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# **LIFE PURPOSES AND CAREER GOALS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TEACHERS IN FINLAND**

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# ABSTRACT

Aytuna YAMAÇ: Life Purposes and Career Goals of International Student Teachers in Finland  
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According to the international surveys such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), Finland has been ranked first many times in education for many years. Thanks to this accomplishment, the Finnish education system has been arousing a worldwide interest not only of researchers but also teachers from various parts of the world. Most of the studies associated this great success with the good quality teacher education programs and thus foreign teachers decide to move to Finland to experience research-based Finnish teacher education programs with the ideal of purposeful lifelong learning.

This thesis is part of a Finnish-Dutch research project "Civic purpose among higher education students". A rather small part of the data consisting of twenty international student teachers from ten different countries with an average age of thirty-one had been analysed and interviewed within a second theory for career devotedness in this existing study. The main aim is to broaden the methodological perspective by utilizing qualitative approaches, allowing phenomena to be studied in both deductive and inductive ways for the international teacher education context. The results contribute to the literature by revealing purposes, purpose profiles, and individuality types of the international student teachers studying in Finland as well as by showing how a Finnish teacher education program creates a difference on career goals.

Keywords: Student Teachers, Purposeful Teaching, Career Commitment, International Teacher Education

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin Originality Check service.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

In today's ever-changing world educators are expected to be purposeful and teacher education programs aim to develop some basic changes in student teachers' behaviour, competencies, beliefs, professional identity, and mission (Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010). Quality education should be seen as a purposeful interactivity between teachers and students and as a key input of the process, teachers should be role models, aiming to give students personal development opportunities (Fredriksson, 2004). Teachers also expected to be purposeful to find their job equally significant and to be able to inspire a sense of purpose in students (Bundick & Tirri, 2014). However, student teachers are struggling in associating the theories they learned at school with real-life practices to solve daily school challenges (Korthagen et al, 2006). Finnish research-based teacher education programs draw attention to this subject by bringing both students and teachers in the ability to think outside the box (Tryggvason, 2009).

During recent history, Finland has been gathering gradually increasing international attention thanks to its superlative scores in international surveys run by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests, Finnish students are Europe's highest achievers and, have been ranking top one worldwide (Sahlberg, 2013). Most of the studies associated this great success with the good quality teacher education programs in Finland and thanks to this accomplishment, the Finnish teacher education system has inspired a huge interest all over the world (Itkonen & Jahnukainen, 2007). Not only researchers but also student teachers from different countries ponder what makes Finland the best. Many teachers from all over the world give a thought to what to learn from the Finnish education system for their vocational development and some decide to move to Finland to study for a master's degree in Teacher Education.

Understanding the motivations of teachers from all over the world who decide to move to Finland to pursue a teacher education master's degree helps to find out the level of commitment to a teaching career because taking such life-changing action at any age requires a strong determination to certain goals. The issue of life purposes and career goals has been long established as an important topic in the field of education and research has been done for Finnish student teachers (Tirri & Ubani, 2013; Tirri & Kuusisto, 2016; Kuusisto & Tirri, 2021 etc.). However, the international perspective on the purposeful teaching is an important scope to be studied and there is a gap in the literature for the life purposes and career goals of the international student teachers in Finland. The main aim of this qualitative study is to investigate the goals that international student teachers have for their careers or more generally the purposes they set for life. The main motivation behind this study is to contribute the discussion concerning teacher education from the international perspective. Teacher education programs should make a difference in a way of developing goals and purposes (Tatto, 1998). Hence another goal of this research is to investigate in regards how studying in a Finnish master's degree program change or improve their life purposes and career plans.

This current research on purposefulness and career commitment is predominantly based on the data gathered from an online survey and interviews due to the pandemic conditions in 2020. There were some restrictions in Finland during the year in which this study conducted for example no contact lessons, no student club activities, no travels outside of the country etc. The effect of the psychological effect of the pandemic conditions on student teachers' motivation to plan a future had been excluded.

To broaden the methodological perspective, qualitative approach based on both inductive and deductive content analysis had been used. Twenty teachers in a highly selective graduate program for teacher education in Tampere University, with a strong background and working experience in education from ten different countries were studied within the Finnish international teacher education context. The results revealed that all participants in this study have a purpose in life and those purposes mostly focused on themselves. The results also show that foreign student teachers in Finland express their purposes in life mainly related to the teaching profession or happiness in life. Moreover, when it

comes to the purpose profiles, half of the participants turned out to be purposeful. On the other hand, four out of the six categories of the individuality types for choosing a career had been spotted as social, investigative, realistic, and artistic among the participants who were interviewed. Social type of people are the best fits for a teaching career (Holland, 1997) and two interviewees who are spotted as social types are turned out to be devoted to teaching so their career decisions are convenient according to their personality types. Finally, the data also focused on how studying in a Finnish education program and experiencing Finnish culture have affects the career plans of foreign teachers. All participants declared that their expectations in terms of education and professional life have been met in Finland. Participants who changed their career plans also pointed out that they do not want to continue teaching neither in Finland nor their hometown while the ones who are devoted to the teaching profession have not questioned their career goals, but they strengthened their plans in Finland.

In the light of the results of this thesis; studying the purposes and goals of the international student teachers in Finland is becoming extremely difficult to ignore. Their employment and transition patterns to working life in global perspective and challenges of internationalization of Finnish teacher education need to be studied in the future. Recent needs to develop purposeful teachers for the evolving world, have led to renew the interest in Finnish teacher education programs due to its research-based teacher education system. Throughout this paper, discovering the life purposes and career goals of the international student teachers who are giving a pause to their career and choosing to study within a famous Finnish teacher education system will be the starting point for generating fresh insight to the effects of international teacher education programs for the purposeful teaching around the world.

## 2 PURPOSE IN LIFE AND CAREER GOALS GUIDING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' CHOICES

### *2.1 PURPOSE IN LIFE AND BEYOND-THE-SELF ORIENTATION*

Purpose is a well-known term, but it requires a deep understanding from the perspective of psychology to recognize its meaning in the field of schooling because purpose development has started to be seen as a branch in education (Koshy & Mariano, 2011). To define purpose and what it means as a whole concept in life, it needed first to be taken into consideration the similarities and differences of the term purpose from the concepts of meaning, value, and goal. The definition of purpose is given differently in different research depending on the context. One of the first definitions in the literature for purpose is made by Frankl in 1959 as an inner strength that is liable for people's inner self and as a justification for living which motivates them (Frankl, 2011). Frankl used the concepts of meaning and purpose interchangeably and regarded them as havens in a world of constant threat. However, the positive psychology movement assumes that the drive to survive through psychological adaptation should not be the desired ultimate direction of human life (Damon et al., 2003). From another point of view, purpose, value, efficacy, and self-worth are considered the four essential aspects of meaning which is defined as the consistency in one's existence, the quest for a substantial goal, and a feeling of wholeness that accompanies it (Baumeister, 1991). Hence according to Baumeister (1991) purpose in life is often being discovered rather than developed.



Purpose is a part of a steady search for meaning and comprehensive goals which people constantly desires to accomplish rather than short-term plans that are evolved in time and even if it is not especially profession cantered, passions are driven by professional education (Colby, 2020). According to developmental psychologists, if young people cannot find their life purposes while growing up, it gets more and more difficult later in life for them to find a life purpose and that's why purpose is regarded as the foremost motivator for success (Erikson, 1994). On the other hand, purpose is related to but should not be necessarily linked with psychological well-being. In some studies well-being is also included as one prospect of purpose (Battista & Almond, 1973).

To understand purpose operationally in this study the definition of purpose is adapted from Damon et al. (2003):

Purpose is a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and of consequence to the world beyond the self (p. 212).

Using Damon, Menon and Bronk's (2003) description, purpose has three dimensions as intention, engagement, and prosocial reasoning. *Intention* includes an orientation towards finding a sustainable and long-term aim while *engagement* means devotion of time, effort, or emotions to reach a purpose and *prosocial reasoning* ties the first two dimensions to the consequences that affect others (Moran, 2009). According to Moran (2009) this dimensional approach is important because teenagers supposedly are at different levels of their own purpose development and most of them may not have all the dimensions integrated yet. Within the context of teacher education, it would be advantageous for student teachers to receive purpose dimensions do not have to form at the same time or rate (Tirri et al., 2016)

Damon's findings show that people can be divided into four categories according to their purposefulness in life (Moran, 2009; Damon, 2008). The first group is called as the *disengaged* and in the context of teaching (Tirri & Kuusisto, 2016), they are the teachers who have neither a life purpose nor an intention to have one. They show limited interest in global issues beyond the self. The second group named as the *purposeful* who already found something meaningful and keep long term interests for an educational vision. These teachers are able to set

clear goals to see the future steps in their career Thirdly, a group named as the *dreamers* consists of the teachers who have purpose related potential ideas, they would like to have but have no practical plan to bring such imaginative designs into life realistically. Lastly, there are the dabblers performing activities that fit their potential purposes, but their interests are limited, and they change their teaching methods frequently without committing themselves to promise concrete goals.

