outcomes for all students, regardless of their residency status.

For some international students, the prospect of gaining experience and earning more money than they would back home was an incentive to stay in the UK. Many students expressed during the group interviews that they needed to gain the relevant experience which would justify their rationale for studying overseas in the hopes for career advancement in their host or home country. This again highlighted the career expectations associated with studying in the UK for these students.

“Find experience...So maybe just like 2 years” (University A Group 2 – Indonesian F) where others focused on the potential salary “I will be needing in compensation that I’m getting here will be a lot more than I will be getting back in my home country” (University A Group 2 – Indian F).

Previous studies have revealed that universities highly value international student recruitment but this high dependency has raised serious concern among students of the ability of universities to support them in unexpected situations and circumstances (Fakunle, 2021a). Many University A students predicted that the university was going to want to continuously recruit international students but felt the support following recruitment was not adequate.

“They're not planning as such to accommodate the international students...people are coming from different cultural settings, and it is very easy for you to easily help, but you (careers services) need to create a passion where they can quickly integrate” (University A Group 2 – Nigerian M).

This student has highlighted the separation of responsibilities they felt from the university. While universities heavily recruited international students, there was a lack of support in developing the social and cultural capital to integrate into the UK. There was an expectation by many international students in this sample that chose to study in the UK that their education and degree would be enough to secure them a good graduate job in the UK. The expectation follows the findings of Nilsson and Ripmeester (2016) that for many international students, improved career prospects and entering the labour market at a higher level was a main motivation for studying overseas yet the expectation of graduate employment outcomes still needs to be bridged. From many careers managers this expectation of finding a relevant career straight out of graduation was the exception, not the rule.

“Careers haven't worked like that for decades, but it's still this kind of the expectation there's some straight line that you follow and it's always happy and you always go up where actually it's a lot more of a mess... It's not to say that international master students don't get jobs because plenty of them do. But it's I think the exception rather than the norm basically” (University A Careers Manager 6).

The development of international student employability was viewed by staff at both universities as a challenge due to the management of student expectations. Many staff members were aware of barriers which may impact a student's ability to demonstrate their employability confidently. Continuing from above, Careers Manager 6 explained how they offered support for students to overcome the challenges but also anticipated that some students would not succeed.

“Depending on what stage in someone's life they've come to university at like, if arguably if someone's come from the more traditional route is younger, they have less of that kind of life experience if you like, don't really understand how things work. That confidence can be a big barrier, so I think you know that's certainly something that we're thinking of, and we do a lot to kind of try and reassure but be realistic as well”

(University A Careers Manager 6).

From this perspective, the responsibility of the university is missing in bridging the gap between an international student's home and host capital. While there is an acknowledgement of the differences and gaps, some staff accepted that some capital gaps were due to the student's lack of acquired capital. The expectations of many international students and their career trajectories were often misaligned from the career services staff perspective. There was a disconnect expressed by several staff as to the amount of experience students would need to have rather than the student perception of what would get them into their desired career. As a student from University B shared:

“I'm not planning to apply for the internship. Because I only want to apply for the graduate program like, I just want to work in the UK like for two years and start gaining the knowledge. The experience I want to go back to my country” (University B Group 1 – Indonesian M).

Most of the Careers Manager at University A knew that many international students preferred to apply for graduate schemes due to their straightforward application or experienced higher position jobs.

“But don't think that maybe they've got so much of a chance of those” (University A Careers Manager 1).

Several Careers Managers at University B felt that there was a misunderstanding from international students about “the amount of work that is going to be needed outside of just your degree” (University B Careers Manager 3). Time expectations by staff and students was another area of differed understanding. Most staff were aware of the timeline expected by employers for roles in graduate schemes but found that a majority of international students often had a completely different timeline in mind. This demonstrated the disconnect in their understanding of the role of attending and completing a university degree on the path to employability and employment. A careers manager explained how they understood the standard application process, which did not align with the traditional master’s degree timelines that many international students would expect.

“Hundreds of students arriving to do a masters and a lot of them hoping to get one of these, you know, big graduate schemes with a blue-chip company...you need to be applying as soon as you arrive or before you've arrived actually” (University A Careers Manager 6).

While there was an expectation expressed by many international students to be able to successfully transition to employment in the UK, survey data demonstrated that a majority of respondents (54%) were not confident in their ability to gain employment after graduation.

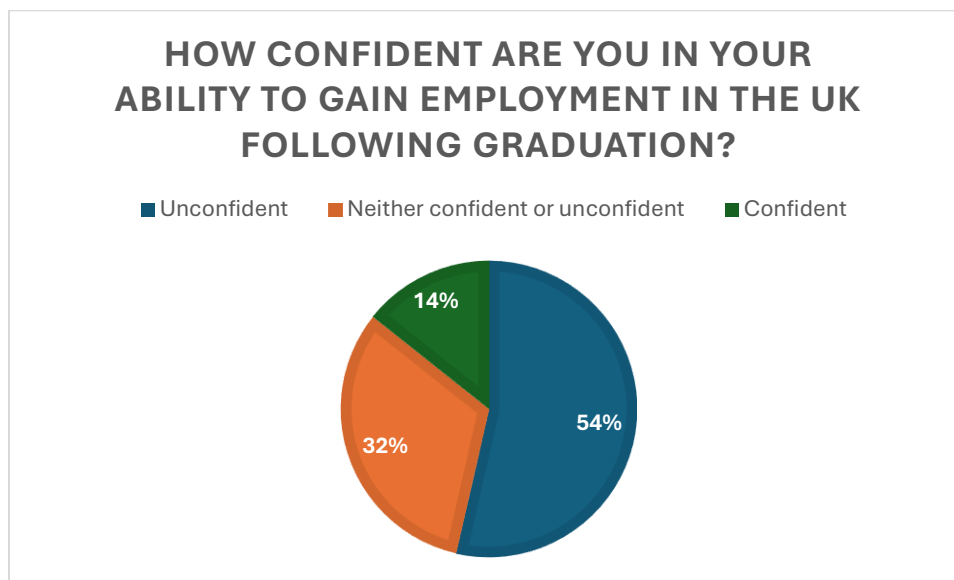


Figure 8 International student confidence in post-graduation employment in the UK

For most careers managers it was understood that international students needed to start working on their employability and networking as soon as they arrived, but time management and coursework was a barrier for many. Many staff at University A expressed that students needed to be proactive in their path to secure employment by the end of their studies.

“[International students] should start really early and really start working on [their] employability and really work on [their] CV, [their] LinkedIn profile, and do [their] research and build [their] network and do all of these things almost in week one. But I also recognize that in reality, soon as the coursework escalates that's really difficult to do and I get it that it shouldn't be because if it's [their] priority that [they've] come here to do this in order to work in the UK for a while, [they] have to make it [their] priority and some people are able to do that” (University A Careers Manager 6).

From the individualistic approach, many staff could identify the capital deficiencies international students had in their employability development, but maintained that the responsibility was with the student to engage with services and experiences that would enhance their employability. The level of support towards international students was also attributed to their graduate outcomes, particularly in the host country labour market. A study by Zevallos (2012) addressed the intercultural issues that arose for international students in Australia which contributed to their inability to gain employment in a relevant field to their degree and reduced the longevity of their time in that position. Similarly, several staff in this study noted that although a high percentage of their graduates do find jobs, the relevancy was questioned. As an Employability Manager from University A described:

“We have that data and we can see our students, you know, 94 plus percent of our students will have jobs 15 months after graduation. But that's not really the question. The question is how relevant your degree programs to the job that you're doing and is your job a graduate level job” (University A Employability Manager 9).

This employability manager highlighted the distinction between employment outcomes and career relevancy. While the definition of employability focuses on the skills and knowledge needed to gain and maintain a career, it rarely mentions the relevancy of the career to the degree. This employability manager begins to suggest that in observing graduate outcomes, we should not simply look at the employment outcomes but the relevancy of that job to the degree obtained.

To accomplish this, another careers manager from University A expressed the necessity to develop the tools to give students the confidence to individually develop their employability skills.

“I think all we can do as a university is make sure that students have the tools, the skills, knowledges and experiences to help them succeed. And that is a lot about empowerment... That they can kind of, you know, feel confident in connecting with the employers and actually kind of looking at them applying there as well” (University A Careers Manager 5).

Knowledge of the host country’s culture, and especially workplace culture presented itself as a challenge and barrier to entry for many international students. University A Career Manager 1 acknowledged “it's quite a challenging thing to try and get into job markets, particularly in a country other than your own” for international students to adapt to the labour market. While this challenge was highlighted, the narrative was maintained as being the student’s responsibility to educate themselves on the cultural complexities of their host country’s market (Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha, 2021). Although this individualistic approach is maintained, University A Careers Manager 5 emphasized the empowerment of international students through receiving supportive tools which enhance their employability experience.

Engagement of tools to support employability

The individualistic approach maintained that a student’s employability development was their individual responsibility. Within the conceptual framework, this would mean that students are to seek out tools and resources within their networks they believe will support their employability skills development. While students were expected to navigate their employability experiences to understand what was expected in the UK labour market, many university staff described the services and tools available to support international students. For many staff at University A, digital delivery was a method to equally distribute resources as well as put the responsibility of engagement on the student. The enhanced scalability through a digital space meant that students could access services and resources at any time, if or when they needed it.

“We call it the catch-up TV model because careers is such a subjective thing. Employability is such a subjective thing... So we talk about pathways and learning

journeys. So, the things that we're developing and the digital space, that's all gonna be about the student can just go in when they're in the mood to do it. And in the headspace to do it and they think, right, I'm ready for it right now. It's there for them to do right now” (University A Careers Manager 8).

The asynchronous approach to services provided was also demonstrated in the promotion of employability development as part of the extracurricular development for students. A careers manager explained that all students at University A could choose to develop their skills and pathways through their skills award programmes (University A Careers Manager 5).

The alignment of the student-university services to support the adjustment of values has been viewed as largely beneficial for international students as they adapted to their new cultural norms and values (Dentakos *et al.*, 2017). The support of the university provided students with an understanding of normative practices within their host culture but was left to the individuals initiative to seek out services. There was some acknowledgement that international students required an additional level of knowledge to develop their employability within their host country which has previously been linked to calls for universities to support international students' career development (Fakunle, 2021b). This was framed as the international students' individual responsibility to be able to understand their rights and navigate their employability and employers' knowledge. The responsibility of the university in this approach was in having supports available if a student was able to proactively engage. It was recommended that international students should be well versed and know visa requirements to be able to inform employers. While this position was maintained, some staff understood this could be frustrating for international students to have to go through the process of trying to convince employers, even when they were meant to treat everyone equally (University A Career Manager 5). For many students, they felt that staff should be doing more to help them overcome barriers associated with their visas status and employers when pursuing careers.

“The most important thing is informing us on how we can handle the limitations we face as international students in pursuing careers. Specifically ...with visas and companies being hesitant to hire us” (University B Group 1 – American F).

Although, many staff did recognize that some individuals are facing internal and external issues which can create barriers for them to make use of the university services, some believed the university was doing all it could to engage with international students.

“There's always going to be reasons that are valid that students don't maybe engage, and it could literally just be for fear that they don't want to know what the actual answer is cause it's too stressful. And there's a limit to what the university can do and has been doing to try engaging with students. So, it's difficult, there's always going to be that disparity there no matter what anybody tries” (University A ISS Advisor 4).

In this perspective, the ability of services to engage with international student networks were limited by students who did not avail of the services. The employability journey was often seen to be the same as home students, so they are therefore treated all the same unless a specific question arises. This falls under the mindset mentioned above that students are responsible for their own employability development and the university is responsible for having the opportunities available and communicate their importance. Most University A staff approached international student employability no different to other students having questions on their need.

“That the responsibility for employability sits with yourself first and foremost” and that secondly, “it's [the institution's] responsibility to make sure that there are opportunities available to develop your employability...it's the university's responsibility to provide these opportunities and also to communicate to students why they should” (University A Careers Manager 8).

Some students agreed with this approach from different perspectives. The two students quoted below felt that their university did well to offer supports for their employability development. An American student from University B emphasized that students should be self-sufficient and motivated enough to find the resources the university has made available.

“It does depend a lot on the motivation of the individual and at some point, if you would like help, it is available. And I think the university has made that bit clear... I believe at some point if a student would like to find one of these resources they can. So, I think the university has done a good job in doing that” (University B Group 1 – American F).

For a Nigerian student from University A, they felt the services available were sufficient and international students should learn to navigate them to avoid feeling a false sense of security. This was applied to how students should approach services which would aid in their adaption to their host society.

“One of the reasons is that if you create this entity (a separate service for international students), international students will think that they have a safe haven here and what if it doesn't turn out well? And so it's going to be there's no need for that” (University A Group 4 – Nigerian M).

Both of these students felt that ultimately the graduate capital an international student develops to enhance their employability is built and maintained through their own motivations to engage with university networks. Although several University A staff described international students as being no different than their home students, they also felt that international students could not be homogenized into one group. Describing the cultural differences of students, a University A staff member gave the example:

“European students often take positions of responsibility which develops excellent employability skills, whereas stereotypically some of our Chinese students, for example, are a bit more reserved and don't tend to get involved in those clubs and societies as much. So probably wouldn't develop their employability skills as much because they're not actively getting involved in some of those things” (University A Careers Manager 5).

Careers Manager 5 identified these cultural differences between European and Chinese students yet maintained that employability development was the responsibility of the individual. Although the cultural background and experiences were acknowledged to contribute to a student's potential to engage with services this was approached as a personal challenge the student should strive to overcome. This again reiterated the distinction several staff have on how involved the university should be when developing international student employability.

Discussing the engagement of international students with the tools and services the university provides, many staff insisted that they were proactive in their outreach and engagement with international students. For the international student support (ISS) team at University A, although there was a desire to assist international students during their experience, they held the

perspective that international students needed to have the individual responsibility to seek out their support and services. The ISS team relied on email communications to connect with students and left it in the students' hands to seek out information or assistance. While the ISS team viewed themselves as proactive, their engagement relied on the student engagement with their communications. It was viewed as the individual's responsibility to reach out and find the information they needed. In this way the network and social capital development was a one way engagement. The staff's role was seen as to support students who choose to contact them, leaving out the students who may have issues or challenges and do not know how to engage with that network circle. Although students had different levels of use and awareness of support services available to them, many staff viewed this as a challenge in equality of opportunity to make sure every student has access to the service to use when they feel it is necessary.

“It's not about reaching everybody, because not everybody wants to talk to the careers service or counselling or disability, or whoever it might be, but that they know that they can if they want to” (University A Careers Manager 8).

An ISS staff member expressed that they were available for students who needed support with understanding information, but they also felt that those who did not avail of their service felt that they were happy to find their own way (University A ISS Advisor 4). Feeling that they were already doing all they could for international students, most ISS staff expressed that they were not sure what more they could do to support international students during their university experience and employability development (University A ISS Advisor 4). This attitude was not unique to the ISS team as other members of University A felt that the use of services by international students from their perspective was seen as being in the right place at the right time. These members of staff felt that students would engage when and if they needed the service.

“If you send them emails about, you know the things that we offer, and it's not something on their mind right now it's not meaningful, they don't even notice it, it doesn't exist... Well, you should know, because you've had emails. But obviously you just didn't notice them, they just didn't sink in” (University A Careers Manager 1).

Many staff emphasized the responsibility of the university to provide the necessary information but relied on the individual's initiative to seek out assistance when or if they realised, they needed additional support from the university.

“You’re assuming that they have made a choice to be there, that no one has told them to be there, and therefore it's quite different, you know, to any areas where they're just doing it as part of the curriculum” (University A Careers Manager 1).

As one staff member described the individual student’s effort to come study in the UK as an indicator of how proactive they would be to use the services available to them.

“They made the effort to make an application, source the funding, get themselves here, get accommodation. You're talking about a pretty engaged group of people, pretty highly motivated group of people. And they tend by nature to seek out what's available to them” (University A Careers Manager 8).

The engagement of students with careers services was almost expected because they were viewed as a highly motivated group. This characteristic of international students has been identified by potential employers who perceive that international students are driven individuals who would contribute to their competitiveness in the business market as they possess a driven attitude which would motivate other employees around them (Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha, 2021).

Although staff maintained the view that international students sought out the help they needed, it was acknowledged that their communications via email and social media were a wide cast net which could miss the students who needed it most. There was an understanding that all students were flooded with information through emails, but often staff accepted it as just the way it was. This reliance on a wide net approach highlighted a gap in social networking where students who are highly aware and engaged are more likely to avail of services while those who are not may struggle to avail of the resources causing a disparity in their distribution and employability development.

“In a perfect world, everyone would [read every email], but it's not a perfect world. So I think there's only so much the university can do realistically...the only thing a service can realistically do is advertise as much as possible” (University A ISS Advisor 4).

While most staff from University A relied on their mass style of outreach, they did recognise an issue in their engagement style. From the perspective of university responsibility, this could mean that students who miss out on information and services will be less likely to equitably

develop their graduate capital. If some students went through their entire university experience without having been to the careers service, some careers managers felt this was a failure to be available to students and ensure the services were available to them.

“That's a failure on our part because we use every network, every platform, every person, every avenue that we can to kind of make sure that students know about the career service and what we do” (University A Career Manager 8).

Discussing the engagement of international students with the tools made available by the university services, the employability development is largely framed as the responsibility of the individual to engage. While many of the university staff acknowledged the cultural differences which would influence how a student engaged with the employability services, these were seen as personal challenges for international students to understand and overcome. In the following section I discuss more of the challenges international students face when navigating their employability experience through an individualistic approach.

Challenges in navigating expectations through an individualistic approach

When navigating their employability experience, international students encountered challenges and barriers which impacted how they intended to overcome them. Many students expressed a feeling of cultural bias which lessened their competitiveness in transitioning to the UK labour market. In one context, international students highlighted the difference between themselves and home students, with some expressing they felt that they were not as competitive as home students. Similar to previous findings (Khawaja and Stallman, 2011) this feeling led to some believing they needed to lower their expectations to ‘realistic’ expectations or resign themselves to lower pay or a lower job level. A Chinese student from University A shared they felt they needed to change their perspective and expectations.

“Maybe I have to find some entry level jobs because I didn't have any local work experience or maybe I have to make some compromise about the salary because I need sponsorship” (University A Group 3 – Chinese F).

As international students contended with lower skilled levels of work just to stay in the UK, this also reflected a potential unconscious cultural bias by employers who were cautious to hire international students who did not fit in with the culture and value of the organisation

(Blackmore and Rahimi, 2019). Employer bias was recognised by international students as previous studies have indicated that although a student may be educated locally, employers do not value their social, cultural, or communication skills as highly (Zevallos, 2012). Although they had been educated in a UK institution, this Chinese student also viewed their employability skills as being less valued than home students in the eyes of employers in the UK. They explained:

“I fully understand it because they want to apply more opportunities for local residents. I think it really makes sense because they want to protect the rights of their own residents. So, maybe, I think, I have to increase my competitive ability so that I can compete with the local person, yes, because maybe I can offer more, maybe skills or experience that make them to believe that I am desirable person who desired them to offer maybe to pay more for my sponsorship. So that's the only thing that I can do because I really accept it. I really accept this because this is the reality I have to accept it and the only thing is to improve myself” (University A Group 3 – Chinese F).

The challenge for international students was to convince employers that their graduate capital was as valuable as a home student's if not more. While international students participate in the same curriculums, the reception to the employability skills were at times dampened by employers perception of their capital deficiency. Similar to a study by Clibborn (2021), students in their Australian study felt they were left with little choice but to accept a lower skilled or lower paid job just to gain money or experience in their host country. The navigation of staying in the host country to gain work experience was an area of stress for international students who often felt they had to make the best decision for themselves with the knowledge and understanding they had available. A student from University A highlighted the struggle for international students balancing the desire for relevant work experience with staying in the UK:

“You either settle for anything just to grant you a stay or you just summon the courage and take chances on doing the kind of job you want, even if it does not come with sponsorship but you have gained experience that is worthwhile to land a better job” (University A Group 2 – Nigerian M).

The sentiment of needing to increase their employability to become competitive in the labour market was highlighted in the literature as well. The motivation to take on a degree programme

overseas for international students was often through a desire to stand out and be competitive in their labour markets (Holloway, O'Hara and Pimlott-Wilson, 2012). While students have sought to enhance their competitiveness, they recognised the challenges they faced. As mentioned above, students acknowledged their employability but highlighted the decisions they must make when entering the labour market. The ability to demonstrate their value to employers needed to be as competitive as possible because they not only have to demonstrate their fit and employability, but overcome employer perceptions which would de-incentivise them from hiring an international student (Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha, 2021). Although there is a perception that international students have a high expectation of what they will gain from studying in the UK, they have often been described as highly motivated individuals who seek to get the most out of their experience in the pursuit of a successful career (Lee, 2022).

While international students have been viewed as highly motivated which can lead them to engage with university services, their expectations of career outcomes in not realistic from many of the university service staff members. Some University B staff felt they had to be realists with their students to manage their expectations of challenges associated with their desire to gain a graduate level position in the UK after their studies have been completed.

“[I] play a little bit of the pessimist...because they don't see the obstacles that are there, they often don't take actions to tackle it. What does that answer? The question is that what they see and what I see is probably in terms of obstacles, a little different”
(University B Careers Manager 3).

The expectations of employability outcomes are evidently different between staff and international students. This demonstrates a gap that university staff attempt to bridge through their realistic approach to an international student's transition to the labour market. Although this difference is apparent, there was little evidence demonstrating how service staff develop their student's graduate capital to overcome barriers. The challenge for many Careers Managers at the universities dealing with international student employability was how they can deal with student development and overcoming barriers while maintaining the individual responsibility students must develop and demonstrate employability skills.

The perception of individual responsibility in employability development was made apparent from staff and international student interviews to varying levels. Engagement was often viewed

to be initiated by the student who was to be aware of the support services provided for them by the outreach attempts facilitated by the staff. While international students were described as a highly motivated group, their expectations of their employment outcomes was not aligned with what was viewed as the realistic perspective of many service staff members. Under the individualist approach, students were expected to be aware and actively seek out services to enhance their employability development without sufficient recognition for how cultural barriers impacted their development. As the university relied on the international student's initiative to engage with services, there was hardly evidence of adjusting services for the cultural differences of students, limiting the graduate capital development of students through generalised services. The expectation of international students to engage with services primarily targeted towards all students lacked intercultural elements to assist international students to apply meaning to the services available to them inhibited the building of social networks. Many staff and students described the stress and pressures international students go through when sourcing information on their own which led some staff to discuss the benefits of an integrated approach which embedded employability development for students.

8.3 Integrated approach – embedding employability

Compared to the individualistic approach where the individual was expected to be aware of services and engage, the integrated approach made the engagement of employability tools embedded within course curriculums. This approach was designed to give all students a base level of employability skills knowledge and minimise the lack of engagement from students who would not choose to engage with careers or employability services on their own. In recognising the gap international students face in their social capital development, the university's responsibility shifted to incorporate student's into the careers services network. By using the integrated approach, it was expected that students would have the foundational employability knowledge to then be able to operate independently in their transition to the UK labour market.

Interviews revealed that both universities were moving towards developing curriculums with employability embedded. This was seen as a way to support those students who may miss out on the communications or otherwise not engage with the careers and employability services. Although many staff in the previous section felt students had a responsibility to engage with the services provided, they also valued embedding employability into the curriculum. By applying

an integrated approach, services were better able to penetrate the networks of students by circumventing the individual responsibility students needed to take to gain that valuable information. By enabling a resource which serves to build social networks among international students and services, the staff are better suited to help international students adapt and apply their graduate capital in their employability development. A staff member highlighted the value students have for information that comes directly to them from their school and expressed:

“Anything that can be embedded within schools for employability is you know really important and valuable” (University B Career Manager 2).

When developing the embedded employability curriculum, it was important for staff to find the balance between what the course offered as part of their degree studies and what students will need in the workplace. Similarly, a study on the perspectives of employers on international student employability revealed that the employer confidence in the university’s ability to prepare international students to integrate into the British workplace was not adequate (Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha, 2021). The value of integrated employability in graduates which demonstrates their aptitude to adapt to local problems within the rapidly globalising landscape has become increasingly important (Jones, 2013). Universities were encouraged to be proactive in communicating their efforts to develop employability in their students, to build trust with employers to elevate confidence in hiring their international graduates through strategic planning (Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha, 2021). To achieve this, several University A staff explained how they integrated employability development within credit bearing courses to guide students and not rely as heavily on the student’s individual motivation to engage with careers service. An employability manager at University A described how their team has developed an employability development programme which enrolls students and notifies them of assignments or projects aligned with their degree programme.

“The developed courses are timed in the middle and the final newsletters will tend to focus on the communication. Mirroring that within master’s program Moodles, where we will have a similar series of communications about 13 communications that go out across the year through their Moodles, which will do exactly that same thing” (University A Employability Manager 9).

This allowed the staff to align employability outputs with the tasks students must already undertake in their courses in one comprehensive area. Especially within Russell Group Universities, strategies have been designed to construct professional skills and graduate attributes in their graduates to succeed in a competitive global market (Russell Group, 2024). As described by a career's manager at University A, they sought to integrate professional skills, as one of the three pillars in the university's learning and teaching strategy, into the curriculum. Careers services staff would lead this integration to ensure every student would work with their academics to build professional skills (University A Careers Manager 5).

The embedding of employability and careers services into the curriculum has been a beneficial role of University B staff but has also been viewed as a challenge due to time resources. The embeddedness of their services was beneficial for the development of networks and trust among students but caused a strain on many of the staff members to fulfil their roles effectively. As one careers manager explained the pros and cons of being embedded within the school and curriculum.

“There's a pro and con with being embedded in the school because you are more familiar. But the problem is you're more familiar to everyone. So, a lot of it's about workload and capacity” (University B Careers Manager 2).

Several University A staff expressed a similar perspective, feeling that the opportunity for learning the practical application of skills learned during the student's course was highly beneficial.

“The focus really has to be on the program and what are the opportunities for applied learning during the program and that's where the curriculum transformation is the most important part of supporting employability for international master students rather than saying we need to double the size of our career service” (University A Employability Manager 9).

The size or budget available for staff to support international students was thought to not be as valuable long-term as the ability to embed employability within the curriculum. To support international students ability to independently develop their employability, it is dependent on the

availability of integrated resources which will provide continued career support to enhance their employability and employment outcomes (Tran *et al.*, 2020b; Fakunle, 2021b).

When discussing the responsibility of the university, several staff members touched on the need to further embed employability development into the curriculum. This complemented a call made in a previous study to develop an embedded framework to help international students overcome challenges which were exacerbated by their lack of understanding related to securing work experience and navigating the host culture (Goodwin and Mbah, 2019). They recognized that for students, accessing extracurricular activities were not always seen as essential or students felt they did not have the time to pursue activities even if they knew it would increase their experience and employability skills. This was especially the case for those on postgraduate taught courses with very confined time allowed to develop themselves in professional employability. When discussing the employability development courses offered by the university, one student explained:

“They're all like quite same, but like I still take different lectures for the same information. I think that it can be like more systematic like you can process like in each stage. And also, especially for the postgraduate students, the time is quite short to get that information like almost in my fellow you can put it more early, like as soon as you go to the university, you can get the kind of information. Then you can prepare like a little bit more” (University B Group 2 – Chinese F).

While services applying the integrated approach sought to enhance the employability experience of international students, there was at times a gap in how this service was applied and the usefulness to international students in developing their employability skills within their perceived timeline. Students were sceptical of the usefulness of employability seminars and felt that they just participated in the workshops for the sake of it without taking away the knowledge and skills which were promised to them. This apprehension of courses offered may be linked to the differences in social and cultural capital as international students interpret value through the lens of their home culture. These differences contributed to this lack of understanding the benefits towards their employability development if they had not yet become accustomed to the education and dissemination of knowledge (Collins *et al.*, 2017). Without understanding the

benefits of these embedded courses, many students were not able to associate their experience with employability development.

“They ask us to do a couple of courses and going to certain seminars. Everyone to get that award but I don't know how much will it improve my employability doing these courses from the university” (University A Group 2 – Indian F).

A careers manager at University A described how they encouraged international students to participate in extracurricular activities relied on students taking up activities themselves. While the services are available, social networking opportunities were not as clearly embedded in the student journey. When there is more embedded into the student journey, employability is embedded, and everyone receives the same base level (University A Careers Manager 5).

Work experience was a topic which was presented by both staff and students at the universities. Echoing a call from Gribble, Rahimi, and Blackmore (2017), University B Careers Manager 4 called for the need for local work experience for international students to aid in their transition through building their confidence and giving realistic expectations of work. Many staff were aware of the differences in experience that may occur between a home student versus an international student and what they may expect when completing their studies. The need to reflect employability skills developed was seen as an area to improve which would enhance the program and student experience. The narrative situated the university and its services in a position to give students the tools and experience to apply and become aware of their individual employability skills. When discussing the skills employers look for in their hires, students emphasized soft skills such as teamwork and communication as essential.

“There is a bigger sort of emphasis on maybe soft skills and things that you can't necessarily learn, but that you can gain from I don't know, voluntary work or different experiences” (English Group 3 – Slovakian F).

It was recognized that higher education has evolved to the point that just a degree is not enough to demonstrate employability. One student from University A discussed the need for practical experience.

“I feel like we learned a lot in my program in theory of like how to do stuff and kind of like the value of archaeology to the public, for instance...but they don't really build in any kind of like hands-on practical experience” (University A Group 4 – American F).

Small group discussions and survey data highlighted that international students knew that employers were seeking experience beyond a university degree. Students felt that the university should be able to develop that relevant employability. One student discussed the importance of university network relations, and explained:

“The employability in my perspective will increase if I get internship rather than similar training because what the employer wants is the experience, right? And I really hope if the university can offer that. I mean like they can make a partnership with the companies and offer us the internship opportunities as a master’s student” (University A Group 2 – Nigerian M).

It was recognised by international students that in order to adapt their graduate social and cultural capital, they needed relevant experience. For students, the responsibility of the university was to serve as a conduit to provide networks and experiences for a student’s employability journey. Students need opportunities provided by the university to gain employability skills and reflect on the experience and what it means for them moving forward (University B Careers Manager 4). As one member of staff from University A discussed they felt it was the university’s role to furnish students with skills that will increase their employability through internships, a year in industry, or time abroad to diversify their experience and skills (University A ISS Advisor 3).

While discussing networks and employability, some University A staff pointed out that without embedding skills into the curriculum, those students who need help the most often miss out. The conceptual framework is reliant on the social network of international students, service staff, peers, and employers being connected to enhance their cultural and social capital to develop relevant employability skills for their transition to the UK labour market. The weakness or challenge in this is accessing the network. The university is an environment which favours those who are more privileged, wealthy, and highly educated (King and Sondhi, 2018), but often the students who are most deficit in their knowledge of employability and the functioning of the university and labour market are impacted negatively the most.

“Universities are very good at reinforcing already fairly well ingrained privilege. So, we will take good academically capable middle-class students, and we will help them to remain middle class for the rest of their lives. The problem is when you have anything that's extracurricular...is that the students that access them are typically the students that need them least. They're typically the most engaged, most enthusiastic, most motivated students. Often students who will do well anyway” (University A Employability Manager 9).

