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What Makes Resources Capital? The Labour Market Integration of Highly Skilled Japanese in Finland

RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Capital is viewed as an essential instrument for highly skilled migrants (HSMs) to gain employment in a host country. Although scholars analyse the impact of capital on the labour market integration, the difference between capital and resources is rarely made. Treating resources such as a degree or networks as capital is too unspecific and disguises what is truly counted as capital that affects the occupational attainment of HSMs. This study addresses this issue by analysing what resources are used by HSMs to gain employment in a host country and what makes resources capital in HSMs' occupational attainment. To do so, the study conducts semi-structured interviews with Japanese from the Finnish university who seek employment in Finland. An analysis of these interviews yields cultural and social resources used during their job search. It also identifies the Finnish job market and the job-seeking intention of highly skilled Japanese as key elements to create capital out of resources. Eventually, this study contributes to the debate on the concept of capital and its role in the labour market integration of HSMs. Furthermore, it offers an extensive viewpoint on the topic of HSMs and integration in the Finnish context through the empirical data.

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INTRODUCTION

Capital is widely accepted as an integral instrument for highly skilled migrants' (HSMs') successful occupational attainment in a host country and, more broadly, the labour market integration (Csedö 2008; Ryan, Erel & D'Angelo 2015; Saksela-Bergholm 2020). Although scholars increasingly investigate how HSMs create cultural and social capital to access the host country's labour market, they tend to treat the notion of capital and that of resources interchangeably. This tendency, however, irritates some sociologists who argue treating resources, for example, a university degree or personal networks as capital, is too broad and unspecific (Anthias 2007). Especially within the context of the labour market integration, this conceptual confusion is problematic because it disguises what is truly affecting the occupational attainment of HSMs in a host country (Erel 2010; Wahlbeck & Fortelius 2019). Hence, a further distinction needs to be made between capital and resources (Savage et al. 2005).

This article analyses the distinction between the notions of capital and resources by examining the following main research questions: What resources are utilised by HSMs to gain employment in a host country? What makes resources capital in the context of the occupational attainment of HSMs? Because of the limited space, the article focuses on cultural resources and capital. To do so, the article examines the case of Japanese with tertiary education seeking employment in the Finnish labour market as they can be considered HSMs (see King & Raghuram 2013; She & Wotherspoon 2013). By doing so, this article contributes to the ongoing discussion concerning the role of capital in facilitating and/or constraining the labour market integration of HSMs (Erel & Ryan 2019; Nohl et al. 2014). Furthermore, it offers an extensive view through the empirical data on the topic of HSMs and integration in Finland (Alho 2020; Kilinç 2021; Koskela 2019; Saksela-Bergholm 2020; Wahlbeck 2018).

The article commences by introducing Japanese migrants in connection to HSMs and the Finnish labour market. Then it elaborates the notion of resources and capital in line with relevant literature concerning the occupational attainment of HSMs. After presenting the data and method deployed in this research, it showcases various resources highly skilled Japanese utilised to get a job in Finland. This is followed by a further analysis on what makes such resources capital in the Finnish job market. The conclusion summarises the main arguments about the distinction between capital and resources, and the impact of capital upon the labour market integration of HSMs.

JAPANESE AS HSM WORKERS IN FINLAND

Since the 1990s, Japanese migrants have captured scholastic attentions as the typical case of HSMs. Although there is no universally accepted definition, HSMs are often viewed as migrants with tertiary education and skilled occupation (Weinar & Klekowski von Koppenfels 2020: 11–12). The mass movement of Japanese corporate movers transferred overseas by company employers in the late 1990s contributed to the considerable representation of Japanese having high-status and skilled employment in major global cities (Goodman et al. 2003). The representation of highly skilled Japanese generated an image of Japanese as HSMs (see Salt 1988). Today this image is applied to the recently growing population among Japanese young adults with tertiary education working abroad (Nakazawa 2016; Niwa 2018). Investigation of how highly skilled Japanese gain employment in a host country raises some issues on HSMs and integration (Matsutani 2014).