In a widespread manner, there is a concern that teachers are inefficient in inspiring youth to find their life purposes because they also failed to find their motivation for work (Krečič & Grmek, 2005). Hence, understanding the parameters that attract young people to consider teaching as a profession, provides a source to improve the quality of teacher education programs (Fray & Gore, 2018). Purpose development should be part of schooling especially teacher education because purposeful teachers focus more on supporting their students' internalization the subject contents as steps to their life purposes (Tirri & Kuusisto, 2016). Teachers' role is critical for fostering youth to find purposes in life (Bundick & Tirri 2014; Damon 2009) and if the purpose is taught everyone can develop a purpose (Benson, 2006; Damon, 2008). Empirical research points out that both experienced and unexperienced teachers in Finland highlight purposes irrespective of the topic taught and they feel in charge for the wholistic development of students (Bundick & Tirri, 2014). In this study, one of the main motivations is to discover whether a Finnish international teacher education program has the same effect on foreigner teachers in Finland in the matter of increasing the sense of responsibility for students' purpose development. In this regard, self-understanding is seen as important ability as academic skills and purposefulness helps this development to be clear in modern societies in which people are expected to have a purpose and sense of involvement (Moran, 2009).

On the other hand, people originate their purposes either with self-reasoning or other focused reasoning, so there are two types of goals people can set in life as one for the benefit of the world beyond their presence, and another as a self-oriented benefit for themselves (Damon, 2008). Self-focused life goals are for example economic wellbeing, self-fulfilment, hedonistic realization, and happiness while other-focused life goals are mainly related to the relationships, social, religious and, political influences (Damon, 2008; Moran, 2015). The

deeper understanding of the purposes that international student teachers have or planning to have helps to figure out a clear differentiation between other-focus and self-focus tendencies they developed as being a part of the Finnish education system.

Purpose is also defined differently by adolescents and adults because as people ages, they will gain a more balanced perspective on the purpose and the need to prove success will likely decrease (Damon et al., 2003). Majority of people are motivated by family goals, such as raising a family; some people focus on professional goals, such as studying for a particular profession; some serve a belief purpose; and some put arts or sports at the centre of their lives (Damon, 2009). On the other hand, factors that determine the life purposes also evolve in time. For example, before; family and faith were dominant in determining purposes but today media influences more the youth (Damon et al., 2003). Previously, not so far away, only a couple of decades ago, the most important decisions were made for most people before their 20s (Damon et al., 2003). According to Damon and his colleagues (2003) there was less concern about what to do in life before than now and many young people have no answers to such questions and are still looking for a purpose at the age of 30, or sometimes later. In the end most part of the youth is avoiding making a commitment as a spouse, a member of the public or as an employee which can be seen as a definition of being an adult (Damon, 2008). Teachers of many ages are making a big commitment by giving a break to their active jobs and moving to Finland to study teacher education master's degree. Hence this study aims to fulfil the gap in the literature by analysing this factor effecting the purpose development for the international teachers subject to this study.

## ***2.2 CAREER GOALS IN LIFE TRANSITIONS***

Choosing a career is a determinant step in life together with figuring out one's life purposes. Taking the right steps in defining a profession is an important life event for youth to meet the world. There are many internal and external factors that affect people's decisions and not everybody has the same life opportunities to construct a purposeful vocational development. Most of the young people do not think carefully while choosing their profession and ended up dissatisfied with their

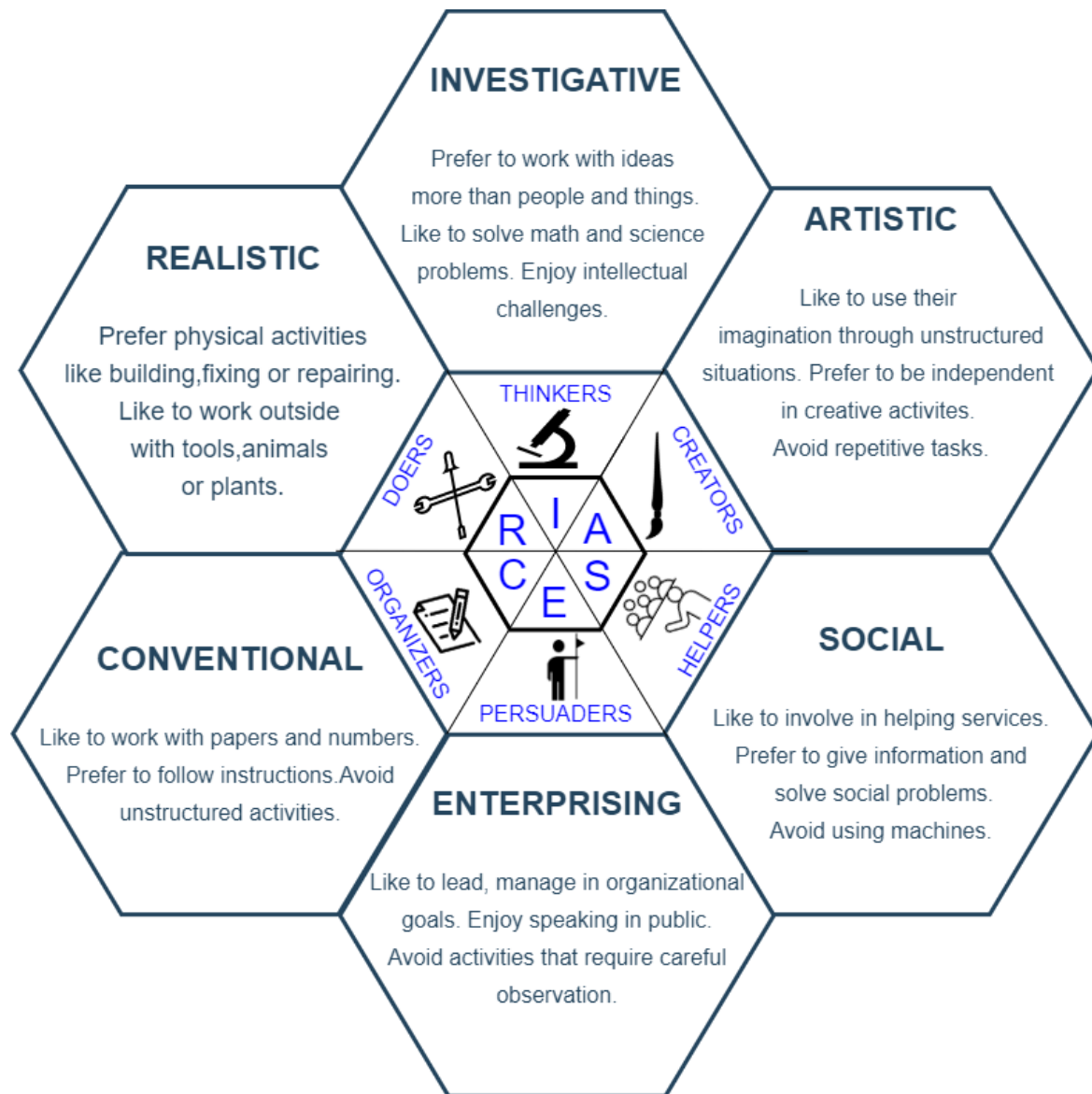
lives because of the work they just fill in time (Imig & Imig, 2007). Hence, it is very important for youth to have an inspiring education life where they can get help to find career paths that fit their interests and talents. Not only locally but also nationally, this quest leads policymakers and researchers to focus on teaching and teacher education.

Holland's theory for career assessment (Holland, 1973 & Holland, 1997) is utilized in this study to understand the current career goals of international student teachers in Tampere University. This study examines how studying in an unfamiliar education system and experiencing a different culture affects previous career goals they set before as pre- or in-service teachers in their home countries. Moreover, exploring the similarities and differences in the motivations of the international student teachers from different career and family backgrounds helps to correlate the efficacy of Finnish education in different parts of the world.

Holland (1997) suggested that people have a "personal career theory" (PCT). PCT is a group gathered by personal beliefs, occupational knowledge and premises that leads people when choosing the fields of study or work and PCT can range from invalid to valid according to the strength of the theory (Holland, 1997). According to Holland professional choices are made by individuals as an expression of the personality because job satisfaction, persistence and success are subject to the harmony between their characteristics and the circle they work in (as cited in Ramadhani et al., 2020). With a close look at the literature, Holland's theory has been examined many times in the context of education e.g., for both in-service teachers (Walsh & Huston, 1988; Amirian & Behshad, 2016) and preservice teachers (Young, 1995; Perkmen & Tezci, 2015) to find out the reasons for entry, current and future career plans, and job perceptions. In the context of teaching, one of the basic premises of Holland's theory can be interpreted as teachers will find satisfaction if their professional properties are compatible with the characteristics of the schooling environment (Place, 1997). Some teachers change fields from which they lack interest and aptitude to seek fields for which they possess interest. Based on Holland's theory (1973) their reasons for career changes may be related to changes in the personality triggered by life-stage development, misperceptions of what is involved in teaching or by a change in the environment which is our main focus in this study. Student teachers may hold occupational stereotypes that may change with direct

experience as a teacher, and they need to be purposefully prepared for the fact that the teaching profession requires readiness to work with youth and adults (Kelchtermans, 2017). When they are not ready, with the absence of a proper support, workload cause some teachers to feel disappointed and quit their jobs untimely in their teaching career (Kim & Cho 2014). According to Kelchtermans, with experience, people become clearer about their assets and liabilities as well as about the opportunities and limitations and may lead to new roads. Student teachers might be quite resistive to cognitive change in the beginning of their teacher education, but internal will power constitute an important part of accessing quality teacher education programs and retaining in teaching (Malmberg, 2006). This study also aims to discover in this study, the proportion of teachers who plan to change their field of work whether related to teaching or not after studying in a Finnish international teacher education program.