A positive reasoning for embedding employability skills development within the classroom was that it was a way for these supports to move towards a situation where skills development courses were not just for the ‘keen beans’ but accessible for all and put in a way where they are told it is something they need to do (University A Employability Manager 9). As Employability Manager 9 explained, the employability courses they developed were contained within the student’s course Moodle page and being told they need to complete the activities in tandem with their coursework. From this staff member’s perspective, it was essential to embed employability development into the curriculum. This shift in the way universities can further support their international students was described as a shift into the “territory of teaching and learning and curriculum redesign and development” (University A Employability Manager 9) by university services. Although many university staff tried to make their outreach unmissable, some international students still felt they did not receive the information they needed and wanted more integration in the classroom. One student felt there were no direct points of contact they could talk to about opportunities available to them.

“Maybe more integration with like programs and like, I feel like my program could benefit from having – like we don't have anyone come in to kind of talk to us about CV's and talk to us about kind of jobs from like the Career Centre or something like that” (University A Group 4 – American F).

While not embedded within the curriculum, most University B staff described themselves as being embedded within the student experience. They built the initial contact and network with the students and then made themselves accessible and visible within their student lives thereafter. Most described this as a beneficial use of service by the students because they couldn’t always capture students in the moment but made sure the level of trust and awareness was built with the

students. University B Careers Manager 3 described a broad approach to capturing students, because even with being in the class with the students, information is sometimes lost. Many staff felt it was necessary to be embedded to catch those who would fall through the cracks. As University B Careers Manager 2 described, they also embedded services to automatically enrol international students into induction programmes to help them form those initial connections for students. While these induction programmes are not mandatory for international students to attend, it is highly encouraged and by automatically enrolling them in the programme there is already a placeholder and incentive for them to participate. Through automatic enrolment, the university has created a situation which injects international students into the social network, overcoming the barrier associated with the first point of access for international students. Prior to this induction programme, staff explained how they began reaching out to incoming international students to provide them with information on what to expect in the UK to prepare them for the differences they may encounter from their home country. Careers Manager 1 from University B emphasized that the central careers service was trying to be more involved through the entire international student journey because they recognised the cultural experiences may be quite different to what may be expected of them in the UK.

“[We’re] trying to do a lot more in the recruitment process to help students understand more about the career service just because what we offer both as a university as well as career services more generally in the UK can be quite different to what they might have experienced in their home country” (University B Careers Manager 1).

Most University A staff explained how their approach differed from a university-wide approach to embedded services by placing the responsibility of providing these services on the individual teams and colleges within the university due to the distribution of resources available. This was seen by University A Employability Manager 9 as an area of opportunity to benefit students. Additionally, internationalising the curriculum was also seen to be an area to improve upon in the university to enhance the global awareness, employability, and understanding of all students. Internationalising the curriculum was viewed to enhance learning outcome through the incorporation of international, intercultural, and global dimensions (Jones, 2013; De Wit and Altbach, 2021) which furthered strengthened international students’ social and cultural capital. In

highlighting the development of an internationalised curriculum, there was an awareness of the need to incorporate intercultural competencies within the courses and services provided.

The approaches to employability development detailed by staff and students indicated that the university offered varied levels of support depending on the school, college, or team who supplied the service. While most university staff in this section demonstrated a desire to integrate their services into the curriculum and academic lives of international students, there was less emphasis on the intercultural competencies. The lack of intercultural competency in the integrated employability services approaches achieved the goal of engaging with all students, but with an absence of fostering social networks and cultural capital it lacked acknowledging the cultural differences which impacted a student's ability to make meaning of the skills and knowledge provided. The responsibility of the university in the employability experience of international students continues to involve facilitating social networks which enhance graduate capital. Continuing to explore the development and implementation of employability services, the following section will further elaborate on the level of employability development support offered throughout an institution and the collaborative nature of the teams.

8.4 Responsibility for providing support services: institutional or departmental

While discussing the responsibility of the university to support international student employability, both universities described the challenges associated with supporting international students in their employability without institutional cooperation. The unequal distribution of services can significantly impact graduate capital development as some students will have access to resources and networks that others would not. As some staff described the responsibility or role the university takes is one of distance and leaving the responsibility of supporting students at the individual team level. This makes it a challenge when the services recognize an area, they could provide support, but the university at a higher level does not promote it equally across the institution, making it so some students receive support while others do not. As a staff member expressed:

“We recognise that there's a lot of information that international students need to know, but often we don't always have the right kind of means to promote and equally the right resource... You know, there isn't that much institutional kind of support or support from

the wider service with the international student agenda so that that in itself can be quite challenging” (University B Careers Manager 1).

Some University A staff felt that for things to change, services needed institutional support from a higher level which would empower them to implement change.

“Top down for things to change for things to really, really change and be done differently” (University A Careers Manager 8).

The development of the teaching and learning strategy has resulted in a shift in the role of the careers service at University A, with the service becoming more hands off in their approach to widen access to employability and professional development through academics. As one staff member described by bringing the careers service into a consultancy role, it pivots their role “into being strategic, being professional leaders and influencing and developing assets that academics can then deliver to students on mass” so every student has access to the experience (University A Careers Manager 8).

The disparity between teams, schools, colleges, and university level support to have a uniform response to international student employability also posed a challenge for many staff who did not work with international students in their everyday capacity. Rather than understanding the supports available, staff often passed the responsibility to those they deemed more capable to understand the needs of international students, placing more strain on already limited resources. When there is one person, or one office designated as ‘international support’ it was common for those members of staff to feel that they were the ones automatically contacted to provide international student support even if they felt they were just as knowledgeable as other members of staff within the university.

“There are also challenges of kind of building colleague confidence and capability in working with international students. I think you know the number of times that I've been forwarded stuff because they see the word international and you kind of think you know well 30% of our population is international. We all need to be working effectively with international students and I think sometimes it's just a lack of confidence...and I think it's about helping kind of our colleagues, you know, for those of us that are maybe a bit more in tune with working with international students, how can our colleagues kind of

understand the key questions, issues, topics, et cetera and how to maybe approach them as well is quite an important thing for universities to consider” (University B Career Manager 1).

This disjointed approach to supporting international students created pressure on the careers services and added additional challenges to effectively support students as they navigated support networks to enhance their cultural knowledge. Limited resources and understaffing contributed to the inability for staff to fully support international students, especially with a culturally diverse student population and staff who were rarely exposed to training to understand the intercultural experience (Goodwin and Mbah, 2019). Several staff discussed the capacity issues they had in being accessible and visible for all students, stating they could not handle the number of students with the limited number of staff members they had available.

“The challenge is that we've however X many students, there's only two of us in the school, and you could almost you could almost triple or quadruple us in terms of getting two faces out there. And I'm sure there's people in the school who have no idea who I am who needs that support as well but it's just it's a capacity problem then” (University B Careers Manager 3).

When the population of the students greatly outnumbers the number of staff available, disjointed and limited resources resulted in students falling through the cracks. This echoes a point made in a previous study which asserted that the success of a student's individual efforts is contingent on the availability of resources and structures which ultimately impact a student's daily life (Fakunle, 2021b). While the individual agency of the student is essential to their graduate capital development, the support structures available contribute to their ability to access and avail of services. Without access to these networks, international students risk not being able to engage with the culture and experiences to fully develop their employability skills and successfully transition to the UK labour market.

For several staff at University A there was a tendency to work within silos, maintaining their own resources within their groups. Some staff described a sense of competition among teams and departments which prevented collaborations or the sharing of knowledge to better support international students. It was common for services to refer students to other services without knowing much about what that service did or offered to students according to University A ISS

Advisor 3. Business schools from both universities were highlighted as having the resources to engage with their international students, specifically their Chinese students. University A Careers Manager 3 who was in the business school was able to offer classes specifically for Chinese students.

“We do target them specifically to our international students. For our Chinese students I work with a company in China called Lock in China who do sessions for students who are returning to China and we’ll target market those students when sessions like that come up and they’re very popular because they’re run in Mandarin, so they tend to get quite good attendance” (University A Careers Manager 5).

While many of the central careers managers highlighted the individuality and asynchronous support available, it is interesting to find that teams who have access to resources can provide individualised supports for groups of international students. As staff members described their work in enhancing international student employability, there was a connection formed between the responsibility of the university in their role in employability development and the network connections formed between services, teams, and colleges. Several staff members discussed the need to work outside of the silos the different university services operate within to work together to support employability development. In regard to how universities approach the international student journey and the relationships that services across the university need to build and maintain a staff member stated:

“Equally institutions need to really start thinking about this (employability), not just from a this is the responsibility of the career service perspective but from a wider institutional perspective” (University B Career Manager 1).

This Careers Manager highlighted that at the university level they felt it was the university’s responsibility to enhance the international student employability experience and there was need to enhance the resources available to support students. They described their experience as a builder of these bridges among other teams as ‘luck’ but pointed out that when they left that position, those relationships would disappear. From the perspective of many University B staff, it was important for the university to recognise the need to facilitate collaboration among university teams as a responsibility to enhance employability development among their students. While some University B staff had already worked to build relationships among other teams,

several staff at University A acknowledged that more support would be needed to enhance working relationships among teams. This compliments previous studies which highlighted how a lack of coordination among university teams led to confusion and inefficiency in understanding challenges presented by international students (Goodwin and Mbah, 2019). There were sentiments of teams or departments throughout University A wanting to protect themselves and seeing themselves in competition with each other (University A Career Manager 1). Another staff member described the way colleges work as they are “very much their own little islands within the university” but that they, similar to University B had managed to form networks to get other departments to support their work (University A Career Manager 10). University A Careers Manager 5 felt that the separation of teams and departments which impacted student employability was at a disadvantage the more they remained disconnected.

“[The] volume of communication that goes out at the [University] in particular, you're quite a big university that's quite fragmented, I would say and everyone communicates with students as if they're their own. So, the volume of communication that students get means that kind of competing almost against yourself for stuff so that that has been a huge challenge” (University A Careers Manager 5).

In addition to building network relationships among other departments within the university, staff were expected by the university to develop employer network relationships. The university wanted employer engagement but framed this development as the responsibility of the careers managers to develop and maintain the networks and ensure a beneficial understanding for the students. Several staff were then concerned about the longevity of these networks, emphasizing that the amount of time and resources expected of staff was a challenge (University A Careers Manager 10).

The lack of unified information and resources available for staff to support international students' employability development impacted resource distribution negatively. For many of the staff who handled the university wide careers service support at University A there was a recurring theme of limited resources available to always support students which echoed findings from Tran et al. (2022c). A majority of university staff have been increasingly concerned with the misalignment of resources and funding at the institutional level which has limited their ability to deliver adequate services for students (Tran *et al.*, 2022c). To support international students,

services provided should be supported by the university to deliver equitable resources. The disjointed approach to careers services across universities weakens the ability of staff to facilitate networks for international students and engage in ways to enhance intercultural competencies. Careers Manager 10 at University A noted their ability to work with limited resources to provide their services for all students.

“I think we do very well with extremely limited resources. Appallingly limited resources, to be honest, compared to other Russell Group universities if you talk about staff as a resource. Yeah, I mean, that limits everything. I mean, we do very, very well. I think I am one person to deal with a whole college” (University A Careers Manager 10).

The lack of resources described by the staff in this study appeared to compliment a sentiment described by international students in a previous study. Students felt that the careers services were neither empathetic to their situation nor knowledgeable about resources applicable to their unique circumstances, which negatively impacted their perception and use of the services (Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos, 2011).

Another point presented by both universities was the frequency of use by international students. For most staff there was a repeated narrative of overuse of services by international students. This was to the point that students began to lack the confidence to apply their employability skills (University A Careers Manager 5). To address this, both universities implemented alternative means of putting limitations on use. The careers service at University A implemented a fair use policy which allowed students to book up to three appointments to reduce the number of ‘frequent flyer’ students (University A Careers Managers 8 & 10). University B careers’ service was more reflective, where staff who would recognise that students were booking multiple appointments at once would have to be frank and direct with the student to ensure they were getting the most out of the appointment and not holding the slot up for other students (University B Careers Manager 1).

To counteract the challenge of managing student queries with limited staff, University A was shifting towards digital pathways and asynchronous learning by students. The approach of University A service delivery shifted towards digital and mass delivery. Rather than forming close contact connections with students, the delivery has become more hands-off and

asynchronous. They developed digital learning resources to provide careers master classes with the ambition to create more E-learning assets (University A Careers Manager 6 & 8).

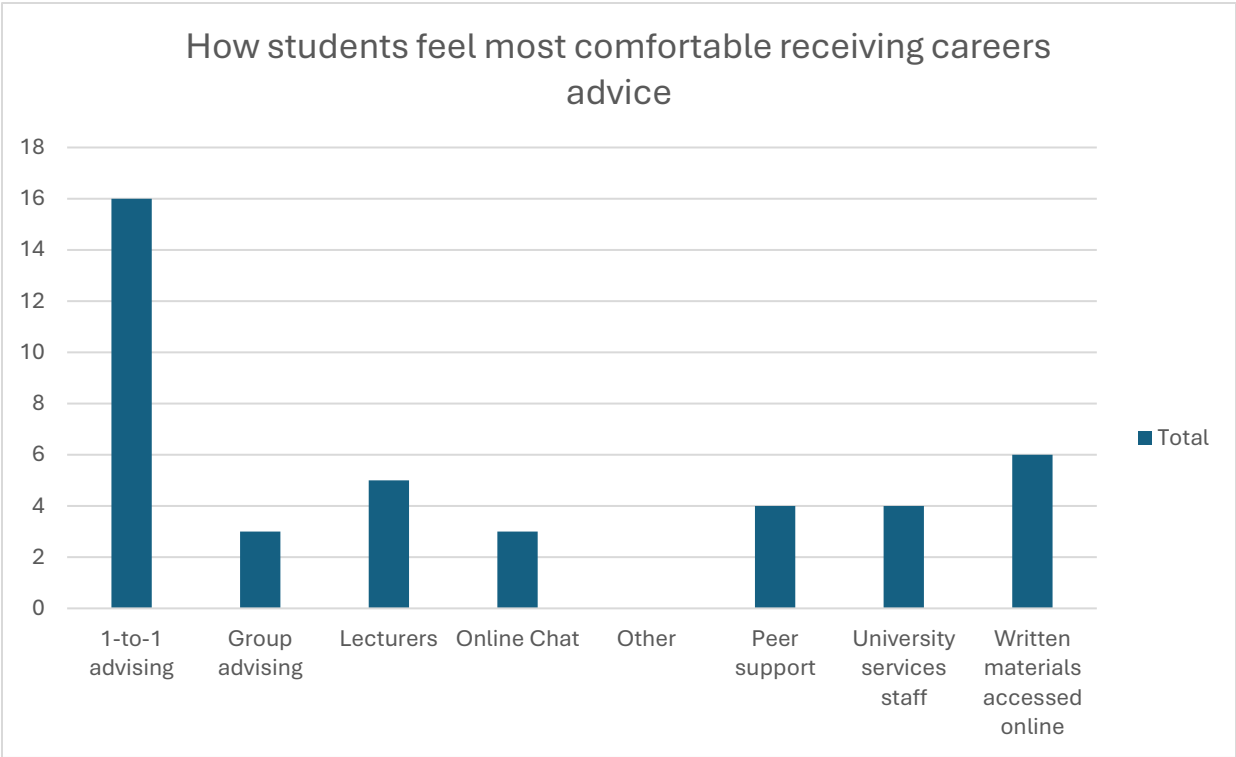
To balance the responsibility of the university with their available resources, the use of digital pathways filters students from making in-person appointments, reserving appointments for students who are really struggling. University A Careers Manager 6 described this filtering system as a ‘soft barrier’ where students must answer certain questions before they are able to book a one-to-one appointment. This was due to the demand on the careers service at the university level and implemented to minimise the strain on already limited resources. While University A careers services staff implemented a filtering system to prevent students from making ‘unnecessary’ in-person appointments, University B careers services staff maintained their booking system to allow students to continue to make appointments. Many of the Careers Managers at University B felt that their international students needed the support and acknowledged that the students felt a sense of trust and connection with the careers service staff because of how visible they were as a service. Despite these differing approaches to international student use of services, there was still a sentiment from both universities that international students were some of the most common repeat users of the careers service. Both universities recognised the repeats or ‘frequent flyer’ students and expressed that they needed to see how students were actively progressing from their appointments to create a traceable journey in their employability development. For students who wanted to access and utilise the careers service, the filtering process was more off-putting. One student who had thought about using the careers service described their experience:

“[I’m] irritated with it to be honest. When I got to the website and had to click through all they have like a lot of links which I think is very helpful for like filtering people out just so like if you don't actually need to make an appointment to talk with somebody. But I was like Ah! I don't want to look through all this” (University A Group 4 – American F).

While this student had demonstrated the intention to use the careers service towards their employability development, the filtering discouraged them from continuing to seek out assistance. This student’s sentiments were echoed in the survey data findings which found that a majority of students preferred one-to-one appointments to receive careers and employability skills advice. If careers services create their own barriers for international students to overcome

in attempting to enhance their employability skills, then they are limiting their inclusion within the students’ social networks and graduate capital development.

Table 4 How students prefer to receive careers/employability advice



The challenges described by both universities consisted of difficulties in providing consistent support for international students due to a lack of institutional cooperation and resources. Each university approached these challenges in the way they felt would support their students the best with the resources they possessed. The divisions and competition among university services was a struggle and hindered collaboration and providing effective support for students, further restricting their ability to develop social and cultural capital which are essential in their employability journey. Due to the limited resources available, both universities recognised the importance of tracking student progress while using their services. However, this process was not widely welcomed by students who felt it limited their accessibility to supports they felt they needed. Overall, there was a call for institutional change to be more collaborative and to provide better resource allocation and alignment to improve the employability support for international students by improving cross-departmental initiatives to better equip students for a successful transition to the UK labour market.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the approaches implemented by university services towards the employability development of their international students. While an individual responsibility to develop employability was maintained by both students and staff, there were two approaches to how to support the student employability development experience. The individualistic approach focused on having services available for students to seek out and engage with proactively. The integrated approach focused on embedding employability within the curriculum so that all students would be exposed to employability skills and knowledge. Although these approaches offered different ways for students and staff to engage in employability development, there was a lack of intercultural competence. For most staff, the services they provided as part of either approach rarely accounted for the cultural differences of students.

In instances where services did develop support for international students this was not done through a university wide strategy but rather through the initiative of individual services and their staff. The lack of cohesive cooperation among internal teams and the reliance on individual teams to support international students in their employability development does not provide a uniform level of support to students and limits the reach of resources available. For international students to make use of the employability services they were expected to interpret their experiences the same as a home student. This emphasised a challenge for international students in their graduate capital, especially in learning to navigate cultural nuances and expectations of local employers. Additionally, social networks play a crucial role in the employability development experience of international students yet they often struggle with navigating networks in ways that home students would not.

It is essential to ensure the approach by universities is balanced and accessible to meet the needs of all students, including those who may struggle with culture differences which would impact their levels of engagement. Universities must consider how their approach to service delivery is perceived by students and how they are willing to engage with the career's services. There is a complexity demonstrated in examining the international student experience through an emphasis on the responsibility of universities, service staff, and international students. An independent responsibility to employability development is challenged by the idea that staff and students must both have a mutual understanding and cooperation, especially regarding cultural diversity

and intercultural competence. Universities play a crucial role in delivering employability support that is accessible and meaningful to all students. The awareness of cultural differences and how individuals make meaning out of their experiences is an area that requires further investigation to support international students to be successful in independently developing their employability skills.

Chapter 9 Discussion and Conclusion

9.1 Overview

This chapter moves beyond the thematic analysis presented in Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight to combine the conceptual discussions of international student employability development experiences during their studies at a UK university. Section 9.2 readdresses the research questions presented in Chapter One and reiterates the main findings while bringing in the existing literature. Section 9.3 considers the theoretical interpretations, contributions, and limitations of the thesis. Section 9.4 provides the practical implications for university service staff and university institutions and provides practical suggestions for university staff and international students to further enhance employability development efforts for international students. Section 9.5 and 9.6 reflect on the limitations of this study and on my personal and professional development as a researcher on this PhD journey. Finally, Section 9.8 summarises and concludes the thesis, providing implications and reflection for those who would pursue similar paths of research.

9.2 Contribution to the existing literature on international student employability

The aim of this study has been to investigate the international student and staff perspectives on their employability experience and the role university services play in supporting their development. This has been through focusing on international students' interactions with employability services, using exploratory interviews to examine the perceptions of staff and international students, and further exploring the social networks and capital developed by international students through a comprehensive survey. Applying an analytical strategy using the graduate capital model and social network analysis – two theoretical approaches used as the conceptual framework for this study, I focused on the graduate capital of international students in the UK in relation to their social network between staff, co-national peers, international peers, and domestic peers. The use of this framework explored the impact of relationship comfort and awareness in connection with international students' confidence in their employability skills development within their host country. The application of this strategy and use of research methods have revealed various opinions regarding the role the university plays in developing student employability and how services are to be delivered to international students as part of the whole student body within universities.

The aim of this study was achieved by addressing the following research questions:

- What employability means for international students at the completion of their studies?
- What are the facilitators and inhibitors to international students' employability experience at the university level when beginning their transition to employment?
- To what extent can application of the graduate capital model enhance our understanding international student transition to the labour market in the UK?
- What is the responsibility of the university in international student employability from support staff perspectives?

By analysing the implementation and development of employability skills in higher education, this thesis has demonstrated how the role of stakeholders can directly and indirectly impact international student employability skills development. This section will conclude by addressing the key findings in relation to the research questions posed in Chapter One, and further discuss the value and contribution of this thesis to the current literature on international student employability and the role of the university.

9.2.1 What employability means for international students at the completion of their studies?

The concept of employability was addressed by international students through a range of individual and contextual factors. The factors were often interconnected and impacted how students viewed their employability development journey. A singular definition of what employability means was not agreed upon but was described as the skills, knowledge and attitudes which contribute to the individual's ability to gain and maintain their career (Fakunle, 2021b). This study asked international students to define what employability was to them. For international students, the definition of employability was the skills and knowledge for them to gain employment in an area relevant to their degree. For many students, the main reason for completing a degree in the UK was with the ambition to enhance their career prospects. This was either through advancing their expertise in a subject they were already well studied in, or completely changing their career trajectory. Chapter Two has provided a detailed account of the literature on graduate employability including student mobility for enhanced career prospects (Brooks and Waters, 2022), skills and attributes required driven by national policies (Fakunle

and Pirrie, 2020), and readiness to enter the labour market (Gribble, Rahimi and Blackmore, 2017). This section will not reiterate what has already been covered in the literature review but rather relate them to the findings and emphasize the contribution.

The career prospects element played an important role in international students' understanding of employability. Students often linked work experience and career prospects with employability when asked about their motivations to study in the UK and what their concept of employability was. Nilsson and Ripmeester (2016) argue that student expectations of enhanced employability are impacted by their international mobility experiences and expectations of career prospects following graduation. They go on to discuss that this expectation is not matched to the employment outcomes of students in their study and further requires more work by higher education institutions to bridge this gap. Similarly, Fakunle (2021a) argues that international student mobility is often pursued with the intention to enhance employability through education combined with relevant work experience but bridging education and work experience can often be a challenge for international students. I found that work experience was indeed an area international students desired in their experience abroad, either through their own pursuit or through embedded experiences within their programmes. Particularly master's level students mentioned they had chosen their programme and to study in the UK with the intention to gain work experience to apply to their host country or take with them back home. For these students, it was a rarity to find any of them who had been able to participate in internships or projects which were directly related to their theoretical learning. In addition to not being able to give examples of practical work experience they felt enhanced their employability through their studies, many students mentioned their disappointment in the support offered by the university to enhance their employability and career prospects. Most students were aware of the need to develop their employability for their future careers but felt they were often left or expected to navigate their development individually. This finding corresponds with Fakunle's (2021a) study of 19 international students in the UK who expressed that they felt they needed employability support but were disappointed in the lack of targeted support for international students. The expectations of employability development and career prospects students had prior to beginning their programme was often not met by the end. Although Huang and Turner's (2018) UK study found that international students acknowledged their employability development is largely a self-formation process, cultural differences impacted students' interactions with careers services to

advance their employability. Therefore, to understand more how international students approach their career prospects, it is important to view the cultural backgrounds that influence their decisions and approach to employability development.

The aspect of cultural backgrounds, specifically social class was identified within the employability context. While discussing career ambitions and employability some students, particularly those from more collectivist and family-oriented backgrounds, discussed how their family influenced their degree programme selection, acceptable work experience, and acceptable graduate careers. For example, in Chapter Six a female student from India talked about how she was facing rejections from her applications because she did not have any part-time work experience. She explained that it was very common in her home country to not have a part-time job, saying that her family perceived that if she was to be working while studying it was a reflection that they could not afford to support her in her studies. While other students in the interviews did not specifically identify their families as the reason for their lack of work experience, others, particularly Chinese students discussed that they also did not have work experience and were aware of the disadvantage it caused them in demonstrating their employability in the UK labour market. These experiences align with Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen (2021) which posited that international students must go through a level of adjustment between balancing their home and host country cultures, and if this adjustment is mismatched it can prevent students from seeking support. The social and cultural impact of their home culture appeared to be significantly influential in how international students approach and navigate their pursuit of employability.

While these cultural differences have been acknowledged in the literature, many staff presented differing opinions on why international students lack work experience or are more disengaged with their employability development than home students in the UK. Reflecting on social class and employability from the staff perspective, there was a prevailing narrative that reflected international students came from wealthy families and were not used to working part-time jobs like how their UK peers would have been. This finding corresponds with King and Sondhi's (2018) study on Indian student's motivations to study abroad in the UK as being a trait of students from traditionally privileged, wealthy, and highly educated classes. However, social class is not a static concept, with the boundaries of classes and mobility constantly shifting as

economies and circumstances change globally. The assumption by some staff members demonstrated a preconceived idea of what employability is and how students develop valuable employability skills and how motivated international students are to enhance their employability and career prospects. The preconception held about the motivations international students have to study abroad often align with a stereotype that they are only there due to family pressures or as a way to migrate to their host country (Tran and Vu, 2016). Similar to how teachers positioned themselves in Tran and Vu's (2016) study to educate all students to a certain level due to presumptions they hold about an international student's reasoning to study abroad, many service staff in this study applied similar presumptions which limited the support offered to international students in their employability development. Service staff at the universities explained that international students "can't quite get why [work experience outside the university] matters" (University A Career Manager 10). There was a common commentary among service staff members that highlighted the cultural differences international students experience when it comes to developing their employability. Many staff highlighted the ways in which international students were different to their home peers in seeking out how to develop their employability, from home students knowing that they needed part-time work experience, extracurricular activities, and other outside interests. The assumption that international students have a responsibility to adapt to their host systems and are expected to approach their employability development the same as their home peers acts as a way to exclude international students (Tran and Hoang, 2023).

While cultural differences were acknowledged by service staff members, the expectation remained that international students were individually responsible for their pursuit of employability development. Consistent with findings by Huang (2013), a majority of international students in this study viewed their employability development as their individual responsibility. This demonstrated that students understood employability to be a set of skills, attributes, and experiences necessary to secure better employment opportunities. For many of the interviewed international students who expressed feelings associated with cost and family, there was a pressure to succeed and repay their family for the time and money put into their overseas education. The familial situation of all international students was not known but the narrative expressed describes the economic rationale findings by Fakunle (2021a) that students will seek out financial aid from governments, friends, and family members to study abroad to enhance

their employability. Different to the social class view presumed by service staff at the university, international student's families would save money to send their children abroad to circumvent the competitive home country education system in hopes of upward social mobility (Huang, 2013; King and Sondhi, 2018). The application of social class in the international student employability experience discussion has demonstrated that although employability development is offered equally to students, the presumptive narrative of many service staff can result in a lack of empathy to their needs. Thus, resulting in international students navigating what employability is and how to develop it through their cultural lens and self-adaptation.

The employability discourse is often framed around developing the skills, knowledge and attributes of home students through national policies (Fakunle and Pirrie, 2020). While national policies were not discussed by staff or international students, there was a focus on the employability support of home students compared to international students. Many students recognised the differences between themselves and home students, especially in their experiences expressing that they felt their employability was less valued than home students. In Chapter Eight, a Chinese student explained that even though they had been educated in the same programme, home students were more valued by employers because of the desire to hire local talent (Zevallos, 2012). This was a driver for them to increase their employability and become more competitive than home students. While international students felt they either had to increase their employability or accept lower skilled level positions after graduation and work their way up, they did not make a connection to external experiences unlike several of the service staff. The exclusion of extracurricular activities or experiences outside of the university was a notable difference between the international student and staff narrative. University service staff members discussed in Chapter Eight that international students were no different in their employability to their home student peers, but emphasized their competitiveness was diminished by a lack of skills, knowledge and attributes that was mainly acquired outside of the classroom (Gribble, Rahimi and Blackmore, 2017). As one careers manager described, European students were more engaged in clubs and societies, while Chinese students tended to not get involved in extracurricular activities. The separation between how international students frame their employability value and how university service staff expect students to develop their employability hindered the acculturation process and student's satisfaction with their employability experience (Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen, 2021). While international students

demonstrated their awareness of needing work experience to gain employability, the value alignment or misalignment impacted their adjustment to developing their employability in line with what staff members viewed as the norm through external activities. International students are continuously choosing to study overseas with the intention to enhance their employability and competitiveness in the labour market (Jones, 2013), and most demonstrated an awareness of the skills, knowledge, and attributes required of them. Students from a variety of countries recognised the employability soft skills of teamwork and communication as essential to the UK labour market but a narrative on home versus international student employability prevailed in the discussion of development and competitiveness.

As students discussed their readiness to enter the labour market in the UK, there was an expectation that their education and degree would be enough to secure them a graduate level position. As one Indonesian student in Chapter Eight stated they were only going to apply for a graduate scheme so they could gain experience relevant to their degree for a few years before returning home. While the expectation to go directly into a graduate scheme position was not expressed by all students, most respondents in the survey indicated they were not confident in their ability to gain employment in the UK following their graduation with only four out of twenty-eight expressing confidence. This finding is consistent with student interviews where some students had begun job-seeking but found they were rarely successful in moving past the application stage. While this was disheartening for many students, they rationalised their rejections with needing to try harder or not applying at the right time. As a Chinese student in Chapter Seven discussed, they had been encouraged by a careers advisor that their rejections were more likely to do with them applying too early, though they questioned the sincerity of the advisor and felt they wanted to give them confidence. The confidence students expressed in their readiness to enter the UK labour market was often linked to their visa status and language ability. This finding corresponds with Zevallos' (2012) study which found that non-native English speaking international students in Australia were less successful in finding work than their English-speaking or Australian-born peers. For most staff, this reality was well known, and they described their role as being reassuring to students in their transition to the labour market but also ensuring expectations were realistic. As many service staff managed the expectations of international students, they demonstrated an awareness of the obstacles and biases employers may exhibit, similar to the concept of work and the glass ceiling (Blackmore and Rahimi, 2019).

The readiness to enter the labour market for international students is a combination of their expectations and confidence in their employability, while their lived experiences indicate inhibitors to their transition to employment.

