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Skilled Migrant Women: Evolving or Devolving Careers

A Study Exploring the Unfolding Career Experiences of Skilled Migrant Women

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Abstract

This research explores how the career experiences of skilled migrant women unfolds over the first ten years in their host country, New Zealand. Most scholars have classified ‘skilled’ migrants as people on the move, possessing tertiary or professional qualifications and/or professional experience at the time they leave their home countries to seek employment elsewhere (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011). Women comprise almost half of the skilled migrants approved permanent residency in New Zealand, and they bring with them skills, qualifications and experience that are highly advantageous to organisations in today’s competitive marketplace. However, their skills are often under-utilised, and while this has repercussions for the migrant women themselves, it can cost organisations substantially in lost productivity. Although some studies have explored the career experiences of skilled migrant women, relatively little is known about the complex interplay of factors that shape their career pathways, or how skilled migrant women utilise their agency in navigating their career in the host country. To address this gap, this study provides a deeper contextual understanding of the career experiences of skilled migrant women in New Zealand by exploring their experiences through the lens of contemporary migration and career theories.

This research is guided by the question: how do the career experiences of skilled migrant women unfold in their host country? There were two underlying research objectives: i) to provide more in-depth understanding and meaning to the life and career experiences of skilled migrant women, and ii) to contribute to existing migration and career theories by exploring the applicability of career and migration theories to the career experiences of skilled migrant women. This study adopts an interpretivist philosophical approach aligned with a constructionist stance which focuses on how the participant makes sense of their career, specifically on how they construct and experience their career in New Zealand (which is the

host country context of this study). A career life history approach is utilised as this is appropriate for an exploratory nature of this study, allowing participants to reconstruct events subjectively and meaningfully in their social and cultural context and in their own words. By embracing a holistic classification of career, this research takes into consideration the whole life perspective of the participants' careers.

The findings of this study were informed by 40 semi-structured life narrative interviews conducted with skilled migrant women in New Zealand. Thematic narrative analysis of the data was used to shed light on how skilled migrant women's experiences aligned with contemporary migration and contemporary career theoretical frameworks. The migration theoretical frameworks examined in the course of this study are the relational perspective (Syed, 2008), the integrated model (Tharmaseelan et al, 2010), the highly skilled migrant women's career development framework (van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012), the skilled migrant's qualification-matched employment model (Shirmohammadi et al, 2018), modes of engagement (Al Ariss, 2010), and theory of motivation to integrate (Cerdin et al., 2014). The three-phase career model (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005) and the kaleidoscope career model (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005) were the contemporary career theories examined. This study focuses on the evolving/devolving career experiences skilled migrant women have due to the major disruption of international career transition.

In contextualising the findings of this study, three theoretical contributions to the understanding of how skilled migrant women's careers unfold are made. The first contribution is to existing international migration literature. The second contribution this study makes is to career theories. The third, and critical, contribution this study makes is the nexus of international migration and career literature together. The careers of skilled migrant women are under-

explored and under-theorised in both these literatures. In addition, by adopting an exploratory life history approach and utilising a lifeline perspective, which anchored critical events, enabling participants to reconstruct experiences subjectively and meaningfully in their own words, this study makes a key methodological contribution. This study adds to the body of knowledge on skilled migrant women, both as a group and as individuals, which may be of strategic benefit to organisations thus making a practical contribution.

This study does have some limitations, and further research could mitigate some of these. First, the study was undertaken in New Zealand. A comparative study undertaken in other countries would be informative and beneficial. Secondly, a more diverse and representative sample would be favourable. Thirdly, a more diverse representation of participants in terms of the LGBT+ community and the additional challenges they may face would make this study more inclusive. Finally, potentially a quantitative study could be applied to approach a broader research scenario.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents.

Harbhamji Viraji Odedra. I don't remember a single day that went by when you missed getting the daily newspaper, always starting at the back page, reading every single word. Your passion and thirst for knowledge, your love of reading, and always making us question our world view was your legacy to us. I miss the days when I came home from school at lunchtime, and we would talk and eat the rice you made for us. Just you and me, sharing the mysteries of life. You gave me the freedom to grow and become the person I am today. I miss you every single day.

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I love you both.

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Publications

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Refereed conference presentations

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Chapter One – Introduction

'You get a strange feeling when you're about to leave a place, like you'll not miss the people you love but you'll miss the person you are now at this time and this place, because you'll never be this way again.'