From Holland's perspective, people interact within their environment and resemble one or combination of six individuality types. Holland's interest based self-directed search theory includes a hexagonal model; RIASEC in which people can be categorized (Holland, 1997). The model is an acronym consisting of the first letters of the six personality characteristics which are realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. Individuals has a unique pattern and a sub type which is a resemblance of the personality scores. People with similar letter code show similar professional preferences.



**Figure 1 Hexagonal RIASEC MODEL of self-directive research (Holland, Powell & Fritzsche, 1997).**

Realistic type personalities called doers and generally described as sensible, practical, mechanical, natural, persistent, and honest. Possible careers for them could be engineering, mining, building, construction, hairdressing, or hospitality. Investigator type personalities are termed as thinkers and characterized as logical, curious, intellectual, independent, and modest. Most appropriate profession options for them could be accounting, business management, safety, web-based technologies or automotive. Artistic type personalities, in other words creators, can be described as open, creative, imaginative, aesthetic, and original. Possible career opportunities for them can be listed as art, interior and exterior

design, hairdressing, travel and tourism or visual arts. Enterprising type personalities are high as persuaders and usually known for their outgoing, optimistic, social, adventurous, and self-confident aspects. Possible profession choices are as following for them, management, administration, design, or sales. The last group of personality type is for conventional people which are called as organisers. Conventional people are most probably having practical, careful, thrifty, obedient, efficient, and persistent characteristics. Possible career options for them could be accountant, business analyst, carpentry, bookkeeper, or laboratory technician. People who called as helpers belong to the social type of personality group. People in this group often described as helpful, understanding, warm, friendly, kind, generous and patient. Possible job options for them might be nursing, childcare, fitness, assessment, or volunteer works. Teachers rank in "Social Type" because social types according to Holland, opt for occasions that need to be managed by others to report, instruct, correct, and improve. They are willing to be helpful and forgiving and see themselves as understanding (Figure 1). It means that emotionally mature teachers might hold some or all these characteristics. Teachers with 'Helpers' qualifications are probable to be professionally gratified and prospering (Amirian & Behshad, 2016).

The quality of the information regarding people's readiness for career decision making is important while using Holland's theory because it measures the degree to which people resemble each of the categories for themselves to increase self-understanding while taking steps for career related purposes (Holland, 1994). Four main diagnostic indicators which are congruence, identity, differentiation, and consistency are theoretically acquired in Holland's theory. Congruence is the first indicator for how an individuals' personality and the business context they belong or planning to be in. Another theoretical indicator, consistency, is the standard of the internal adaptation for individuals. The third indicator; differentiation refers to the specificity of the character type is calculated as the subtraction of the highest and the lowest score. Finally, identity measures whether the individual has a clear idea of their goals, interests, and abilities or not (Holland, 1994).

Holland's theory works as a comprehensive assessment to find most suitable work environments for all individuals based on a suggested theoretical formulation regarding personalities (Brown & Lent, 2004). It is important in any point of life to reinvent for oneself by updating prior, ongoing, or future career plans and purposes for life. Adults could question their path and determine short-term and long-term plans. In this research, the factors leading the international teachers who study teacher education masters' degree program in Tampere University by making a life changing decision to move to Finland had been investigated. The idea behind this study is to discover the purposeful determination behind this career attempt. Hence Damon's life purpose and Holland's career theories had been used together with the professional tendencies in this study.



# 3 INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS IN FINNISH TEACHER EDUCATION

## 3.1 *INTERNATIONALIZATION OF FINNISH EDUCATION*

### 3.1.1 The History of International Assessments in Finland within the frame of PISA

Before 21st century, the Finnish education system has not attracted any interest because highly populated countries like China and USA were having a reputation as high performers in education with different indicators such as International Olympiads for physics, mathematics, and chemistry while Finland could not rank the top ten (Sahlberg, 2011). In 2000, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) started first time testing the Programme for International Student Assessment which is well known as PISA and after that repeated every three years (Sjøberg, 2016). Finland has participated in PISA since the beginning and the results of the first PISA for Finnish students turned out to be high-performing learners were as good as their peers in other countries, while the weakest students clearly outperformed than elsewhere (Kupiainen et al., 2009). The initial PISA results that published in 2001 were used in Finland as an evidence that the structure of the education system needs no change however, with the decline in the international assessments especially in mathematics since 2006, comprehensive reforms have been initiated to recapture the success (Rautalin, 2018). High number of students from Finland with immigrant background were selected for testing in PISA 2012 because the number of students who speak languages other than the national ones (Finnish and Swedish) has increased overall in the country and Finland benefit from over-sampling of immigrant learners in teaching the Finnish language to minority students (Vainikainen & Harju-Luukkainen, 2020).

Comparative education has started as a new discipline in education with the to learn and inspire from other systems and thus the term 'reference societies' have been created (Schriewer & Martinez 2004). According to Rautalin (2018) PISA gave rise to the 'reference societies and the term 'reference' is used for the countries like Finland that is popular of their achievements in international assessments. Reference societies have been essential to process the results in international tests and to legitimate the necessity of domestic reforms around the world (Sellar & Lingard, 2013). Finland has developed some practices using the results of the international assessments on national level (Seppänen et al., 2019). PISA is influencing policies and practices not only in Finland but also in other countries, but Finnish education system has been always in the core of the debate when it comes to PISA and attracting international educators to come and study in Finland (Rautalin, 2018). After the amazing achievement in PISA 2001, 2004, 2007 and, 2010 of Finnish students, OECD reported a remarkable fall in Finnish educational learning data in the 2013 PISA results. This sharp decrease in the PISA rankings and the inefficient explanations of the politicians for this outcome, the public started to believe there were already problems with the Finnish education for example teachers had been suffering from job stress (Rautalin, 2018). To sum up, as it can be seen from the reference articles the role of the PISA comes into being when its results are paid attention due to its ability to convince public. Thuswise the PISA results serve an important function in the assessment of Finnish education policies and to determine the new ones.

### 3.1.2 Finnish University Policy for International Programs

Finland has taken actions according to the international assessments results to internationalize the higher education institutions to engage international degree students and researchers from other countries (Renfors, 2019). Internationalization of the higher education helps graduates to have knowledge, abilities, and manners which they will need as professionals to contribute to the global societies (Leask & Carroll, 2011). According to Leask, internationalization is an old concept since the middle ages, but the shape and purpose of internationalization in higher education has changed drastically over the centuries.

The concept of global citizenship is the motivation behind the internationalization activities in university policy making not only in Finland but whole world because universities prepare all graduates to work and live in the global world by expanding their horizons beyond national concerns (Bourn, 2010). Finland is a nation as an exemplary model of the knowledge economy where education is used as a milestone to economic and social development (Sahlberg, 2007). According to Sahlberg, Finnish education policies are built feasible supervision, governed by widely welcomed values and common vision, rather than introducing sequential changes and improvements. International comparisons for student achievement have become one of the strongest benchmarks for education reform in Finland to analyse how well the Finnish education system perform worldwide and how well they have reputation in the world media (Chung, 2010). Renovations made in higher education policies in Finland confront Finnish education not only in terms of internationalization, but also from the national institutions perspective in a globalizing world (Saarinen, 2012).

Among the European countries, Finland has the second highest number of higher education programs in which the language of teaching is English (Wächter & Maiworm, 2008) because internationalization has been remaining on the agenda of Finnish higher education policy makers for the last three decades (Nokkala, 2007). According to Nokkala the internationalization actions in Finnish higher education institutions have taken up in 1980s. After 2000 the attention has mainly given on international degree programmes rather than exchange programmes (Saarinen, 2012). In 2009 a new internationalization strategy was published for Finnish university level and the main aim was to create internationally remarkable higher education institutions and research communities in Finland and to actively participate in solving global problems (Aarrevaara et al., 2009). Internationalization encourages diversity, networking, competition, and creativity in social and professional life (Ursin, 2019). The fundamental objectives of Finnish internationalization for higher institutions are to attract foreigner students and to contribute the internationalize Finnish society (Saarinen & Nikula, 2013).

## **3.2 *TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS***

### **3.2.1 HISTORY of TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS in FINLAND**

Policy makers have been giving increasing attention to how to help teacher educators more in the modern world to prepare student teachers learn to teach in practice (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Superior teacher education has been agreed as the underlying factor for the Finnish success in international assessment tests, but educational researchers in Finland focus also on the impacts of the historic, social, and cultural characteristics on outstanding schooling and high-quality teacher education (Niemi, 2012).

The starting date of teacher education for Finland can be recorded as the year 1852 at the University of Helsinki with the chair positioned firstly in the Faculty of Theology to be founded in all the Nordic countries (Kansanen, 2003). After that, a Lutheran minister named Uno Cygnaeus established the first teacher training college for all male and female primary school teachers in Jyväskylä-Finland in 1863 and created the school's curriculum influenced by Swiss and German educators (Tirri, 2014). Based on the principles of this very first school, other institutions for teacher education have established in Finland over time, with the very first applicants coming mostly from rural families (Niemi, 2012). As a result of the 1971 Teacher Education Act reform, teacher training colleges were reassigned to universities in 1974, and in 1979 a master's degree was defined as mandatory for secondary and primary school teachers (Tirri, 2014). According to Tirri (2014); Finnish youth have always had liking for being teachers and it is more difficult to be accepted to the education faculties than it is to be accepted to the other programs. In the 1980s, a fundamental reform aimed at adopting the idea of the municipal curriculum rather than the national curriculum updated the Finnish education system again, and the central adjudgment process of the 1970s shifted (Sivesind et al., 2016). In 1998, ethical principles which defines the values behind teachers' ethics for teachers were issued in Finland (Tirri, 2010). In the 21st century, graduates of teacher education programs in Finland are expected to be professional teachers who continue to thrive with the ideal of lifelong learning with research-based thinking skills (Jakhelln et al., 2019).