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In Finland, the topic of HSMs and the labour market integration is vigorously discussed nowadays. Koskela (2019: 313), referring to the national statistics, noted that foreign nationals with tertiary education account for nearly 40% of the foreign-born residents in Finland. The rapid growth of the ICT-based Finnish economy has been the factor to attract more HSM workers and thus retaining HSMs is a central concern among the Finnish business sectors and policymakers (Habti & Koikkalainen 2014; Koskela 2010). However, scholars have pointed out challenges HSMs experience when accessing the Finnish labour market, involving discrimination, exploitation, overqualification and unemployment (Alho 2020; Maury 2020). To understand better how HSMs become integrated into the Finnish economy, more empirical research is required (Kilinç 2021).

Finnish Immigration Service Migri statistics[1] show that the number of issued residence permits for Japanese in Finland amounted to 3,953 between 2015 and 2019. The sum was made up of 2,206 first permits, 1,527extended permits, 217 permanent permits and 3 other conditions. In the first permits, 52% (1,143) received a residence permit based on the study, whereas those who received a work-related permit were only 25% (557). But the work-related permit receivers rose to 48% (738) among those who extended their residence permit while those who obtained an extended permit based on the study declined to just 15% (238). That is to say, the majority of Japanese initially move to Finland for studying and later decide to stay for working. How do they enter the Finnish working life then? This question is examined further through the discussion concerning capital and resources.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Refusing to accept the dominant explanation for individual occupational attainment based on human capital (Becker 1993), sociologists have taken an alternative approach. Lin et al. (1981) were sceptical about a theory of status attainment proposed by previous social thinkers, which explained individual occupational status would depend on the level of education and family background. Attempting to refine this theoretical model, they presented two elements that would affect one's job seeking and its outcome: personal and social resources. Personal resources are seen as the individuals' wealth, power and status, whereas social resources are considered the wealth, status, power, position and social ties of personal contacts an individual can reach to gain employment through the relationship with these contacts (Lin et al. 1981: 395). In their view, the job-seeking process is understood as the process by which individuals try to get prestigious employment through not only personal resources but also social resources. Social resources are widely associated with ethnic ties (Portes 1995) and social connections with various people (Ryan et al. 2008) through which migrants use to get a job in a host country.

A similar approach was taken by Goldthorpe (1996) for analysing social class mobility by underlining the calculated choice of individuals on using various resources to maintain social dominance. He emphasised rational actions among individuals who use resources at their disposal and adapt to the opportunities and constraints that define their social position by utilising these resources (Goldthorpe 1996: 486). Of these

1 Maahanmuuttovirasto Statistics. 2020. First residence permit to Finland. Available at *https://statistik.migri.fi/index.html#decisions/21205/59?l=en&start=540&end=599* (accessed 1.2.2021).

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resources, he vaguely conceptualised the term cultural resources that encompass a distinctive conceptual feature from Bourdieu's cultural capital (Goldthorpe 2007). To him, although Bourdieu's cultural capital carries a concept of social reproduction, cultural resources are simply resources drawn upon to attain a social advantage. However, his concept of cultural resources was criticised because the term possesses no conceptual foundation and used in 'a commonsensical way' (Savage et al. 2005: 38). To avoid this ambiguity, Savage et al. (2005) argued cultural resources would need to be discussed in connection to cultural norms, values and framing in shaping social actions. Cultural resources within migration contexts are often understood as ethnicity- or nationality-specific resources such as language, cultural knowledge, accent, and so on (see Erel 2010).

The debate on cultural resources and capital is resurging today particularly in the context of the occupational attainment of HSMs in a host country. It is argued that resources HSMs bring from their country of origin are likely to be undervalued in their destination where only relevant resources to the country's value system are appreciated (Anthias 2007; Erel 2010). This is where problems arise in the concept of capital that should be differentiated from resources, which will be delineated further in the following section.