All the elements described above have an interrelated impact on what employability means for international students at the end of their studies. For international students, there were high expectations in their career prospects and readiness to enter the labour market through the international mobility experience. This expectation was balanced by a knowledge that skills, knowledge and attributes were necessary to enhance their employability. While several students discussed familial pressures which had prevented them from gaining work experience, some staff cited social class and family wealth as an excuse of privileged international students. The stigma of attaching this label on international students runs the risk of adversely impacting the support they receive to understand how to develop their employability in the UK (Tran and Vu, 2016). For international students, employability for them was a balance between appreciating the skills and knowledge they learned from their home country and the adaptation needed to understand and engage with the UK labour market. Although employability was largely discussed as the skills and knowledge needed to gain and maintain their career (Fakunle, 2021b), the inclusion of intercultural competencies as a key to understanding its development was a focal point. The social and cultural challenges expressed by many of the staff and international students highlighted how multi-dimensional the employability experience can be for students.

9.2.2 What are the facilitators and inhibitors to international students' employability experience at the university level when beginning their transition to employment?

The second research question sought to investigate the facilitators and inhibitors that impact the international student's employability journey. Facilitators evidenced included a feeling of independence to pursue work and opportunities, and connections formed with academic and service staff. The inhibitors largely focused on the adjustment to the host country's culture. From understanding the host culture and recognising the differences between their home culture and the UK's, to then applying their skills in the context of the UK labour market. Intercultural competencies and communication competencies inhibited students' experience in making sense of the services offered and understanding the cultural nuances of living and working in the UK.

As students discussed their employability development, the aspect of being independent in their development and trying out the process for themselves was a facilitator of their employability experience. As a Slovakian and a Nigerian student discussed in Chapter Six, the process of applying for positions themselves and going through the interviews was good practice and gave them real world experiences, especially in the UK context. This sentiment was reflected in findings from Fakunle's (2021b) study. This again linked to the notion that international students felt they should have individual experiences which will enhance their skills and knowledge outside of educational outcomes. For students who succeeded in securing part-time positions while studying in the UK, they expressed the feelings they had from the interview process versus in their home countries. Some students, such as an Indonesian student felt a sense of 'dignity and respect' and like they were treated 'like the CEO' which encouraged them to find work in the UK. This corresponds with Huang, Turner and Chen's (2014) study which found that Chinese students studying in the UK were most influenced by their individual skills and attitudes, labour market, and work culture to develop their employability. The transition to employment and student's employability development was positively influenced by their own level of confidence in applying their skills and knowledge. This level of confidence was interrelated with their cultural adjustment to the UK and workplace adaptation. Cultural adaptation and adjustment were a significant facilitator as well as inhibitor to international student's transition to the UK workplace.

Findings on inhibitors to international students experience in their transition from university to employment reflected findings from previous studies which demonstrated that a misalignment of intercultural competencies and cultural adjustment can hinder students' transition (Zevallos, 2012; Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen, 2021). An understanding of the host culture from cultural expectations to leveraging their skills, knowledge, and attributes in the setting of the UK, and possessing a high level of language and communicative competence were reflected on by many students as the main inhibitors they faced in transitioning to the UK labour market. Cultural expectations and understanding were expressed by most university service staff and international students as a challenge to overcome. The cultural differences caused stress and anxiety in students trying to navigate the UK labour market, corresponding with Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen's (2021) study linking the misalignment of values to a student's positive adjustment. For students who did not come from a cultural background similar to the UK, the differences posed

challenges for them to overcome individually. In Chapter Six, an Indonesian student discussed how for them coming from a collectivist society, it was hard to have initiative to seek out information from services or other sources because it was not in their culture. Similarly, a Nigerian student explained in Chapter Eight that in their culture they would not email or contact lecturers with questions because it was seen as questioning their authority. The exploration of cultural differences and the impact on an international student's employability development journey was a common topic during interviews. Many students felt that the services provided by the university to support their employability development were often generic offerings which did not lend to their understanding of specific UK nuances when it came to navigating their transition. There was a disappointment expressed by several students over the lack of support which targeted international student cultural competencies. This corresponds with Fakunle's (2021b) study which found that many international students were disappointed in the careers services offered by their UK university as they were primarily designed for home students. This sentiment was echoed by students in this study as they expressed that the support, they were given was not applicable, because of their cultural background. In Chapter Five, an American student explained that as an international student they did not have the same starting point as home students and therefore were not able to navigate these answers in the same way as a home student might. This difference in support and understanding also led to a lack of confidence by several international students to be able to secure a job when compared with their home student peers, feeling they should be willing to accept lower-pay or lower levelled jobs (Khawaja and Stallman, 2011). Although most of the students interviewed had availed of the career's services, their experiences made the services feel unwelcoming and that they lacked supports which provided an equity of opportunity. As an Indian student in Chapter Six explained, the university treats everyone the same and, in that way, they are excluding a group of students who need help in navigating the UK labour market.

While most service staff and international students were aware of the cultural differences, the approach to navigating employability development was not aligned. As an inhibitor, staff recognised the challenges cultural differences pose for international students transitioning from university to the labour market. The homogenous approach of one-to-one appointments, careers fairs, and networking events were intended for all students, but were disproportionately attended by international students. Many staff viewed this as the individual uptake of support services

which they expected students to initiate, yet the overuse of services put a strain on the already limited resources (Fakunle, 2021b). Although several international students did use the services provided by their universities to enhance their employability, many staff members emphasized the need for them to make sure international students were realistic in their employment expectations. Many of the university service staff recognised the cultural differences and the impact on international students' transition to employment in the UK but maintained it was the individual student's responsibility to develop themselves. While some staff provided services targeted to support international student employability and their transition to employment, without fully comprehending the cultural differences international students will continue to be disadvantaged against home students (Goodwin and Mbah, 2019).

Competency in the English language was an inhibitor for many international students whose first language was not English from the perspective of students and staff. Many students who were primarily from China voiced that they felt their language ability was a main factor to their inability to gain work experience in the UK. Corresponding with Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos' (2011) study, most students felt that their English language fluency or lack thereof limited their competitiveness in the UK market with employers not being as friendly to international students. For some students this diminished their confidence in seeking out support from services or in-person appointments and they preferred to find information online or through email. From many of the staff's perspective in Chapter Eight, an international student's English language must be perfect because anything that stands out will be discredited by employers. Most staff agreed that the hardest barrier for international students to overcome was often their English Proficiency, distinguishing between their academic and professional language ability. Similar to Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha's (2021) study on employer perspectives of international student employability, several staff held a negative perception of non-native English speaking students' language skills and their ability to adapt to the British work culture.

While language aptitude was discussed from both the staff and student perspective, many international students expressed that their lack of confidence in the English language came not from a low English language ability level but rather a lack of confidence in communicating using the cultural nuances expected by locals familiar with the UK culture and community. This finding came through the investigation into the relationships and confidence levels international

students feel when exhibiting their employability to employers described in Chapter Seven and Eight. Although students were not asked directly about their intercultural competence, it became evident that they associated their language abilities to being able to relate to the UK labour market and locals. Language proficiency was often used as an all-encompassing barrier, which hides deeper cultural issues (Valencia-Forrester and Backhaus, 2020). This was highlighted by a staff member from University A in Chapter Eight who explained that even a student from the US or Canada would struggle to adapt culturally to the business etiquette and social norms of the UK. For most students there was a social learning curve they had to overcome and be able to understand how and why CVs, applications, and interviews were done in a certain way. A Slovakian student explained in Chapter Eight that before coming to the UK they had not even considered there would be differences. As this student has demonstrated, the effectiveness of services is only as useful as it is understood. For university services maintaining the equal application of services without the consideration of student's cultural differences serves to disadvantage students from availing of the service to its full potential (Goodwin and Mbah, 2019). Cultural differences were often grouped together with language proficiency as part of a student's communication skills. As students navigated their employability journey, they desired more specialised support for their unique circumstances.

As students discussed the support they received from the university services, there was a mutual understanding that as an individual they were responsible for acquiring their employability skills. Although individual responsibility was accepted, students expressed a need for differentiation in information provided for them to successfully navigate their transition to the UK labour market. As a Slovakian student pointed out, "there are many things that for home students perhaps are common sense and they just don't need to be told that while international students might need to be told." Corresponding with findings from Fakunle and Pirrie (2020), many international students observed deficiencies in the university services to develop supports which addressed overcoming the inhibitors faced by international students. Several students from both universities spoke of wanting tailored support which would enhance their competitiveness. Several staff members acknowledged the importance of supporting their international students but approached this in different ways. Most University B staff were proactive in developing customised support which included workshops and pathways such as the China Career Gateway. Most University A staff focused on unified services which could adapt to international students' unique needs,

though they were in the process of developing additional supports for international students. Just as Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen (2021) discussed that a one-size does not fit all due to the diversity of the student population, most international students and staff recognised the differences which impacted their transition to employment. While international students have access to all services to develop their employability, intercultural and language competencies provide barriers in the student transition to employment experience.

9.2.3 To what extent can application of the graduate capital model enhance our understanding international student transition to the labour market in the UK?

The third research question sought to investigate to what extent the graduate capital model can enhance our understanding of the international student transition to the UK labour market. In relation to the concept of social networks and graduate capital, an unexpected result was how prominent intercultural skills and competencies became as a central point in discussions. As Jones (2013) defined in their study, intercultural competence is the dynamic process of learning and adapting skills to effectively and appropriately communication across cultures. While asking questions related to social networks and skills or capital development of international students, there was a repeated emphasis of cultural fit and integration. This reoccurring narrative revolved around the intercultural skills and value viewed by both students and staff. Most students acknowledged the differences between the UK culture and their home culture, pointing out the values, knowledge, and everyday nuances they were accustomed to in their home country could at times cause stress when trying to adapt to the UK customs and cultural values. Several students in Chapter Seven described wanting to make friends outside of their co-national peers but often found it difficult because local students already had their social circles. The social networks of international students were viewed by several staff and students as important factors when adapting to the UK. When staff described the challenges faced by international students in their employability development and adaptation to the UK, many often brought up cultural differences and a lack of language competence by the student. While not a universally expressed opinion, many staff in their interviews expressed preconceived notions that rationalised why international students did not always succeed in integrating within the university and transition to the UK workplace. Difficulty in English language ability and staying within their familiar co-national social networks was viewed by most staff as a significant reason why international students struggled in understanding the UK and making use of university provided services.

Although language aptitude was often described as a main inhibitor, many staff linked this to cultural and communicative competencies as a determinant of an international student's ability to enhance their employability skills development. Communication competencies are not held only in the realm of linguistics but also include "discourse (capacity to speak and write in a suitable context), actional (capacity to convey communicative intent), sociocultural (capacity to use culturally appropriate language), and strategic (capacity to learn the language in the context)" (Pham, 2021a, p. 3). Cultural etiquette and knowledge of UK business culture was addressed by several staff who felt that international students who did not understand the differences were placed at a disadvantage and created a barrier to their integration into the UK workplace. This corresponds with Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen's (2021) findings in explaining how a misalignment in student-university values leads to hesitation in seeking out support, negatively impacting their acculturation. As a staff member in Chapter Eight explained, international students are aware of the social and cultural capital in their awareness of the markets and culture. Although they are aware, home students still possess a higher understanding of their environment and can adapt to the transition to the labour market. While there was some recognition by staff that cultural differences created barriers for international students to overcome, the institutional approach to assist them in overcoming cultural barriers varied which hindered their employability skills development during their studies. Both universities offered varied services targeted towards international students, but intercultural understanding was not explicitly apparent as an objective in the curriculum objectives of employability skills development.

Intercultural competency was expressed by both international students and university staff as essential to employability development. This was described as understanding individual self-worth, the value fit, and social integration. The different ways international students approached university services stemmed from their varied understanding of how to develop their skills. The cultural background and lived experiences of international students impacted how they viewed the need for work experience, where they sourced information, and who they approached for help while developing their employability skills at university. Work experience was discussed in Chapter Eight by students and staff, often with the impression of being deficit in valuable work experience. From the student perspective, work experience in their home country was either not expected or they perceived it as being less valued than UK work experience. Corresponding with Fakunle (2021b), several students viewed UK work experience as a way to make themselves

comparable and competitive against home students. This sense of needing to find local work experience supports the cultural dimension of graduate capital as a significant factor in capital formation (Tomlinson, 2017). Although some students had found part-time work in the UK, they did not understand how applicable it was to their employability and future transition to graduate employment. Even with external work experiences, many students desired the university to take a more proactive role in providing them with work experience or internships relevant to their education. As a student in Chapter Five described their archaeology course there was a desire to move beyond theoretical and apply hands-on experience. Another student from Nigeria was aware of the experience they needed in their field and felt that the university should offer opportunities for students to enhance their employability through internship opportunities with partnering employers. This finding corresponds with Fakunle (2021a) which revealed that international students had an expectation of the university to provide embedded work-integrated learning opportunities. Work experience was seen as a vital step for international students to build their employability capital within their host country.

Cultural background also impacted how and where international students would source information regarding their employability and employment. Most students from traditionally collectivist cultures tended to focus on receiving and sharing information through friends and informal connections. A Nigerian student often used group forums and chats, while an Indonesian student relied on her friends to pass along essential information. For the Nigerian and Indonesian student, emailing lecturers or approaching services for a one-to-one appointment was a foreign concept. These students explained how approaching those in positions of authority, such as a lecturer, was viewed as questioning their authority which was not accepted in their cultures. Instead, there was an expectation that students would share amongst each other, but these students had to adjust to a more individualistic method of sourcing information. These students relied on their access to certain social groups (social capital) and knowledge of how to negotiate within a social setting (cultural capital) to make meaning of their new environment (Tomlinson, 2017).

Applying social capital in the form of their already known knowledge and experience from their home country to their host environment develops new social networks of support with other co-national and international students as they transition to the UK (Montgomery and McDowell,

2009). While these students attempted to make sense of their new environment through the lens of their home culture, it at times resulted in a misunderstanding of how an individual is expected to operate within the social and cultural constructs of the UK university. This misunderstanding then continued to be a barrier to their transition to the labour market. Many staff also highlighted in Chapter Eight the cultural differences they had observed, anecdotally explaining how students from Chinese backgrounds or similar were not used to seeking out help or being asked their opinion because they did not want to waste a staff member's time. Staff and students both acknowledged the cultural differences which impacted an international student's ability to know how to source information like home students within the university.

In seeking out help to develop their employability skills, cultural backgrounds and social networks played a key role in the information shared and the confidence of developing employability skills for transitioning to the UK labour market. Most international students described barriers in integrating in social networks outside of their co-national and international peers although they had the desire to make friends with their home student peers. However, a distinction was made between students of different cultural backgrounds as to the level of comfort they felt in seeking out careers or employability support from the professional services. Typically, students from a cultural background which prioritised a collective community and family networks (e.g. Indonesian, Chinese, Nigerian, and Indian students) preferred a collectivist approach to seek out help or share information from peers, or at times lecturers they were familiar with. This was dissimilar to students from more individualist backgrounds, such as American students, who functioned more independently in seeking out support. Several international students who had developed a relationship with staff members felt they had someone they could trust to help them understand the employment process in the UK. A Chinese student described how they had come to rely on the support of a member of staff because they were so friendly and welcoming. Though from many of the staff's perspective in Chapter Five, they had to limit this use by students due to the limited resources and not being able to accommodate regular one-to-one support. There was an interesting distinction between interviews and the survey responses over who students sought out for advice on employment in the UK after graduation. Most of the students in the interviews responded they trusted the careers services, while most students in the survey responded they trusted their friends and peers from the UK. This finding corresponds with Taha and Cox's (2016) study which found that the

support networks that international students develop are built through both proximity and through previous histories of interaction and patterns of relationships. These responses to information gathering suggest that there is more complexity to how international students navigate social networks and obtain information they view as trustworthy and valuable. From the staff's perspective in Chapter Seven, this could be due to the revolving door effect that international students experience when using the careers services. Without having a network connection built, international students are not able to develop a relationship of trust with the service staff and know how to receive information to build social capital. What is interesting about this is that of the students interviewed, those who discussed their friendship networks found they were not able to make friends with home students. As several students discussed in Chapter Seven, students had the ambition and desire to make friends outside of their co-national peers but found making connections was difficult due to pre-established networks among home students. The desire to build networks with home students and university staff aligns with Lee's (2014) interpretation of social capital development through social networks. As Lee (2014) explains, the strategic collection of resources by students reflects their role as resource seekers whose social capital is inherently controlled by resource givers and their willingness to help within their relationship. International students in this study were aware of their cultural differences and attempting to bridge the gap in their cultural and social capital through information collected among their social networks.

As has been discussed above, graduate capital encapsulates social and cultural capital, in addition to human, psychological, and identity capital which identifies the skills and experiences under the concept of graduate employability (Tomlinson, 2017). Most students in this study were able to differentiate their forms of social and cultural graduate capital from those of home students based on how they relate to their host culture and demonstrate their intercultural communicative competencies (Pham, 2021a). Cultural capital deficiency was acknowledged as students recognised their cultural differences in approaching their employability development during their time studying at a UK university. The cultural gap many students referred to often revolved around actions and knowledge which would be common sense to home students but a foreign concept to themselves. While Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen (2021) did not specify cultural capital in their study, the misalignment of the home and host country's culture supports the understanding of Tomlinson's (2017) interpretation of cultural capital in the graduate capital

model. The deployment of relevant cultural capital a student is able to demonstrate to employers in their desired field and community demonstrates their match with the company and its culture through their intercultural and interpersonal skills (Blackmore and Rahimi, 2019; Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen, 2021; Fakunle, 2021b). Social capital was observed as the social networks international students develop to enhance their understanding of the UK culture and mobilise their other forms of capital to positively transition to the labour market (Tomlinson, 2017). Several students highlighted the difficulties they encountered in building local relationships which would help them access knowledge about the UK and future employment opportunities. In Chapter Seven, some staff members also recognised how the social capital of home and international students differed. As a staff member from University B described, international students start their journey in the UK often without a social network to support them and guide them. Although the differences were acknowledged, there was little implication that the university services were working towards delivering services which would enhance the intercultural awareness of international students during their employability skills development. The unfamiliarity international students exhibit when adjusting to the cultural and social capital required in their host institutions and later in their transition to employment is evident of the complexities they face in managing and demonstrating their intercultural and communicative competencies (Pham, 2021a).

This research has demonstrated that the role and responsibility of employability development from the university services providers perspective differs from that of international students when viewed through the conceptual framework of social networks and capital and intercultural competencies. While there were alternative approaches to enhance the employability development of international students, there was a lack of cohesion in providing support for students across the university services. Although international students felt that they held responsibility for their employability development, a need for more intercultural understanding was a main finding related to equality and equity of services and graduate capital development. Based on these conclusions, university services staff should consider how employability services are delivered to a diverse student population and how resources and intercultural training can be implemented in student employability development.

9.2.4 What is the responsibility of the university in international student employability from support staff perspectives?

The fourth research question sought to investigate the perspective support staff have on the role of the university in international student employability development. Findings have demonstrated there was a difference of opinion presented between the different members of staff over the university's responsibility to ensure the development and support of employability for international students. Employability is maintained within internationalisation of the curriculum strategies as a key element for students to become global citizens (Jones, 2013). The narrative described by most staff positioned the responsibility as either an individual responsibility of the student or one that should be embedded within the curriculum by the university and its services. Resource availability was an indicator as to the level of support service staff felt they could offer. Findings by Tran et al. (2022c) indicated that university support was often limited by budgeting and resource allocation at the institutional level. Several staff in Chapter Five corresponded with these findings, discussing the limited resources and lack of collaboration among the departmental teams. Most staff indicated that the availability of employability support was important for all students, though there was acknowledgement of the specialised support international students required. Most staff and international students who agreed with the more individualistic approach felt that it was the individual responsibility of the student to make use of the university services made available to them. From the integrated perspective, many staff and students felt that employability should be embedded within their curriculum, developing skills in their degree beyond the theoretical. In discussing the role of the university, staff positioned themselves as either supporting all students through a homogenous approach or differentiating services to acknowledge the gap in cultural knowledge international students may face.

This conversation led to a differentiation between the equity and equality of services available for international students. From the equality perspective, some university staff felt that the services were available for all students and to differentiate them would cause unnecessary duplication of services and use limited resources. In Chapter Six, a staff member recalled they used to have a distinction in support offered for international student employability but pivoted away from that separation, opting to treat all students the same until an individual issue arises. Some international students agreed with this perspective and felt that home students required as much support as international students but also expressed a lack of awareness from the university

for the unique challenges international students faced. While the services using an equality approach opted to create a singular careers and employability service for all students, there was still a distinction made between how international students engaged with the services. For several staff, international students became ‘frequent flyers’, often using the careers service multiple times in their employability journey. The frequent use of the careers service prompted staff from both universities to implement a limit, either systematically or verbally to international students. Reiterating the lack of resources, some staff members developed online employability and careers support for students to learn asynchronously and encouraged academic staff to deliver employability information and support to students. Frustrations arose from international students attempting to access certain support services. For an American Student from University A in Chapter Six, they found it irritating to navigate the website and felt like they were being filtered out of receiving help. The differing perspectives of the employability support provided by university services corresponds with Sangganjanavanich, Lenz and Cavazos (2011) which urged university services to offer quality services to international students to adjust for cultural differences and provide interventions accordingly. The commitment to equality of services and opportunities provided by the university services was made evident through the findings. This also highlighted the limitations of a homogenous approach to the employability development experience for international students. As another American student from University B in Chapter Six highlighted, “international students are supported, but very limited with their sources because we are using sources that were made for domestic students such as the career service.” The discussion of responsibility in providing services to support employability continued to highlight the challenges faced by international students.

Most staff acknowledged that international students were not a homogeneous group due to their varied language and cultural backgrounds. This was further emphasised by international students who recognised their cultural backgrounds and sought to understand the values and nuances of living and working in the UK. Several students felt that their cultural understanding and work experience was often not equal to home students. Acknowledging the unique career needs international students have in their career development and transition to employment in a foreign country requires having specialised services to assist them to effectively enhance their employability development for the UK market and beyond (Linkes *et al.*, 2018). The approaches of the two university’s staff differed in their employability support offerings for international

students. University B careers services demonstrated they were proactive in their support development, from generating work experience opportunities to providing extra resources such as the China Career Gateway and workshops on how to find a job in the UK. As a Slovakian student from University B stated in Chapter Six, “there are many things that for home students perhaps are common sense and they just don't need to be told that while international students might need to be told like, OK, you know, this is not needed.” This student was not alone in emphasizing the need for employability support which helped international students understand and interpret meaning out of nuances which have no meaning in their culture (Goodwin and Mbah, 2019). For several staff, incorporating the cultural diversity and the challenges associated with them into the employability support offered was a way for them to overcome the disadvantages faced by international students. Although each university supported their international students in different ways, most staff from each university agreed that international students required additional support in developing their employability while at university in the UK.

Another approach the university services took to enhance employability development for students was embedding employability within the curriculums. This approach was taken to capture students who otherwise would miss out on valuable information. As most staff had discussed limited resources above, the embedded employability curriculum was a way for staff to align employability with credit bearing programmes designed within the university strategies. Supporting these findings, Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha (2021) found that employers have emphasized that UK universities must be concerned with preparing their international graduates to enter the UK labour market. Embedded employability curriculum worked to develop employability opportunities within the classroom for international and home students to share experiences and prepare for a work placement in the UK (Goodwin and Mbah, 2019). As one staff member in Chapter Five mentioned, by embedding employability in the curriculum it gives all students the same base level. Embedding employability works to make sure that those students who would normally not access support services still have access to the information and development. As an employability manager from University A explained, normally those who engage with the extracurricular activities and services are the ones who need it the least. The level of cultural compatibility can impact a student's ability to adjust to the host country and understand why they would need to seek out support for their employability (Dentakos *et al.*,

2017). Embedding employability skills offers a way to capture all students to support their skills, knowledge, and attributes development. While this approach does create opportunities for international students to develop employability skills within their degree programmes, it does not always account for the cultural differences.

Many of the service staff held a consensus that it was the university's responsibility to support international student employability development. Although this was generally agreed upon, the way in which the university and its service staff implemented support varied. From providing services which provided support to all students through external or embedded support, to services which specifically targeted international students, staff recognised the responsibility the university had to make these supports available. Availability of resources significantly influenced the level of support provided as limited budgets and collaboration impacted the level of services provided. The availability of resources also had many staff divided between providing equal services for all students or differentiated services to address the unique challenges faced by international students. For some members of staff, the singular approach to services prevented a duplication of services. However, the frequent use of career services by international students highlighted a desire by international students to enhance their employability and potentially overcome cultural blocks which hindered their understanding of services. The barriers international students experienced related to their cultural differences impacted their abilities to fully appreciate and apprehend the benefits of the services provided by the university. The recognition of this additional cultural step international students must overcome when adapting to their host university and society highlights the critical role of the student-university alignment. Similar to Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen (2021), the ability of an international student to find similarity or understanding of their host society's customs and nuances lessens the acculturative stress, enhancing the employability experience. There was a consensus by staff that international students did require specialised support due to varied cultural and language backgrounds. The approach of University B service staff offered tailored support and opportunities for international students to overcome challenges. While this support was more tailored to international students, embedded employability within the curriculum worked to capture all students, including those who did not pursue external resources. The complexity of balancing resources by university services to support international student

employability was made evident and continues to require an understanding of the cultural challenges students face in transitioning from university to employment in the UK.

9.3 Theoretical implications

Through connecting the findings and relevant concepts of the literature, this section discusses international student employability within the concept of the graduate capital model, reconceptualising social network analysis in international student employability and discussing the role of the university in the international student employability development experience in terms of theoretical and conceptual concepts from the perspectives of conceptualising employability.

9.3.1 Conceptualising international student employability within the graduate capital model

The graduate capital model introduced by Tomlinson (2017) was originally introduced to conceptualise graduate employability and the approaches and resources graduates collect beyond the previous human capital model developed by Bourdieu (1986). Defining graduate employability through the lens of internationalisation and international student mobility has been a goal of this research, building on research conducted by Pham, Tomlinson and Thompson (2019). This research specifically looks at the social and cultural aspects of graduate capital to determine how international students fit within the model. Social capital is understood to be the networks and relationships that help mobilise a graduate's human capital, while cultural capital is the knowledge acquired which aligns with the workplaces a graduate seeks to enter (Tomlinson, 2017). Tomlinson *et al.* (2022) conducted a validation study of the graduate capital scale over three waves, capturing domiciled, EU, and overseas students. While international students were included in their validation study, the findings were produced to look at the whole of the participant population. By investigating the social and cultural capital of international students we can determine how it impacts their graduate employability and readiness to enter the UK labour market. Grounded in what I have learned from this research's findings, I suggest that the graduate capital model should be further honed to explore the social and capital aspects which relate to the employability development experience of international students while studying at their host institution.

This study examines the graduate employability skills students expect to obtain through their experience attending university in the UK. The focus on international students in examining this model was to highlight the social and cultural differences international students navigate compared to home students when developing their graduate employability. The role of higher education in graduate employability is discussed by Tomlinson (2017), emphasizing the application of the graduate capital model to assist graduates in managing their employability. The perspectives of the skills, or capital, development during higher education differed between staff and international students. One obvious difference was the development of cultural capital. Cultural capital is seen as an essential cultural knowledge which enhances the fit in their targeted employment. For many international students, the negotiation of cultural capital within their host institution is impacted by their home cultivated cultural capital. Even through exposure to the host culture, the development of strong cultural capital can be impeded by how a student chooses to engage with the culture and their depth of understanding of the employment environment (Pham, Tomlinson and Thompson, 2019). As students in Chapter Five explained, they acknowledged their cultural differences and the impact it had on their employment prospects, but still expected a level of assistance from the university. A Nigerian student felt that universities were doing all they could to recruit international students but not accommodating the cultural differences to assist students in their integration. Seemingly in agreement, there was a narrative that some staff had the insider knowledge of how to approach the transition to employment but viewed the international student position as being disadvantaged or ignorant of the skills and knowledge they would need to gain access to UK employment. Although it was demonstrated that there were services available to enhance employability in international students, the enhancement of students' cultural capital outcomes was not fully tracked. In line with Pham, Tomlinson, and Thompson (2019), these findings suggest that the cultural capital development which contributes to an international student's employability development experience requires further support from the university.

Social capital development was another aspect of the graduate capital model which emphasised networks would bring a graduate closer to the labour market and opportunities (Tomlinson, 2017). The importance of social networks has been promoted as a significant way for graduates to improve their knowledge of the labour market and providing better job insight, and opportunity awareness (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2022). For international students, the need to develop

social networks was viewed as an essential part of gathering knowledge about the host country, its labour market, and future job opportunities. Yet the establishment of these networks was different and often more limited than their home peer's networks as they had to adjust themselves to their new environment (Kaya, 2020). Several International students and staff discussed their network development in Chapter Seven. Students discussed the struggles they experienced in trying to make friends with locals from the UK, but often found themselves in groups with their co-national or other international friends. This lack of connection with local students left many international students seeking out their lecturers and support service staff for assistance. This finding aligns with Tomlinson's (2017) findings which associate poor socioeconomic background or an overseas background with developing weak network ties with support services. Social capital is a connection graduates utilise to source opportunities and connect with potential employers. For many international students, the process of developing social capital is interwoven with cultural capital development. As many of the international students explained, coming to a new country where they do not know anyone is stressful because local students already have their friend groups and understand how to market themselves to UK employers. Even the process of meeting employers was not always a smooth process for international students. The university services arranged careers fairs for students to meet potential employers, but this was met with mixed responses. Employers were not always receptive to international students, and many students were unsure how to engage and network with the employers. Although the university service staff made these social networks available, there was still a gap in the international student social capital development. As graduate employability continues to be a focal point of university strategies and policies, consideration should be made for the way social and cultural capital is developed among all students to form meaningful relations and beneficial interactions between support services and employers.

9.3.2 Conceptualising social network analysis in international student employability

Social network analysis in the study of international students is often structured around their peer relationships and adjustment to life in their host country (Rienties and Nolan, 2014; Jon, Kim and Byun, 2020; Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen, 2021). Throughout this research I have been trying to find the link between social networks and international student employability development. This has been through examining the value international students place in forming relationships with support services during their time at a host university to seek out and receive information on

developing their employability for the local labour market. The staff's perspective was also examined to see how service staff viewed their relationship with their international student population when delivering information on employability development and the transition to the UK labour market. In an attempt to define these relationships, I realised that both international students and staff recognised a vacuum in the social networks of international students. Friendship social networks have been shown to enhance an international student's adjustment and acculturation to their host community through classroom interactions (Jon, Kim and Byun, 2020). Both groups in this research described the lack of social networks international students have access to when they move to another country for education. As a careers manager from University B described in Chapter Seven, international students must adapt to a "new course, new program, new way of life, different type of accommodation, different facilities, making friends, not knowing anybody." The highlighted difference between a home student and international student's social network was the level of support home students had access to. For home students in the UK, several staff pointed out they possessed an awareness of how to navigate themselves because they had grown up in that culture. This was a distinctly different experience for many international students who were not familiar with the culture, often leading them to seek out help from co-national peers or familiar names within the support services on their university campus. While I did not conduct an examination of the density of these networks among international students, an examination of the international students' lived experiences of developing their employability in the UK revealed who they trusted to give them advice and when and why they would approach these groups.