In 2011, The Department of Teacher Education at the University of Helsinki launched one-year of English-medium program which gives non-Finnish speaker students official teaching qualifications with the intention of attracting international students (Dervin & Hahl, 2015).

### 3.2.2 INTERNATIONAL TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS in FINLAND

As required by the Bologna Process, teaching in English in the European universities has gradually increased in 21st century to promote diversity within and outside of the Europe (Wächter & Maiworm, 2008). English-medium degree programmes are normally founded in the countries where English is not the official language and, The Finnish Ministry of Education has required teachers in 2009 to have language proficiency certificate in a foreign language to secure high-quality education for Finnish universities (Hahl et al., 2016). The language for the international research is English in the education departments in Finland and, the researchers are awaited to write academic articles for international journals.

The first subject teacher training program in English was launched in Finland for international students because the programs that grant general teaching qualifications for subject teachers were previously only available in Finnish and Swedish (Hahl & Löfström, 2016). To manage teaching in an English-medium teacher education programme in Finland requires teachers a substantial command of English because such programs have three characteristics; first, teaching student teachers how to teach (Loughran, 2006); secondly It requires careful collaboration between teachers from different countries to ensure that the objectives are aligned at program levels (Biggs, 2011); lastly, teachers should be able to lead classroom discussions as they will face spontaneous questions from students (Hahl et al., 2016). Moreover, according to Hahl (2016); the aim of the international teacher education programs is the student teachers considered as active contributors for their own learning by engaging in courses instead of playing just a student role because student teachers' language proficiency also helps to cope with the differences in teacher student polarity.

While the international education space has a short history in Finnish teacher education in regard to the other European countries, the concept of intercultural competences in teacher education has gained increasingly strength as a goal of multicultural education understanding in Finland (Dervin et al., 2012). In this regard, one of the main goals of this research is to bring to light the competences of the student teachers who pursue a degree in an English-medium program for teacher education in the context of Finnish education.

# 4 DATA AND METHODS

## 4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study investigates international student teachers' purposes and career goals that they set for life and that they update with the flow of life in time. The definition for purpose is used in this study as "a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and of consequence to the world beyond the self" (Damon et al., 2003) and career goals are evaluated based on Holland's theory (1973) for career goal orientation and possible career changes which may be triggered by life-stage development which is moving to a foreign country in the context of this study.

Research Question	Method	Instrument	Data Analysis
What kind of purposes do international student teachers who are studying teacher education master's degree in Tampere University have in life?	The study follows the mixed method research design. Data from the survey and the interview are triangulized to answer the first research question.	Survey and Interview	Deductive Content Analysis
What kind of purpose profiles can be found among international student teachers?	Qualitative content analysis had been applied to an open ended survey question to answer the second research question.	Survey	Deductive Content Analysis
What kind of individuality types (RIASEC) can be found among international student teachers?	Qualitative content analysis had been applied to the interview data by creating new clusters to answer the third research question.	Interview	Deductive Content Analysis
What are the effects of studying in Finland on international student teachers' career plans?	Qualitative content analysis had been applied to the interview questions to answer the last research question.	Interview	Inductive Content Analysis

**Figure 2 Research Design**

This study aims to gain insight into goals, purpose profiles, individuality types and career plans of students from international teacher education master's degree program in Tampere University. As it can be seen from the table four research question had been developed for this aim. Research had been conducted both inductively and deductively within the qualitative content analysis procedure evolved around the following research questions:

- What kind of purposes do international student teachers who are studying teacher education master's degree in Tampere University have in life?
- What kind of purpose profiles can be found among international student teachers?
- What kind of individuality types (RIASEC) can be found among international student teachers?
- What are the effects of studying in Finland on international student teachers' career plans?

## **4.2 METHODOLOGY**

The study is designed with a qualitative approach aiming to have an understanding on purpose and career devotedness of foreign student teachers within the effects of a Finnish teacher education master's degree. The degree program targets international teachers to have a critical understanding of worldwide perspectives for learning and education. Teachers who have completed the master's degree programme in teacher education will be aware of their importance in education while making well-grounded ethical choices as teachers, mentors, innovative educational practitioners, curriculum developers and activists of learning as it is stated at the university web page (Tampere University, 2019). The program does not give qualification to teach in Finnish schools.



The case study of international teacher education students at the Tampere University was chosen because there is no similar study conducted in the literature for the international student teachers in Finland. The study is underpinned by the methodological assumption that the participants have a sincere interest in taking part in the study and have no other motives such as getting a grade. There are no inclusion criteria determined other than studying in the international master's degree program for teacher education at Tampere University, while choosing the participants of the study. The data was collected through an electronic survey and interviews which are conducted through online meetings. The theoretical approach in this study is based on both inductive and deductive content analysis to link the hypotheses and summary findings derived from the data. The qualitative method was used for raw textual data to condense into a brief, summary format while analysing the data.

### **4.3 PARTICIPANTS**

The data had been obtained from 20 international student teachers in a highly selective teacher education graduate program in Tampere University, Finland. The program requires applicants to have.

- bachelor's degree in education which corresponds to at least 180 ECTS.
- evidence of the good command of English language for academic purposes. There are two options of demonstrating the English language proficiency: international English language tests or previous studies in which the teaching language is English.
- minimum one-year of official teaching experience.

(Tampere University, 2019).

Both 1st and 2nd year students with a mean age of 31 years (SD = 7.03, Median=29) were asked to answer a questionnaire in which the questions were mainly related to life purposes and to their personal details.

<b>Table1. Demography</b>			
<b>Total sample size n=20</b>			
<b>Gender</b>		<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
		<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Country</b>	<b>Turkey</b>	<b>2</b>	
	<b>Indonesia</b>	<b>2</b>	
	<b>Bangladesh</b>	<b>3</b>	
	<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>2</b>	
	<b>Taiwan</b>	<b>1</b>	
	<b>Vietnam</b>	<b>2</b>	
	<b>Korea</b>	<b>2</b>	
	<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>1</b>	
	<b>China</b>	<b>1</b>	
	<b>Canada</b>	<b>1</b>	
	<b>No Answer</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>Work</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>6</b>	
	<b>Part-time</b>	<b>3</b>	
	<b>Not working</b>	<b>11</b>	
<b>Religion</b>	<b>Christian</b>	<b>1</b>	
	<b>Islam</b>	<b>2</b>	
	<b>Hindu</b>	<b>4</b>	
	<b>Jewish</b>	<b>3</b>	
	<b>Spirituality</b>	<b>1</b>	
	<b>Not Religious</b>	<b>7</b>	
	<b>No Answer</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Parent's education</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>5</b>	
	<b>Bachelor's</b>	<b>8</b>	
	<b>Master's</b>	<b>4</b>	
	<b>PhD</b>	<b>1</b>	
	<b>No Answer</b>	<b>2</b>	

**Table 1 Demographic information for respondents of this study.**

According to their answers (see **Table 1**), there are student teachers coming from ten different countries of the world and the majority is female (n=18, 90%). Background information about the hometown, parents' education, religious opinion, and employment of the participants considering their effects on life purpose has been gathered. Some students declared that they need to work for the cover the expenses of their education (n = 9, 45%). A considerable amount of the participants indicated that they do not identify themselves with a religion or worldview (n=7, 35%).

10 out of 20 participants declared to be willing for an interview which deals with career goals and 5 participants are interviewed. Participants of the interview were all females with a mean age of 29 (Mode=28, SD=2.28). Two participants were from Indonesia, one from Turkey, one from Vietnam and one from Taiwan.

## 4.4 DATA GATHERING

### 4.4.1 Procedure

The study had been conducted in Tampere, Finland and it is part of a Finnish-Dutch research project "Civic purpose among higher education students". The data had been gathered in November and December 2020 through online surveys and interviews because of the pandemic conditions (see **Appendix 2. Information letter**). The answers were acquired from multiple choice and open-ended questions, covered several main areas, including finding a meaning in life, contributing to a better world and social and political involvement, career plans and goal orientation through life changing experiences. Participation in the study was voluntary and unrewarded. The participants were informed beforehand that the survey and interview concerned their purposes in life and career devotion. Volunteer

A more detailed explanation about the purpose of the study and Holland's tool for career search was given after each interview if the participants declared they are interested in learning more. Holland, in 1985, developed a self-scoring instrument for vocational interests, then in 1994 promoted self-directed search theory together with his colleagues (Holland, 1994).

The main purpose of this tool is to understand people's professional tendencies and by using them make logical suggestions to help people choose the right job that fits them and achieve professional satisfaction. Both participants who are changing their career paths and those who are devoted to a previously set plans were asked at the end of the interview whether they would like to perform Holland's self-assessment career tool or not.

#### 4.4.2 Instruments

The data in this study had been gathered within 6 instruments in two parts performed by an online survey and an online interview.