FORMS OF CAPITAL

Capital related to the job-seeking and occupational attainment of migrants often constitutes the concept and discourse influenced by Pierre Bourdieu (see Anthias 2007; Cederberg 2012; Erel 2010; Koikkalainen 2019; Paul 2015; Ryan, Erel & D'Angelo 2015; Saksela-Bergholm, Toivonen & Wahlbeck 2019; Wahlbeck 2018). Bourdieu (1986) understood capital in four fundamental forms – namely, economic, cultural, social, symbolic capital. Bourdieu's key concept of different capital is its characteristics of conversion from one form to another but eventually to economic form (Bourdieu 1986). Economic capital is related to money and property. It is said economic capital is an essential element that underpins capitalist societies and class systems in a contemporary society (Savage et al. 2005). Symbolic capital is seen as one's prestige and honour that can be convertible into economic capital (Bourdieu 1977). For instance, a man buying an expensive suit to increase his employment prospects by giving an impression to job interviewers of himself as 'a suitable candidate' may possess symbolic capital.

Social capital consists of social relationships with different people, through which one can draw upon useful resources for social gain. Bourdieu defined social capital as follows: 'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu 1986: 249).

To understand social capital, Bourdieu emphasised the size of social connections one can effectively utilise and the volume of capital possessed by those to whom she/he is connected. Whether she/he can derive useful resources from such connections depends on not only the characteristics of their relationship with various individuals (for example, proximity, closeness, nationality, ethnicity, gender) (Ryan et al. 2008; Ryan 2011) but also their efforts of networking and social positioning in a given social context (Granovetter 1985; Lin 2001; Ryan 2016). As acknowledged, social capital is linked with social networks and these two separate terms are occasionally seen as the

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same (Ryan et al. 2008). Portes (1998: 8) offers a more nuanced definition of social capital as the 'ability to secure benefits through membership in networks and other social structures.' The viewpoint of Portes prompts a reconsideration of the concept of capital as just resources gained through social connections (Anthias 2007; Saksela-Bergholm 2020) and such reconsideration is equally required when considering the concept and discourse of cultural capital.

Cultural capital takes three forms: the embodied entity; objectified entity; and institutionalised entity (Bourdieu 1986: 245). The embodied form of cultural capital constitutes dispositions in one's mind and body, often appearing in the way one thinks, speaks and behaves. The embodied cultural capital is forged unconsciously and requires a considerable amount of time until it is generated. This form of cultural capital involves the distinctive value that differentiates its possessor from another (Bourdieu 1986). In migration studies, cultural practices and knowledge related to ethnicity and nationality (for example, Japanese-ness) are deemed the embodied cultural capital (Erel 2010). The objectified form, on the other hand, can be found in materials and properties that embody the creator's cultural capital such as writings, monuments, instruments, and so on (Bourdieu 1986). Finally, the institutionalised cultural capital refers to formal academic qualifications. In a migratory context, this form of capital obtained elsewhere other than the country of destination is normally misrecognised in a host country (Wahlbeck & Fortelius 2019). More broadly, cultural capital, whatever forms it takes, is in danger of being subject to such structural misrecognition.

This structural misrecognition brings us to the other important explanation for what differentiates capital from resources. Bourdieu argued that capital cannot be explained without referring to its connection to social space called the field in which capital is formed and used (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). The field can be defined as a structured system of the social position taken by individuals, which defines the position of each individual in the system (Jenkins 1992: 53). Under this circumstance, agents can gain social dominance by the access to capital that is at the stake in the field (Jenkins 1992; Wacquant 1989). Capital may seem equivalent to resources utilised to gain employment and yet, in order for the resources to serve its purpose, it needs to take a form that is at stake in the field. In other words, capital is different from resources that are *not* at stake in the field, and capital is a specific form of resources that is relevant to the specific field (Savage et al. 2005; Wacquant 1989).

DATA AND METHOD

This article analyses the following research questions: What resources do Japanese with tertiary education draw upon to gain employment in Finland? What makes these resources capital in the Finnish labour market? The data source is collected through semi-structured interviews with 18 Japanese having enrolled at the Finnish university who have searched for and/or got a job in Finland. The interviews were undertaken between May and July 2020, consisting of 11 face-to-face and seven video call interviews. The follow-up interviews were conducted via email and phone call in September 2020. The data sample involves 15 women and 3 men aged from 20 to 40. At the time of the interviews, 15 had employment status while 3 were unemployed. The detail of the interviewees is described in ***Table 1***.