This study unpacks the social network bonds and trust needed by international students to successfully navigate their employability development and transition to the host country's labour market. International students were found to value connections with service staff, alumni, and their peers. Findings by Cheng, Meng and Liu (2018) demonstrate how the social supports international students receive play a critical role in their intercultural adjustment. Their study found that information and emotional support is linked to the proportion of ties, tie strength, and network density which then impacts a student's sociocultural and psychological adjustment (Cheng, Meng and Liu, 2018). This study investigates how international students felt most supported emotionally and informationally in developing their employability through their network ties. For many students interviewed, the university support services were identified as

the primary source of information to help them enhance their employability. Stemming from the survey, locals were the preferred connections because students felt a local perspective would be more beneficial to them than their co-national, and other international peers. From most of the staff's perspective, their networks were open and available for students to obtain information while providing little for intercultural adjustments. Most students desired to learn about their host country and how to become competitive in the labour market but lacked the intercultural competency to consistently develop networks to successfully share and make use of the information received. Looking at Yamin and Kurt's (2018) study, the success of international students accessing networks is based on the willingness they have to invest in becoming included in that network. Findings indicated that most international students had a willingness to access networks of staff, employers, and peers but found that time and cultural differences impacted the strength of the network tie. As a student in Chapter Seven explained that they had formed a relationship with a careers advisor at her university who helped her with applications. Although she had been unsuccessful, the advisor continued to encourage her and give reasons for why she may have been unsuccessful, but she was not sure of the advisor's sincerity. Similarly, a Chinese student expressed they were unsure of the true feelings of locals they met in the UK because of cultural differences in the way people express themselves. The strength of social network ties and intercultural competencies has been shown to be an important factor in the employability development of international students. This study demonstrates that international students rely on their social networks not only for cultural adjustment in their social life but also for their successful transition to employment in their host country.

9.3.3 Conceptualising role of the university in the employability experience

While there is not an agreed upon definition, employability is understood to be an individual's skills, knowledge, and attitudes which are used to obtain and maintain employment throughout their career (Fakunle, 2021b). Employability has been a central focus on this doctoral research project, but as a concept remained subject to the individual, strategy, or policy to provide a definition. I thought by the conclusion of this research that I would be able to provide a concise definition of employability to encompass all students. However, after examining the literature and having in-depth conversations with international students and university service staff, an attempt to differentiate home student and international student employability was not plausible. Both students and staff in this research defined employability as the skills and knowledge needed

to maintain a career. I have acknowledged that employability is related to a set of resources which helps an individual attain their employment goals through demonstration of their capital and competencies (Peeters *et al.*, 2019). A universal definition of employability may be influenced by the cultural practices in different contexts. As I learned from the findings, while employability may be viewed universally as the collection of skills and resources to gain employment, the specific skills and resources obtained are culturally dependant. Grounded in the findings from this research, I suggest that understanding of employability should be taken further from Fakunle's (2021b) definition to include the intercultural competencies as the development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes developed within intercultural competencies to obtain and maintain employment throughout their career.

This study delves into the complexities of understanding and defining international student employability through an examination of international students' employability development experiences and comparing them to the perspectives of the university service staff. These complexities were defined by different expectations, different concepts of building employability, and the adaptation of skills over time. While most staff and international students defined employability similarly, there were diverse understandings of how to develop and apply employability in diverse and foreign settings. For many international students there was a concept of the skills needed, such as communication and soft skills but developing these through the university employability courses was at times a foreign concept. Some service staff who understood employability in the UK context developed an employability curriculum through embedded and external courses. There seemed to be an assumption by several staff that by integrating employability mechanisms within the curriculum, international students would understand the reasoning behind developing specific skills and knowledge for a UK context. Having different assumptions of how an individual should approach their employability created conceptual complexities in the development. An Indian student in Chapter Five described their engagement with their university's employability course. Although they had participated in the course, they were sceptical that the course would improve their employability and was merely a 'tick-box' exercise put on by the university. Several staff's attitudes towards employability presented a perspective of providing skills necessary to the local context but differed in the application of employability in an interculturally diverse context. This is consistent with Fakunle's (2021a) findings on international students' perspectives on developing employability

abroad. In their study it was found that international student's agency to develop their employability was hindered by a lack of addressing specific concerns and offering undifferentiated support services to reflect the diversity of the student population (Fakunle and Pirrie, 2020). In addition, criticising the current position universities take on student employability within their internationalisation strategies, Jones (2013) highlights the link between intercultural competencies and the development of transferable employability skills and advocates for institutions to take more responsibility in helping students articulate their employability skills. Employability is often regarded as a responsibility of the individual, but leaving international students to apply their own agency while not accounting for cultural differences is no longer a role the university can maintain (Nilsson and Ripmeester, 2016). Treating intercultural competencies as something separate from employability skills detracts from the skills needed for today's global graduates.

9.4 Practical implications

This study explored the gap presented in the literature of the role the university services play in supporting the unique needs of the international student employability development experience. The results of this discussion have furthered theoretical contribution and provided implications for practical applications within UK universities. Based on these findings, this section identifies the following implications for universities to create a more supportive environment for everyone involved.

9.4.1 Implications for institutions and university services

Institutional policies and strategies for internationalisation and graduate employability directly influence the practices of university services who directly impact the student's experience and development during their studies. This section provides implications for both institutions and service providers to support international students in their employability development and transition to employment.

Firstly, internationalisation has been a key agenda item for higher education institutions globally with two key drivers. This first is primarily an institutional driver with an offer of economic benefit and elevated perceptions of its reputation, while the second less prevalent driver revolves around the benefits for students (Jones, 2013). Employability has been included in the internationalisation discussion as students who choose to study abroad often research which

institution will provide them with enhanced career opportunities (Fakunle, 2021b). Although the benefits to students are a driver of institutional internationalisation, this research found that between most students and services staff there was a consensus that it is the individual's responsibility to enhance their employability. Corresponding with Kaya's (2020) findings, many international students felt they often had to navigate their new environment on their own as they were given far less attention once they arrived in their host institution. While individualism and independence for students to discover and enhance their employability through their personal journey is encouraged, there are times when their individual agency is not enough. As Tran and Vu (2018) described, the success or failure of students depends not only on their individual effort but on the available institutional resources which enable students to enact agency. Fakunle and Pirrie (2020) assert that the responsibility of enhancing employability does not lie solely with the international student and that support from staff is crucial to facilitate a successful transition to employment. University services such as employability workshops, careers service, and international student support services were available at the examined universities. However, this research argues that the institution's understanding of cultural diversity and intercultural competencies among their student population is not sufficient to support international students successfully and inclusively on their employability development journey.

The UK higher education system and supports have been primarily geared towards home students, but moving forward the diverse student population should continue to be considered with practices and established to accommodate intercultural competencies (Zevallos, 2012; Goodwin and Mbah, 2019). Intercultural competence is not just geared towards adapting to international students, but in fact responding to the diversity of international and home students (Jones, 2013). The awareness of cultural differences and appreciation was noted among several staff and international students, but formal training provided by the university was not evident. As discussed in Chapter Three, universities play a significant role in developing graduate employability. Integrated classroom activities, extracurricular activities, and work integrated learning have been encouraged to enhance the international student experience in developing their employability (Schartner, 2015; Fakunle and Pirrie, 2020). While there was evidence that some of the central career services are moving towards creating resources tailored to international students, this was limited to individual teams or schools within each university. The homogenous approach of these universities and their services continues to segregate international

students from home students as they are not given the intercultural resources to integrate into their host community. While the university cannot be expected to teach soft skills and subtle codes associated with adjustment in the host country, they can implement a shared-responsibility approach (Pham, 2021a). The impact of student's cultural backgrounds must be considered, especially for terminology and situations which has no meaning or alternative meaning in their home culture (Goodwin and Mbah, 2019). Supplying the stepping stones for international students to understand the cultural codes and nuances of their host country will help them in their employability development. To enhance the international student experience, institutions must move beyond simply providing services, to creating conditions which allow international students to understand and operate independently when participating in the host society (Tran and Vu, 2018). Development of intercultural competency training for university services staff is an essential asset which will enhance their interaction with international students to positively enhance their approach to UK values and cultural understanding.

Second, embedding employability resources for international students within the curriculum is essential to capture most if not all students while managing limited resources. The lack of resources available for university services to adequately support the unique needs of international students was widely addressed by most of the service staff and international students. As the international student population in the UK continues to grow, a more internationalised curriculum is encouraged to provide support for international students and reduce the reliance on individual teams with limited resources. Internationalisation of the curriculum has been an increasing topic as higher education continues to develop on an international scale. An internationalised curriculum is an incorporation of international and intercultural dimensions to deliver a transformative education experience (Jones, 2013). Internationalisation and employability have both been associated with higher education agendas, yet both remain separate in their discourses. As Fakunle and Pirrie (2020) explained, internationalisation is framed around international student recruitment while employability is framed on the skills development of home students. For international students the expectation of an internationalised experience is to have a positive impact on their career and employability (Nilsson and Ripmeester, 2016). Several staff highlighted the benefits of embedding employability skills into the curriculum which included capturing students who would otherwise miss out and delivers the same base level for all students. Many students recognised the employability skills they were meant to acquire but

they did not see the connection between what the services provided and how they were meant to develop their employability skills. Several students continued to emphasize internships and work opportunities as ways they felt they would gain the most employability skills to succeed in the UK labour market. Embedded employability within UK universities operates in-conjunction with the centralised service and proliferation of extra-curricular activities to promote graduate employability (Huang and Turner, 2018). For many international students, the necessity or relevance of the extracurricular employability activities was sometimes lost. As some students explained how they had participated in various employability workshops or courses, they were unable to make meaning of their experiences and the relevance towards their employability development. As universities continue to recruit international students, internationalisation and employability must continue to be linked. Universities must be able to demonstrate the benefits and outcomes of their embedded employability clearly and be understood by their international students.

Finally, apart from the implications discussed above, the following recommendations were reported by university service staff and international students to assist in the employability development and transition to employment for international students. Most international students felt employer networks and having access to opportunities for work experience was highly important. Consistent with recommendations from (Sutherland, Thompson and Edirisingha (2021) UK higher education institutions should continue to support international students' employability by continuing to build trust with employers about the education system, enhancing their confidence in international students. Specific support for international students was desired to assist them in navigating life in the UK and the transition to employment. Additionally, one to one appointments and personalised counselling was also viewed as beneficial by most students. Several staff reported that enhanced resources and institutional support was essential to support the increasing international student population, especially for in-person counselling services. This is not an exhaustive list, but it includes some examples of key areas that international students and staff felt would enhance the employability development of students.

9.4.2 Implications for international students

The narrative has maintained that international students have an individual responsibility to develop their employability skills to successfully transition to employment. While individual

responsibility is expected, the adjustment to another country's system and way of life takes a considerable amount of time and energy for international students. This section summarises some of the strategies participants found useful in navigating their integration and employability development.

First, students should make use of the extracurricular activities available in addition to focusing on internships and work experiences. Although some students did advocate for extracurricular activities, most desired work experiences provided by their university. While work placements are viewed as important to develop employability skills, Goodwin and Mbah (2019) emphasize that simply providing work opportunities is not enough. Work placements within the UK are still considered international placements for international students, and universities need to plan accordingly to what the challenges and impact of a student's cultural background will be. Most students knew that UK work experience was crucial to develop their employability, yet there was little attention paid to their self-awareness of their own culture and how they would adapt to the UK work culture. Fakunle and Pirrie (2020) call for enhanced support systems from universities to address the problems and challenges international students face when accessing work placements and further reflecting on their experiences. Enhanced reflective support systems for international students would be helpful for them to understand the employability skills they gain during their work experiences. The experiences of some international students demonstrated they had the reflective ability to recognise their skills development, while others only viewed their work as a way to earn money. It will be helpful to enhance support systems which encourage international students to be reflective of their extracurricular and work experiences.

Second, the accessibility of support services for international students was an area of contention. Most students in interviews spoke about their awareness of services was mainly through email but found the frequency and volume overwhelming. Some staff recognised the volume of information international students needed to filter through from the different services and teams. While sifting through this information falls under the control and individual responsibility of international students to be aware of the services, the volume of information makes it hard to sift through for essential information. I suggest the university develop a centralised interactive database where the university services across the different teams and departments can upload information and guidance. This space can also act as a forum for international students to share

their experiences and approaches to navigating their transition to employment in the UK as well as any other areas of their student experience. Creating this centralised hub of information will minimise the oversubscription of emails students receive while allowing students to be able to easily source information. This centralised system created for students will also be an essential marketing tool to demonstrate the infrastructure support the university has developed to enhance the international student experience from their arrival through to transition to employment.

Finally, while English language skills were viewed as essential to complete a degree and further transition to the labour market in the UK, communicative competencies were beneficial to localised employability development. During interviews, non-native English-speaking students highlighted their difficulty with the English language or employer bias in not gaining access to employment opportunities. While staff highlighted this as limited linguistic skills, students related this more to being unfamiliar with the cultural nuances and behaviours expected in a particular social context (Pham, 2021a). Although students recognised this cultural difference, there was little evidence of how they attempted to adapt to the UK environment and learn the communicative and intercultural competencies. Exposure to different cultures is important, but it is also important for students to understand the cultural differences and be able to link their academic learning to a professional environment (Nilsson and Ripmeester, 2016). Aligning with the recommendations of Fakunle and Pirrie (2020) and Pham (2021a), as students are encouraged to be independent and reflective of their employability experiences there is a need for a shared-responsibility approach by university services to facilitate the individual agency. This approach would encourage international students to take more responsibility for their employability development while giving them the tools to reflect and prepare for their transition to the UK labour market.

9.5 Limitations

To maintain criticality and transparency of my research and conduct, this section addresses and reflects on the potential limitations of this study. First, while the inclusion of only two higher education institutions for the main body of data collected limits the generalisability of the results, the findings provide insight into how to better support international students in their employability development during their studies at UK higher education institutions. Although the international students who participated in the study were diverse, there was still a limited uptake

in the student interviews and survey responses which limited the student input data to accurately generalise the findings to describe the international student population. A limitation of generalisation with small groups and interviews as the method of questioning is not standardised, meaning a different situation or group may warrant different answers (Vicsek, 2010). While home students and their interactions with international students during their employability development were excluded, this decision was justified based on studying the link international students have with support services and members of staff when developing their employability. The aim of this study was to provide insight into student experience, not to produce a right or wrong answer.

The second limitation was the time constraints which were limited due to the nature of the PhD timescale. This study captured international students as they were entering the final stage of their degree programme in the UK. The international student participants were able to describe their experiences and skills development, but a limitation was their application of their developed employability skills in the real world. The time limit of this study resulted in the data collecting the student's experience early in their employability journey. Interviewing or surveying students beyond their graduation who indicated they were planning to stay in the UK could have helped to further identify how students applied their employability in their transition to employment. Another limitation was from the sampling strategies. Using purposive and convenience sampling which recruited students via social media and university emails ran the risk of recruiting students who were already engaged and being overgeneralised in the findings (Robinson, 2014). Employing these strategies assumed I would recruit a diverse enough population which would fully represent international students in the UK.

The third limitation was the scope of this research focused on international students studying in the UK with the intention to remain in the UK for a period of time to gain work experience after completing their studies. This focus excluded international students with the intention to return home or continue onto a third destination country for work or further study. The exclusion of this group of students limits the knowledge of the application of employability skills developed during the UK university experience. Narrowing the scope of this research was intentional due to the resources available to be able to analyse findings within the time allocated in the PhD programme. Although the decision to limit the scope of the research excluded the experiences of

a group of international students, the value of highlighting the experience of international students intending to remain in the UK after graduation provides a base for future research.

Finally, my research skills presented an additional potential limitation of this study. In conducting interviews, Roulston and Choi (2018) described that good interviews require the interviewer to sit back and learn through discussions with their interviewees while aligning trust in the relationship. Although I had previously learned how to conduct interviews and produce a thematic analysis during my master's, this study was my first experience in conducting a large-scale project over an extended period. Additionally, the use of a comprehensive survey questionnaire and its analysis was a relatively new skill for me. Although I had created and delivered surveys previously for data collection, this was my first experience to collect and analyse data on this scale. Despite these potential skills limitations, I received training and guidance from my faculty and supervisors, developing my skills to collect rich data from the applied methods.

9.6 Personal and professional development

In the development and contribution of research, it is a necessity for scholars to be culturally responsive and acknowledge the humanity of all parties involved, which includes being reflexive and aware of your positionality as a researcher (alexander and Pasque, 2022). In developing and conducting this research from a mixed methods approach, it was important to be culturally responsive and transform the research process over time as contexts and communities became more evident (alexander and Pasque, 2022). As I reflect on the journey of conducting this exploratory study, I can say I have grown personally and professionally. This study has enabled me to learn more about the international student experience of their transition to employment in their host country and the impacts of their employability development. On a personal level, I was motivated by my own experiences of studying in Ireland and the UK and the journey I experienced and observed other international peers experience in finding a job after graduation. The process of conducting this research helped explain the differences I had experienced and observed and navigate the confusion I had in attempting to enter a foreign job market. Through this process I began to look beyond my personal experience and recognise the significant role of the university, its services, and those within the network to develop student employability.

Although I had my personal experience of navigating the university and the transition to employment in the UK, I never aimed to direct their participation in interviews. Due to the nature of the small group interviews, it did at times become a conversation to attempt to bring out their thoughts and reasoning. Most students who participated were enthusiastic about sharing their opinions and felt the process of the interview was beneficial for them to be able to speak with other students. Some students in the small group interviews even exchanged LinkedIn contact information with the other participants, expanding their network. Additionally, speaking with university services staff was a positive experience. I treated each interview professionally and enhanced my interview skills as I progressed. Most if not all staff were accommodating and encouraging, and genuinely interested in the results of the research to help them enhance the international student experience.

I have developed professionally throughout the journey of this study, acquiring skills and knowledge to complete the research project successfully and independently. The journey itself was filled with highs and lows, from periods of not knowing what direction the project was going to take, to feelings of excitement and passion to pursue the unknown. Through all these experiences, I have grown as a researcher and have found my academic voice to deliver results confidently and tackle future projects. In developing as a researcher, I have become more aware of the power of critical thinking to explore issues without pursuing a preconceived answer based on my personal experience. Instead, I can consider the different perspectives and knowledge to deliver a well-developed response to the issue.

This study has positively influenced my tutoring and interactions with international students and will continue. I worked as a tutor for academic writing and was selected as an ambassador with the UK Council for International Student Affairs. As I was so immersed in the international student experience within and outside the university, I strived to understand the different perspectives students from various backgrounds would have in their journey. I made an effort to share my findings with students, staff, and others involved in the international student experience during this project to continue the conversation and raise awareness. I am aware the conclusions of this project may not achieve an immediate change, but if it raises awareness of the diversity of the student population and their experiences navigating the culture of a new community and labour market, it is a step in the right direction.

9.7 Recommendations for future research

This study has highlighted the unique experiences of international students as they develop their employability skills and the role of the university services support. As addressed in the limitations section above, the sample size, generalisability, and time constraints limited the research at this time, but future researchers can undertake similar research to overcome these to provide more robust data in this field.

To overcome a limited sample size that reduced the generalisability of results, future studies should work to capture a wider pool of international students across the UK from various disciplines to depict the heterogeneity of the international student population in the UK. While convenience sampling was utilised, it would enhance the richness of the data to collect target specific disciplines and services within the university.

To overcome limitations brought on by the time constraints, future studies may use a longitudinal approach to understand the impact of employability skills developed during university. Tracking the progress of international students as they transition from university to employment in the UK would further explore the employability development of international graduates. This would serve to understand how international students apply their skills in their careers beyond university, capturing graduate experiences during and after their transition to the labour market.

9.8 Conclusion

Given the growing student mobility and internationalisation in UK higher education institutions, it is essential that higher education institutions create strategies which reflect an understanding of the employability needs of international students. Previous studies have exposed a "profound and deep-rooted systematic failure to recognize the legitimate career aspirations of international students" (Fakunle and Pirrie, 2020, p. 97). The act of being transplanted from their home culture to host culture in a university setting exposes international students to various challenges as they progress through their education to then transitioning to employment in their host country. These challenges include a lack of intercultural and communicative competencies, a lack of established support social networks, and an unclear application of their social and cultural capital in a foreign setting (Khawaja and Stallman, 2011; Dentakos *et al.*, 2017; Valencia-Forrester and Backhaus, 2020; Pham, 2021a). The culture and value alignment between the international

student and their university and host community plays a critical role in their adjustment, impacting their desire to speak about their issues and seek university support (Bui, Selvarajah and Vinen, 2021). While employability development requires international students to reflect on their experiences, the role of the university in enhancing international students' employability is debated (Fakunle and Pirrie, 2020). There is a need for a more nuanced understanding of international students' employability and transition to the UK labour market that takes into account students' social, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds.

In conclusion, this study of the international student experience in employability development from the perspective of service staff and international students has much to teach us about the role of the university in the employability development experience of international students. Service staff and international student participants' navigation of various influencing factors of capital, social networks, and intercultural competence, and the role each member holds reveals the complexity involved in managing student employability. This research has expanded on the conversation of the employability experience and provided an alternative to the notion that student employability is an entirely independently and individually developed skill. Through investigating the experiences of international students and service staff, it has shown that international student employability development is a process that requires understanding by both students and service staff of the cultural diversity, personal circumstances, and mutual cooperation to appreciate the perspectives of each other. Participation in employability development services, whether through extracurricular activities or embedded curriculum does not solely determine the enhancement of employability skills for students. Cultural understanding in the form of intercultural competency has its role from both perspectives. Rather than relying on the university to develop services which individually target international students or leave students to navigate the services originally developed for home students, this study calls for a collaborative initiative. This initiative calls encourages all participants to recognise the intercultural and social differences in approaching employability. International students should be able to maintain their individual responsibility in developing their employability, so long as services prepare students for life and a career in the UK. Likewise, international students need to be continually aware of their home culture and how this impacts their interaction with faculty, students, and university services during their time abroad. The role of the university in the international student employability development experience has been investigated during this

study. While services provided aim to assist all students, the social networks, existing capital, and intercultural competencies of international students play a significant role in their navigation of employability development. There is a call for the development of services which consider the intercultural competencies of the home institution and international students, where students have an equitable opportunity to enhance their employability in the UK setting.

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Appendix One Matrix of Systematic Literature Review

Publication Year	Author	Title	Participant Characteristics	Methods	Theories	Role of the University	Employability Measures	Transition Experience Measures	Notes/Findings	Theme
2021	Albien, Anouk J.; Mashatola, Ngoako J.	A Systematic Review and Conceptual Model of International Student Mobility Decision-Making	*Internationally mobile v non-internationally mobile students *South African HE students	*Systematic review on ISM of HE students *Organisational psychology perspective contributing to literature on decision-making in becoming internationally mobile *Conceptual model proposed to assess interventions to be created to support international students in SA *Identify motivators, barriers, and enablers to IM	Migration system theory & boundaryless career theory (CSM)			*mobility movement perspectives: occupational; social; demographic *Australian context (Skrbis et al 2014) 3 key structural variables: gender, school sector, and geographical location variables *Transition across boundaries: physical mobility *psychological mobility: perception of the career actor of his/her capacity to make transitions	*to contribute to the sustainable employment and transferable skill development of HE students *Mobility movements: occupational mobility; global demand for education; key demographic variables *Occupational mobility is tied to social, labor, and occupational mobility with underlying motivations for an individual linked to inequality, power, education, or prestige - *Social mobility is to change an individual's status *Labor mobility is the transition of place, sector or nature of work *Lack of attention to and from the Global South *Vertical v Horizontal mobility *Mobile students had better job and economic opportunities, increasing their cultural capital. Students who stayed in their country of origin had more familial ties, viewed home institutions as reputable and lacked 'mobility culture' *Girls have a more positive mobility outlook *Determinants of IM: cost of HE; cost-	T
2018	Balaz, Vladimir; Williams, Allan M.; Chrancokova, Martina	Connectivity as the facilitator of intra-European student migration		*Main data source: OECD *Inconsistencies in the details recorded about the type of mobility and qualifications *Misclassification of the type of mobility (2nd generation being misclassified) *1st stage: spatial concentration over time using descriptive statistics and network analysis *5 year averages were produced for 3 periods *Geographies of IS analysed using both descriptive statistics and an innovative application of network science using Gephi software *Fruchterman-Reingold layout algorithm arranged the nodes and edges *2nd stage: modelling determinants of student migration between 23	*Push-pull factors *Connectivity factors - refers to the different communication channels for the exchange of people, goods and knowledge between 2 or more countries *Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was used to address push-pull factors and connectivity factors			*Internationalisation *Physical student migration (European movement)	*Substructure of world student migration in characterised by its connectivity, both cultural and material. *Shared knowledge in international communities are articulated through cultural and spatial proximities *2/3 of intra-European ISM move to UK, Germany and France *only 3 push-pull coefficients were significant: unemployment rates for tertiary graduates, HEI investment, and the quality of universities *Connectivity to different forms of tacit knowledge was important: foreign-born population, language, inward tourism and spatial proximity *Economic and non-economic gaps between countries or origin and destination, both income gaps and non-economic variables, describing satisfaction with private life and public institutions were not significantly correlated with student migration, possible for labour migration *Findings are that connectivity determinants are more significant than push-pull factors	T
2016	Balin, Elif; Anderson, Nicole M.; Chudasama, Satomi Y.; Kanagasigam,	Working with International Students in the U.S. and Beyond: A Summary of Survey Research by NCDA International Student								

	Battaglia, Lana; Flynn, Catherine A.; McDermott, Fiona	International graduates of Australian social work education - where are they now?								
2012	Beecher, Blake; Eggertsen, Lars; Furuto, Sharlene; Reeves, John	International Student Views of Social Work in Select Asian and Pacific Island Countries								
2019	Blackmore, Jill; Rahimi, Mark	How 'best fit' excludes international graduates from employment in Australia: a Bourdeusian perspective		<p>*Stakeholder interviewer in the fields of engineering, accounting, and health services</p> <p>*questioned regarding policies and practices in relation to student preparation for employment, expectations or graduates, and entry-level recruitment and staff development precesses</p>	<p>*Bourdieu: international education is a field in which there are hierarchies, discourses, and actors</p> <p>*Actors include students, universities, and other educational institutions competing for recruits</p> <p>*'best fit' theory counters the discourse that diversity of employees is a good thing in contemporary organisations</p> <p>*</p>		<p>*Focus on employability encourages an instrumentalist view of international education as a commodity</p> <p>*Employability is directly tied to transactional views related to migration and visa policies, transforming the landscape of selecting universities and national locations</p> <p>*21st century skills has become part of everyday understanding or doxa</p> <p>*Graduate knowledge, skills and attitudes become valued forms of capital</p> <p>*credentials or education capital indicate the skills argued to make graduates more employable</p> <p>*Skills: critical capabilities, problem-solving, teamwork and empathy (western work habitus)</p> <p>*English language proficiency, visa cost/loss of investment</p> <p>*employers/recruiters seek out graduates who are more likely to integrate with their organisation seamlessly rather than diversify</p>	<p>*Student transnational mobility: catering to the rising demands of countries with national systems unable to cater to the education and career aspirations of the middle-class</p>	<p>*Anglophone universities have become increasingly reliant of international student fees, Australian universities are particularly reliant on China and India and governments reduce HE funding</p> <p>*Global ranking has also increased desires of universities to be distinctive in the global market to attract research funding and students</p> <p>*Australian graduate survey of post-university destinations found that it takes longer for graduates to get full-time employment in their discipline and there is an increase in casual and contract labour</p> <p>*Both domestic and international graduates work in fields not in their discipline or specific area of interest they aspired to when choosing their course and university</p> <p>*Graduate employability has become a measure of higher education quality with QS University ranking and a form of distinction that attracts international students and research funds</p> <p>*Study found nearly all the international student cohort aspired to gain jobs in large MNC or public sector organisations yet the</p>	E
2022	Brooks, Rachel; Waters, Johanna	Partial, hierarchical and stratified space? Understanding 'the international' in studies of international student mobility					<p>*Potentially, the level of employment after completing their study abroad</p> <p>*In IS returning to their home countries, skills were more highly valued over their domestic counterparts for their confident communication style and language proficiency.</p> <p>*Referring to specific qualifications from particular national systems</p> <p>*Desire of more IS in pursuing international education is for an international career or as a stepping stone to further migration (often with the UK and US as the end goal)</p> <p>*an international degree is seen as a valuable commodity in labour markets</p>	<p>*choice to study abroad informed by wider factors including class relations, employment prospects, and colonial legacies</p> <p>*Social mobility aided by international education</p> <p>*There is no ability to integrate as the label of international reinforces otherness and justifies the differential fees and treatment</p> <p>*IS are monitored due to their visa status, in ways which are not applied to home students</p> <p>*"International students are destined to have lower levels of attainment than home students, precisely because they are foreign students"</p> <p>*employment outcomes of IS in less rigorous courses are poorer</p> <p>*Common question: how have students from Country A fared in the labour market after a period of study in Country B?"</p> <p>*Primary concern of ISM has been outcomes of mobility in relation</p>	<p>*ISM: the movement of student nationally, regionally, and internationally for education</p> <p>*The term 'international' within ISM is taken for granted, its meaning intuited</p> <p>*International has valorised particular parts of the world as centres in the production of knowledge. Global North and its use of the English language as 'lingua franca' has instead represented a 'narrowing' geographical scope</p> <p>*ISM research tends to reproduce Western-centric perspectives and binary frameworks</p> <p>*ISM is an exclusive space inhabited primarily by the affluent, those with sufficient cultural, economic, and social resources</p> <p>*ISM is increasing from upper middle class to lower and working class backgrounds. In-country agents and migration policies have been influential</p> <p>*'International' is not really a focus, more of the East to West</p> <p>*In the UK, IS pay at least £10,000 more per year than home students</p> <p>*IS often end up as not fully protected as</p>	T