Firstly, the participants provided answers to an online survey which is designed to investigate how university students reflect their life purposes and their own role in the society and how they see the program they are studying support their holistic development. The survey has been delivered to the students via their registered school mails. Answering the survey questions took approximately 20 minutes. The answers provided by twenty international student teachers which are the participants of this thesis to two open ended survey questions that focus on purpose content and purpose orientation had been separated and evaluated according to the research questions of this study.

First research question is answered with the help of two instruments from the survey and interview which are respectively as the following.

- i. 'What do you think is your life purpose, or the closest thing you have to a life purpose?'
- ii. 'Do you see yourself purposeful? If so, what kind of purposes do you have in life?'

Second research question is answered by an instrument which focuses on the engagement in realization of their purpose in the survey.

- iii. 'Describe any plans or actions you are taking right now to actualize your purpose.'

Secondly, a semi-structured online interview protocol was conducted to find answers to the third and fourth research questions while also allowing for spontaneous topics to emerge. The interviews lasted about 1 hour on the Zoom platform. All interviews had been recorded with the verbal permission of the participants and are scheduled online and completed in a week. There were no technical difficulties during the interview and the answers had been transcribed by the author after all the meetings ended. The interview questions were designed to ask student teachers' reflections about the effects of Finnish culture and Finnish education on life purpose and career development of the student teachers. The interview questions grouped in 5 themes as background, social, educational, and professional life in Finland, societal concerns, career plans, and closure. Interview guide (see **Appendix 1. Interview guide**) had been developed according to the Holland's career theory (Holland, 1973 & Holland, 1997). Third research question is replied by the data gathered from the following question in the interview.

- iv. 'How do you spend your time mostly here in Tampere socially and professionally? Please define, taking into account both before and after the pandemic.'

Last research question is studied with the help of the answers supplied to two instruments from the interview.

- v. 'Have you changed/updated your career plans after your education in Tampere University?'
- vi. 'How has your professional knowledge changed after your study in Tampere University. In what way are you planning to benefit from these knowledges in your future professional role?'

#### **4.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

As a first stage of the research, the student teachers answered an online survey of which two measures were used in this study. In the second stage of the study, the interview data of the four questions had been chosen to answer research questions. The answers gathered from both survey and interviews were analysed

qualitatively according to the qualitative content analysis guidelines because it is commonly used in research that to mean rich verbal data in an objective and systematic procedure (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008).

Triangulation was applied to answer the first research question using the mixed method over two instruments. Triangulation represents a qualitative research strategy of using multiple methods and data sources for synthesis and integrated analysis of the research questions to gain broader understanding of the focused phenomenon (Patton, 1999). Answers provided to the question **i** (see section 4.3.2. Instruments) in the survey and the similar question **ii** asked in the interview had been tabularised in an excel folder. Life purposes of the participants of the interview were crosschecked with the written statements for their purposes in the survey. The words which are revealing the contents of the purposes had been identified in the sentences. Triangulation was chosen because it has the potential to enrich this study by analysing two questions asked for similar purposes at different times. It offers a variety of datasets to explain differing aspects of the answers gathered from both survey and interview. According to Patton (1999) there are four types of triangulation which are method, theory, data source and investigator triangulation. Method triangulation includes using multiple methods of data gathering for the same question (Triangulation, 2014). Hence, method source triangulation had been applied by focusing on the theory of the study as the first phase of data gathering through survey and the second phase involved interviews which concentrates upon the context of this research.

Both inductive and deductive approaches are used in this study. First research question had been supplied an answer with the help of the instruments **i** and **ii** which are analysed deductively with the help of Damon's theory (Damon et al., 2003). Contents of the life purposes among the international student teachers were assessed on a 10-item version of Kuusisto and Tirri's (2021) scale. The aim was to see what kind of content areas had been captured in international student teachers' life purposes and how these students incorporated professional goals into their life purposes. Kuusisto and Tirri (2021) also used seven categories of Robert and Robins' life goals questionnaire (Roberts & Robins, 2000) and created four categories inductively. For example, work was one of the categories in Kuusisto and Tirri's scale and the work goal items had been perceived in the sentences such as 'To be the best in early childhood education.' or 'Becoming a

leader in teaching.’ In this study. Seven categories which are *happiness, relationships, work, self-actualization, economic, religion, health* were utilised from Kuusisto and Tirri’s (2021) scale as a deductive framework. However, some of the students’ life purposes did not adopt the Kuusisto and Tirri’s categories and so, three additional categories as success, help and existence had been created inductively after captured many times from the answers of the students. A qualitative content analysis had been conducted for the written statements in two parts. The unit of analysis had been created by color-coding the words and phrases that pointing out a specific content category. Statements of the participants who participated also in the interview had been coded together and triangulated by checking how many keywords had occurred in both answers of the same student. In Example 1 of the student teacher 202007, three keywords had been caught in both survey data and interview data which has been gathered approximately three months later than the survey, so the answers were regarded as consistent. Thus, all individual words considered in the analysis (see **Table 2**).

Example1:

Survey answer of the student teacher 202007.

‘Live happily (**happiness-self**) according to my religious values as a Christian (**religion-self**). Achieve my dreams such as having a good job (**work-self**), stable financial standing (**economics-self**), etc.’

Interview answer of the same student teacher 202007.

‘Happiness (**happiness-self**) and religion (**religion-self**) is important. Not wasting time and having a meaningful life (**existential-self**) because my students helped me realize how good to be a teacher (**work-self**).’

Moreover, self-, and beyond-the-self orientations in the content categories had been analysed. For instance, ‘I love teaching and I have potential to influence next generation.’ is a statement of the student teacher 202006 and it has a strong beyond-the-self orientation which is directed to work. Therefore, the second unit of analysis was created for the purpose aspiration. Self-focus was assumed if any participant did not specifically express a beneficiary. **Table 3** had been

deductively clustered into an Excel table where content categories are involved as self, beyond-the-self, self- and beyond-the-self orientations.

Secondly, to define purpose profiles of international student teachers, a qualitative content analysis was conducted to answer second research question and to classify international student teachers in line with their degrees of determining a purpose, goal-directedness, and purpose orientation. The answers to the instrument i which is 'What do you think is your life purpose, or the closest thing you have to a life purpose?' and, iii which is 'Describe any plans or actions you are taking right now to actualize your purpose' were deductively decoded. To create purpose profiles among the international student teachers pursuing a master's degree in Tampere University, three dimensions had been searched wherein the answers according to the framework by Damon et al., (2003).

- Does the person have an intention for a purpose?
- Is the person actualizing this purpose?
- Does the person have a beyond the self-orientation?

Firstly, participants' answers to the instrument i regarding what their purpose in life had been listed. Answers that contain a clear understanding of a purpose and an intention named as group one. For example, 'I want to be an early childhood educator and work as a foreign teacher outside of my country.' is a purpose statement by the student teacher 202002. Secondly, group one's members' answers to the instrument iii regarding what kind of actions they are taking to accomplish their purpose had been checked. Whoever declared that they are taking concrete actions to accomplish a purpose, they had been added in group two. For example, 'I donate to charity projects on a regular basis.' is a way of actualizing a purpose in life by a student teacher 202017. Thirdly, participants' answer to the first instrument had been analysed again in terms of orientation. Whenever a beyond the self-orientation had been distinguished among the answers, they had been moved to group three. For example, 'I want to help children to get a good education.' is a statement which has a beyond-the-self orientation. Participant student teachers who belong to the group three, owns all



three dimensions of Damon's definition, and considered as purposeful. All participants are grouped according to Damon's purpose profiles (2003). Student teachers who are left in group one that contains answers with a purpose related idea, but taking no specific actions are named as dreamers. Student teachers in group two whose purpose related actions are changing frequently without a commitment are named as dabblers. Lastly, participants who belong to group one who express a purpose related which have a clear self-orientation are named as self-oriented life goal pursuers (see **Table 4** for all purpose profiles).

Third research question had been analysed by using the data gathered from the instrument **iv** from the interview. Each inquiry is distinctive, and depending on the background, skills, insights, and experiences of the participants, Holland's six personality categories (1997) had been assigned them by a deductive content analysis. To find answers to the third research question, interview data gathered by the questions asking participants' motives to come to Finland, actions taken after the opportunities they got in Finland, the messages they receive from significant people, reactions to different life experiences and knowledge they perceive in Tampere University relative to their professional development had been collected in an excel folder. Among the written statement, words such as working with people, solving problems, imagination, helping others, leading, organizing, public speaking, numbers, tools, machines, physical activities had been colour coded to be able to match Holland's career profiles. Finally, 6 clusters from Holland's career theory had been assigned to match participants' profile. Example 3 illustrates a unit of analysis related to career of which the keywords were *help, social, organize, lead, fun*; subcategory was *helper* and the main category from Holland's RIASEC (**Figure 1**) model is *social*.

Example 3: I was always social and into helping others since the childhood. I came here to learn different teaching approaches to organize similar activities later when I go back to my country to work. I had the opportunity to observe how teachers teach in Finland and how different is this than my way of teaching. [...] My goals had been strengthened in here. Having fun is important in classroom if teachers want to lead their students with kindness.