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 18	
Sex	Female: 15, Male: 3
Age	20–25 years (2), 25–30 years (5), 30–35 years (4), over 35 years (7)
Employment status	Employed: 15, Unemployed: 3
Level of education	Masters candidate (1); Masters (12); PhD candidate (1); PhD (4)
Field of study in Finland	Social sciences (10); Music (2); Health care (1); Natural science (1); Urban design (2); Business (2)
Reason for migration	Study (16); Spouse or partner (2)
Field of employment in Finland	Academic/research (5); Sales/marketing (2); Music (2); IT (2); Healthcare sector (1); Service sector (1); Non-profit sector (1); Internship (1); Job seekers (3)

Table 1 The demographic profile of the interviewees.

The rationale for adopting semi-structured interviews is twofold. First, the present research intends to achieve the aforementioned aim through the viewpoint of the interviewees on job-seeking experience in Finland. Instead of testing existing theories, the article engages in identifying key themes relevant to the research context. Second, semi-structured interviews allow for a flexible session in which the interviewees not just answer a set of questions but also provide additional comments that can be integral to fulfil the purpose of this research (Bryman 2012: 471–472).

The interview questions concern the following categories: (1) migratory background: how, when, why the participants ended up living in Finland; (2) educational history: what skills/education they have acquired in pre/post-migration; (3) job search experience: how they have searched for jobs in Helsinki, what kind of job they have got in and outside of Finland; (4) social relationships: what relationships they have established in pre/post-migration and how they have relied on the relationships to seek a job in Finland. The interviews lasted for average one hour and were undertaken in Japanese. Pseudonyms for all participants are used throughout this article to protect the privacy of all participants.

All the recorded interviews were transcribed and translated from Japanese into English. Then the interview data were coded across the full transcript texts to identify specific themes that convey what resources they utilised to get a job in Finland and how these resources became capital. The coding was conducted by using Atlas.ti.

All interviewees were sent a document as informed consent that summarises the research overview and its purpose, the interview procedure and the code of ethics. They were asked to read it through and the interviews were conducted only with those who understood the research and agreed to collaborate. The document was elaborated when interviewing to avoid misunderstandings about the research.

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources in this study involve language skills, that is, Finnish and English; Japanese nationality, the Japanese language and knowledge of Japanese culture; relevant work experience (RWE) in Japan and Finland. Finnish and English language skills were chiefly used in finding the information of opening positions and creating job application materials such as CV/a motivation letter. Although a few interviewees

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could utilise the Finnish language skill to get a job, others found the English language ability pivotal for finding non-Finnish-speaking work. Japanese nationality was utilised to look for specific kinds of employment often requiring knowledge about the Japanese language and culture such as travel agents, translation, the Finnish employers specialising in international business between Finland and Japan. RWE acquired in Japan and Finland was useful for the interviewees to target the job matching their previous employment. Some intended to get a similar job they had before migration to Finland, whereas others were able to build on work experience in Finland and start a new career. As many interviewees experienced, RWE in Japan was unlikely to be valued by the Finnish employers.

Social resources consist of personal contacts with reliable persons such as friends, family members and spouse; personal contacts with non-reliable people such as strangers, acquaintances, professors. Social connections with reliable individuals provided the interviewees with not just relevant information about employment but also a sense of belonging. Most of the interviewees formed strong ties with friends (both Finnish and non-Finnish) whom they met in Finland. On the one hand, spouse played a considerable role in connecting them to their friends' group and providing the local job market information. On the other hand, social supports offered through social connections with non-reliable people confined to job-related matter. Some interviewees relied on the weak ties with a professor, supervisor or practitioner when searching for a job. A few others registered themselves to the membership of occupational mailing lists for receiving employment information.

Although the interviewees drew upon different resources during the period of job seeking, not all resources were converted into capital – namely, resources whose value is properly recognised, thereby resulting in employment. In what follows, this article will explain how these resources became capital. Because of the limited space, it particularly focuses on cultural resources and capital.