2021	Bui, Huyen T. N.; Selvarajah, Christopher; Vinen, Denis G.	The role of student-university value alignment in international student acculturation in Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*International Undergraduate students*Universities in Victoria*Students recruited via social media (FB, LinkedIn, Instagram) and student associations*Paper distribution at the IS welcome-back and cultural events in Victoria*154 and 230 valid responses from online and paper resulting in 384 total	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*mix methods research: quantitative study with data collected from a student survey and qualitative study with data collected from semi-structured interviews with university staff*Allows for the capturing of IS and host university's perspectives*7-point likert scale to measure the 5 latent constructs of the study model*Online and paper-based surveys were used to collect data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Acculturation - process of change occurring when there is contact of 2 or more different cultural systems often resulting in the adjustment of both groups*Cyclical movement of 'draw back to leap'*PE value fit (person and environment)*Schwartz's Universal Human Value system: Value fit as a dimension of culture fit is defined as the degree of alignment between 'international students' and their host university values*International student adjustment as a predictor of student overall satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Should expand beyond a one-size fits all approach in their student services to meet the diverse needs of different IS cohorts to assist in their cross-cultural adjustment*An emphasis on people-to-people empathy and connections in the teaching, learning, and engagement of IS to support IS wellbeing*Embed values which reflect those of IS reflected in the way universities treat them, ie they are respected, they are inclusive, it will build student's trust and confidence*Value alignment is critical for students' cross-cultural adjustment. A misalignment could prevent students from openly speaking about their problems and seeking university support leading to poor cross-cultural adjustment*Universities should frequently communicate and demonstrate their values to international students on a daily basis*Universities should provide social support resources such as: providing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*IS with high level of expectations and participation in extra-curricular activities generally achieve better work-life balance and enjoy diverse experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Level of cross-cultural adjustment of IS regarding their interactions with their host universities*Findings of association between IS-university value fit are that IS possessing values that align with their university values are able to adjust well into the university environment*Demonstrating that cultural similarities are positively related to social integration*Level of 'fit' determines the IS satisfaction with experience and integration*Smoother acculturation process is deemed positive to lessen the culture shock and adjustment period if IS are made aware of the institution's values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*IS acculturation cycle: (1) <i>pre-departure preparation</i> where push and pull factors including personal, family and cultural factors from home country and intended host country determine the level of excitement, expectation and uncertainty of the individual; (2) <i>initial experience</i> which is formed by the first interaction between the individual and the host environment; (3) <i>gestation</i> where sojourners experience a continuum between frustration and contentment as a result of their negative and positive experience in the host environment; and (4) <i>adjustment</i> where outcomes of the acculturation process are determined by the sojourner's sum of total experience in the previous stages. (p143)*Many students can struggle to navigate the cross-cultural adjustment because of traditions and cultures they bring from home and not knowing how to apply them to their new environment*The IS group is not homogenous. There are many groups within this group which have diverse cultures and ways of communicating	R&T
2017	Choudaha, Rahul	Three waves of international student mobility (1999-2020)								
2021	Civera, Alice; Meoli, Michele; Paleari, Stefano	International student mobility: onset for a future career or an experiential opportunity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Competing destinations model for IS flows among 35 OECD countries during 2004-2018*Empirical application of the gravity model to ISM: assumes the flow of students between two countries is proportional to their respective economic sizes and inversely related to the physical distance between them*Dependent variable: flow of international students enrolled in tertiary education from all OECD countries to each OECD country*Gravity model applied to ISM, determinants are geographical distance and GDP*The greater distance between two countries, the lower will be the flows	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Implications for national ISM policies can be derived, as traditional recommendation of encouraging quality in a host country and position in academic rankings is not valid for all the destination countries*Underdeveloped HE infrastructure encourages students to travel to gain a better degree than they would otherwise receive in their home country*Many tertiary institution entry demand exceeds their existing capacity*Wei (2013), tertiary education enrolment rate in the inflow country indicates more attention to domestic students and possible negligence to IS*Some universities, the acceptance of IS only occur if students pay significant fees. Otherwise, there is little incentive to accept IS*In traditional destinations such as the US, UK and Australia, career oriented rationales of student mobility are not prominent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*IS motivations in career orientation v personal and cultural experience*Economic factors intended as beneficial to future career outcomes*Employment career outcomes: professional development, perceived employability, career choices, transition into international careers, and career success*Expectations of economic advantage and thus improve job prospects from mobility*Studying overseas allows students to differentiate themselves from the other academic peers*Career trajectory is dependent on the quality of their qualifications and the reputation of the education in the particular country/institution (league tables)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Mobility motivations: IS from wealthier, English-speaking and European countries are sensitive to the life satisfaction in the destination country, revealing a lack of career-orientation in the ISM choices*Motivation: social and cultural benefits derived by such experience*Personal outcomes: understanding moral and ethical issues, maturity, self-confidence, sense of accomplishment, self-efficacy, and communication skills*Cultural outcomes: cultural awareness, cultural intelligence, global mindedness, cultural sensitivity and empathy, cultural adaptability, language skills, cross-cultural communication skills, and intercultural competence*Objectives of overseas study is to become confident in cross-cultural communication*The experiences of friendship and kinship networks act as a direct	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Increasing motivations of students to study globally, especially with the perceived value of prestigious institutions*IS have been increasingly identified as supplicants of prestigious education systems in pursuit of opportunities for career development*IS may seek 'excitement' and 'adventure' from overseas study and often use the opportunity to delay the onset of a career and prolong a relatively carefree student lifestyle*Economic and HE development in emerging countries and changes in economic ties and political connections between countries have led to new ISM patterns and regional hubs*'West is best' mentality as evidenced by the top destinations: US, UK, Germany and Australia.*Prioritize English-speaking countries to gain language skills*Countries aimed at attracting IS should pay attention to the different motivations and characteristics of IS and create policies accordingly	T		

2021	Clibborn, Stephen	Multiple frames of reference: Why international student workers in Australia tolerate underpayment		<ul style="list-style-type: none">*quantifying underpayment of wages to international students in the higher education sector;*and second, examining international student workers' frames of reference, asking the question: How do segmented labour market conceptualisations of workers' frames of reference help us to understand why international students tolerate underpayment of wages?*Sequential explanatory mixed method*Sample: Chinese students, aged 20–24, studying accounting, business or management at a university in Sydney, supported financially by family in their home	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Piore's 1979 'Dual frames of reference' theory: - accepting lower wages and conditions due to reference groups in their home country*Emerging research demonstrates that new immigrant workers rely on support networks within communities of fellow immigrants, particularly from common cultural backgrounds*IS are more likely to socialise with other IS than with host country students*Extending Piore's framework to include a third reference: IS's peer group of fellow IS*Migrants commonly work in the secondary labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Public policy perspective - particularly for state regulators, as IS take cues from peers rather than their host country, regulators need to reassess their provision of information regarding minimum wage and employment standards.*Traditional means of communicating information will have little impact*Need to provide information to IS (on arrival) before they are exposed to advice from peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Wages and conditions*IS exploitation has been explored in a small number of scholarly publications estimating underpayment of wages*IS do not report underpayment due to incomplete knowledge about workplace rights and fear of the consequence of reporting their employers*60% of IS were paid less than the national minimum wage and 35% were paid \$12ph or less*choice to work to gain experience, spending money and practice speaking English*Main reason is to earn spending money and gain experience*Wage is a lower priority as it isn't cited in their reasons for seeking employment*IS did not regard local legal minimum wage pay as attainable and so a weak influencer on their decision making. IS were largely resigned to the inevitability of the situation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*transition from home to host country, IS are vulnerable to exploitation at work and lack a dedicated legal regime for protection separate from the employment relations system*Frame of reference: home. Generally compared indirectly. Few worked in their home country*IS unaware of local minimum legal wages or even think legal pay might be different for locals and temporary migrants.*Easier to find work in the host country that is underpaid due to perceived limits in English language skills, lack of work experience and temporary visa status*Peer frame of reference was the strongest and most direct frame of reference to gain work after coming to their host country. Justification for continuing to tolerate low pay and not taking steps to enforce their rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Widely accepted theory that new migrant workers tolerate relatively low pay and conditions in the receiving, or host, country because they maintain a dual frame of reference, comparing to pay and conditions in their home country*little attention has been paid to the growing population of migrants studying as IS and working part-time during their studies*In Australia, the education of IS is the second largest export after natural resources, worth AUD\$28 billion (2017)*IS are strongly represented in the workforce in low-skill jobs*"International students possess many of the classic vulnerabilities of temporary migrants: temporary migration status, using a second or other language, distance from support networks, unfamiliarity with local laws and institutions and the risk of deportation if caught working beyond their visa limits" (Nyland et al., 2009)*Article focuses on the agency of IS exercised in their acceptance of working conditions*Australia receives a significant share of IS	R,T,&E
2017	Collins, Francis L.; Ho, Kong Chong; Ishikawa, Mayumi; Ma, Ai-Hsuan Sandra	International Student Mobility and After-Study Lives: The Portability and Prospects of Overseas Education in Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Graduates from 3 universities: National Taiwan University, National University of Singapore, Osaka University*Participants were based in Bangkok, Hanoi, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, and Shanghai*time since graduation was 1-41 years, median of 9y*Excluded participants who has less than 3 years since graduation as that draws attention to more immediate concerns*25 were from science related, technology-related, and medicine-related. 33 were from humanities and SS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Semi-structured interviews from June 2009- Dec 2012*Recruited through alumni networks and snowballing*Conducted in English, Japanese, or Mandarin. Subsequently transcribed and translated before inductive analysis that involved identification of common themes involved in the biographies of participants, their after-study experiences, and their outlooks for the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*University/country reputation shapes the value and recognition of education. The portability of credentials is recognized as universities and countries become well recognized by employers*Providing alumni networks to enhance the portability of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*ISM expands horizons of learning, alternative perspectives, new languages, and intercultural skills that cultivate capacities to operate in the world*Suggests that an internationally accredited degree guarantees the holder has acquired cultural knowledge, skills, and credentials that enable transportation of social status across borders*"while education enables transnational mobility, it 'also serves to societally and territorially embed' students and then graduates 'in particular organisational cultures and places'" (p3)*attention needs to be paid to the social networks and learning experiences and this influence this has on the portability of education and after-study lives*IE involves the learning of other cultural perspectives and norms and their application after-study in careers and personal life*Graduates were provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Situating learning experiences and social network capital are likely to be significant in graduate outcomes of IS*Situating learning: learning is a social rather than individual process generated through culturally valued collaborative practices*It is the acquisition of skills within specific social contexts through communication with peers and experts*IE knowledge is generated in the manner in which individual students encounter and interact with a particular place, its people, practices, and environment*IS learn not only education but also the everyday life of places and cultural differences, encounters, and experiences*Social networks emphasise the importance of family and co-ethnic contacts play for settlement but not job prospects and friends and business contacts important in	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*key premise of ISM is to distinguish IS from those who attend domestic institutions*Particularly in Asia where the massification of education has made university study more common, raising the stakes for aspiring middle-class students and families*Distinction of overseas education occurs through the generation of cultural capital that is generated around degrees from particular universities*International study is also associated with particular kinds of knowledge acquired in situated contexts*International education is viewed as a time to develop social networks, which could include those amongst co-nationals/co-ethnics but also more cosmopolitan socialities*ISM should therefore have tangible outcomes in after-study lives*	T&E	
2012	Collins, Francis Leo	Researching mobility and emplacement: examining transience and transnationality in international student lives								

2021	Delly, Pamela	"I feel a deep sense of belonging to the team": International student experiences as peer-								
2017	Dentakos, Stella; Wintre, Maxine; Chavoshi, Saeid; Wright, Lorna	Acculturation Motivation in International Student Adjustment and Permanent Residency Intentions: A Mixed-Methods Approach	<p>*UG IS attending York University in Toronto, Canada.</p> <p>*Participants with no prior education in North America</p> <p>*266 IS completed the online questionnaire</p> <p>*70 participants took part in the follow-up interview</p> <p>*Current study, 24 participants representing either high or low levels of AM were analysed</p>	<p>*Interview: In-depth, semi-structured interview that explores the IS pre- and postmigration experiences</p> <p>*Interviews varied from 30min to an hour, and conducted in English</p> <p>*Questionnaire: The acculturation scale assesses willingness to interact with the host country context and consists of 15 items with 5-point likert type responses</p> <p>*Future residency intent</p> <p>*Self perceived English competence</p> <p>*The student adaption of college questionnaire *</p>	<p>*Acculturation motivation (AM) - the willingness to learn about the host culture, to develop friendships with host members, and to explore the host country's social and cultural environments.</p> <p>*AM may predict not only IS adjustment but also PR intentions</p>	<p>*In university-related outcomes, IS report less perceived social support and university affiliation compared to domestic students</p> <p>*The perception of the university is influenced by AM. As IS are primarily adapting to the host country's university culture, rather than to the host country's culture itself. Weak institutional attachment is associated with poor adjustment in IS populations</p>	<p>*positive word of mouth remains the most effective and utilized means of attracting prospective students</p> <p>*host country experience is a powerful determinant of whether or not an international student will pursue permanent migration.</p> <p>*IS adjustment is associated with increased psychological, sociocultural, and language stressors, such as loneliness, depression, culture shock, and acculturative stress</p> <p>*As emerging adults, IS have postponed engaging in permanent adult roles in order to pursue higher levels of education. IS have reported fewer social networks and a more disorganized sense of self</p> <p>*Academic experiences were described as failures and triumphs. Some IS were disappointed in the quality of education received and expressed difficulties in keeping up with a competitive, foreign, and</p>	<p>*The difference of migration intention. IS migration is temporary and voluntary to accomplish specific academic, personal, or employment related objectives</p> <p>*Due to the transient nature, IS may be less focused on the value of learning about or adapting to the host country environment</p> <p>*In this way, IS experience greater levels of stress or lower levels of social adjustment compared to permanent migrants</p> <p>*IS are a particularly vulnerable group. They must successfully navigate the transition to university, while also managing the transition within a foreign culture without their customary social network</p> <p>*For some IS, education is the best way to achieve PR and they may be classed as a subset of student sojourners as "permanent migrants in process"</p> <p>*IS with high AM wanted to pursue PR</p> <p>*Future research needed to explore the intention of IS who will seek PR and whether they present a higher level of AM due to perceiving a permanent future with</p>	T	
2021	d'Hombres, Beatrice; Schnepf, Sylke	International mobility of students in Italy and the UK: does it pay off and for whom?							Exclude article: focus on semesters abroad while registered at home country HEI	
2011	Erichsen, Elizabeth A.; Bolliger, Doris U.	Towards understanding international graduate student isolation in traditional and online								

2021	Fakunle, Omolabake	International students' perspective on developing employability during study abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *11 non-EU countries who have limited access to work opportunities (20 hr per week) as a condition of their student visa *36 semi-structured interviews in which the term 'employability' was not referenced to ensure they were not constrained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Research questions: (1) to what extent do IS' expectations of developing their employability match their experience? (2) Whether IS' perceptions of the benefits of studying on the masters-level programme change over the course of the 1yr of study *Thematic analysis was used to search and refine the themes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Archer's notion of downward conflation, observing that IS experience is well suited to the notion of 'agency' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Changing demographics of student population is not being reflected in employability policy discourse *IS mainly engage with the online searched of Career Service website for job opportunities *The applicability (or inapplicability) or services which can be misaligned to support IS *Participants with compulsory WIL did not engage with Careers Service and instead relied on their programme director to consult on their academic study and career aspirations *IS consulted a range of careers events towards developing their employability but expressed disappointment with the undifferentiated careers support for IS *Calls for HEI need to find a way to support IS career development and employability *Due to the policy void connecting IS experience and employability, this in turn limits IS' agency and impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Employability is cited as a main motivator by IS for studying abroad *Research into IS perceptions of developing their employability is lacking as (1) national and institutional strategies and policies on IS recruitment are driven by economic rationales and (2) employability is a priority for national policy making within country contexts *The IS perspective is lacking in the perspectives of employability *Employability policy places IS in a policy void within a system of nationally oriented employability policy *Employability definitions can be narrowed down to a competence-based approach that focuses on an individual's skills and ability to obtain and maintain employment throughout their career. (Rogans et al., 2020) *This approach sees employment outcomes as a quantitative measure of employability, but does not 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *The agency of IS and their employability development is hindered by institutional and national policies which limit their access to experience and opportunities *Visa policies in the area of internationalisation is directly contradictory to equity values espoused by HE and limit the IS transition experience throughout their education experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *WIL was a source of dissatisfaction where it was not a compulsory part of the MSc demonstrating that structural factors may constrain or enable agency towards developing employability *whether agency succeeds or fails depends on not only students' individual efforts, but also on the availability of resources, institutional and structural factors influencing the students' lived realities *Need to fill a policy gap which would bring equitable policies for HE IS 	E
2021	Fakunle, Omolabake	Developing a framework for international students' rationales for studying abroad, beyond economic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *19 masters-level students from 11 countries across four schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Research question: What are the rationales for IS to study a one-year masters-level programme at a UK university? *Exploratory research design *Extensive review of literature and strategic documents relating to internationalisation (2009 to 2016) *University which attracts the highest numbers of non-EU IS in Scotland *Pilot study with 3 IS helped sharpen the focus of the study *1-to-1 semi-structured interviews were conducted with IS in semester one and two *Audio recorded and transcribed verbatim *Thematic analysis captured themes: Educational, Aspirational, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Capability approach (Sen, 1999) which focuses on the well-being and freedom of people to lead the lives they have reason to value and to enhance the real choices they have *Significance of this approach to understand and evaluate educational policies from the perspectives of individuals *To address IS rationales from studying abroad beyond economic rationales *Questions why HE for investment in personal earning power is counter-posed to education for knowledge as if the two cannot coexist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Macro framework is used for conceptualising rationales for internationalisation portray policy development and strategic approaches to internationalisation by host countries/institutions. This is useful in depicting the issues from a 'destination' perspective *Successful internationalisation is measured in terms of research funding, international staff and student recruitment, and international research collaborations to improve the position of HEIs in global rankings *IS were very vocal about the need for the school to provide a rounded experience which should combine both theoretical and practical aspects of learning *Universities can further review to what extent students are able to access opportunities to realise their aspirations *Create opportunities to provide a reciprocal exchange of knowledge about different cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *The experiential rationale is both intrinsic (interest in different cultures) and instrumental (future work prospects) which guide IS in exercising their agency to develop a broader outlook as preparation to live and work in a global world *Career advancement as an intention in studying abroad to develop international professional networks and how this could be possible during WIL projects. *Interwoven rationales such as learning for earning (employability) and learning for living (self-fulfilment) cannot be mutually exclusive. IS question how they can live if they can't get employment *Economic pay-offs matter for IS, for whom, more than most students, the costs are large (Marginson, 2014) *WIL learning opportunities for IS would enhance their knowledge of an unfamiliar work environment in the host country, which are even more limited in one-year masters- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Macro economic rationale: viewed as serving the interests of host institutions and countries who benefit from recruiting high fee-paying IS *Micro-level: students are consumers seeking education to enhance their labour market opportunities and economic contribution to society *push-pull model is limited in the ability to analyse individual preferences and personal characteristics of IS and often one directional *The capabilities framework approaches the rationales for ISM as both human capital stressing the importance of economic productivity, and a critical approach stressing the intrinsic importance of education from a justice-as-rights perspective *IS were disappointed in their inability to participate in a work-based dissertation due to being ill informed or not clearly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *The numbers of IS has more than doubled from 2mil in 2000 to 5.3mil in 2017 (UNESCO, 2019) *ISM is the most well-developed category of national policy frameworks in all the 11 European countries studied *IS recruitment number targets are feature as a major target in policy documents *IE is regarded as an economic sector *Macro level does not provide insight IS motivations to study abroad *Educational rationale for IS based on their programme selection - eliminating ones that did not align with their interests and future career plans. Those with practical work experience were a major draw *Lantz-Deaton, (2017) has suggested that 'university policy and practice may need to be enhanced if producing graduates with higher levels of intercultural competence is to become a realised outcome of internationalisation' *The student rationale or perspective is rarely featured in internationalisation studies or policies 	R,T,&E

2020	Fakunle, Omolabake; Pirrie, Anne	International Students' Reflections on Employability Development Opportunities During a One-Year Masters-level Program in the UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Masters level students domiciled in the UK for education*Participants were largely from China and India, with others being Canada, Columbia, Mexico, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, Taiwan, Turkey, and the US	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Research question: How did the IS in the study reflect on the wider implications of the absense of WIL opportunities?*IS recruited from four schools (education, business, literatures, languages and cultures, and social and political studies)*4 rounds of face-to-face semi-structured interviews over the course of the one-year Master's program and the end of the first and second semester*Focused on IS as non-citizens of the host country*Audio recorded and transcribed and analysed thematically	Meaning-making reflective process (Rodgers, 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Systemic flaw in the internationalisation agenda, issues around equality of access and the human rights of IS in the host country*Internationalisation is an evolution of higher education society beyond national borders. As Unis seek to internationalise, the student community has become more diverse yet it remains to be seen is the values of a democratic society are reflected in the agenda*The lack of opportunity to undertake work experiences but the role of the university is unclear due to the rules formed by the government regarding visas*In this study, the university was insufficient to offer help for IS to access work experience*Criticism was mainly towards non-academic dimensions of university life, such as support services. There is a need for universities to develop systems and support that are effective towards addressing the problems and challenges faced by IS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Employability is defined as developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes to improve the likelihood of obtaining and retaining fulfilling work*Value in experience (WIL) and the attitude of participants to be resilient in personal growth*Applicability of practical knowledge to the job market and successful obtainment of desired employment*Part-time work allows for employability skills development: organisation and time management. And benefit of meeting people outside of the university (community integration)*Enhancing employability among the IS population does not lie solely with the students themselves. Support from staff is crucial-towards facilitating relevant WIL projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*The ability of IS to reflect on their experiences and how they make sense of a particular aspect of that experience, namely employability development opportunities during their study abroad*Desire to gain experience during the student period, but a lack of access to WIL was a major barrier to enhancing employment development opportunities*IS would benefit from a reassessment of expectations and access to work experience during their study abroad*Reality of being able to work during studies of a one-year masters is unrealistic. The payment of high tuition fees makes the focus on studies more important than gaining work experience outside of the programme*IS status inhibits ability of IS to gain relevant internships and EDOs*Visa hostility, inability of IS to progress in gaining employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*A lack of insight into IS employability which can be linked to a lack of alignment of internationalisation and employability discourses*Internationalisation literature is framed around IS recruitment and the benefit to the host institutions/countries*Employability discourse is often centred around skills and knowledge development of home students as part of a human capital driven national policy*The current internationalisation agenda continues to focus on the business model of recruitment, exposing a profound and deep-rooted systemic failure to recognise the legitimate career aspirations of IS	R,T,&E	
2017	Falcone, Santa	International Student Recruitment: Trends and Challenges									
2013	Furukawa, Takao; Shirakawa, Nobuyuki; Okuwada, Kumi	An empirical study of graduate student mobility underpinning research universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*represent scientists working as faculty members at universities or engineers working in the R&D sections of enterprises, as well as applicants for these positions (graduate students who have published a journal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Literature review	Push-pull model to describe the bilateral flow of IS from their home country to the host country <ul style="list-style-type: none">*Economic and social situation in the home country acts as a push factor*Knowledge and awareness of the host		<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Mobility contributes to network building which in turns promotes collaboration which can profoundly shape the future careers of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Employment for high-skilled workers like engineers in R&D is a pull factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Characteristics of graduate student mobility - graduate mobility is dependent on research domain*Brain-drain is a serious problem faced by countries which export their population to Western high-ranking universities	T&E	
2009	Gargano, Terra	(Re)conceptualizing International Student Mobility The Potential of Transnational Social Fields									

2019	Goodwin, Kelly; Mbah, Marcellus	Enhancing the work placement experience of international students: towards a support framework	<p>*final-year students</p> <p>*international students (68) enrolled within the targeted faculty were approached, and 41 responded (60.29%) to the questionnaire.</p> <p>Twenty-one different nationalities took part (Bahraini, Bulgarian, Chinese, Czech, Dutch, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Kazakh, Lithuanian, Moldovan, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Sri Lankan, Tanzanian and Turkish).</p> <p>*67% of the students were from European Union (EU) countries, 18% from Asian countries, 9% from outside of the EU</p>	<p>*Institutional case study of a HE institution as a classic model of an international university. Ranked in the Times HE top 200 list of the most international and outward-looking universities in the world</p> <p>*Sample population was drawn from the Faculty of Management</p> <p>*Questionnaire and Focus Group Discussions</p> <p>*Questionnaire design: which addressed gender, nationality, age; programme of study; placement organisation, location; placement optionality; prior expectations; types of support; experiences and recommendations for work placement improvement</p> <p>*FG thematically analysed</p>	<p>Dewey's Experiential Learning (1938) - applicable knowledge rather than learning merely for the sake of learning.</p> <p>*Bridging theory and practice through experience</p>	<p>*An institution-wide priority to advance a support framework for IS work placement experience due to the fundamentally different experience IS have due to the fact that their primary location for their studies is different from their home countries</p> <p>*Recruit IS through the HE internationalisation agenda, and provide support to improve their experience</p> <p>*Current lack of understanding of IS UG employability centring on a work placement scheme suggests that institutions may be limited in their ability to product effective institutional strategies that ensure positive IS work placement experiences</p> <p>*Only 32% of IS felt they had been sufficiently prepared by the institution to effectively adapt to the UK work culture</p> <p>*IS employability-driven curriculum being adapted to consider cultural differences in order to effectively</p>	<p>*Cultural values may affect some dimensions of career development and IS may need assistance to gain work experience, such as with job search skills and career planning</p> <p>*A cap on the number of working hours can make it difficult for IS to achieve meaningful work placement or part-time employment that can allow them to gain relevant skills that will be useful in their future placement</p> <p>*Clearly a difference in confidence presented by UK students compared to IS when it comes to assessment centres and interviews</p> <p>*IS request compulsory self-confidence workshops to counter timidity and lack of confidence</p> <p>*Work experience is not a necessity for some IS in their home countries whereas the need is entrenched within the employment culture of the UK</p>	<p>*A lack of understanding regarding mobility in the UK, career intentions and approaches to managed IS employability remains which may detrimentally affect IS well-being and overall study experiences</p> <p>*IS are ill informed about the need to undertake work placement and remain insufficiently informed about the demands, duration, companies, or type of work option on offer</p> <p>*This lack of understanding was attributed to cultural background in which many students would not be familiar with standards known and accepted by UK students</p> <p>*Recruitment of students in their home countries limits the information they receive prior to arriving in the UK</p> <p>*Visa discrepancies make it difficult for student to gain permanent employment in their placement company</p> <p>*Contact and being pushed to be</p>	<p>*Knight (2004) approaches to internationalisation: activity, outcome, rational, process, at home and abroad</p> <p>*Activity based: curriculum development, institutional linkages, networks, relevant development projects</p> <p>*Outcomes: anticipated goals and targets such as student competencies and enhanced profiles</p> <p>*Rationales: motivations or rationale driving institutional efforts</p> <p>*Process: incorporates an international dimension to activities, policies, and procedures</p> <p>*At home (at university): ethos, culture, and climate on campus that supports internationalisation</p> <p>*Abroad: needs for cross-border information sharing or delivery of education</p> <p>*The majority of literature regarding work placement experience focuses on UK students, raising the question of whether current teaching and learning practices cater for both since the need to gain work experience extends to all students</p> <p>*many international students lack</p>	R&T
2020	Grace Chien, Y.	Studying Abroad in Britain: Advantages and Disadvantages	<p>*Qualitative phase: 26 first year, full-time postgraduate, international students</p> <p>*Quantitative phase: survey distributed to all first-year, full time PG international students: 250 completed answers</p>	<p>*sequential exploratory mixed methods strategy</p> <p>*Face to face in-depth semi structured interview first conducted in the spring term of the academic year</p> <p>*Qualitative online survey during summer term</p> <p>*</p>		<p>*language support or academic proofreading services should be provided for IS since having imperfect English was perceived as a common disadvantage of studying abroad</p> <p>*Greater interaction between IS and host national students should be encouraged since lacking a host country social network and experiencing cultural differences were noted as limitations of studying abroad</p> <p>*Policies related to the internationalisation of HE and recruitment of IS to study in Britain should be continued and improved to increase mutual understanding among people in the world</p> <p>*The length of study for a one-year masters was both seen as an advantage (financially and time) and disadvantage (insufficient time for developing their learning)</p>	<p>*Common belief that studying abroad in Britain would improve opportunities for employment or promotion</p> <p>*Challenged when IS need to find work at home and are hindered by their need for job hunting training, requirements, or even local networks</p>	<p>*Benefits of studying abroad: different cultures or perspectives, personal improvement, opportunities for employment or promotion, knowledge improvement, and better education</p> <p>*Personal improvement: personality, interpersonal characteristics, or adaptability, independence, maturity, responsibility, and personality</p> <p>*The experience of studying abroad expands future employment possibilities</p> <p>*Disadvantages of studying abroad include: cultural and emotional adjustment, high costs, personal disadvantages such as the interaction between IS and host nationals.</p> <p>*A lack of network and imperfect English could make IS have worse academic performance than in their home country</p> <p>*With a lack of network, it is harder to ask for help</p>	<p>*The internationalisation of HE has led to a number of benefits worldwide including improving education quality, contributing to the economies of host countries, and fostering international communication and understanding</p> <p>*Advantages for IS receiving HE in Britain included promoting career development or alternatives, improving English language, maturing personal growth via wider experiences, broadening networks through professional or social contacts, and developing cosmopolitanism and multicultural sensitivity</p> <p>*The internationalisation of British tertiary education has benefited the British economy</p> <p>*</p>	R&T

2021	Hastings, Catherine; Ramia, Gabby; Wilson, Shaun; Mitchell, Emma; Morris, Alan	Precarity Before and During the Pandemic: International Student Employment and Personal Finances in Australia	*IS studying in Sydney and Melbourne					<p>*IS are subject to employment law and formally on an equal footing with other workers under Australia's Fair Work Act, 2009 however there are widespread systemic underpayment and exploitation of IS workers, reinforcing their noncitizenship</p> <p>*the legal reduction of hours eligible to work and penalty of deportation create an "underclass of student-migrant workers"</p> <p>**Low skill levels, a lack of previous work experience, lower English language ability, the need for flexibility around study commitments, and the restrictions of their temporary visas are all factors that may further increase work precarity for international students"</p> <p>*A tolerance for precarity may be motivated through frames of reference to home country or IS-worker peers; a lack of knowledge of their work rights; a desire to improve their English; social,</p>	<p>*IS need to adjust to an unfamiliar culture, education system, society, and economy, facing new personal and practical challenges while being members of a minority group</p> <p>*In the US and UK, IS from non-English speaking and non-Western countries are more likely to experience being ignored, verbal insults, and confrontation as well as discrimination, isolation, and alienation from the host culture, as well as experiences of economic exploitation</p> <p>*Work precarity for IS occurs in most advanced economies. IS experienced uncertainty in job and income insecurity in Singapore while in Dublin, visa conditions created opportunities for abuse at the intersection of legal and economic insecurity making them vulnerable to workplace exploitation</p> <p>*Restrictive work rights for IS in the UK such as limiting working</p>	<p>*Research on IS experience has shown that IS do not enjoy the same rights and treatments as domestic students.</p> <p>*Foreign student status and the "problem" represented by their differences from the host culture, motivates attitudes that do not give them equivalent status to local students impacting their financial status, emotional welfare, experiences of work exploitation, and social experiences</p> <p>*In the process of ISM, IS become vulnerable to disadvantage, marginalisation, and discrimination due to the lack of coordinated mechanisms to protect their rights and well-being</p> <p>*In Australia, IS are viewed primarily as consumers of a service, not as rights-bearing subjects of education and welfare systems, and their value is linked to their position as a source of commercial income</p>	
2021	Haupt, John P.; Sutrisno, Agustian; Hermawan, Marko S.	Motivations and outcomes in dual-degree programs: insights from graduate scholarships for Indonesian									
2010	Hawthorne, Lesleyanne	How Valuable is "Two-Step Migration"? Labor Market Outcomes for International Student Migrants to									
2012	Holloway, Sarah L.; O'Hara, Sarah L.; Pimlott-Wilson, Helena	Educational mobility and the gendered geography of cultural capital: the case of international student flows between Central Asia and the UK	<p>*20 students who have moved from Kazakhstan to the UK to undertake UG degrees</p> <p>*10 men, 10 women</p> <p>*Aged 20-23yo</p> <p>*Final year of study</p> <p>*Were recruited through university admissions and International offices, student societies, and via Facebook</p> <p>*17 Bolashak scholars, 3 self-funded</p> <p>*14 were of Kazakh ethnicity, 3 mixed background, 3 were minor nationalities</p>	*Semi-structured interviews lasting 2 hours on average, conducted in English to explore motivations and experiences of studying in the UK and it's role in their future life				<p>*International education is viewed as a step up from just higher education. It makes them stand out in a competitive domestic labour market</p> <p>*Difficulties in finding a job in the host country (UK): non-European passport, first language is not English, if British people are unemployed then what are the chances of a foreigner</p> <p>*In Kazakhstan, your relationship networks are used primarily to get a job emphasizing social capital development</p> <p>*Culture capital is seen as being more fair than using social capital in recruitment. Valuing abilities and experience and skills</p> <p>*Education qualifications are especially focused on by women</p>	<p>*IS from Kazakhstan view international education as an essential role in nation-building</p> <p>*Women who are not tied to needing to return home after completing their degree sought out graduate employment in the UK where they feel their abilities are more highly valued</p> <p>*Women saw another world from Kazakhstan. One with more independence and freedom to pursue what they like</p>	<p>*Education industries have responded to neoliberal reform by seeking to attract fee-paying IS in order to sustain and develop their sector through times of fiscal difficulty</p> <p>*The demand for international education experiences and qualifications is growing in Asia</p> <p>*Overseas education contributes to maintaining their privileged class status and indicate fluency in the English language and other less obvious qualities such as confidence, sociability, cosmopolitanism and possession of valuable social capital</p> <p>*Securing positional advantage in the labour market and transforming one's future life chances is a clear aim of the group interviewed</p>	T&E
2013	Huang, Rong	International experience and graduate employability: Perceptions of Chinese International students in the UK									