Ultimately, to answer the fourth research question, inductive content analysis had been conducted on the data gathered by the instruments **v** and **vi** from the interview. Participants were asked whether they strongly committed to a career plan or they have changed/updated their career goals after experiencing Finnish academic and social life. Data from the interview's topics were content analysed. The unit of analysis varied from words and phrases to whole paragraphs. One of the aims of this study is to identify, how experiencing Finnish education and lifestyle which has been gaining a lot of attention around the world, effected international teachers' professional and purposeful goals. First, each interview data regarding a career related experience in Finland had been listed in an Excel folder. Second, through a process of reflection, words and phrases were colour coded such as, *monotony*, *academic interests*, *better working conditions*, *expectations* etc. Then, the codes were clustered into five subcategories as autonomy, burnout, approval, role definition, knowledge. Then finally five participants were grouped in three main categories depending on the decisions on their career plans. The process necessitated various readings of the data even if the number of the participants is limited. Example 4 demonstrates a unit of analysis of which colour codes are, *expectations*, *new interests*, *academic research*, *new projects*. Broader subcategory is *autonomy*, and the main category is *career goals totally changed*.

Example 4: My expectations were not that high about Finnish education before, and I can say they were met in my master education in Tampere University. I do not want to go back to my hometown, and I do not want to teach anymore after graduation. I have new interests towards academic research, and I would like to pursue a new career in education related projects.

## 5 RESULTS

### 5.1 PURPOSEFULNESS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TEACHERS IN TAMPERE UNIVERSITY

#### 5.1.1 Contents of Purposes among International Student Teachers

First research question had been answered in **Table 2** which shows the content analysis of the written statements. N refers to the number of participants referred this significant content; n displays the number of participants mentioned the self or other focused reasoning to the content. Percentages also can be seen on the table.

Categories in the written statements	N	%	Self n	%	Other n	%
Happiness	8	40	3	15	5	25
Relationships	6	30	2	10	4	20
Work	9	45	7	35	2	10
Self-Actualization	6	30	3	15	3	15
Success	5	25	3	15	2	10
Help	3	15	0	0	3	15
Economic	2	10	1	5	1	5
Religion	1	5	1	5	0	0
Health	1	5	0	0	1	5
Existence	2	10	2	10	0	0

**Table 2. The contents of the International student teachers' aspirations according to the written statements.**

According to the first qualitative content analysis of this study, the most mentioned content categories of the student teachers were work-related and happiness. Health and religious influence were less frequently declared. The greater part of the variables correlated statistically significant with each other.

International student teachers who are the participants of this study referred happiness as becoming happy or having a good life and being happy together with the loved ones. Happiness was generally other oriented. Some of the participants declared that happiness is their decisive purpose that they are noticing via more presentative goals such as 'having a good job (Student teacher 202007) or more spiritual purposes such as 'living to make loved ones happy and proud' (Student teacher 202012). Happiness was also stated as a prerequisite for an ultimate goal such as 'be happy and raise happy and confident children' (Student teacher 202016). Work is occurred as the biggest category because almost half of the student teachers (n=9, 45%) placed work in their answers. Their profession was obviously at the core of their aspirations for life purpose for example, 'teaching gives my life purpose' (Student teacher 202006) or 'to be able to achieve what I set to fulfil my career ambitions' (Student teacher 202011). A considerable amount of the student teachers (n=6, 30%) mentioned self-actualization as the most important content by desiring to learn new things and to focusing on to make life meaningful and unique. In spite of the fact that self-actualization naturally related to oneself, participant student teachers of this study want to share their knowledge with their students, family, and other people: 'I want to become an independent and successful person who help and serve others in need' (Student teacher 202004). Content related to social goals such as help (n=3, 15%) were oriented other-self by a majority instead of towards-self. The international student teachers desire to help their students, all children of the world and take part in voluntary activities. Even though they do not express help in their aspirations, when their career plans after graduation are asked, regardless of the path, helping others in need was included in their plans. Among all the participants, six people (30%) declared that they want to continue teaching in their fields of subject after they graduate. Five of them (25%) wants to continue their academic study and pursue PhD. Only two of the participants (10%) are planning to work on education related projects for NGOs (non-governmental organizations). Lastly, the rest of the participants that are seven people (35%) are planning to work in a private company focusing on education in various fields. Relationships on the other hand was one of the most valued contents (n=6, 30%). Participants value family, close friendships and they consider being a good person in their relationships. In addition to meaning of the relationships to

themselves, the participants express a beyond-the-self orientation for example 'I live for my family' (Student teacher 202012).

Economic goals were emerged moderately important, but the written statements uncovered that international student teachers are not interested in chasing richness or wealth while they mostly concentrated on having consistent and acceptable quality of living. Interestingly, health was noticed in only one of the student teachers' answer while the responses reveal a balance between mental and physical well-being.

Triangulation that is performed to answer the first research question strengthened the feasibility and trustworthiness of the existing data gathered in the survey for the content categories. The answers gathered from the instrument asking the interviewees' purposes in life had supported their answers in the survey. Findings did not converge, so it cannot generate any new findings because the additional five answers had not changed the ranking of the most mentioned content categories in total. They have mentioned the same content categories in both answers. Hence consistency had been achieved. There were three content categories which are mentioned in the survey but not in the interview by the same participants but when It is double checked, it had come into view that they are the least mentioned ones in the **Table 2**.

This study involves 2 male participants (10%). Among the international student teachers, there is no content category statistically significantly more important for males than females or vice versa. Purpose contents for males are appeared as happiness and work which are the most generated content categories among all participants, so their answers are consistent with the average answer for the content analysis.

The content category of the oldest participant (age 45) of the study turned out to be help and, the content of youngest (age 25) participant's purpose showed up as happiness. Happiness is especially widespread among the youngest student teachers of the participants, aged 25–28.

The contents of the international student teacher' aspiration had been also analysed within the scope of self and beyond-the-self orientation. It can be seen from the **Table 3** that almost half of the participants (n=9, 45%) had expressed a self-orientation in their responses. A spot of the international student teacher (n=4) expressed only a beyond-the-self orientation which means that they focus

only on others regarding their life purposes for example ‘I live up to my family’s expectations’ (Student teacher 202012). On the other hand, they also show self-serving reasons for other-focused life purposes which means that even if people have other-focused purposes, their justifications show that they concentrated on benefits of helping others to themselves for example, ‘to become a successful person, so I will be able to help others who are in need’ (Student teacher 202004). Finally, those who identify both self and beyond-the-self orientation were also covering a wide range of the participants (n=7, 35%).

ORIENTATIONS	N=20	%
Self	n=9	45
Beyond-the-self	n=4	20
Self and beyond-the-self	n=7	35

**Table 3 Purpose Orientations**

#### 5.1.2 Purpose Profiles of International Student Teachers in Tampere University

The qualitative data gathered in survey and the interview which includes purpose aspirations, orientations, and actions taken to accomplish goals revealed purpose profiles for the participant student teachers of this study as an answer to the second research question. Triangulation had been applied by using two instruments in two different times to validate the answers for the purpose orientation which should be consistent over time by the theory. The orientations gathered in the interview data were not added to the **Table 3** and performed indirectly with the aim of keeping the number of purpose profiles consistent with the number of the participant student teachers. The merged data sets had only been examined on an individual basis to see a coordination in devotedness to a life purpose. As shown before, purpose has three dimensions as clear understanding of the purpose, to be able to work actively to actualize the purpose and to own beyond-the-self-dimension (Damon et al.,2003; Moran, 2009). Results pointed out how the participants pursue these three dimensions and supported four noticeable and meaningful profiles of youth purpose that are highly coherent with the theory (**Table 4**).

Group	Number of student teachers (n)	Percentages %	An example among the open answers
Self-oriented-life goal pursuers	2	10 %	Just focusing on daily goals and trying to be punctual in work.
Purposeful	10	50 %	I am writing projects to apply all I learn in Finland to my own country.
Dreamers	4	20 %	I want to graduate on time, and I will change my career path.
Dabblers	4	20 %	Getting high degrees at school, networking, learning from different sources and taking leadership positions.

**Table 4 Categorization of the student teachers depending on their answers to the actions they are taking to reach a purpose.**

*Self-oriented-life goal pursuers* are the ones who have a clear self-orientation on a goal they are pursuing in life. As we can see from the example sentence in **Table 4**, a student teacher is trying to be punctual then it means he or she is engaged and doing something for a purpose even if living the life in daily basis (n=2, 10%). Second group named as the *purposeful* who already found something meaningful and keep long term interests for a vision. The participant has a purpose to be devoted to and currently working on it. The numbers of the student teachers who are studying, working, and taking actions for a specific life purpose is high in number (n=10, 50%). Together with the new motions of the world in 21<sup>st</sup> century, student teachers are expected to internalize purposeful teaching and purposeful teaching is seen as a hassle but also an ethical goal for Finnish teachers (Kuusisto & Tirri, 2021). Hence having half of the international student teachers pursuing master's degree in Finland as purposeful has a great potential to advocate the purposeful teaching around the world. Thirdly, a group named as the *dreamers* consists of the teachers who have purpose related potential ideas, they would like to have but they have no practical plan (n=4, 20%). From the example sentence, the participants declared that there is a dream

to change a career, but no specific action is given to bring such imaginative designs into life realistically. Lastly, there are the dabblers performing activities that fit their potential purposes, but their interests are limited, and they change their plans frequently without committing themselves to focus on a specific goal as it can be seen from the example sentence (n=4, 20%).

