

Concerning the research question about hindering and supporting cultural aspects, several aspects were experienced as supportive such as cultural similarity (e.g., Western cultures, surname), local language proficiency and the ability to build up trust. The latter was enhanced by cultural knowledge and awareness and seems to correlate with similarity to Finns in name, appearance, and customs. On the other hand, having a foreign-sounding surname might be a hindrance when entering the Finnish labour market, as well as insufficient knowledge of the local official languages and professional customs. An educational background from the migrant's home country is usually not directly validated in Finland.

Cultural integration is a complex concept and we noticed that most mentors nor mentees have a full overview of its meaning and scope. All four areas of cultural competences (individual, professional, organisational, and societal) were seldom acknowledged and covered. Often there was a focus on one or two domains while they are all important and, when entering the labour market, especially the professional and organizational should be given adequate attention. As also Evans (2018) recommends (cf. Neuwirth and Wahl, 2017), it is an advantage if the mentor is working in the same professional field the mentee is aiming to enter. This will give an opportunity for the mentee to receive practical information about the professional culture and customs and enable learning of professional language.

According to Månsson and Delander (2017), there is no difference in goal attainment arising from the national origin of the mentor. However, in terms of cultural learning, it could be recommended that the mentor belongs to the local population and therefore knows the local culture. When, on the other hand, we also consider van Zyl's research results (2022), according to which a shared identity is important in terms of psychosocial support, a mentor with a migrant background who has lived in the country for a long time and is well integrated could be a good option.

Language is closely related to cultural skills, in the sense that a culturally competent person must be able to send and receive both verbal and nonverbal messages accurately and appropriately, between cultures (Sue, 2006 and 2017). Language was considered one of the most significant cultural aspects in the integration process, and the level of knowing the official language(s) appeared to be a great contributor to either facilitating or hindering successful integration into society and the labour market. Moreover, mentoring was seen by the mentees as a chance to practice Finnish and learn more about the local working culture. For this reason, mentors and mentees can be advised to use the local languages during their meeting as these are unique opportunities to learn and practice the language.

Mentoring proves to be an important tool for enhancing the cultural competences of mentors and mentees as it provides a framework in which both mentor and mentee are introduced to another culture. For cultural issues to be sufficiently considered in mentoring programmes, cultural issues should be included in the themes addressed in the mentoring training. Cultural issues, such as values, attitudes, or differences in organizational cultures, can be discussed, for example, in a joint training for mentor pairs. Consciously looking at the deeper layers of culture during the mentoring process could help to touch the similarities between the different cultures. After all, cultures have many similar and overlapping values and beliefs, but the way in which they are expressed can be very different (Hanel et al., 2018). Mentors and mentees must be aware that diving into the deeper levels of culture requires trust, so attention need to be paid to building up trust first. As Neuwirth and Wahl (2017) state, the formation of a relationship and the emergence of trust require time. The mentoring programme must be long and dense enough to enable this. For highly educated migrants, networking is especially important in terms of employment (Bagnoli et al., 2022), and it also takes time. In our study, the half-year program proved to be quite sufficient, as also reported in Bagnoli et al.'s study (2022).

Regarding the validity of findings, there are some limitations. In evaluation of validity in qualitative research, Whittemore et al. (2001) emphasize credibility and authenticity. Rather intensive engagement in multicultural mentoring-to-work, several researchers and more than one data

source make us believe that the results are an accurate interpretation of the participants' meaning. However, a significant number of mentors and mentees left the follow-up questionnaire unanswered. Many voices were not heard, which questions the authenticity of the findings. As our study indicates some special challenges in the health care sector, studies addressing multicultural mentoring in different professional fields would be of particular interest and need, as well as studies on practical mechanisms of bi-directional learning of cultural competences in mentoring relationships.

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