2014	Huang, Rong; Turner, Rebecca; Chen, Qian	Chinese international students' perspective and strategies in preparing for their future employability	*Mainland Chinese studying in the UK	<p>*4 part questionnaire (demographic, student understanding and approaches to employability, influential factors in employability, students' likelihood to participate in different activities to develop employability)</p> <p>*Single choice questions using a 7-point likert scale</p> <p>*Designed in English and translated to simplified Chinese</p> <p>*Piloted with 30 students. 196 online responses, 141 usable. 308 face-to-face usable responses. Total 449 responses</p>		<p>*Traditionally the planning and management of careers was considered the responsibility of the individual</p> <p>*Career management is individuals ability to identify what they want from their careers, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the goals, and decide what steps need to be taken</p> <p>*Tomlinson (2007) observed that employability and career progression were largely viewed as a problem for graduates rather than HE providers</p> <p>*To help IS develop their employability, universities should consider using different assessments to examine knowledge and abilities of the students</p> <p>*Reconsider strategies in teaching and learning in relation to employability of Mainland Chinese students</p>	<p>*Global knowledge economy positions employability as a central driver of political and business thinking</p> <p>*Employability at the individual level related to the acquisition of knowledge, skills, abilities that make a graduate more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupation (p3)</p> <p>*Broadly, employability relates to the capability to move into and within labour markets and to realise a potential by gaining sustainable employment (p3)</p> <p>*Holmes (2011) examines 3 competing perspectives on employability: possessive, positioning, processual</p> <p>*Possessive: employability is defined as a set of achievements, including skills, understandings and personal attributes (deeply flawed theoretically)</p> <p>*Positional: Graduate skills relate strongly to social positioning (positional conflict theory)</p>	<p>*The concept of employability is already formulated by IS before they arrive in their host country, where a new interpretation of employability, informed by the policy and practices of the host country is introduced</p> <p>*Without knowing how to negotiate or manage the different definitions, IS are at risk of being left in a confused state regarding the management of their future employability</p>	<p>*2011, Non-EU students studying in the UK, 16% were coming from China</p> <p>*2014, Export value of UK education and training is estimated to be £28b, compared to financial services £19b, and automotive industry at £20b</p> <p>*Research tends to focus on the employability of home students</p> <p>*Teaching-centred universities, with their greater focus on skills and a remit for vocational education, are more receptive to the idea of incorporating employability skills development in their programmes; whereas traditional/research universities are more reluctant</p> <p>*</p>	E
2016	Ingrams, Alex; Holzer, Marc	The Educational and Professional Goals of International Students in Public Service Degrees								
2017	Jackson, Denise	Exploring the challenges experienced by international students during work-integrated learning in Australia								

2013	Jones, Elspeth	Internationalization and employability: the role of intercultural experiences in the development of transferable skills				<p>*Internationalization of the curriculum: the incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the preparation, delivery, and outcomes of a program of study</p> <p>*To produce graduates capable of solving problems in a variety of locations with cultural and environmental sensitivity and promoting a sense of interculturality</p> <p>*Incorporate relevant learning outcomes into curricula for all students, not simply through mobility opportunities</p> <p>*There is a greater need for an alignment of courses which match employer expectations in intercultural expectations. Academic staff may be reluctant to incorporate 'skills' at the expense of their subject-specific content</p>	<p>*Employability skills have been defined as 'a set of achievements-skills, understandings and personal attributes- that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations'(p96)</p> <p>*Soft or transferable skills which are independent of the field of study</p> <p>*In Australia, employability skills as generic capabilities have been highlighted for at least 2 decades, whereas in the UK a report found (2008) that employability related teaching was not embedded into mainstream curricula in HE</p> <p>*Attributes developed through ISM include forging of networks, language acquisition and the development of soft skills relating to intercultural understanding, personal characteristics, and ways of thinking</p> <p>*Overseas study as a way to distinguish themselves from other graduates in a congested labour market</p>		<p>*Internationalisation in HE is defined as integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of post-secondary education</p> <p>*Two broad drivers of internationalization: (1) to enhance quality, offer an economic benefit or elevate perceptions of the institution and its reputation, (2) benefits for students, primarily concerned with support, inclusive pedagogy, and questions of curriculum at home or overseas</p> <p>*Of the 10 drivers for internationalisation only 2 relate specifically to students, with the 2nd hinting at graduate outcomes for employability (global citizenship and preparing students for a global workforce)</p> <p>*An Australian study found that IS were unaware of the importance of these generic employability skills and there was a mismatch between employer and graduate perceptions</p> <p>*Substantial evidence that an overseas education does often lead to substantial labour market rewards</p>	E
2020	Kaya, Jean	Inside the International Student World: Challenges, Opportunities, and Imagined Communities	<p>*5 international graduate students</p> <p>*Non native English speakers who traveled to the US to pursue HE</p>	<p>*Purposeful sampling</p> <p>*Interview, audio-recorded</p> <p>*Saldana's methods of transforming data from codes to themes</p> <p>*2nd cycle of coding identified patterns in the codes, reduced to 4 main themes: challenges, opportunities, identities, and imagined communities (post-graduate life)</p>	Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural approach, which values social interactions and culturally constructed artifacts as a vital means of learning and psychological development	<p>*Understanding that the experience of IS cannot be generalised since it is contextual and multifaceted</p> <p>*By understanding the small 'worlds' in which IS operate, HEI and offices of international education can acquire valuable information that can be used to enhance the likelihood of a satisfying and successful study abroad experience for their inbound IS</p>		<p>*Navigation of the new world is often the responsibility of individual students. Far less attention is paid to IS once they arrive to the host institution</p> <p>*It is often assumed that just by being in the host country, IS will be exposed to native speakers and develop intercultural competence but this is not always sufficient</p> <p>*IS often experience communication issues, failure in socialization, loneliness and difficulty making friends, and culture shock</p> <p>*The experience of developing friendships with local students is often difficult and disappointing</p> <p>*Agency is unstable and constantly constructed in relation to environments and processes</p> <p>*Being able to make friends and build that community/or be accepted by it is an opportunity for IS and are seen as opportunities afforded to them by studying abroad</p>	<p>*In the difficulty of IS making friends or networks - does this limit their employability development or ability to gain employment if they are limited in their capital development?</p> <p>*Developing identity which involves how we see ourselves and others and how others see us and themselves. To be recognized as a certain kind of person in a given context</p>	T

2011	Khawaja, Nigar G.; Stallman, Helen M.	Understanding the Coping Strategies of International Students: A Qualitative Approach	*22 international students from an Australian university	*Focus groups (4) *Themes: studies (27%), social isolation (18%), culture shock (13%), adjustment (12%), psychological stress (9%), English language skills (8%), employment (7%), and unmet expectations (6%).		*Frustration at not being able to develop friendships with local students as they had expected. Some expected a higher level of support, resources, and mentoring system. Others felt the course was not what they had anticipated and felt locked in a program they had entered without adequate understanding, however they felt they could not withdraw due to shame and it being unacceptable *Develop effective university policies and teaching practices, as well as counselling strategies to enhance the wellbeing of IS	*Expectations that it would be easy to secure a job in Australia, that studies would lead to employment. These were unmet in the reality. *Seeking employment in Australia was a mismatched experience of students seeking employment but unable to meet the 'previous work experience' and reference in Australia required by Australian employers *The experience in their home country is not equivalent to the requirements in the host country, according to employers *Employment, when obtained, was seen as a positive which helped financially, socially, and expedited language efficiency *Advise from IS to other IS is to pursue 'realistic' jobs, not aspiring for professional positions or to stay with one's own nationals settled in Australia *Having the degree completed increases the chances of obtaining a job, yet IS should not have false	*IS experience a range of stressors such as culture shock, discrimination, adjustment to unfamiliar cultural norms, values and customs, communication/language difficulties, education system differences, financial hardships, lack of appropriate accommodation, isolation and loneliness, homesickness and loss of established support and social networks *Not feeling included, accepted, or understood by home students and society can disrupt the acculturation process and lead to emotional problems *Socio-cultural and language barriers are associated with limited interaction of IS with home students *Stressors specific to IS adjustment have been found to exacerbate stress in other areas of IS lives *Coping mechanisms differ by	*IS are the largest service export industry in the US, UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand *In a study of 200 Australian students, 2/3 experienced loneliness in the early phase of their stay *Off-campus discrimination *Emotional problems and underutilisation of counseling *Present IS students suggest that IS seek help from senior students, particularly those from the same country and working with fellow students (inward-networking) and to seek assistance from the International Student Services/or other services within the university to help with academic oriented support *Most challenges identified by IS are unexpected to them and they overcame them by trial and error (potential role of university to build supports for known challenges of students) *Future IS are advised to become familiar with the university, educational system, courses, and campus. And to learn about the host city and the country *Emphasis is on IS to go out of their	T
2021	Kim, Junhyoung; Park, Se-Hyuk; Kim, May; Chow, Hsueh-Wen; Han, Sua	Leisure and health benefits associated with acculturation among Western international students living in South Korea	*Western IS studying in South Korea *Full-time college students *Comfortable speaking English *18 participants (7 male, 11 female) between 20-28yo	*Semi-structured interviews *Content mapping and content mining question strategy *constant comparative method to derive patterns and themes		*Promote multi-ethnic recreational programs to the IS can engage and bond with the host country and other ethnic groups *Aim to explore and minimize barriers, such as language and cultural differences, by enhancing opportunities for IS to engage in leisure activities		*Initial experience was limited opportunities to form friendships with host individuals due to differences in language and cultural values/ beliefs *Engagement in leisure activities was a way to breakdown these barriers, developing intergroup friendships *Engagement in club activities helped IS learn how to interact with host student in the appropriate manner *Intragroup friendships are used to overcome and support each other through challenges associated with acculturation	*Engagement in leisure activities can be instrumental in promoting social and psychological benefits among IS *Socializing with other ethnic and racial groups of students encourages the growth of cultural knowledge and understanding	T

2018	King, Russell; Sondhi, Gunjan	International student migration: a comparison of UK and Indian students' motivations for studying abroad		<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Survey UK-origin students undertaking complete degree programmes abroad, mainly in North America- but also Australia and several European countries*Online questionnaire survey (553 respondents) or UK students enrolled abroad; and 64 face-to-café*Indian students studying for a degree in another country (157 online), (43 face-to-face)*UK survey collected information on themes: life at present, school background, decision to study, experience of studying and living abroad, respondent info*Interviews were semi-structured built around key themes and questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*ISM - macro-economic perspective, host country motivation to attract foreign students to improve the supply of highly qualified human capital- into domestic labour markets*Human capital perspective - individual ISM can be seen as a career enhancing investment - to compete better in the origin country following the return home*Debate on whether IS can be classified as 'highly skilled' since they have in most cases not yet entered the labour market to demonstrate their skills*ISM is both a product and underlying mechanism of the globalisation of HE		<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Most important factor to studying abroad was the determination to study at a world-class university. Second was accessing an international career.*Indian students felt studying abroad for their career was very important (56%) will not as many UK students were concerned (34%)*Internationally recognized degree from a prestigious university would make them competitive in an internationalised labour market*Employers would value the skills gained (deliberately going out of their comfort zone and increased self-confidence)*Opportunities to gain employment in the US, Canada, Australia and the UK is seen as more merit-based from Indian students perspective - whereas the Indian labour market is very hierarchical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Indian students have a good deal of interest in using the student-visa route to facilitate longer-term migration out of India. Signaling the desire to settle abroad.*UK students regarded their time abroad as an adventure where they could easily return the UKs globally connected labour market*Indian students look to accumulate cultural capital by circumventing the challenges of the local HE system*Those going to study abroad are intrinsically aware that they are migrating to another place and culture and have the desire to learn and gain tacit knowledge of the new setting*The IS experience can often be contained between the 'imagined' and 'real' everyday life, especially for those who live on-campus and are far removed from the real, everyday life of the host country	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Agency: the greater diversity of places students have experienced, the greater their agency in terms of creative and individualised self-identification*Mobility student's international experience is classified as cultural capital - mobility capital/transcultural capital/intercultural capital*Access to university education is socio-economically selective in most societies, but also that an access to international education from the general pool of students is biased in favour of the more privileged classes	T&E
2018	Kratz, Fabian; Netz, Nicolai	Which mechanisms explain monetary returns to international student mobility?								
2021	Krsmanovic, Masha	The Synthesis and Future Directions of Empirical Research on International Students in the United States: The Insights from One Decade		<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Literature review 344 empirical research studies*2010-2019, United States, Undergraduate and graduate degree-seeking IS in 4-year universities and 2-year colleges in the US	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*comprehensive internationalisation - commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout teaching, research, and service missions of HE*The opportunity to IS to succeed academically is often undermined by underlying barriers (cultural, social, academic)			<ul style="list-style-type: none">*IS studying in the US expressed an ease of adjustment, were satisfied with the quality of teaching, and felt the staff and faculty were welcoming*Though they experienced challenges and barriers in not being involved in activities and events at their host institution, and that their social relationships were with students from their own country or other IS.*More than half of the respondents expressed difficulty in forming close relationships with domestic students, a lack of campus network, cultural and language barriers, academic stress, and barriers to community integration*IS in their UG express lower levels of satisfaction with their experience than domestic peers, negatively affecting students' self-efficacy and creating additional barriers to adjustment*An unfamiliarity with the host	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*In research, the homogenising of the IS group needs to be addressed as different academic levels relate to different findings	T

2022	Lee, Jihyun	When the world is your oyster: international students in the UK and their aspirations for onward mobility after graduation	*55 IS from outside the EU who were enrolled in or had recently completed a PG degree in social sciences, and STEM from three universities in the UK	*Face-to-face or Skype interviews in English *Student in their final year, or graduates working full-time and/or abroad	Bourdieu (1977) habitus 'structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures'. It predisposes individuals towards certain practices in a way that often -but not always- reproduces the social conditions of one's own production. *This claim has suggested that disposition to studying abroad or ISM are developed and reproduced through cultures of mobility embedded in social networks of family, friends, and acquaintances who have gone overseas for work, study, or travel *Overseas credentials have long been		*'A degree from the UK' (indication of shared institutionalised capital) would be easily converted into economic capital in myriad countries *Perception that a degree from the UK is universally accepted globally as the UK is portrayed to carry a significant cultural, economic, and emotional value. *A 'want' perspective is more freed in their mobility and they are free to practice and pursue activities in line with what they want to do as well as where they want to be. Future intentions and aspirations for post-study international mobility were largely shaped by the informal connections (social network) or 'institutional social capital' *This represents interviewees who negotiated their future alternatives based on financial resources, social networks, and knowledge and information of different pathways abroad. Being well informed of their options made them aware of the capital they possessed	*The decision to stay, return home, or move to a third country can be limited by an individual's national origins	*IE is often undertaken to reproduce social advantage upon return home or secure residency rights or citizenship in the country of education *Research has shown that IS are motivated not just by study at a world-class university but by the pursuit of an international career or an internationally mobile lifestyle *IS are exposed to a wide range of ideas and opportunities through a diverse social network of domestic and other IS in the host country *IE for some students is seen as a pathway to another destination *Bozionelos et al. (2015), in their research on international (i.e., non-UK) postgraduate taught (i.e., master's) students at a British university that individual (e.g., self-efficacy in working abroad), experiential (e.g., adjustment to international study) and perceived constraint (e.g., labour market perceptions) factors all contribute to the likelihood of their participants pursuing a career abroad after completion of their studies	E
2016	Lee, Yun Jeong	Characteristics and Career Plans of Korean International Students and Graduates of Doctor of Pharmacy Program in the United States		*Members of the online community for South Korean Pharm.D students and graduates invited to participate in an online questionnaire 4 sections: demographics, admission pathway, college life, and career plans *Career: short and long-term career plans, current employment status, long-term career aspirations, and current visa status in the US		*Providing attention and appropriate academic counseling to IS in their program could be extremely valuable *Academic and career advising of international students during pharmacy school and establishing a network of U.S Pharm.D graduates in Korea could serve as valuable resources for Korean students and graduates in the U.S Pharm.D program as they navigate through pharmacy school and career exploration process.	*In preparation of employment, a majority responded that they were engaged in internships and work experience. Others maintained a good GPA, networking, professional organization and attendance at conferences, and research *Top reasons to stay in the US: better compensation, opportunity for professional development, and preferences of lifestyle in the US	*Anxiety over employment was higher than their anxiety over the pharmacy exam *Desire to stay in the US after graduation. IS who believe they will be treated much better by colleagues back in their home country have a higher chance of leaving the US *Extremely difficult to find employment in the US without citizenship or residency	*A majority of respondents (26) wanted to stay and work in the US, (20) wanted several years of post-graduate training in the US but undecided thereafter, (9) wanted to return to Korea, (8) wanted to return to Korea after several years of training in the US	R,T.&E
2017	Lertora, Ian M.; Henriksen, Richard C.; Starkey, Jesse; Li, Chi-Sing	International Students' Transition Experiences in Rural Texas: A Phenomenological Study								

2018	Linkes, Snjezana; Ezekiel, Fredrick; Lerch, Ashleigh; Meadows, Ken N.	Group Career Counselling for International Students: Evaluation and Promising Practices	<p>*4 cohorts of international UG students from fall 2013 to winter 2015</p> <p>*32 of the 61 students participated in the research</p> <p>*Country of origin majority was China. Others included India, Rwanda, Barbados, Armenia, Iran, Lebanon, Libya, Ukraine, and Vietnam.</p>	<p>*2010-2011 academic year, two pilot group counselling cohorts were offered to 16 participants</p> <p>*5 group sessions of 90 minutes</p> <p>*From 2013-2015, each group included eight 3-hour sessions, covering topics that included adjustment and culture shock, self-identify, skills identification, job search strategies and self-promotion, developing an application package, and maintaining employment in Canada</p> <p>*Quantitative measures: assess student knowledge and competencies in 10 core areas or interest on a 5-point Likert scale relating to career optimism, interview anxiety, and attitude towards diversity</p>	<p>*Measuring outcomes were validated with three scales - Career Optimism Scale measures students' disposition toward their career plans, and prospects</p> <p>*Performance Anxiety subscale measures students' confidence in their ability to perform well in an interview setting</p> <p>*Diversity Attitudes subscale measures an individual's self-understanding in relation to the diverse world, and ability to effectively build relationships with diverse others. This is relevant to the IS ability to establish effective relationships (networks)</p>	<p>*Common needs and considerations among IS make group counselling a potentially impactful tool at it supports normalisation of feelings and experiences, as well as opportunities to learn from shared experiences among members of the group</p> <p>*Provide more comprehensive approaches to support the job search, placement, and career decision-making needs of IS, especially when considering decision to pursue employment and immigration in Canada</p> <p>*Offering high-quality, tailored career development supports for IS</p> <p>*Offer group career counselling. Characterized by three core elements: career planning and decision making require input about occupations; accurate data about self are needed; opportunities to explore personal meaning, and get feedback from others and try on roles</p> <p>*Group counselling can be used among groups of individuals with</p>	<p>*Language capacity, including both second language ability and confidence about speaking in the second language has been implicated as a barrier to career decision making, career exploration, and navigation of selection processes for IS</p> <p>*Due to this barrier, IS may pursue occupations which do not require high levels of English proficiency</p> <p>*Primary career-related concerns are job search and placement</p> <p>*IS have expressed needs for specific supports while at university: employment experience while at university, services specific to IS needs, services specific to IS needs at graduation, help with job search processes, better understanding of cultural nuances, concrete help to access local labour market, identifying employers who are accepting of international students, and help to secure international student mentors</p> <p>*IS felt more comfortable (skills) in</p>	<p>*During university, IS deal with typical stressors like any other student: financial demands, academic pressures, loneliness, and career indecision. IS students face unique issues related to career development and adapting to a foreign country, often referred to as acculturative stress.</p> <p>*IS raised in one environment and then transplanted to another language, customs, and occupational structure impacts the types of jobs one pursues, often resulting in immigrants securing employment in lower status, lower paying jobs</p> <p>*IS benefit from group counselling due to the: normalization of feelings and decreased isolation; increased social support; opportunities to increase English language skills; and promotion of information sharing for problem-solving and accessing resources</p> <p>*Group formats contribute to a feeling of hope, validation,</p>	<p>*IS are continuing to access career counselling services and programs in large numbers</p> <p>*With the increased demand, there is a necessity to address the distinct nature of some of their career needs: language proficiency, academic demands, loneliness, establishing a new support network, culture shock, gender role expectations and values conflicts</p> <p>*Gap in the research exploring the experiences of IS in the final stage of their educational programs who wish to secure employment in the country in which they are studying</p> <p>*Very limited research on the topic of IS and group counselling, if any at all</p> <p>*IS benefited from case studies and putting concepts into practice, while building their skills and confidence</p> <p>*Still IS desired more opportunities for one-on-one time with the counsellors, opportunities to share as a whole group, and more materials for advanced preparation study</p>	R,T,E
2015	Lin-Stephens, Serene; Uesi, John; Doherty, Julie	Chinese returnees' conceptions of positive career outcomes after graduating from Australian universities - quantitative findings								
2021	Lopez-Duarte, Cristina; Maley, Jane F.; Vidal-Suarez, Marta M.	Main challenges to international student mobility in the European arena		<p>*Literature review of articles published between 2008-2018</p> <p>*Following the Planning/Conducting/Analysis protocol and good practices for literature reviews (Pan and Lopez, 2004) and Torracio (2005)</p>			<p>*Employability and finding a job after graduation is still a fear for many students and impacts their ISM choice</p> <p>*Improving professional development is a key objective pursued by students when deciding to study abroad</p> <p>*Challenges associated with acquiring employability skills may lie within academia resistance and prejudices to the concept of HE for employability</p> <p>*Need to build stronger collaborations between HE and industry to communicate skills desired by employers and enhance employability of ISM graduates. Sussex University developed a prototype for improving university-industry networks which could be taken across borders</p> <p>*WIL is considered fundamental to graduate job-readiness and improves explicitly soft skills</p>	<p>*ISM is often viewed by students as the first step towards migration which raises a potential contradictino as desired (due to economic and brain gain reasons) and unwanted (due to migration controls and politics)</p> <p>*Language barriers are extensively acknowledged in ISM as taking lectures in a language different from ones local fosters the creation of language-based clusters which keep IS away from local students</p> <p>*The socialisation process relies on co-national and international student networks</p> <p>*Accommodation options for IS often result in being housed with other IS</p> <p>*ISM positively impacts the students' cultural awareness, intelligence, sensibility, empathy, and adaptability and helps them to develop their intercultural competences, cross-cultural communication skills, and global</p>	<p>*Many challenges to ISM exist despite the best endeavors of policymakers and HE specialists</p> <p>*5 critical challenges exist: student employability, social class segregation, credit mobility, the strategic intent of ISM, and language barriers</p> <p>*Many nations are still preoccupied with their national strategy, which is often not aligned with the spirit of ISM and they often lack a clear strategy</p> <p>*ISM relies substantially on the student's ability to pay a significant portion of the cost of the time abroad. Raising questions as to the level of social inequality in ISM</p> <p>*Contradiction of concepts. The employability in ISM schema is argued to be at odds with the humanist concept of education as something for the public good, crushing the humanist HE aims of education</p>	T&E

2007	McClure, Joanne W.	International graduates' cross-cultural adjustment: experiences, coping strategies, and suggested								
2021	Mogaji, Emmanuel; Adamu, Nenadi; Nguyen, Nguyen Phong	Stakeholders shaping experiences of self-funded international PhD students in UK business schools	*26 participants engaged in full-time study during 2019-2020 across different business schools in the UK *Age 20-45	*Semi-structured interviews of self-funded PhD international students *Recruited through snowballing and personal network, and social media	*Theory of doctoral student persistence (Tinto, 1993) and multidimensional value-based approach (Gallarza et al, 2017) to explore the factors that contribute to an enhanced doctoral study experience from the IS perspective *Push-pull theory on motivational factors for students studying in the UK *Terrell et al. 2012 grounded theory of connectivity and persistence found that establishing a community setting among doctoral students enhances communication and their persistence in the programme			*IS found there were limited opportunities to network with other students and professionals *IS cannot all be classed as 'migratory elite' because although most of them possess some level of cultural and economic capital, obtaining a doctorate is seen as a means of enhancing future careers *University Administrative systems around finances and visa restrictions were noted as key factors in IS experiences *Belief in an unsupportive university environment that treats IS more like cash cows with little understanding their circumstances or hardships *Often the financial stress creates more emotional and psychological pressure for IS who feel the university is not understanding of their circumstances *70% of participants believed their supervisors didn't understand their struggles as IS *IS expressed deep appreciation	*IS contribute approximately £4.8 billion to the UK economy (2020) *International PhD Students bring a huge financial return to universities *Lit review should that motivations to study abroad are overwhelmingly on career progression *Studies also mention challenges faced by students including unmet expectations and difficulties adjusting to the UK academic practices	T
2022	Mulvey, Benjamin	Global Inequality, Mobility Regimes and Transnational Capital: The Post-Graduation Plans of African								
2013	Nerlich, Steve	Australians as international students - where they go, what they do and why they do it		*literature review		*Better articulation by the institution or government of the potential return on investment to encourage participation in ISM experiences and focused on the curriculum-specific learning outcome rather than 'broadening the mind' which would be achieved through personal travel	*IE is seen as a motivator to enhance career prospects	*Generic benefits of of ISM include the development of skills that enable collaboration and the enhanced understanding gained from considering common subjects of study across different cultural contexts. However these are considered general benefits of international travel, rather than as a curriculum specific learning outcome	*Internationalisation of HE is driven by a common view that economic growth and prosperity depend on greater international engagement with an increasingly globalised economy *Many students who have participated in IE have trouble articulating the learning outcomes achieved from the study experience with most describing value largely outside of the classroom	R&T

2021	Oldac, Yusuf Ikbal; Fancourt, Nigel	'New Wave Turks': Turkish Graduates of German Universities and the Turkish Diaspora in Germany	*migrants from Turkey to Germany in two groups: students and those who moved for work *Included 14 graduates were intending to stay though eventually some returned home	*literature review *Interview with full-degree Turkish graduates of German universities *Snowballing	*Push-pull model: reputation is a pull factor attracting Turkish students to Germany. Turkey's current situation of decreasing freedoms and earning potential after graduation is a push factor *Model is criticised for overemphasizing macro-level factors and downplaying individual factors *Assumption that experiences during IE and opportunities available afterwards may have implications for the overall experience in Germany and the decision to stay or return after graduation			*through diasporas, the cost of moving to that country is decreased and this attracts further mobility, decreasing the risk and costs of moving *While one community of Turks is established in Germany, the new wave of student Turks may not be as united as a community nor have the same attitudes to their hosts or homeland *In other studies, have an established community in global locations (Jewish, Chinese, etc) it served to attract and support students of that group *Even as graduates of host universities, with opportunities to join the wider society it was still difficult to integrate. German speakers would stick with German speakers, and foreigners would then just have to speak with each other *The choice to stay or return to Turkey for graduates was impacted by the different	*New wave Turks have formed a new network and differentiated themselves from the existing Turkish diaspora *Most Turkish graduates felt the German perspective of them was built based on the impressions they've had of the existing diaspora *Results of this study suggest that the existing community might have a multifaceted relationship with newcomers. Although IS are supported by their co-national community initially, the relationship becomes complicated as the IS try to start their life and build communities and networks within the host country *Although the New Wave graduates were reconnected with the community from their shared homeland, they were acutely aware of the socio-economic and educational differences and frustrated at being grouped together in a homogenous group *This generalisation influenced their ability to integrate into the German society and influenced whether their stay would be short-term or long-term	T
2020	Perovic, Barbara Toplak; Komotar, Marusa Hauptman	Are international degree students indeed more employable? The case of Italian physiotherapy graduates in Slovenian higher education	*Italian graduates of the Bachelor's study programme in physiotherapy in Slovenian HE *To date, Italian students are the only foreign student group to enroll in or have completed their UG study in Slovenia in a foreign language (Italian)				*International experiences provide graduates with advantages over those with only local knowledge, because they accumulate multiple and mutually-reinforcing forms of capital - mobility, human, social, cultural, and eventually economic capital *The governmental aim of graduate employability has been imposed in national HE systems to varying degrees because in some countries 'inflexible' national legal framework may hinder development *In Slovenia, Italian students do not experience the added value of their mobility to their employability due to being blocked by the State's requirement of Slovene language for professional examinations *Most students regard the successful completion of the study programme and the award of the respective degree as the most obvious criterion of success, but in the case of Slovenia this is not the case due to the language	*This study highlights a conflicting case context demonstrating that despite obtaining a degree in accordance with the Higher Education Act, country-specific regulations severely impact the employment of foreign graduates of the study programme *In this study, it is viewed that the higher education system in Slovenia is still quite traditional and binary in what is foreign and what is domestic, demonstrating how phobic we are when opening up to the world	*The Bologna Process (1999) emphasized student mobility and employability, stressing the importance of the mobility of students, teachers, researchers and admin staff to overcome obstacles *In the strategy document 'European Higher Education in the World' (2016) the strengthening of human capital, employability and competitiveness was emphasized to equip everyone with a broad range of skills which opens the doors to personal fulfillment *Many studies agree that ISM enhances graduate employability *Internationalisation strategies and policies predominantly emphasize degree student mobility *There is a conflicting aim to internationalise HE systems and escalating trends towards isolationism and inward looking nationalism	T&E
2017	Pham, Anh	Visualising Returnee Re-engagement with Local Workplaces and Community: A Case Study of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam								