## ***5.2 STUDYING AS AN INTERNATIONAL TEACHER IN FINLAND***

### **5.2.1 Individuality types (RIASEC) found among international student teachers.**

First to find answer to the third research question, the interviewees were asked to think about the messages they got from their parents, teachers, or any other significant adults when they were young. The motivation behind the question of encouraging them to think about the childhood advice is to help them to figure out whether they have a strong root from their childhood while they are shaping their career path. Majority of the participants stated that those messages were spiritual or related to the emotions such as religion, maturity, and love (n=3, 60%) while the others were given messages focusing on career and future (n=2, 40%). They are also asked when they look at back those messages and values, what they think about them now. Almost all the interviewees said that they appreciate those messages and even today they still give direction to their life according to those messages (n=4, 80%). Only one participant stated that the message that is got from parents is not important anymore because it is not enough to reach goals. Participants were also asked about their daily activities before and after pandemic and when and how they decided to become a teacher.

They have been asked to how they spend their time mostly in Finland socially and professionally to understand why this group of bright students decided to study a master's degree in Tampere for a career in teaching. Data have been gathered from their answers about what was the motivation behind this decision, how they benefit from Finnish culture and the activities they prefer to attend etc. Both before and after the pandemic times had been considered. Depending on the answers, they are assigned with one of the individuality types



that Holland developed with the interest based self-directed search theory. 2 out of 5 participants (40%) have been considered as helper and assigned *social* individual type according to Holland' personal career theory (**Figure 1 Hexagonal RIASEC MODEL of self-directive research (Holland, Powell & Fritzsche, 1997).**) People who have social type personality are good candidates for teaching and both two participants declared that they would like to continue teaching after graduation. One participant (20%) was regarded as investigative-thinker, one (20%) as realistic-doer and one (20%) artistic-thinker. They all had expressed in their answers that they do not prefer teaching anymore after graduation and they are planning to change their career path (**Table 5**).

Personal Career Theory	Motives to come Finland	Goals	Exxperience with the Finnish Education
<b>Helper-Social</b> Need no assistance to analyze the career plans.	To overcome monotony.	Will be back to hometown to teach there with Finnish insights.	Expectations were met. Career goal was not changed but strengthened.
<b>Investigative-Thinker</b> Need help to shape new goals.	To become best in the profession.	Will not teach anymore. Will go back to hometown. Plans to work in educational projects.	Expectations were met. Career goal was updated.
<b>Realistic-Doer</b> Need help to validate newplans.	Better social and professional life.	Will not teach anymore. Plans to work in educational companies in Finland.	Expectations were slightly met. Career goal was changed
<b>Artistic-Creator</b> Need no help.	Academic interests.	Will not teach anymore. Interested in new concepts. Looks for works in Finland.	Expectations were met. Career goal was changed
<b>Helper-Social</b> Need help to be sure.	Better Working Conditions.	Will continue teaching in Finland with a different age group.	Expectations were met. Career goal was not changed but improved.

**Table 5 Interview Results**

### 5.2.2 The effects of studying in Finland on foreign student teachers' career plans.

For the fourth research question, participants' answers gathered related to whether they have changed/updated their career plans and how their professional knowledge have affected within their new life experience in Tampere University (**Table 6**)

Category	Construct	Reason
Career goals totally changed	Autonomy	New opportunities to progress by developing new standards
	Burnout	Constant and repeated emotional pressure associated even after a life changing experience
Career goals remained same	Approval	Professional skills have been validated.
Career goals slightly updated	Role Definition	Work responsibilities have been defined more clearly
	Knowledge	Clear understanding of the rights and wrongs from the previous career overviewed

**Table 6 Effects of Finnish Culture and Education Experience on International Student Teachers' Career Plans**

Teachers who stated that they have changed their plans after their experience within a Finnish education, also pointed out that they do not want to continue teaching after graduation (n=3, 60%). The rest of the participants still devoted to the teaching profession and their career goals have not changed but strengthened in Finland (n=2, 40%). While two student teachers (40%) are planning to go back to their hometown to pursue their career goals, three of the interviewees (60%) stated that they would like to continue their lives in Finland. All participants stated that their expectations from Finnish education were met within Tampere University.

## 6 DISCUSSION

The central thesis of this paper was to obtain data of the goals, purpose profiles, individuality types and career plans of foreign student teachers in Finland. This article therefore set out to investigate first the purpose in life and purpose profile of the teachers, from all around the world, who currently studying for a teacher education master's degree in Tampere University. The results were alike the results found for American youth (Damon, 2008). If teachers develop a purpose as a virtue, they become more willing to help students and other people within their profession (Kynäslähti et al., 2006). According to Kynäslähti et al., (2006) content-based approaches to purpose allow teachers to experience morally fulfilling teaching and help them to determine their life purposes mostly in relation to work as it is also discovered in this study. In the content analysis, health and religious related purposes did not seem as important for international student teachers as happiness or work-related goals. In the demography questions, a considerable amount of the participants stated that they are not religious (n=7, %35). Hence having religion as one of the least mentioned content categories makes sense. This finding also coincides with the research where benefitting other people is linked to individual prosperity and career goals instead of spiritual life purposes (Manninen et al., 2018). Obtaining work as the most frequently mentioned content category, is meaningful for these teachers to leave their current jobs and come to Finland to further their profession because one of the main concerns of this study was to reveal any common point regarding career goals among the international student teachers.

Where after the content categories analysed, the purpose aspirations had been also analysed in terms of the indication of a self- or beyond-the-self orientation. International student teachers appear to cherish self-oriented goals the most: they want to enjoy life, to be happy, to feel connected with loved ones and, to have a satisfying career etc. The results also demonstrated that all contents were related to both orientations. In other words, while even happiness-

related goals can benefit others, those interested in helping and volunteering can also include self-centred motivations. Moreover, work was seen by the participants mainly as for their own benefit, and only a small fraction expressed a beyond-the-self orientation which is wanting to serve other people, society, or other noble purposes. However, it is in the nature of teaching to benefit others.

The future challenge for the education system in Finland is to promote the enhancement of the whole-person approach, which considers not only to emphasize students' cognitive and affective development, but also the student's ethical concerns such as emotional, behavioural, moral, and social development (Tirri & Kuusisto, 2013). Considering the results of this study, Finland International teacher education programs also need a whole-person approach that assists student teachers to think from self-orientation to beyond-the-self-orientation and develop their goals.

This study provides data in an area focuses on career plans and work perceptions which has been explored many times since Holland first developed the career theory in 1973. However, the unexplored part of this area was the international student teacher's perspective which is the main concern of this study. The insights gained in this study could be used to attract more teachers to experience studying in Finland. Even if the fact that two interviewees expressed, they decided to change their career plans because they would not be fulfilled anymore by teaching, their results showed that they still want to contribute to society by working in an education related job. Hence, the statements of the talented student teachers in this study make it clear that their skills and interests match the teaching profession.

The study also investigated the data to find personal career theory of the participants and two of the participants had been assigned as helper-social type of personality. According to Holland' career theory (1997) helper-social type people are good fits to be teachers and results of this study showed that these students are devoted to teaching and studying in Finland gave them fresh insights toward the profession. Regardless of the decisions to change career or their commitment to pre-determined plans, all participants were asked at the end of the interview whether they would like to perform Holland's career tool or not. Three interviewees reported their willingness to try the test to check, validate or shape their career plans. People's readiness for career decision is important

while using Holland's theory because it increases self-understanding while taking steps for career related purposes (Holland, 1994). Even if the number of the participants are limited in this study, it can be said that there is an equal distribution in the results about the Finnish education effect on the career goals. The results show that 2 out of 5 student teachers are changing their career plans entirely after studying in Finland and 3 out of 5 student teachers keep their plans but slightly updated. By taking into consideration the fact that all the five participants who were interviewed were purposeful teachers according to the survey results, they are not chosen to be interviewed by intention.

Although it was not intended, one interesting outcome emerged from the societal concern questions that ask interviewees their role as a citizen to their country and their role as a resident in Finland. Majority of the participants stated that they feel more responsible to Finland than their hometown because they feel easily accepted by the Finnish society and Finnish government supplied scholarships to support their goals (n=4, 80%). From this result, there might be a correlation behind the decision to study and live abroad and questioning the social responsibilities. A further study needs to be conducted to explore this question because all the interviewees stated that these two questions were the most difficult part of the interview. All in all, this was one of the main purposes of this study, lead them the way to reconsider their previous, current, and future steps about their life purposes and career goals.

One of the biggest challenges for researchers is striving for the highest credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability when conducting and reporting a qualitative research (Cope, 2014). To achieve these following methods had been used in this study. At the beginning of the research, the survey was sent to the participants by the head of the department only through registered university accounts, thus member checking technique in qualitative study is established for credibility. All interviews had been recorded on an online platform and the verbal consent of the participants was acquired for ethical transparency. The sample, participants, methods, and analysis of the study had been clearly detailed in the methods section so that they can be applied to other future studies in other contexts for transferability. To establish dependability, methods chapter had been written in explicit details by using the examples for content analysis so future researchers can follow and affiliate the decisions made in this thesis. Last

but not least, both in the text and in the tables, rich quotes from the participants had been exhibited in reporting to demonstrate confirmability.

The present research contributes to the literature within a new context of international perspective on a framework of life purposes and career goals of student teachers. The expectations for this study were that international student teachers could promote other-focused life goals and associate their justification with the teaching profession and acquire insights from studying in Finland for their future roles. The results satisfy the expectations with a limited amount of data. Same research questions are planned to be studied with more participants from different international teacher education programs in Finland as a follow up article. The willingness of the interviewees to test Holland's self-assessment tool (Holland, 1994) shows that there is a need for future research to explore whether the effect of Finnish education on more international student teachers is the same within different periods and contexts. Moreover, perception of purposeful teaching is also needed to be studied in other countries both for local and international teacher education programs.