CULTURAL RESOURCES BECOMING CAPITAL

Identifying what transforms resources into capital requires a closer look at both structure and agency. The structure here refers to the field in which the interviewees use resources to gain employment, whereas the agency signifies the interviewees' intention that determines their target and specific resources used to get the desired job. As resources take a form of capital only when their value is recognised, first, we must consider the circumstance under which these resources become valuable. Correspondingly, we ought to see how the field is shaped by individuals as the social structure is constructed by a set of individual behaviours (Bourdieu 1989). An analysis of the data induces two elements that contribute to capital formation, which is now explained.

THE FINNISH LABOUR MARKET

The first element is the Finnish labour market characterised as 'unfavourable' to non-natives, regardless of their qualification brought from another country, which results in 'weak labour market performance' such as under/unemployment because of inadequate command of the Finnish language, the local employers' distrust towards non-Finnish citizens, the lack of knowledge on work ethic and communication at work and professional networks, and discrimination (Ahmad 2020). Others argue the

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Finnish labour market chiefly offers temporary or part-time work, pointing out the scarcity of full-time employment (Maury 2020). Forsander (2004) adds that a majority of job vacancy in Finland is not filled through formal channels (that is, applying to opening positions), but through informal channels (that is, social connections with key persons), which is often an unavailable option for newcomers because of the lack of social contacts in Finland. Having mentioned a set of structural barriers migrants face, Forsander (2004: 214) indicated a significant number of HSMs would struggle with 'a mismatch of their human capital' and limited access to professional employment in the Finnish job market, thereby placing HSMs in a disadvantaged position.

These structural factors in the Finnish labour market exert their institutional power to define which resources are recognised and misrecognised. Language is one of the most frequently used resources by the interviewees. Although the Finnish language competence is seen as highly valued resources in Finland, only a few interviewees were able to master the language. To overcome this disadvantage, they used English and Japanese to access the Finnish labour market. On the one hand, the English language skill is considered as cultural resources that often drawn upon by international students to access the global job market (Igarashi & Saito 2014; Jarvis 2020). On the other hand, the national language is also pivotal to secure ethnic niche work (Wahlbeck & Fortelius 2019). Although the second or third language ability is associated with only particular industries such as translation, the role of non-native language skills cannot be dismissed. For example, in the Finnish labour market today, many job advertisements are published in English and some companies require (mainly) Finnish/Swedish and English as well as (occasionally) the third language (see Shumilova et al. 2012). This is exemplified in the case of one interviewee Aoi, who utilised her Japanese and English language ability to get a job in Finland. She recalls:

> 'I found the opening position for a Japanese language speaker advertised through the university website and from there I took up the position at a company providing services for the Japanese market. I engaged in translation work [English–Japanese].' – Aoi

Aoi's case shows the process in which the Japanese and English language as cultural resources become capital in the Finnish labour market. In many cases, the Finnish language is prerequisite for employment and thus the limited Finnish-speaking ability is associated with non-successful occupational attainment. That is, the language ability except the Finnish language is merely resources and hardly capital. Yet it is unwise to assume a zero-sum game that the second or third language skill of HSMs does not fit to a host country's labour market and therefore they cannot render such cultural resources capital to achieve their goal. As Erel (2010) critiqued, although HSMs may not possess cultural capital at the first place because resources in their possession are devalued, they can compensate for the devaluation of resources brought from the country of origin in the labour market of their destination. As described in Aoi's case, non-native language ability, however it may seem no use, is properly recognised in a particular field of the Finnish labour market. In other words, specific cultural resources, namely, Japanese and English language skills, can take a form of capital when these are used in the specific area within the Finnish labour market.