Azar Nafisi

1 Introduction

This study explores how the career experiences of skilled migrant women unfold in New Zealand. Drawing on data from the interviews of 40 skilled women who migrated to New Zealand, this study seeks to gain a nuanced and in-depth understanding of their career experiences. This chapter provides an overview of this research. First, the research background is discussed, alongside a justification for the study. Next, the context and importance of the study is presented. This is followed by the research focus and research design, where the research objectives, overarching question and philosophical considerations and research methodology are briefly introduced. The structure of the thesis follows. Finally, the original contributions this research aims to present are discussed.

1.1 Research Background

International migration, the movement of people across international borders, has become both a global phenomenon and a global challenge for the 21st century (Habti & Elo, 2019; Kuzior et al., 2020; OECD, 2022; Ressler et al., 2017). It has become an established feature of contemporary, social, and economic life in all parts of the world (Anderson, 2016; Crowley-Henry et al., 2018). Despite a record decline in international migration from 2020 due to the COVID-19 crisis, permanent migration flows increased in 2021 and this trend has continued into 2022 (OECD, 2022). The number of international migrants throughout the world reached 281 million in 2020 (3.6% of the world's population), with women making up almost half this number (Migration Data Portal, 2021; United Nations, 2020). The desire for a better life is potentially the biggest motivation for migration (Alberti et al., 2013; Carling & Collins, 2018; Dean & Manzoni, 2012; Marotzke et al., 2020; Vaughan-Williams & Pisani, 2020). Often this is an escape from poverty, an oppressive society, or natural disaster, or the opportunity to live and work in a country where there is better personal safety (Gontijo & Lana, 2020; Kline, 2003; Nshimbi, 2020; Sunam & McCarthy, 2016). For skilled migrants, it is for better economic prospects, higher education,

and research opportunities that they decide to migrate (Ghosh, 2009; Syed et al., 2008; Sardana et al., 2016). However, whether these perceived opportunities become a reality post-migration is uncertain.

With more people moving between developed countries, amongst developing countries as well as from developing countries to developed countries (Kline, 2003; Li & Heath, 2017; Pagano, 2018), flows of migration are now multidirectional (Ewers et al., 2022). Both developed and developing countries are now impacted by brain drain and brain gain – when the net flow of skills is weighted either out of or into the country, respectively (Mahroum, 2000; Siekierski et al., 2018). With increasing expansion of international trade and globalisation of production in developing countries (Al Ariss & Özbilgin, 2010;; Raghuram, 2004 Skelton, 2020;), skill shortages, aging populations and decreasing fertility (Al Ariss et al., 2012; Bahn, 2015; Burgelt et al., 2008; van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012), skilled migrants are a source of competitive advantage for countries and organisations, especially international firms (Agullo & Egawa, 2009; Cerdin et al., 2014; Crowley-Henry & Al Ariss, 2016; Ressia et al., 2016; Waxin, et al., 2021; Zikic, 2015). A growing number of countries are contending for skilled migrants, investing substantial resources into attracting migrants to facilitate economic growth, and to offset aging populations and escalating emigration (Burgelt et al., 2008; Fernando & Cohen, 2016; Phan et al., 2015). Skilled migrants not only have qualifications and experience but bring with them international knowledge and rich cultural diversity (Farashah & Blomquist, 2021; Ressia et al., 2017). Further, while skilled migrants may have similar qualifications to assigned expatriates (employees who are sponsored by large multi-national companies and assigned to foreign locations), skilled migrants typically cost organisations less as they are employed on a local contract (Cerdin et al., 2014; Cerdin & Selmer, 2014).

However skilled migrants face numerous barriers finding jobs that match their qualifications and skills in their host country, and this means that for that country, any brain gain

is minimal (Al Ariss & Özbilgin, 2010; Cameron et al., 2019; Crowley-Henry & Al Ariss, 2018; Rajendra et al., 2017). For skilled migrant women, these barriers are even more intense and detrimental (Hardy, 2010; Kofman & Raghuram, 2010; Ricci et al., 2021), and include difficulty accessing the host country labour market, credential recognition, underemployment and lower wages (Elitok & Nawyn, 2023; Enriquez & Triandafyllidou, 2016).