This research is predominantly based on an online questionnaire and interview because of the covid-19 outbreak in 2020. Contact lessons, student club activities, travels outside of the country were not allowed in Finland during the year in which this study conducted. The effect of the psychological effect of the pandemic restrictions on student teachers' motivation to plan a purposeful future had been excluded in this study. More research needs to be conducted in this area to explore how their level of commitment on purposes and goals of the foreign students in Finland affected by the pandemic restrictions.

The major limitation of this study is that findings are based on a quite small sample and comprise of almost totally female participants. Teaching has long been a female dominated profession (Drudy, 2008) and males were underrepresented also in this study. Moreover, when studying international student teachers' purpose in life and career goals, it is important to avoid generalization because of the difficulties to estimating the willingness of the participants, the time they spend for answering and, their motivations to answer the survey and the interview questions. Generalization in qualitative research can be left to the readers (Payne & Williams, 2005) and excessive generalizing claims had been avoided in this research.

## 7 CONCLUSION

Finland has been considered as the best in education for many years according to the international surveys such as PISA (Sahlberg, 2011). Thanks to this success, Finnish education system has been attracting a worldwide attention by not only researchers but also by teachers all around the world and most of the studies associated this great success with the good quality Finnish teacher education programs (Itkonen & Jahnukainen, 2007). Teachers are expected to be purposeful in Finland and to be able to foster a sense of purpose in students' behaviour, competencies, beliefs, professional identity, and mission (Bundick & Tirri, 2014). How Finnish teacher education programs create difference as giving an opportunity for developing purpose in student teachers had been discovered many times in the literature (Kuusisto & Tirri, 2021) but there was a gap in the literature aiming to find out the life purposes and the effect of Finnish research-based teacher education on career goals of the foreign teachers who pursue a teacher education master's degree in Finland. All in all, this study had been carried out to understand the purposes of teachers from all over the world deciding to move to Finland to study a teacher education master's degree and to find out the level of commitment to their teaching career.

Two theories regarding purpose in life and career directedness had been used in this study. Purpose is a well-known term, but it requires a psychological perspective to recognize its meaning in the field of education (Koshy & Mariano, 2011). Purpose is a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something, and purpose has three dimensions as intention, engagement, and prosocial reasoning (Damon et al., 2003). People can be divided into four categories according to their purposefulness in life (Moran, 2009; Damon, 2008). Besides, choosing a career in life as important as figuring out one's life purposes. Hence, it is very important to have an inspiring education life where people can find career paths that fit their interests and talents. Holland suggested that all people have a personal career theory which is a collection of personal beliefs,

occupational knowledge and assumptions that guides individuals when choosing the fields of study or work (Holland, 1997). According to Holland (1997) people resemble one or combination of six individuality types which are investigative, realistic, artistic, social, enterprising and, conventional. In the context of the international teacher education program, this study aims to gain insight into goals, purpose profiles, individuality types and career plans of the teachers moved to study in Tampere University, Finland from all over the world.

The study is designed with a qualitative approach which is based on both inductive and deductive content analysis while analysing the data. 20 international student teachers in a highly selective teacher education graduate program in Tampere University, Finland had been participated. According to the results of this study, all participants have a purpose in life and the most common content categories for their purposes are related to either work or happiness. Additionally, the majority of the participants have a self-orientation which means that their purposes in life more focused on themselves. Moreover, when it comes to the purpose profiles, half of the participant turned out to be purposeful regarding their actions and orientations for a life purpose. On the other hand, four out of the six categories of the individuality types for choosing a career had been spotted for the international student teachers as social, investigative, realistic, and artistic where social type participants are willing to continuing to be teachers. Finally, the data focusing on the effect of studying in the Finnish education on international teachers' career plans revealed that teachers who changed career plans in Finland also pointed out that they would like to pursue a career related to education but not teaching and the ones who are devoted to the teaching profession have not changed their plans just strengthened in Finland.

As a result, the findings of this study have remarkable inferences in which there is a need for more research in international teacher education programs in Finland. It has been found in this paper that there are purposeful teachers from all over the world and they are taking life-changing actions for their career goals by getting inspired from purposeful education systems. Likewise, more teacher education programs around the world need to be studied to support teachers to have knowledge about purposeful teaching and career directedness in order to find meaning in their profession.



Life purposes and career goals of the experienced teachers who moved to Finland to study a master's degree in teacher education are extremely difficult to ignore. Their employment patterns in international schools or different sectors are important to be spotted as a follow-up study. Accordingly, when the steps to be taken in the future by policy makers in Finland considered, tracking the professional moves of these highly capable graduate student teachers would be an important source when formalizing international teacher education programs. Challenges of internationalization of Finnish teacher education also need to be studied in the future. The modern world's need for purposeful teachers for educating purposeful students, have renewed the interest in teacher education programs. Hence this study will be the starting point for generating fresh insight to the purposeful teachers from different parts the world.

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# APPENDIX 1. INTERVIEW GUIDE

## INTERVIEW THEMES ABOUT LIFE PURPOSES AND CAREER PLANS

Small talk.

Instruct about the survey and information letter for students.

Ask permission to record interview.

-Data will be processed anonymously. You can withdraw your consent at any time.

### **Background**

1-Tell me a little bit about yourself?

2-What were the important messages you got from your parents and teachers or other significant adults or peers when you were young? When you look at back those messages or values, what do you think about them now?

3-What contributed to your insights as a teacher? In what way? Who or what helped/inspired you?

### **Purpose in Life**

1-Do you see yourself purposeful? If so, what kind of purposes do you have in life?

-Have you ever thought about your purpose in life before you participated the survey?

-Have your purposes in life changed after your life in Finland? How?

-What factors generally influence you to determine life purposes?

2-Are you devoted to a career plan?

-Have you changed/updated your career plans after your education in Tampere University?

-If you are planning to change your career plans, do you need help to plan a new one?

(If yes, introduce Holland's career assessment tool.)

3-In the survey, for a lot of students having fun was an important goal. What does fun mean to you?

-How could education be more fun?

-Is it important to you to have fun at work?

### **Social, educational, and professional life in Finland**

1-What were the reasons that gave direction to your decision to move to Finland?

-How do you spend your time mostly here in Tampere socially and professionally? Please define, taking into account both before and after the pandemic.

2-In what way did you encounter the subjects of societal and professional responsibility within Tampere University? For example, themes such as sustainability, flipped classroom or lifelong learning.

-How has your professional knowledge changed after your study in Tampere University. In what way are you planning to benefit from these knowledges in your future professional role?

-What or who helped or inspired you the most here in Finland?

-How could Tampere University affect your education possibly more or differently?

3-What do you think about your future professional role?

-What kind of values matters to you the most in your plans after the graduation?

-Are you planning to live in Finland after graduation? If no, which country are you planning to move? Why?

### **Societal concerns**

3-How do you see your role as a citizen in your country?

4-How do you see your role as a resident in Finland?

**Closure**

- Are there any other important issues we have not discussed?
  - What did you think of the interview; what went well and what could be improved?
  - Do you have any questions yourself?
  - Would you like to be informed about the results of this research?
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# APPENDIX 2. INFORMATION LETTER

## **Information letter about the research: Civic purpose among higher education students**

### **Principal investigator**

Elina Kuusisto, Tampere University, Faculty of Education and Culture

### **Introduction**

The aim of this letter is to inform you about the research in order to make it possible for you to decide whether you will participate in the research. Prior to your possible participation in the research, you can contact principal investigator Elina Kuusisto ([elina.kuusisto@tuni.fi](mailto:elina.kuusisto@tuni.fi)).

### **Aim of the study.**

The aim of the study is to investigate Finnish and Dutch higher education students' purposes in life and societal engagement. The study enables enhancement of higher education to support better whole person development of the students. Participation can be interesting for you, because it makes you more aware of how you think about your life purposes and civic engagement and what you might do in this area. In addition, experience in completing scientific questionnaires can be helpful in developing your own questionnaires in future research subjects.

### **Your role in the research**

Participation in the study means that you fill out a questionnaire (25 minutes). We will later invite some students for an individual interview. At the end of the questionnaire, you will be asked if we can approach you for this interview.

### **Privacy protection**

Data will be used only for scientific research. Data will be anonymized, and anonymity of the participants will be protected in all phases of the study. Results that will be presented at lectures or in written reports will be based on all answers, and individuals are not traceable. Short quotations from the data will be shown to illustrate the results but these examples cannot be traced to a specific person.

The anonymized data will be stored in a secure environment and at password protected servers, in accordance with Finnish legal requirements. After the study, anonymized data will be archived at The Finnish Social Science Data Archive (FSD).

**Participation in the study is voluntary.**

You can - also later - decide not to participate in the study.

**Who can I contact if I have questions about the research?**

If you have questions about the research, you can contact the principal investigator, Elina Kuusisto ([elina.kuusisto@tuni.fi](mailto:elina.kuusisto@tuni.fi)).

**The research permission** has been granted by the Vice President of the Tampere University and the Vice President of the Tampere University of Applied Sciences in Finland, and by the Education chair group and the Executive Board of the University of Humanistic Studies in the Netherlands.