This capital formation pattern resonates with other cultural resources commonly used by the interviewees: Japanese nationality. Ethnic origin in a host country's labour market is usually deemed a source of exclusion and inclusion. For example, the study of Ahmad (2020) confirmed the discrimination that job seekers with immigrant

background encountered greater obstacles than the natives in the Finnish labour market, underlining this negative attitude by the local employers was especially directed towards the Somalian and Iraqi-born migrants. He noted '[d]espite possessing identical human capital credentials, immigrant candidate encountered substantial discrimination when striving for the same positions as their Finnish counterparts' (Ahmad 2020: 833). This is also applied to the case of foreign students in Finland, in which the Finnish language and cultural knowledge on the Finnish working life are used to screen out the job application of international students (Alho 2020). In addition, white migrants from the Western European continent or North America are more likely to be accepted than non-white migrants from the non-Western countries (Ahmad 2020; Alho 2020; Koskela 2014). Koskela (2014: 27) furthers this discussion by identifying the linkage between ethnicity and employment in Finland, such as Indian IT or African cleaners. However, as Cai & Kivistö (2011) reported, on the one hand, some nationalities of HSMs are occasionally appreciated when such nationalities are seen as useful for the Finnish companies to participate in the global market. On the other hand, nationality also entails the cultural knowledge about the country of origin, which can be utilised as cultural resources (Samaluk 2016). Many cases of the present research show that Japanese nationality became convertible into capital. One interviewee Emi who landed a job when attending an academic conference said:

> 'The conference was about was the theme of welfare which was also related to Japan. Because [what was presented in the conference] was about some projects done by the Japanese and Finnish university, I saw many researchers from Japan who are interested in the welfare system of Finland. There were also Finns who are interested in building a relationship with Japan…There were business conventions from various companies and [one of them hired me] as they were planning to expand their business in Japan.' – Emi

The Finnish company who hired Emi at that time was promoting its production to the Japanese market, and Emi was required to render the prototype suitable for the taste of Japanese people. Therefore, her knowledge of the market in Japan and Japanese society was integral to this job. Essentially, Emi's case demonstrates cultural knowledge about the country of origin, not just the language, is valued and required in the specific area of a host country's labour market and in this respect, ethnic origin can be transformed into capital (Wahlbeck & Fortelius 2019). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that employment gained among the interviewees through the Japanese language ability and nationality also involved temporary and part-time work that was not a desired job for them. The interviewees tended to gain this type of employment during the period of school holidays.

The final resources drawn upon by the interviewees were RWE in Japan and Finland. Although the Finnish language seems to be a key competence to succeed in the Finnish labour market, it is profound to uncover that job experience in the field of employment sought can be a decisive factor for occupational attainment. The study of Shumilova et al. (2012) presented a considerable disparity between foreign students having and not having RWE, noting that foreign students with RWE during their studies are more likely to gain employment than those without RWE. This study also showed that the employment prospects of foreign students get higher when students possess RWE to the field of studies. RWE in this context can indicate 'practical knowledge' (Bourdieu 1977: 19) as cultural resources 'generated not only in specific educational contexts but also in the manner in which individual students encounter and interact with a

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particular place (city/country of education), its people, practices and environment' (Collins et al. 2017: 3). RWE is also place-specific resources because their value is appreciated particularly in a host country's labour market (Balàž & Williams 2004). An interviewee Tsubaki who used to work as an intern in Finland before securing her current position at a Finnish IT company explained how RWE helped her to get a job in the Finnish job market:

> 'I think the previous job experience is useful. Since I had such an experience, it was easy for me to write a motivation letter and after all, I used to engage in data analytics in Tokyo and the former job title in Oulu was an [data] analyst. That's why I was invited [to a job interview and hired]. So, my experience resulted in this current employment.' – Tsubaki

Tsubaki found this position through an online employment-oriented website and applied it through a formal channel, that is, sending CV and a motivation letter. Her current workplace does not require the Finnish language skill but English. Tsubaki's case indicates RWE to the field of the job applied can increase employment prospects of HSMs, despite the lack of the local language ability. Her RWE as a data analyst was not only recognised as valuable in the Finnish IT firm but also helped her to provide a proper format for a letter of motivation, which was also appreciated by the employer. Then Tsubakis' case suggests RWE obtained both in Japan and Finland resulted in her occupational attainment. This reflects the characteristic of the modern Finnish labour market investing in the knowledge-based economy by employing individuals with expertise in data, science and technology (see Eskelä 2013; Koskela 2010). Essentially, no matter where it is obtained, the value of RWE depends on the Finnish labour market. If this is true, whether resources become capital hinges on the field in which resources are used (Erel & Ryan 2019).