2017	Quan, Rose; Pearce, Alison; Baranchenko, Yevhen	Educational mobility in transition: what can China and the UK learn from each other?	*UGI(2), university staff(4) and parents(2) in the UK and China who were involved in ISM	*Inductive approach *Participant observation and semi-structured interview, 50 minutes, conducted in English and Mandarin Chinese	*HE and the role of student mobility *Students are a key stakeholder in implementing internationalisation strategy *Individual drivers shaping student outbound mobility and discovered that academic development, personal development, career development and work-skills development are primary factors motivating SM	*Specific post-return 'maximising employability' sessions were organised to help students unpack their experiences, positive and negative, and translate them into evidence of the 'additional global competences' employers seek such as adaptability, resilience, self-reliance, and an ability to work internationally with many different people *Policymakers in the HE industry in the UK and China need to promote ISM in a more strategic fashion to develop students' cultural capital and enhance their multi-cultural capabilities	*Chinese students believed their ISM brought many benefits for their career developing and felt more confident and coped better with difficulties and solving problems *Believed the studying abroad enhanced their employability skills *Some students struggle to realise the value of challenges they had overcome, slipping into negativity because they had not entirely enjoyed their experience abroad	*Institutional support is influential in attracting more overseas students to study at Chinese universities *Developing peer-to-peer learning allows students and staff to provide up-to-date detail to the briefing and support process	*Universities are seeking how to manage SM efficiently *Motivations for inward mobility in China is closely related to support from the Chinese government *IS studying in China receive better accommodation, student-wellbeing services, language learning and cultural visits *Self-motivation played an important role in motivating students to travel: personal development, gaining cultural and social capital, seeking personally rewarding experiences, and maximising educational and employment opportunities	R,T,&E
2018	Rajani, Namita; Ng, Eddy S.; Groustis, Dimitria	From India to Canada: An Autoethnographic Account of an International Student's Decision to Settle as a Self-Initiated Expatriate								
2018	Rakhshandehroo, Mahboubeh	A Qualitative Exploration of On-Campus Experiences of English-Speaking Graduate International Students at a Leading Japanese University								
2019	Rakotonarivo, Andonirina	International student mobility and professional integration: the case of...								
2011	Rizvi, Fazal	Theorizing student mobility in an era of globalization						*If the neo-liberal market view of IE was largely about recruiting students, the emphasis on transnational collaborations implies rethinking the nature and scope of the education itself. Re-examining the traditional curriculum, challenged now by new pedagogies and the ubiquitous technologies of communication	*The notion of exchange of ideas and intercultural learning has always been a part of the mission of HE *Mobility gives shape to institutional forms and has the potential of transforming social identities *Student recruitment became increasingly filtered through the lens of marketing to recruitment IS to their universities *Recruitment to balance their declining budgets was increased but often sidelined the critical issues of quality and capacity of the university to provide IS with promised educational experiences *People, governments and institutions are coming to the reality of transnational economic relations, technological and media innovations, and cultural flows cut across national borders *HE cannot afford to be driven more by the profit motive than by its traditional cultural and educational concerns *It is a problem that international HE has become a private good, available mostly to the transnational elite	T
2020	Ryan, Mary; Barton, Georgina	International Students, Reflection, and Employability								

2011	Sangganjanavanh, Varunee Fai; Lenz, A. Stephen; Cavazos, Javier	International students' employment search in the united states: a phenomenological study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*8 UG IS during their employment search in the US in their final year of study*6 women, 2 men. Age 20-24*5 from Asia, 3 from Latin America	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Literature review*10-week support group followed by a single-session focus group*Support group lasted for 75min*Opportunity for IS to exchange their perceptions and experiences of seeking employment*Journal reflections of their thoughts and emotions at the midpoint and end of the group*Single-session focus group was used to discuss participants' (a) views or perceptions of themselves in the current U.S. job market, (b) personal strengths and uniqueness, (c) experiences (i.e., learning about positions, application process, and interviews), (d) challenges or difficulties faced, and		<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Training career counsellors to provide services to IS is a critical step toward enriching their educational experiences and career development and are sensitive to the unique needs of IS*According to the American Counselling Association Code of Ethics require all counsellors to demonstrate culturally sensitive knowledge, attitudes, and skills when providing services*IS are frequently unaware of supportive counselling services available through their university*Group counselling offers a flexible strategy and cost-effective means for meeting the needs of diverse clients facing numerous issues*IS preferred to turn to other resources such as international education officers, foreign students organizations on campus, academic advisers and professors, and the US citizenship and immigration services*It is important for career development practitioners to assess	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*IS enrolled in HE abroad often face numerous challenges when seeking employment. These are the complexities of obtaining a work permit and immigration status to facing the intricacies of acclimating to the US culture, society, and job market.*Unique strengths: cultural diversity and multilingual ability and offered unique perspectives and approaches to cross-cultural POV and ability to better comprehend global trends and international issues*Struggles with acculturation process influenced the interview process: especially with communication styles and behaviours, including nonverbal communication and verbal communication*Adjusting one's behaviour to fit a foreign cultural context led to feelings of discomfort, incongruence, and awkwardness*Language barriers are often a concern as a lack in English inhibited	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Challenges associated with acclimating include adjusting to different value systems, learning interview styles, and accessing career and vocational guidance resources*Barriers to employment of IS: negative perceptions of an accent, unfamiliarity with available employment options, and acculturation stress*In the process of seeking employment, IS discovered a personal uniqueness that distinguished them from their domestic counterparts. The previously thought of themselves as outsiders but during employment seeking, they concluded they were merely different and not outcasts*All participants suggested that lack of familiarity with the US culture impeded their ability to compete with their domestic counterparts. They struggled to manage their cultural backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Survey of IS across the US indicated the expansion of the student body had outpaced the ability of vocational guidance and career development professionals to identify and meet the unique needs*Themes identified: (a) discovering personal uniqueness, (b) coping with acculturation, and (c) dealing with a lack of resources.*All participant expressed not knowing how to locate essential resources that pertained to employment of international workers: (a) employment rules, regulations, and restrictions pertaining to international workers or employees and (b) public policies and laws that identify the rights of international workers or employees.*Most participants believed that public policies and laws regarding employment (including affirmative action and equal pay opportunities) did not apply to them because they weren't US citizens*Most IS believed immigration issues contributed to employers' hiring decisions	R,T&E	
2021	Seminario, Romina; Le Feuvre, Nicky	The Combined Effect of Qualifications and Marriage on the Employment Trajectories of Peruvian Graduates in Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Peruvian nationality*16 graduates from Swiss HEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*54 biographical interviews carried out in Spanish with Peruvian men and women living in Switzerland			<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Host country qualifications do not automatically improve labour market outcomes on Peruvian immigrants*Marriage to a Swiss or EU national works in one way to act as an additional resource to help graduates access the legal security of the labour market. On the other hand, marriage appears to cancel out the advantages of possessing a Swiss degree, often resulting in precarious and part-time jobs, or even full-time domesticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*The route to studying in Switzerland as an IS is often a long and complex process via a selective admission procedure to HE institutions. Each HEI is entitled to make its' own decision concerning the entry regulations to particular courses and is free to recognise (or not) qualifications obtained abroad*Family reunification scheme is seen as an easier way to stay in Switzerland than navigating the 'essential employment' clause*Male dominated, especially STEM*The Peruvian partner's career is considered secondary to that of their Swiss or EU spouse*Although marriage provided a form of residential and financial stability, it also led to the renouncement of their own professional ambitions and, ultimately, to lose the potential value of their Swiss qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*The route to studying in Switzerland as an IS is often a long and complex process via a selective admission procedure to HE institutions. Each HEI is entitled to make its' own decision concerning the entry regulations to particular courses and is free to recognise (or not) qualifications obtained abroad*Family reunification scheme is seen as an easier way to stay in Switzerland than navigating the 'essential employment' clause*Male dominated, especially STEM*The Peruvian partner's career is considered secondary to that of their Swiss or EU spouse*Although marriage provided a form of residential and financial stability, it also led to the renouncement of their own professional ambitions and, ultimately, to lose the potential value of their Swiss qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">*Often migrants from the Global South to the North experience a devaluation of their educational credentials because their initial qualifications are not recognised in their host countries*In this study, it is shown that obtaining a Swiss HE qualification is rarely enough to guarantee access to the upper reaches of the Swiss labour market. In most cases such qualifications need to be combined with marriage to a Swiss (or EU) citizen before they can settle legally in the host country and start a career congruent with their educational credentials*Swiss residential permits are only valid for the precise length of study. Since 2008, there have been tighter restrictions on the ability of Non-EU citizens to study, work, or settle in the country.*Since 2011, a 6-month job search extension was given to student permits, however to recruit a non-EU graduate an employer must demonstrate that the candidate is better qualified than any available Swiss or EU citizen	T&E
2018	Su, Mengwei	Work a Way Out: Breaking Monoethnic Isolation through On-Campus Employment									

2021	Sutherland, Matthew; Thompson, David; Edirisingha, Prabash	Try before you buy: a small business employer (SME) perspective of international student mobility in England	*18 small business owners in the North East of England	*Semi-structured in depth interviews at multiple points over 5 months		<p>*Integrated work-based learning in the UK curriculum</p> <p>*IS be assisted by tailored programmes to suit their needs, augmented by university support services</p> <p>*Support services could help IS build networks and be introduced to prospective employers; students need to be better connected</p> <p>*Facilitating better networks for IS and a careers services that is more proactive in establishing links between businesses and IS, as well as mentoring from students who have already undertaken work or placements</p> <p>*Higher standards in identifying, recruiting, and selecting IS would bring skillful IS who are capable of adapting to the British workplace</p> <p>*Universities need a more defined acculturation process, consisting of peer mentoring, social networking, and career development strategies that would better inform new IS and better equip them</p>	<p>*WBL is viewed by some practitioners as integral to providing students with invaluable practical and soft skills to succeed in increasingly competitive graduate employment</p> <p>*From employers perspective: skills and traits, social-cultural-legal barriers, and misaligning expectations</p> <p>*Skills and traits were perceived as a major benefit when choosing to recruit IS. The approached problems from a different cultural perspective and displayed strong traits of creative thinking. They have the ability to draw from multiple perspectives</p> <p>*With their skills and purposeful attitude, IS often act as motivators for other employees</p> <p>*View from employers that IS lack an ability to understand British cultural nuances and technical jargon and might find it challenging to be competent among other employees who are comfortable in</p>	<p>*Regional attitudes may be a challenge for IS seeking employment and there is some subconscious level thinking than channels stereotypical perceptions of IS that may challenge them integrating into the British work place</p> <p>*When seeking employment, IS are challenged to overcome perceptions employers have of them (perishability, acculturative challenges, English communication skills and stringent immigration regulations), in addition to demonstrating their fit for the employment criteria and personal motivations</p>	<p>*findings of tension in internationalisation pursuits of British universities and raises questions about their strategies to facilitate international students experience and mobility</p> <p>*Studies indicate that there are intercultural barriers hindering IS career aspirations and development and their ability to secure employment both during WBL and graduate employment</p> <p>*Studies on student mobility and employability primarily focus on home students</p> <p>*SMEs are integral to UK economy because they play a role in employment creation and innovation</p> <p>*SMEs may be hesitant to take on IS due to language concerns and their capacity to 'fit in'</p>	R,T&E
2022	Tinta, Abdoulganiour Almale; Ouedraogo, Salifou; Thiombiano, Noel	Does graduate education abroad matter? Evidence from Burkina Faso		<p>*March 2021</p> <p>*1774 alumni with 455 migrant graduates and 1319 local graduates</p> <p>*Sequential logistic model: individuals' choices are not made simultaneously, and each sub-choice is based on previous choices.</p> <p>*Stage 1: respondent's choice, whether employed or not, can be influenced by the reservation wage</p> <p>*Stage 2: 'government' is the reference category. In this stage, the same level of education is considered, differentiating for local or overseas graduate</p> <p>*Stage 3: Specific influence of migrated for studies on wages is separated by Master's and PhD graduates</p> <p>*Stage 4: measure whether migration for education provides better</p>	<p>*Human capital and signaling theory</p> <p>*Education is an investment that creates and increases skills embodied in people with improves the likelihood of finding employment and earning higher future incomes</p> <p>*Some authors advocate that education is a simple selection process, whereby the most talented people are distinguished from the less talented</p> <p>*Signaling theory is an extension of human capital theory. The achievement of education represents a signal that workers give to employers, to reveal their innate levels of productivity.</p> <p>*Employers use</p>	<p>*Confidence and social inclusion are key skills for self-employment and employment in institutions</p> <p>*Migration decreases the probability of having a job, it is an asset for working in institutions</p> <p>*Effect of migration of employment becomes degree-dependent. Master's degree holders are the same for local and abroad graduates. PhD holders, employment is higher for local graduates, meaning migrants are at a disadvantage</p>	<p>*Return migration is based on residence cost in the country of destination, despite the opportunities in the labour market</p> <p>*Returnees take longer to get a job despite having degrees from better schools. A possible explanation is the adjustment or adaptability time of migrants in the labour market</p>	<p>*Human capital theory- education is associated with higher labour productivity, which is then associated with higher bargaining power which enhances wage level, leading to higher incomes and earnings.</p> <p>*Findings show in the first stage that males are more likely to be employed than females. Being older increases the probability of getting a job but after a certain age, the chances decrease</p> <p>*More years in education increased the chances of being employed, and there is a significant difference between local and overseas graduates</p> <p>*Migration for education does not necessarily guarantee better access to employment, as non-migrants get more employment than migrants</p> <p>*Wage was not differentiated based on education gained at home or abroad, so it has a negative net effect and not beneficial as it generates the same income as local graduates</p> <p>*More education can be risky and can lead to self-exclusion from the labour market</p>	T&E	
2021	Tran, Ly Thi; Blackmore, Jill; Rahimi, Mark	"You are not as localised as I need": employability of Chinese returning graduates								

2022	Tran, Ly Thi; Bui, Huyen; Tan, George; Rahimi, Mar	Post-Graduation Work Visas and Loopholes: Insights into Support Provision for International Graduates from the Perspectives of Migration Agents, Universities, and International Graduates	*32 temporary graduate visa holders and 18 key stakeholders	*50 in-depth interviews conducted *30-45 minute interviews	*Positioning Theory to understand the how different key players position themselves and are positioned by each other in relation to the provision of advice and support on post-graduation work and migration *The discursive practice where the social force of an action and the positions of people involved mutually determine one another with ascribed rights and duties to the participants *Positions are referred to as a 'cluster of beliefs, some implicit and some explicit, as to the rights and duties proper to a person who was taken to have the ascribed attributes, or at	*International graduates need assistance around advice on their visa application, post-study and migration pathways *Under the Migration Act, universities are not permitted to provide the PSWR visa support. Some universities partner with migration agents to provide free information sessions, however this carries the risk of engaging with low quality agents *Alternative option is to train up university staff to qualify them in providing PSWR and migration advice. However the demand for advice would well exceed the availability of staff *Existing regulatory system not only prevents universities from being in a legitimate position to support students on the issue, but poses potential legal issues if they were to partner with legitimate agents *University staff felt universities has an ethical obligation to continue post-graduation support provision to international graduates		*Employers are resistant to employ IS due to concerns over their unfamiliarity with the local workplace culture and English proficiency *In Australia, IS are required to declare they only intend to stay on a temporary basis, though the PSWR complicates this. Due to universities being restricted about what they can tell IS, IS cannot make fully informed decisions or manage their expectations *Exploitation of IS by some migration agents who tend to charge a lot of money. In some instances, IS are unable to verify information provided which creates confusion and precarity *The longer IS stay only serves to increase the potential for legal disputes due to their non-permanent status placing them in a deficit position *A positive post-study work outcome has implications for their competitive advantage in the	*Post-study work rights have been regarded as a strategic policy which mutually benefits IS and destination countries *Responds to IS aspirations to gain post-study work experiences and assist with host universities' commitment to enhancing employability and employment outcomes for IS alumni *Even with PSWR, residency is inherently temporary. Although these routes are not primarily designed to lead to permanent migration, they do play an important role in the decision making of IS *there are several mismatches between intended goals of the policy and the reality facing IS *Barriers include: the temporary nature of the visa and the availability of jobs that fit the visa length; a constrained labour market in the host country characterised by employers' lack of understanding of the policy and a preference for local residents; a lack of local work experience and networks; lack of continuing support from universities for alumni employability development	R&T
2020	Tran, Ly Thi; Rahimi, Mark; Tan, George; Dang, Xuan Thu; Le, Nhung	Post-study work for international graduates in Australia: opportunity to enhance employability, get a return on investment or secure migration?	*Survey: 1150 international graduates *50 interviews with 32 IS and 18 university staff, employers, and migration agents, government representatives and key industry groups	*analysis of Australian government policy texts and secondary datasets relating to the temporary graduate visa; qualitative inquiry through in-depth interviews' a national survey of IS graduates *In-depth interviews provided nuanced understandings as to IS expectations and employment outcomes under the impact of the post-study arrangements *30-45 minute interview *Content analysis approach was employed to analyses the data		*Critical need to universities to provide international graduates access to institutions' resources and continuing career support to enhance their employability and employment outcomes, stressing the importance of career education, including developing employability skills, WIL and professional portfolio early in the study programme *It is crucial for international education sector, universities, and related stakeholders to have specific campaigns and practical approaches to aligning employers needs and strengths of international graduates *Benefits of international graduates needs to be communicated in a meaningful way *A practical guide for employers should be introduced	*Post-study visa is perceived to allow IS to improve their English skills and enhance their social, cultural, networking and professional capitals *The post-study visa allows time to accumulate knowledge and skills, and a chance to improve networks to indirectly enhance their employability *IS were not fully aware of the attributes of employability (English proficiency, soft skills for employability, networking, cultural adaptation and collaboration) until after they had engaged with the labour market *While IS graduates preferred to secure employment in their respective field of study, a significant number end up working in jobs outside their field of study. However, working odd jobs can hone their communication and social skills to round off their employability *Networking as a means of gaining	*The ability to live and work in the host country after finishing their studies is an important factor in the decision making process for many IS *IS are regarded as 'designer immigrants' which is based on the view that IS graduates would have little difficulty integrating into local labour markets as they would be accustomed to the social and cultural norms of their host country and master the language of their degree *Employers often prefer local graduates due to hesitations about their legal rights, local terminology and expectations in addition to concerns related to their visa status and unfamiliarity with the Australian workplace culture *Survey showed that those who took up the post-study visa had ambitions for permanent residency *Employers are often hesitant to	*Traditionally, key selection criteria underpinning IS decision about their study destinations include institutional ranking and reputation, affordability, quality of education, safety and employment outcomes. *Evolving expectations of IS place increased emphasis on post-study work experiences in the host labour markets and employability *Studying overseas is often driven by the production of 'distinctiveness' on one's future career and employment prospects *Few studies have focused on the post-study experiences and the transitioning from student to work and other visas in their host country *Often a disconnect between government and graduate expectations for the post-study visa. Governments expect the visa allows graduates to test the Australian labour market. While IS graduates provide opportunities to secure work and functions as a back door to migration *If employers do not see the benefit of the post-study work visa, it does not lend any advantage to international graduates	R,T&E
2018	Tran, Ly Thi; Vu, Thao Thi Phuong	*Agency in mobility': towards a conceptualisation of international student agency in transnational								

2017	Tzanakou, Charikleia; Behle, Heike	The intra-European transferability of graduates' skills gained in the UK	*12 UK educated mobile graduates with British and European origin from a range of subjects	*Interviews, semi-structured telephone lasting 30-60minutes	*Human capital theory and the concept of transnational informational capital *Human capital theory: individuals who invest more in their education will yield more benefits in terms of earnings and productivity *Transnational capital: individuals' investment in obtaining academic qualifications abroad, which could confer positional advantage to their holders especially when they are obtained in elite foreign universities (academic capital in the form of accumulating knowledge and developing intercultural skills and symbolic capital in the form of signalling prestige and social class	*UK HEIs need more efforts to be put in focusing on providing information for employers and HEIs beyond the UK borders to ensure the transferability of skills	*Expectation that the skills gained whilst studying abroad are of equal or higher value in a different European country in both employment and further study contexts however this is still unclear if it does improve employability *Employers seem to value IE, but short-term and combined with local professional networks and qualifications that they are aware of *Majority of interviewees emphasised the research and critical thinking skills they developed abroad in the UK helped with their future employment or further study *Language skills were invaluable irrespective of the disciplinary background and current activity *Transferable skills learning in the UK context were important in standing out from the crowd *Integration through participation in university societies enhanced their organizational and people skills which were highly valuable in their current employment	*In Europe, studies showed that compared to home-educated students, degree mobile students with a foreign degree experienced prolonged periods of unemployment and over-education when they returned home. This was explained by their lack of professional networks, country-specific capital and limited familiarity of both students and employers in the domestic labour market *Frustration at not having degrees transfer easily, or employers having limited knowledge of what the degree entailed *The transition of entering the home labour market after obtaining a degree in the UK raised access issues *After embarking on IE, graduates found themselves in an unequal labour market position compared to domestic-educated graduates	*As student mobility in Europe continues to grow, the mutual acceptance of qualifications, both by employers and HEIs, is a necessary pre-condition for students' and graduates' mobility *In the UK there has been an emphasis to increase the attractiveness of UK HEIs for IS since the 1990s *Despite the financial investment, mobility benefits are expected to improve language skills and intercultural competencies, transnational academic capital abroad, career advantage in domestic labour markets, and personal development gains	T&E
2018	Uosaki, Noriko; Mouri, Kousuke; Yin, Chengjiu; Ogata, Hiroaki	Seamless Support for International Students' Job Hunting in Japan Using Learning Log System and eBook								
2020	Valencia-Forrester, Faith; Backhaus, Bridget	Service learning as supported, social learning for international students: an Australian case study	*6 students completed ISVP *Peer mentor *Debriefing interview with the staff facilitators, course coordinators, and convenors was conducted in order to reflect on the design and execution of the project	*Participatory Action Research - a process of systematic reflection, enquiry and action about the researchers professional practices. It recognises that the researchers are also part of the group under observation *Data collected from a pilot project which was developed to provide IS with a gateway to more meaningful participation in service learning *Facilitators completed weekly reflective diaries, the academic advisors and peer mentor submitted a reflective report at the completion of the project, and students were interviewed and completed surveys about their experiences		*Universities need to engage IS in meaningful learning experience that contribute to graduate employability outcome, while catering to the unique needs of this group *Guarantee access to the same learning opportunities as domestic students, but also affordances that recognise the unique challenges facing IS *Service learning is becoming more popular as universities seek to form closer connections to their local communities and offer students an understanding of what their role in the community might be *Service learning is the idea that university education should be holistic: graduates should not only be equipped with academic and professional skills, but also a sense of civic values. They instill such values through carefully designed curriculum *Offering supports for IS help them feel more confident in approaching tasks	*Well established links between experiential learning (WIL) and graduate employability *Service learning facilitates transformative learning experiences where students can practically test their skills and ways of life *Expectations for ISVP, IS expected to improve their communication skills and build confidence in English language proficiency *Perceived language barriers by employers which may influence a resistance of employers to supervise IS based on a fear that their English communication skills may not fit the workplace *IS lack of social network and cultural capital impact experiences as they may lack 'taken-for-granted' 'know how' that domestic students have that enable them to more readily fit in the agency workplace culture *Social interaction and interpersonal development are key for IS	*Is often find themselves experiencing feelings of loneliness and isolation as a result of being so far from their support networks. They struggle to make connections with local students and have difficulties finding their place in their new home *In service learning programmes, students are required to spend a certain number of contact hours in the community and reflect on their experiences *IS are a group that repeatedly find themselves disadvantaged when it comes to fully participate in WIL and service learning programmes *IS are often frustrated by the lack of equal opportunities as compared to domestic students for WIL experiences *IS often reported feeling isolated, afraid of communicating with domestic students, and insecure about their intercultural competence	*Marketing to recruit IS to Australia has been extremely effective, but are IS really experiencing the best that Australia has to offer? Research suggests that IS are questioning their return on investment *the International Student Volunteer Program (ISVP) was designed and incorporated as part of a broader community internship programme to support IS across a range of schools and disciplines to give them the opportunity to learn and engage with topical social issues in Australia while developing transferable skills	R,T&E

2021	Van Mol, Christof; Caarls, Kim; Souto Otero, Manuel	International student mobility and labour market outcomes: an investigation of the role of level of study, type of mobility, and international prestige hierarchies									
2017	Wall, Tony; Tran, Ly Thi; Soejatminah, Sri	Inequalities and Agencies in Workplace Learning Experiences: International Student Perspectives									
2010	Wee, Alysa	Space and Identity Construction: A Study of Female Singaporean Undergraduates in the UK	*8 Female Singaporean US students studying in the UK *First exposure to independent living away from family	*Semi-structured interviews and visual methods of photo elicitation *Participants provided photographs of their room spaces in the UK in and Singapore	*Interpretivist epistemology to understand how individuals experience and negotiate social reality in and through various spaces	*Institutional spaces were preferred by participants as they felt justified in using the spaces like the library and felt less insecure		*Difficulties in assimilation are often linguistic. Even with native English speakers, differences in accents to the 'imperial language' can lead to real and/or perceived exclusion *Culture shock and difficulties assimilating can lead to self-segregation and threats to students' identity and sense of self *Differences in ability to use public spaces in home versus the UK. In the UK, participants were subjected to hyper-visibility and Otherness *In classrooms, IS had to carefully consider when they wanted to speak as they are often considered the representatives of their racial or ethnic group			
2013	Wei, Hao	An empirical study on the determinants of international student mobility: a global perspective	*48 inflow countries and regions						*Mobility of people with tertiary education is higher than that of the people with lower levels of education *Host countries are often then main beneficiaries of foreign students' inflows *International talent flow is impacted by geopolitical and economic factors, such as economic integration and political alliances *A stronger demand for labour (talent) in the inflow country will bring more favourable policies to attract international students, resulting in higher number of IS *Top 7 developed inflow countries: USA, UK, France, Australia, Japan, Germany, and Italy *IS from developing countries put more weight on economic factors whereas IS from developed countries put more emphasis on educational factors		

2017	Wilken, Lisanne; Dahlberg, Mette Ginnerkov	Between international student mobility and work migration: experiences of students from EU's newer member states in Denmark	*70 interviews with IS in master's degree programmes	*Ethnographic fieldwork among full-degree Master's students over Sept 2012 to Nov 2014 *Classroom observations, participated in social event, accompanied students to work, churches and libraries, and visited some of them in their home countries *Interviews and focus groups *Interviews lasted 1-2 hours; focus groups lasted 3-4 hours *Survey of 376 students	*Unequal division of labour (Sayer, 2011) - normative philosophical approach with a Bourdieusian sociological approach to discuss how differences in the quality of the jobs people have contribute to their possibilities of developing their abilities and finding fulfilment, respect and self-esteem *The jobs people do influence their opportunities for realising their potential, and to develop skills and future opportunities *The quality of student jobs influence educational qualifications *Symbolic boundary construction and moral distinction		*Hope that a degree abroad will enhance their chances of getting a job at home or abroad *Students who had been employed in jobs with relevance for their education while studying had significantly better opportunities of getting a high-skilled job afterwards than those who had not *Networks mainly consist of other low-skilled/unskilled workers leaving students feeling invisible and with a lack of opportunity	*IS from the new middle class often have to work while studying abroad in order to make ends meet. This often involves employment in low-skilled, low-paid jobs, positioning these students between two different migrant categories *EU student chose to study abroad due to a lack of opportunities at home - no jobs, no connections, limited access to the local universities, and they see no future. *limited options to find work in Denmark due to no network, not speaking Danish, and having limited work experience *Because EU-students right to the study grant is tied to their status as workers, many get caught in illegal or semi-illegal employment *Students working in these low-skilled jobs often end up working full-time and detach from the student environment at the university and rarely hang out with	*IS should not only be considered students but also migrants, and not only as an appendix to the highly skilled *There is an intersection between ISM and low-skilled employment *Education in Denmark is free for EU-students, however non-EU pay tuition fees *EU students can receive a study grant so long as they qualify as mobile workers (10 hours/wk). Domestic students are not required to work and receive the grant for their enrolment in education. This can make EU students vulnerable to labour market exploitation *Most IS expressed the importance of free education, if they had had the resources they would have preferred to have studied in the UK or US *EU students often express moral judgement of Danish students, suggesting they don't do anything to earn their grants and they are not likely to be serious about their education	T
2007	Yoshimitsu, Kuniko	Intercultural Academic Participation Processes the Case of a Japanese International Student at an Australian University								
2017	Yuen, Timothy Wai Wa; Cheung, Alan Chi Keung; Wong, Ping Man	Studying where the jobs are: Mainland Chinese students in Hong Kong								

2012	Zevallos, Zuleyka	Context and outcomes of intercultural education amongst international students in Australia				<p>*IS reported they did not receive adequate career guidance or support to manage realistic expectations of the job market and starting salaries for new graduates</p> <p>*forming close partnerships with employers would offer IS hands-on experience while also exposing employers to IS to overcome negative stereotypes</p>	<p>*Studies show that IS who were educated in Australia have a difficult time securing full-time employment compared to their local counterparts</p> <p>*In vocational training courses, students need to gain 2 years work experience in addition to their studies which can mean that IS work for low pay with the expectation of permanent residency at the end of their course</p> <p>*Although IS are educated in Australia and they have acquired the technical skills required in their fields, their social, cultural and communication skills tend not to respond to those sought after by Australian employers.</p> <p>*There appears to be a gap between IS employment and employers. IS believe they cannot get a job in Australia due to lack of adequate job experience or visa status. Employers report they are experiencing skills shortage. Yet employers have reservations about</p>	<p>*There has been a significant drop in IS satisfaction in the support (research and financial) they receive</p> <p>*IS mix uneasily and infrequently with Australian students and such limited and superficial contact with local students often disappoints IS and inhibits their understanding of the local culture</p> <p>*IS who stayed in Australia to work are less likely to be working a field related to their degree</p> <p>*Education providers would benefit from partnering with workplaces in order to offer IS work placements and internship opportunities</p>	<p>*Australian born graduates are preferred by employers even though Australian-educated IS have the same qualifications</p> <p>*Strengthening the social networks between international students, local students and employers will improve the delivery of education services in a way that would be advantageous to Australia's higher education system</p>	E
2021	Zhai, Keyu; Moskal, Marta; Read, Barbara	Compelled to Compete: Chinese graduates on employment and social mobility after international and domestic study (vol 84, 102432, 2021)							English	
2021	Zhai, Keyu; Gao, Xing	Who achieves superior rates of upward social mobility and better labor market outcomes in China: international student returnees or postgraduates who study domestically?	*Cooperating universities and their alumni. University graduates recruited through social networks and WeChat	*Spatial maps and multiregression model	*Bourdieu Capital Theory		<p>*Higher education is not equally valued by all employers</p> <p>*Returnees' employment outcomes are often not as positive as expected</p> <p>*IE is still generally considered to be a benefit to enhance soft skills, such as independent study skills, and to establish social networks</p>	<p>*Male returnees continued to develop their professional careers, while females encountered greater challenges</p> <p>*Domestic graduates have more fluidity of social mobility than their peers</p> <p>*IS maintained their social class or even moved downward</p>	<p>*IE is an important means of accumulating international cultural capital to enable international graduates to maintain their social class or continue in upward mobility</p> <p>*Students within a certain social class are provided more opportunities to study overseas</p>	T&E

2021	Zhan, Meng; Downey, Chris; Dyke, Martin	International postgraduate students' labour mobility in the United Kingdom: A cross-classified multilevel analysis	<p>*38,812 students who responded their location of employment, which indicates a response rate of 29.1%</p> <p>*International postgraduate students of working age who obtained master's or doctoral degree from a UK HEI</p>	<p>*Data sets used from the DLHE survey 2013/2014 and 2014/2015.</p> <p>*For those who completed their study between 1 August 2013 and 31 December 2013, the survey was carried out in April 2014</p> <p>*For those who completed between 1 January 2014 and 31 July 2014, the survey was scheduled in January 2015.</p> <p>*Dependent variable: location of employment. Which indicated if they stayed in the UK to work after graduating</p> <p>*Independent variables consisted of individual-level, HEI-level and domicile-level variables</p> <p>*The individual-level variables included demographic features (i.e., gender and age)</p>		<p>*Students worked in the United Kingdom seem to be more successful in obtaining a job through HEI sources (e.g., careers service, lecturer and university website. This result stresses the importance of HEIs in assisting international students to find employment in the United Kingdom.</p> <p>*University careers and employability services are commonly underutilised by international postgraduate students due to language and cultural barriers</p> <p>*HEIs in the United Kingdom are less helpful in facilitating international students to find employment outside the United Kingdom, as they generally have not paid enough attention to the employability needs of international students</p>	<p>*In addition to acquiring academic skills, a majority of IS reported they also had a great need in obtaining knowledge and information about immigration regulations/visa restrictions and career development</p> <p>*Job-finding method refers to the method to secure employment as opposed to merely job-searching methods.</p> <p>*The most obvious difference between those who remained to work in the UK and those employed in other countries was the usage of personal contacts</p> <p>*Personal networks/contacts reduce the costs and risks of international graduates in finding jobs and rise the probability of migrating back to their home countries</p> <p>*Degree level of graduates seems to have the largest impact on probability to work in the UK</p> <p>*At domicile level, although the importance of GDP, unemployment, language backgrounds and colonial</p>	<p>*Careers and employability service provided by universities/colleges were found to have positive effects in assisting international graduates' employment in host country</p> <p>*Due to visa restrictions, IS find they are restricted or experience a reduction in their employment opportunities in the host country</p> <p>*Male graduates were more likely to work in the UK at 1% significance level.</p> <p>*Doctorate students were more likely to remain for work than master's level IS</p> <p>*Females were observed to be more mobile with higher stay rates. This could be attributed to some female students wanting to achieve their career goals or self-realisation and may use studying abroad as a stepping stone to escape gender norms in their home countries</p>	<p>*In a US study, Indian and Chinese domiciled doctoral graduates were more likely to stay in the US after finishing their degree than graduates from other countries</p> <p>*In Australia, employment outcomes of IS in Australia could be significantly affected by their language backgrounds, subject area, and level of qualification</p> <p>*Factors which could influence IS decision to stay: individual-level factors, HEI-level factors and country-level factors</p> <p>*In Australia, IS who received master's or doctorates in high-demand fields (engineering, law and medicine) were found to have higher employment than those in oversubscribed fields (IT and business-related subjects)</p> <p>*The UK is experiencing a shortage in skilled labour</p> <p>*DLHE survey is the first data set that provides a national level overview of post-study employment activities of non-EU graduates in the UK HE system</p>	R,T&E
2006	Ziguras, Christopher; Law, Siew-Fang	Recruiting international students as skilled migrants: the global 'skills race' as viewed from Australia and Malaysia						<p>*IS easily met the requirements for skilled migrants to make the transition to permanent residency</p> <p>*From completing education in Australia they were young, had recognised Australian qualifications, have a high standard in English proficiency, and during their studies they had time to become familiar with life in Australia</p>	<p>*the knowledge that HEI generate and disseminate is integral to economic development, government and cultural production</p> <p>*IS provide a significant injection into the economy at the national and regional level. They also contribute financially to the universities which help them undertake research and teaching activities</p> <p>*Developed countries seek to retain a proportion of IS as skilled migrants after the completion of their studies</p> <p>*In the long term, the ageing of the population in developed countries may mean that the labour force advantages of international education will outweigh the direct economic benefits from tuition fees and living costs of IS</p> <p>*Preferring Australian educated migrants increases demand for Australian education and further generates revenue</p>	T

Appendix Two Interview with Schedule International Students

Group

Data Statement: This Group has been designed by Lindsay Nygren as a PhD thesis study. It aims to collect thoughts about the experiences, challenges and issues faced by international students at the final stage of their university degree programme with regard to network development and the transition to the labour market. The study aims to provide university services with information to enhance their ability to assist international students recognize their employability and transition to the UK labour market.