Researchers have identified that skilled migrant women and their professional experiences have largely gone unnoticed (Aure, 2013; Berry & Bell, 2012; Khattab et al., 2020; Kofman, 2018; Kubiciel-Lodzińska & Maj, 2021; Phan et al., 2015; Purkayastha & Bircan, 2023; Ressia, 2014; Riaño, 2021; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2019). When migrant women have been considered, it has usually been as a dependent of a principal migrant spouse, or as an unskilled low-wage service worker (Beoku-Betts, 2008; Cliff et al., 2015; Dumont et al., 2007; Ghosh, 2009; González-Ferrer, 2011; Shirmohammadi et al., 2019; Syed, 2015). The statistics show not just the numbers, but also the costs of under-utilization of skilled migrant women (Ali et al., 2017; Ressia et al., 2017). For instance, in Canada alone, the cost was estimated to be \$7.44 billion Canadian dollars in 2006 (Reitz et al., 2014). This brain waste, where highly qualified and skilled migrant women are working below their potential, also has negative consequences in terms of self-esteem, confidence, and their own sense of identity (Campbell & Burgess, 2018; Lehtovaara & Jyrkinen, 2021; van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012; Zikic et al., 2010).

1.2 Importance of the Study: New Zealand as a Host Country

New Zealand is a small country, and migrants comprise a large portion of the overall population and are constantly the focus of policy and media attention (Meares et al., 2010). New Zealand's migration policies focus heavily on skills, and this is only increasing as the need for skilled people in specific labour industries is identified. Auckland is home to approximately 1.5 million people (out of a total New Zealand population of 5 million), with approximately 41% of

Auckland residents born overseas (New Zealand Census, 2018). This makes Auckland the world's fourth most cosmopolitan city (after Dubai, Brussels, and Toronto).

This research was conducted pre-COVID-19. The net gain in migrants in New Zealand in a 12-month period (2019/2020) was 73,238 (Statistics NZ, 2022). This figure dropped to -20,291 due to COVID-19 related border and travel restrictions by the month of June 2021, however picked up by June 2022 to -6890 (Statistics NZ, 2022). The number of applicants who had permanent resident visas approved peaked in 2016/2017 in New Zealand with 47,684 approvals, falling to 30,063 for 2019/2020, before increasing to 40,211 the following year 2020/2021 (Immigration NZ, 2023). However, with the introduction of the one-off residence pathway in September 2021 by the Labour Government, there was a significant increase in permanent resident visas approved in the periods of 2021/2022 (83,199) and 2022/2023 (83,228).

The skilled migrant resident visa category contributed to 49% of all resident visa approvals in 2016/2017, however significantly dropped to 35% in 2020/21 period. Taking into consideration the one-off residency pathway permanent resident visas granted in 2021/2022 and 2022/2023, the percentage of permanent resident visas granted in the skilled migrant resident visa category dropped to 10% and 3% respectively (Immigration NZ, 2023). The top source countries for skilled migrants to New Zealand in 2020 were India, the United Kingdom, and South Africa. In 2021, it was India, followed by China and Sri Lanka.

1.3 Scope of Research

One way in which researchers and practitioners alike can better understand migrant women's career experiences, is to view them through existing migration and career theories. Migration theories allow a deeper and more nuanced understanding of skilled migrants' lived experiences, while career theories attempt to explain how careers unfold. Unfortunately, there is still a paucity of migration research giving skilled migrant women a voice and opportunity to tell their stories (Kubiciel-Lodzińska & Maj, 2021; Phan et al., 2015; Purkayastha & Bircan, 2023;

Riaño, 2021; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2019; Ruysen & Salomone, 2015). Further, most career theories have been developed and applied largely to Western males (Makaren & Wang, 2020; McMahon & Patton, 2018; Yao et al., 2020). Career experiences of women are considered complex, multi-directional and multi-dimensional (Mainiero & Gibson, 2018; O’Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008) and this resounds even more for skilled migrant women (Colakoglu et al., 2018; Grimaldi et al., 2022; Riaño & Baghdadi, 2007). While researchers have attempted to apply and develop career theories that better reflect the career experiences of women (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; O’Neil & Bilimoria, 2005), the applicability of these contemporary career theories to skilled migrant women’s career experiences is unknown.