Three cultural resources presented here seem valuable in the Finnish labour market. But it is not to suggest any sorts of resources drawn upon by the interviewees are valuated in Finland. For example, many interviewees including Tsubaki have experienced undervaluation of their RWE brought from Japan by the Finnish employers. Some interviewees voiced despite their Finnish language skills they struggled to get a job because their RWE was not recognised as valuable. In effect, cultural resources used by the interviewees were useful only when they become capital. The Finnish job market is one element that transforms resources into capital and yet this is certainly not the only one. In what follows, the other element integral to capital formation is delineated.

JOB-SEEKING INTENTION

As explored, it is obvious that the Finnish labour market consists of different fields in which particular resources are recognised and misrecognised. Some interviewees happened to be able to convert resources into capital and others failed. How can this distinction among the interviewees be explained? What differentiates those who found a particular field where resources are valued from those who did not? To solve this puzzle, it seems relevant to take an explanation by Bourdieu (1989) that the social structure is constructed by a set of actions and interactions between individuals who endeavour to differentiate themselves from one another. Here we need a nuanced view on job-seeking actions as an agency for using resources at her/his disposal to gain a socio-economic status but simultaneously such agency is restricted and enabled by a set of social regulations (Goldthorpe 1996; Portes 1995). Given these

accounts and the interview data, the job-seeking intention is seen as the second element transforming resources into capital.

The notion of the job-seeking intention here is far from rational action that agents calculate in a rational way to maximise resources for achieving a higher socio-economic position, indicated by Goldthorpe (1996) and Lin et al. (1981). Rather, the job-seeking intention is characterised as a totally unconscious mind and an individual learning process that determines acts (either reasonable or unreasonable) and their outcome (success or not) (Bourdieu 1977). It is not calculative rational decision-making but the socially constructed actions that are inscribed in the body and the relation of the body to social restrictions (Bourdieu 1989; Jenkins 1992).

In this paper, the job-seeking intention is also relevant to the interviewees' usage of resources in pursuit of employment in the Finnish labour market. More precisely, the job-seeking intention includes some features of what Koikkalainen (2014) calls *adaptation* and *distinction* and what Wahlbeck & Fortelius (2019) name *field navigation*. On the one hand, adaptation refers to the rule-governed job-seeking action such as using the 'correct' CV format, acceptable language and job application through the right channel, whereas distinction signifies 'tactics for utilising one's skills, education, and experiences to gain a competitive advantage.' (Koikkalainen 2014: 166). On the other hand, field navigation is an action to collect information about the labour market and access specific job fields in which they manage to transform resources into capital (Wahlbeck & Fortelius 2019). The job-seeking intention is incrementally shaped over time, reflecting upon one's social milieu. Through the job-seeking intention, the interviewees endeavoured to create capital out of resources at their disposal. An interviewee Sora, who used to work in Finland as self-employed and looked for a new job during the self-employment period, has developed his way:

> 'I feel a small company assesses positively my experience as a self-employed. So, I don't think I am going to be invited to a job interview if I would apply for a large corporate. Because I have a long experience of self-employment and only experience as an employee at a small company. If one has work experience at a major corporate, I think those interested in hiring the person would be an employer from a corporate. ... when looking for a job here, in my opinion, the possibility of getting work would be increasing if I target a similar size of company [to the companies I used to work for].' – Sora

Sora became self-employed while he studied at the Finnish university but continued searching for employment because of his uncertain financial situation as a self-employed worker. His work experience was not properly recognised by corporate employers as he received rejections during his job-seeking period. Hence, Sora changed his job-seeking intention to target a small company rather than to apply for a large corporate, so that he could utilise his work experience to gain employment in Finland. His strategy enabled him to find a specific field in which his previous work experience is considered valuable.