1. What was your motivation to study in the UK?
2. How do you feel about getting a job in the UK after you graduate? How do you define employability?
 - a. What do you think are your employability skills?
3. How confident do you feel in your ability to describe your skills, knowledge, and experience to employers in-person or through written applications?
4. Where do you go to find information on graduate jobs in the UK?
5. Which services have been the most useful to you as you've begun thinking about getting a job in the UK?
6. Which information sources do you trust or find the most reliable?
7. Which university services have you used to improve your confidence in job seeking in the UK?
 - a. And how have these impacted your experience at the university?
8. How often have you used the career service resources available at the university?
9. What do you think the career services at the university is?
10. Would you rather get career advice (CV writing, interview advice, job opportunities, cultural nuances) from peers/friends, university services staff, lecturers, or online/social media? Why?
11. What factors would encourage you to use the career services resources?
12. What factors would discourage you from using the career services resources?

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|--|
| <p>13. What would you like to occur when meeting with career service staff on the topic of graduate employment in the UK?</p> <p>14. What have been your experiences in the job seeking process in the UK to date?</p> <p>15. What has been most influential in recognizing your ability or preparedness to search and obtain a job in the UK?</p> |
| <p>Thank you.</p> |

Appendix Three Student Participant Information Sheet



College of Social
Sciences

Participant Information Sheet

The role of the university in international students' employability in the UK

Lindsay Nygren, School of Education

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask the researcher/s if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take some time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

The purpose of this research is to understand the international student experience in their transition from a taught degree programme to employment in their host country labour market and the role of the university during this transition.

Participation in this study will involve a 60-minute Group discussion with additional international students in their final year of a taught degree programme at the university. This research will be beneficial to the participants to learn about services and networks available in the university to assist them in recognizing their employability and transition to the labour market. Audio will be recorded and retained for the sole purpose of analysing and disseminating in the final thesis. Names will not be used during the Group and all participants will receive a coded identifier to maintain confidentiality. All data will be kept on a secure server with the University of Glasgow.

Involvement in this study is entirely voluntary and you will be free to end your participation at any point. In the event that you choose to withdraw early from the study, information already provided will be kept unless you express a desire to have it removed from the study.

Should you choose to withdraw at any time, this will be taken without prejudice to your job, studies, or well-being and you are not required to provide a reason.

Thank you for reading this.

Please note that confidentiality may not be guaranteed; due to the limited size of the participant sample.

Data collected during this research will be stored electronically on the secure University of Glasgow server and only accessed by the primary researcher, their supervisors, and assistants to help with transcription of the data. The data will be used for the purpose of dissemination through conference papers and presented within the final PhD thesis.

Personal and research data that underpins the thesis will be securely held for a period of ten years after the completion of the research project. After this period, the data will be wiped from the servers and permanently deleted.

This project has been considered and approved by the College Research Ethics Committee.

Questions, concerns, or complaints should be directed to the research team. The primary researcher, Lindsay Nygren may be contacted by email l.nygren.1@research.gla.ac.uk. The supervisors of this research may be contacted by email, Marta Moskal: marta.moskal@glasgow.ac.uk and Belgin Okay-Somerville: belgin.okay-somerville@glasgow.ac.uk

To pursue any complaint about the conduct of the research: contact the College of Social Sciences Lead for Ethical Review, Dr Benjamin Franks: email socsci-ethics-lead@glasgow.ac.uk

End of Participant Information Sheet

Appendix Four Interview Schedule with University Support Staff

Interview Questions

Data Statement: This study has been designed by Lindsay Nygren as a PhD thesis project. It aims to collect thoughts about the experiences of international students at the final stage of their university degree programme who plan to stay and work in the UK. The study is interested in the student network development and their transition to the labour market. The study aims to provide university services with information to enhance their ability to assist international students recognize their employability and transition to the UK labour market.

Broad service level questions

1. Can you tell me about your role in supporting the international student experience and employability?
2. What service do YOU offer for international students?
3. Different stakeholders define employability in different ways. What does employability mean to you?
4. In your opinion, how different is international student experience and employability to home students? Do you think the same set of knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes apply to home and international students seeking employment in the UK?

International students' seeking guidance

5. What are international students most concerned with when approaching you?
6. Which group of international students approach you the most for advice?
 - a. E.g., is there a difference by nationality, degree subject, gender, age, degree they are studying for (e.g. UG vs PGT).
7. How often do international students use your services repeatedly or as a one-off resource?

Reaching out and benefiting international students

8. How do you reach out to and attract international students to use the services offered by your department at the university?
 - a. What are your challenges in reaching out to international students?
 - b. What are your challenges in helping international students improve employability

<p>9. What training and development did you undertake to handle cultural differences of international students navigating employment in the UK?</p> <p>a. What is the perception of usefulness of this training?</p> <p>10. To what extent do you think it is the University's duty to enhance international students' employability?</p> <p>a. If the answer is yes it is a responsibility: which services are crucial?</p> <p>b. If the answer is no: Considering the proportion of international students in Glasgow/Newcastle, does this imply that international students recruited for revenue generation?</p> <p>11. In what ways do you feel the resources offered by your services benefit international students in navigating their employability?</p> <p>a. What are we/you doing well in Glasgow/Newcastle in improving international students' employability?</p> <p>12. What could university services do to better support international students during their transition to the labour market experience?</p> <p>13. Is there anything you would like to add about the role of universities for improving international students' transition to the labour market?</p> <p>14. When analysing the data, if I require clarification or would like to ask one more question, would it be OK if I dropped you a quick email?</p>
<p>Thank you.</p>

Appendix Five Staff Participant Information Sheet



College of Social
Sciences

Participant Information Sheet

The role of the university in international students' employability in the UK

Lindsay Nygren, School of Education

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask the researcher/s if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take some time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

The purpose of this research is to understand the international student experience in their transition from a taught degree programme to employment in their host country labour market and the role of the university during this transition.

Participation in this study will involve a 60-minute online interview. This research will be beneficial to the participants to discuss services and networks available in the university to explore how they are beneficial to international students to recognize their employability and transition to the labour market. Audio will be recorded and retained for the sole purpose of analysing and disseminating in the final thesis. Participant's details will be kept confidential using coded identifiers. All data will be kept on a secure server with the University of Glasgow.

Involvement in this study is entirely voluntary and you will be free to end your participation at any point. In the event that you choose to withdraw early from the study, information already provided will be kept unless you express a desire to have it removed from the study.

Should you choose to withdraw at any time, this will be taken without prejudice to your job, studies, or well-being and you are not required to provide a reason.

Thank you for reading this.

Please note that confidentiality may not be guaranteed; due to the limited size of the participant sample.

Data collected during this research will be stored electronically on the secure University of Glasgow server and only accessed by the primary researcher, their supervisors, and assistants to help with transcription of the data. The data will be used for the purpose of dissemination through conference papers and presented within the final PhD thesis.

Personal and research data that underpins the thesis will be securely held for a period of ten years after the completion of the research project. After this period, the data will be wiped from the servers and permanently deleted.

This project has been considered and approved by the College Research Ethics Committee.

Questions, concerns, or complaints should be directed to the research team. The primary researcher, Lindsay Nygren may be contacted by email l.nygren.1@research.gla.ac.uk. The supervisors of this research may be contacted by email, Marta Moskal: marta.moskal@glasgow.ac.uk and Belgin Okay-Somerville: belgin.okay-somerville@glasgow.ac.uk

To pursue any complaint about the conduct of the research: contact the College of Social Sciences Lead for Ethical Review, Dr Benjamin Franks: email socsci-ethics-lead@glasgow.ac.uk

End of Participant Information Sheet

Appendix Six Survey Questionnaire

Survey Questionnaire
Data Statement: This survey has been designed by Lindsay Nygren as a PhD thesis study. It aims to collect thoughts about the experiences, challenges and issues faced by international students at the final stage of their university degree programme with regard to network development and the transition to the labour market. The study aims to provide university services with information to enhance their ability to assist international students recognize their employability and transition to the UK labour market.
The survey is anonymous, and data/opinions collected will be used in a generalised way to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all participants.
1. What is your gender?
2. What is your country of origin?
3. What is your age?
4. Where are you domiciled?
5. What is your native language?
6. What is your level in the English language? a. Fluent b. Advanced c. Intermediate d. Beginner
7. When did you arrive in the UK?
8. Which school are you currently enrolled in? a. College of Social Sciences b. College of Arts c. College of Science & Engineering d. College of Medical, Veterinary & Life Sciences
9. What type of programme are you enrolled in? a. Undergraduate b. Postgraduate taught c. Postgraduate research d. Other i. Specify
10. Why did you choose to study at the University of Glasgow/Newcastle University?

<p>11. What is your plan following the completion of your degree programme?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To get a job in your home country b. To get a job in the UK c. To get a job in another country d. To continue in higher education in your country e. To continue in higher education in the UK f. To continue in higher education in another country g. Undecided h. Other i. Specify
<p>12. Have you started the job seeking process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes, I have sent out applications and have received an interview b. Yes, I have sent out application but have not heard back c. No, I'm focusing on my studies d. No, I already have a job e. Other i. Specify
<p>13. Do you think the university provides adequate support for international students in the job seeking process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes (explain) b. Not sure (explain) c. No (explain)
<p>14. Which university services have you used? (Mark all that apply)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. International student support office b. Careers Services c. Peer Wellbeing support d. Learning Enhancement & Academic Development (LEADS) e. English for Academic Study f. Disability Services g. Counselling & Psychology Services
<p>15. How would you rate the quality of services and support offered to international students seeking a job in the UK by the international student support office?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Poor b. Fair c. Satisfactory d. Good e. Excellent f. No experience

<p>16. How would you rate in general the quality of services and support offered to international students seeking a job in the UK by the careers services office?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Poor b. Fair c. Satisfactory d. Good e. Excellent f. No experience
<p>17. Where do you seek information on the job seeking process and opportunities in the UK?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. From friends and peers b. From lecturers, tutors, or other staff within my programme/school c. From support services (careers service or international student support office) d. Other
<p>18. Has your degree programme enhanced your employability?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Yes b. No c. Not sure
<p>19. Have the following employability skills been developed during your studies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Written communication b. Ability to work in teams c. Research skills d. Basic computer literacy e. Spoken communication skills f. Problem-solving skills g. Management skills h. Leadership skills i. Creativity j. Entrepreneurial skills k. Advanced IT and software skills
<p>20. As an international student, what do you consider to be your most valuable employability skills?</p>
<p>21. How important is it to you to interact and develop a relationship with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Local students (not at all, somewhat, important, very important) b. Other international students not from your home country (not at all, somewhat, important, very important) c. International students from your home country (not at all, somewhat, important, very important) d. Lecturers and staff (not at all, somewhat, important, very important)
<p>22. Who have you gone to for advice on employment in the UK after graduation?</p>
<p>23. What are the most important skills or knowledge you need to have to gain employment in the UK?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do you feel you have these skills and knowledge?
<p>24. What could the university do to better enhance your employability skills?</p>

<p>25. How would you feel most comfortable receiving career or employability skills information from?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Peer supports b. Lecturers c. University services staff d. Written material accessed online e. Online chat f. Other
<p>26. On a scale of 1-5, how strongly do you feel your relationship with the following groups have positively impacted your career expectations in the UK?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Peers from your home country b. Other international peers c. Lecturers/Tutors d. Career services e. International Support Office f. Other university services staff i.Explain
<p>27. How often have you used the career services as a resource to enhance your employability?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Once a week or more b. One to two times per month c. Once a semester d. Once e. Never
<p>28. Which resources have you used from the career services and how useful did you find them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Career module (not useful at all to extremely useful) b. One-to-one counselling (not useful at all to extremely useful) c. Online workshops (not useful at all to extremely useful) d. In-person workshops (not useful at all to extremely useful) e. Online seminars (not useful at all to extremely useful) f. Career fairs (not useful at all to extremely useful)
<p>29. How strongly do you feel it is important to build connections within your UK campus community?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Not important at all b. Somewhat important c. Important d. Very important e. Extremely important
<p>30. On a level of 1-10, how confident are you in your ability to gain employment in the UK following graduation? (1 being not at all confident, to 10 being extremely confident)</p>
<p>Thank you.</p>

Appendix Seven Survey Participant Information Sheet



College of Social
Sciences

Participant Information Sheet

The role of the university in international students' employability in the UK

Lindsay Nygren, School of Education

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask the researcher/s if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take some time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

The purpose of this research is to understand the international student experience in their transition from a taught degree programme to employment in their host country labour market and the role of the university during this transition.

Participation in this study will involve completing a questionnaire on the experiences you have encountered during the final year of your taught programme. It should take you no more than 20 minutes to complete. Responses will be anonymous and given unique ID numbers. All data will be kept on a secure server with the University of Glasgow.

Involvement in this study is entirely voluntary and you will be free to end your participation at any point. In the event that you choose to withdraw early from the study, information already provided will be kept unless you express a desire to have it removed from the study.

Should you choose to withdraw at any time, this will be taken without prejudice to your job, studies, or well-being and you are not required to provide a reason.

Thank you for reading this.

Please note that confidentiality may not be guaranteed; due to the limited size of the participant sample.

Data collected during this research will be stored electronically on the secure University of Glasgow server and only accessed by the primary researcher, their supervisors, and assistants to help with transcription of the data. The data will be used for the purpose of dissemination through conference papers and presented within the final PhD thesis.

Personal and research data that underpins the thesis will be securely held for a period of ten years after the completion of the research project. After this period, the data will be wiped from the servers and permanently deleted.

This project has been considered and approved by the College Research Ethics Committee.

Questions, concerns, or complaints should be directed to the research team. The primary researcher, Lindsay Nygren may be contacted by email l.nygren.1@research.gla.ac.uk. The supervisors of this research may be contacted by email, Marta Moskal: marta.moskal@glasgow.ac.uk and Belgin Okay-Somerville: belgin.okay-somerville@glasgow.ac.uk

To pursue any complaint about the conduct of the research: contact the College of Social Sciences Lead for Ethical Review, Dr Benjamin Franks: email socsci-ethics-lead@glasgow.ac.uk

End of Participant Information Sheet

Appendix Eight Consent Form



College of Social
Sciences

Consent Form

Title of Project: The role of the university in international students' employability in the UK

Name of Researcher: Lindsay Nygren

Name of Supervisors: Marta Moskal and Belgin Okay-Somerville

I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym.

I acknowledge that there will be no effect on my grades/employment arising from my participation or non-participation in this research.

- All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.
- The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- The material will be destroyed once the project is complete.
- I agree to waive my copyright to any data collected as part of this project.
- I understand that other authenticated researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

I acknowledge the provision of a Privacy Notice in relation to this research project.

I consent / do not consent (delete as applicable) to interviews being audio-recorded.

(I acknowledge that copies of transcripts will be returned to participants for verification.)

I agree to take part in this research study ☐

I do not agree to take part in this research study ☐

Name of
Participant Signature
Date

Name of
ResearcherSignature
Date

Appendix Nine Privacy Notice

Privacy Notice for Participation in Research Project: The role of the university in international students' employability

Researcher

Lindsay Nygren; Marta Moskal, Belgin Okay-Somerville (supervisors)

Contact: l.nygren.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Your Personal Data

The University of Glasgow will be what's known as the 'Data Controller' of your personal data processed in relation to your participation in the research project 'The role of the university in international students' employability'. This **privacy notice** will explain how The University of Glasgow will process your personal data.

Why we need it

We are collecting your basic personal data such as your email address in order to conduct our research. We need your email address to enter you into the prize draw, as you opted into this at the end of the survey. We will only contact you if you win a prize.

We only collect data that we need for the research project and your e-mail address will not be used for any other purpose. All research data used within the project will be aggregated and anonymised, so that individuals cannot be identified. For further information, please see the [Participant Information Sheet](#).

Legal basis for processing your data

We must have a legal basis for processing all personal data. In this instance, the legal basis is **Task in the Public Interest** in order to process the basic personal data that you provide. For any special categories data collected we will be processing this on the basis that it is **necessary for archiving purposes, scientific or historical research purposes or statistical purposes**.

Alongside this, in order to fulfil our ethical obligations, we will ask for your **Consent** to take part in the study. You will be asked to provide this within the survey and will be asked for this again to be entered into the prize draw.

What we do with it and who we share it with

All the personal data you submit is processed by staff at the University of Glasgow in the United Kingdom. In addition, security measures are in place to ensure that your personal data remains safe. Your e-mail address will be kept in an encrypted password protected file and only linked to the data you provide if you contact us saying wish to withdraw from the research. Please consult the **Participant Information Sheet** which accompanies this notice, via the weblink above.

How long do we keep it for

Your **personal** data will be retained by the University for as long as is necessary for processing and no longer than the period of ethical approval ending 11/10/2024. After this time, data will be securely deleted.

Your **research** data will be retained for a period of ten years in line with the University of Glasgow Guidelines. Specific details in relation to research data storage are provided on the **Participant Information Sheet**.

What are your rights?*

GDPR provides that individuals have certain rights including: to request access to, copies of and rectification or erasure of personal data and to object to processing. In addition, data subjects may also have the right to restrict the processing of the personal data and to data portability.

You can request access to the information we process about you at any time. If at any point you believe that the information we process relating to you is incorrect, you can request to see this information and may in some instances request to have it restricted, corrected or, erased. You may also have the right to object to the processing of data and the right to data portability.

We have relied upon your consent to process your data, you also have the right to withdraw your consent at any time.

If you wish to exercise any of these rights, please submit your request via the [webform](#) or contact dp@gla.ac.uk.

*Please note that the ability to exercise these rights will vary and depend on the legal basis on which the processing is being carried out.

Complaints

If you wish to raise a complaint on how we have handled your personal data, you can contact the University Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter.

Our Data Protection Officer can be contacted at dataprotectionofficer@glasgow.ac.uk

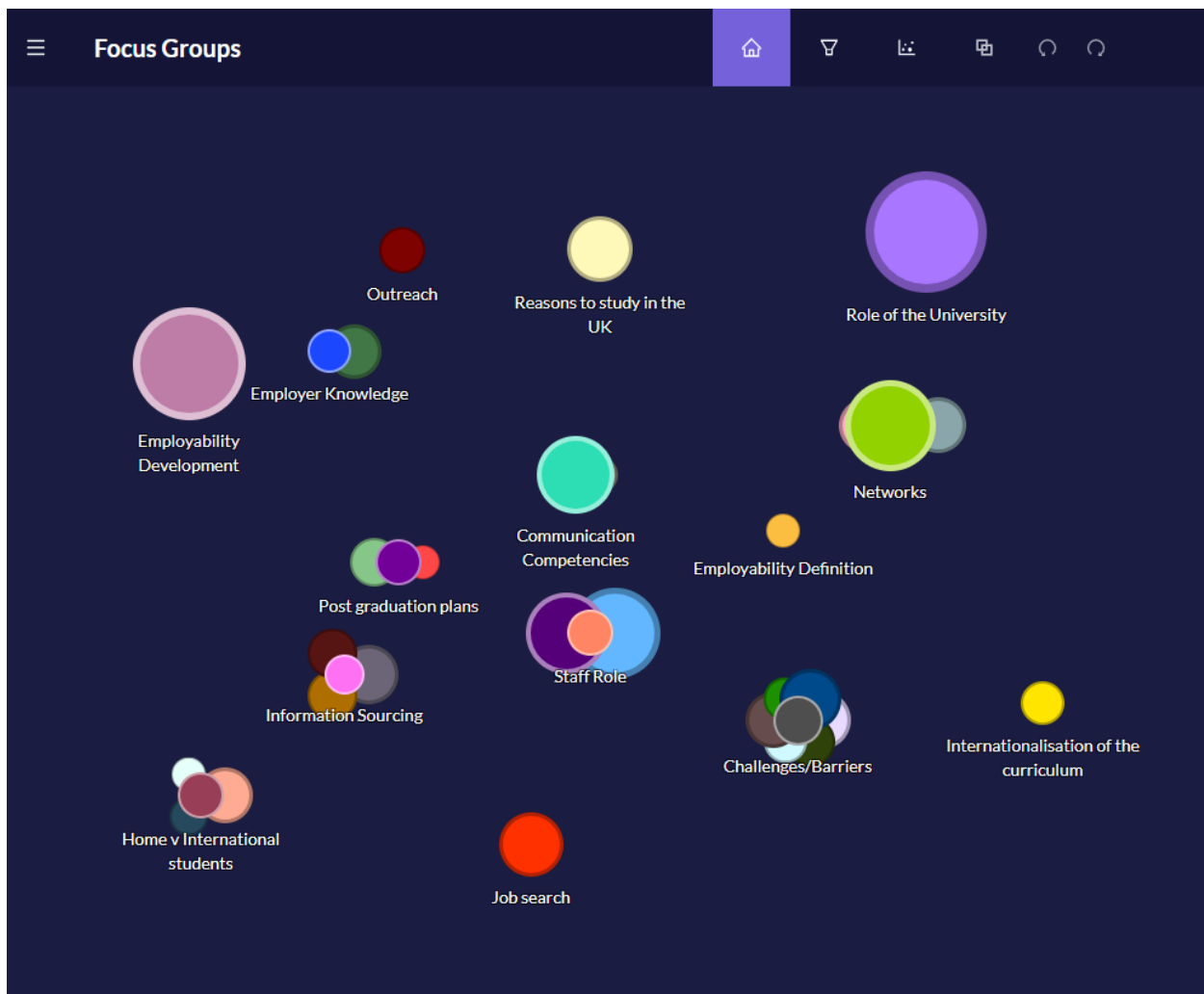
If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are not processing your personal data in accordance with the law, you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) <https://ico.org.uk/>

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

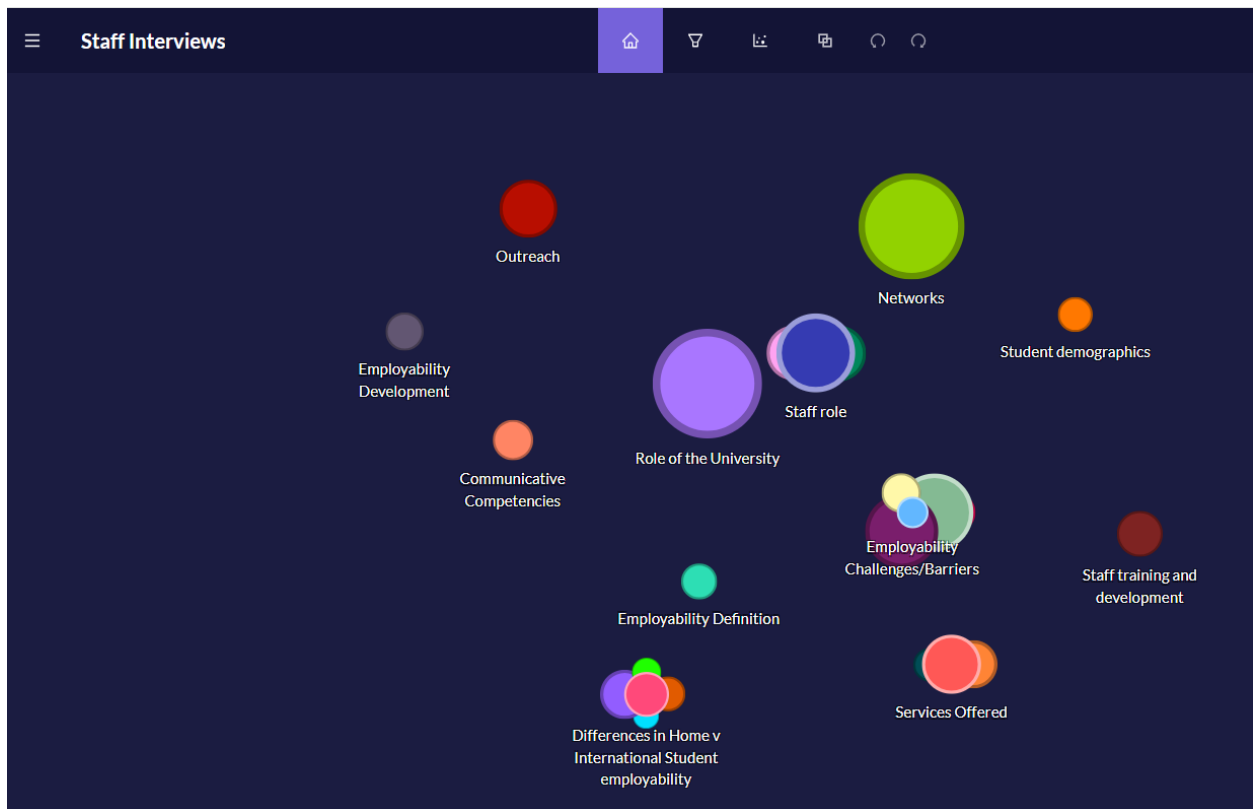
This project has been ethically approved via the University of Glasgow College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

End of Privacy Notice

Appendix Ten Interview Data Clustering: Student Example



Appendix Eleven Interview Data Clustering: Staff Example



Appendix Twelve Thematic Coding Example

A. Thematic analysis for staff interviews

1. *The role of the university*

Throughout the interviews, the role of the university was a significant theme that came across though the interpretation of how involved and what responsibilities the university holds varied.

University's **responsibility** to ensure opportunities and employability skills development. There was a mention of the duty of care associated with university responsibilities to ensure that students and graduates were supportive of employability development, not employment outcomes.

"I definitely think the university has a huge **responsibility** to ensure that opportunities are there and that students know about those opportunities and can make a choice to to do that, to enhance their employability, sure" (University B staff 2).

"So I think you know, to help students prepare for making an impact in whatever way they choose to do that, that we do have a an **obligation** to help them to develop their employability skills" (University A staff 5).

"The university has a role to Play with that I think in many ways the key the key word there is employability. So, we have a **duty** of care to the Students and a duty to support their employability. That that isn't the same as any kind of like guarantee of employment outcomes...for employability, yeah, we should be there to offer that kind of advice, guidance information, online, face to face, and workshops that that people should, you know, should be able to Access that. What makes people employ employable? What are the skill sets that that employers look for? Where will you find information? How can you access opportunities? All of that is around people building their employability and I think we absolutely are responsible for supporting that and without taking on the full, you know, employment outcomes **responsibility**" (University A staff 2).

Appendix Thirteen Complete Table of Survey Participants by Level of Study

Count of Country Participant	Level of Study					Grand Total
	Undergraduate final year (UG, Bachelors)	Postgraduate Taught (Masters, MSc, MLit, MDes, etc)	Postgraduate Research (MRes, PhD, EdD)	Other		
Belarus	2%	0%	0%	0%		2%
Canada	0%	3%	2%	0%		5%
Chile	0%	0%	2%	0%		2%
China	0%	9%	0%	0%		9%
Denmark	0%	0%	0%	2%		2%
Hong Kong (S.A.R.)	3%	0%	0%	0%		3%
India	2%	19%	3%	0%		24%
Indonesia	0%	2%	0%	0%		2%
Iran	0%	0%	2%	0%		2%
Italy	0%	2%	0%	0%		2%
Japan	0%	0%	0%	2%		2%
Jordan	0%	0%	3%	0%		3%
Malawi	0%	2%	0%	0%		2%
Malaysia	0%	2%	0%	0%		2%
Mexico	0%	2%	0%	0%		2%
Nepal	0%	2%	0%	0%		2%
New Zealand	2%	0%	0%	0%		2%
Nigeria	0%	3%	2%	0%		5%
Pakistan	0%	5%	0%	2%		7%
Paraguay	0%	2%	0%	0%		2%
Philippines	0%	2%	0%	0%		2%
Spain	0%	2%	0%	0%		2%
Sri Lanka	0%	0%	2%	0%		2%
Syrian Arab Republic	0%	2%	0%	0%		2%
Thailand	0%	2%	0%	0%		2%
United States of America	0%	7%	5%	0%		12%
Grand Total	9%	66%	21%	5%		100%