For others having no self-employment experience in Finland, it is common to find a job through which they become a linkage between Japan and Finland. Knowledge of Japanese culture and language is pivotal for this type of employment but also the field

relevant to education and previous work experience in Japan. Aoi, who used to work as a study-abroad coordinator at a university in Japan after completing her Bachelor's degree in intercultural communication studies, tried to get a similar job in Finland.

> 'I guess it [when I started to desire to work in Finland] was after my masters programme began in Finland. I became interested in building a connection between Japan and Finland. … [So] I sent open application to companies related to Japan one after another.' – Aoi

Despite her efforts, Aoi was not able to get employment as a coordinator of study abroad at the Finnish university because of the language barrier. Nevertheless, she succeeded in securing a full-time position responsible for traveling business of the global shipping company operates in the northern Baltic Sea regions. Her role is to promote Finland as a tourism destination for Japanese tourists and to provide a better understanding of Japanese culture to improve their hospitality services for Japanese customers. Although Aoi's current employment was not the one she was initially looking for, her perseverant attitude to become a linkage between Japan and Finland resulted in transforming cultural resources into a capital in the Finnish job market.

CONCLUSION

This article has explored how HSMs create and utilise capital to gain employment in a host country by highlighting the difference between resources and capital. Only a few studies have analysed the process of the occupational attainment of HSMs in the Finnish contexts in the light of socially and culturally relevant aspects (Ahmad 2020; Alho 2020; Saksela-Bergholm 2020; Wahlbeck 2018). The findings from these studies clearly indicate that different forms of capital are imperative in investigating the occupational achievement of HSMs in Finland. The present article pursues to develop this discussion by drawing on the case of Japanese students/graduates at the Finnish university seeking a job in Finland. Furthermore, this article has extended the discussion concerning the relation between capital and resources by analysing what resources are used and how these resources are converted into capital within the context of the occupational attainment of HSMs (Anthias 2007; Erel 2010; Ryan et al. 2015). In this article, cultural resources and cultural capital formed and used by highly skilled Japanese are particularly highlighted. Consequently, the findings of this article show that the Finnish labour market and the job-seeking intention play a significant role in converting resources into capital.

The main argument of this article is to provide the viewpoint that resources and capital should be understood as two separate instruments created and utilised by HSMs to get work in a host country. In particular, this study has tried to argue the possession of a sizeable advantage in seeking employment such as degree, language proficiency or expertise is not helpful unless HSMs utilise these resources in a particular form that is considered useful, namely capital. The transformation of resources into capital in the occupational attainment of HSMs is not given but made possible only when they endeavour to create capital out of resources. Such endeavour cannot be explained without its connection with the surrounding social structure that constructs the specific condition wherein resources become capital. This viewpoint indicates that the occupational attainment process of HSMs can be seen as their efforts to make capital out of resources and capital formation results from the dynamics between such efforts and the host country's labour market structure.

The empirical study presented in this article opposes a pessimistic view that HSMs of the non-Western origin are naturally subject to discrimination or overqualification when seeking employment in a host country (see Ahmad 2020). But it is by no means supporting an optimistic perspective that HSMs are always able to get a job in a host country owing to their competence. Rather, this study holds a 'pragmatic' lens that HSMs (even those with the non-Western origin) can find a way to deploy resources at their disposal for their occupational achievement. This lens helps to avoid falling into the simplistic discourse that sees any resources HSMs bring from the country of their origin or create in that of destination as transferable to successful occupational attainment in a host country. Additionally, it addresses how the occupational attainment and the labour market inclusion of HSMs are constructed through both the host country's labour market structure and HSMs' agency to gain employment.

Finally, this article was not able to discuss social resources and capital within the context of the occupational achievement of HSMs. As previous research underscored the role of social networks and ties in facilitating migrants' job search and the labour market inclusion in Finland (see Alho 2020; Saksela-Bergholm 2020), it requires further attention to the process in which these social resources become capital. What is it makes social resources capital? How do HSMs create social capital out of social resources? These questions are to be investigated in the future research.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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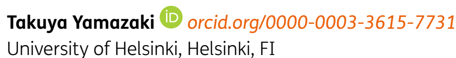
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