The feminisation of migration flows into New Zealand is not well documented, with little known about the factors driving gendered migration to this country (Badkar et al., 2007). Taking into consideration the rapid increase in migration into New Zealand pre-Covid, and the lack of understanding around the career experiences of skilled migrant women, this study is both timely and valuable for both the New Zealand Government and organisations requiring these skilled workers.

1.4 Research Focus

The purpose of this study is to explore how skilled migrant women’s career experiences unfold and evolve after they move to their host country through the theoretical lenses of contemporary migration and career theories. The objectives of this study are:

- ❖ To provide more in-depth understanding and meaning to the life and career experiences of skilled migrant women.
- ❖ To contribute to existing migration and career theories by exploring the applicability of career and migration theories to the career experiences of skilled migrant women.

To address these objectives, the over-arching research question that this study addresses is:

- ❖ How do the career experiences of skilled migrant women unfold in their host country?

To facilitate the above objectives, an extensive literature review was conducted of migration and career theories before progressing to the research design. This was a broad and exploratory study, highlighted by the all-encompassing research question.

1.5 Motivation for the Research

My mum migrated to the United Kingdom on the 17th of December 1975 with 50 pence in her left pocket and an 18-month baby on her right hip. It had snowed earlier in the week. My father had migrated to the United Kingdom a year earlier, but he hadn't told her that it would be so cold, and she arrived wearing a sari and sandals. She spoke no English. Twenty-five years later, that baby on her hip (me) migrated to New Zealand. When I came to New Zealand, I had an English University education, plus several years of banking experience behind me. There was a vast difference between my mum's experiences migrating to the United Kingdom and mine to New Zealand. But there were also some similarities.

As a child, I remember my mum going to work in the morning in a sari and sandals, irrespective of whether it was summer or winter. She would drop my brother and I at the childminders and then pick us up in the evening. It would be dark when she dropped us off, and dark when she picked us up. My father worked long hours too, leaving before we woke up and coming home after we had gone to bed. Once we were old enough to go to school, mum went to the local college, enrolling in several courses including English and food technology. She is very intelligent, and soon was able to read, write and speak fluent English. But she could only get low-skilled factory work. We lived in an area where there were only two other South Asian families. Over the years, she had a number of factory jobs until we moved to London. When my father and his brother bought a local dairy (called newsagents in the United Kingdom), my mum ran it for them while they both worked full time. She loved that, meeting people, and talking about day-to-day trivial things. This was a very typical scenario amongst migrant Indians, where the women would run the day-to-day retail business and the men worked full time. Soon mum was selling

samosa and other Indian snacks. Two years later the shop was sold, and we moved to Surrey and mum went back to factory work. Sometimes my parents would leave home at 5am and come back at 1am. Despite being only 11 years old, I would look after my younger brothers. We didn't think it was a difficult life, we didn't know any better. Everyone we knew had similar lives. All of our parents' friends worked in factories, they all had a shared culture and language. My mum was 43 years old when my father passed away, leaving her to bring up three children on her own.

When I migrated to New Zealand, I was several years older than my mum when she had migrated to the United Kingdom. I started working two weeks later for one of the banks. It wasn't on par with my role in the bank in the United Kingdom, but at the time I thought it was a foot in the door. Within the first three years, I had four 'promotions'. However, two of the roles were sideways movements and I still was working in a role far lower than back home. I thought it would be easy to rebuild my career in New Zealand, but I was proved wrong. I thought New Zealand wasn't racist. In the United Kingdom, it was common to hear 'Paki' hurled at you walking down the street, or told you smelled of curry at work. Again, it wasn't long before I was proved wrong there too. In my second week in the bank, I heard a senior manager loudly complain about one of his business managers as a 'lazy fat Samoan'. That 'lazy fat Samoan' had won a sales award only a few months earlier. Later on, one of my roles was in private banking, and clients were lovely on the phone. However, when they would come to meet me, the surprise on their faces was difficult to hide. My accent and the colour of my skin didn't match.

When my son was born, I was told that I would not be able to go back to my role unless I went back full-time. I was in my early career stage, and a single parent. Fortunately, my mum had moved to New Zealand to help me look after my son, so I was able to work four days a week. However, I still regressed in my career, having been forced to step back from my personal banker role to a teller role. Management would not let me work part-time in a banker role. It was only when a native New Zealand colleague, in the same situation as me, was allowed to work as a part-

time banker, that I too was able to start to re-build my career in banking. Several years later (in my mid-career stage), I decided to pivot my career and move to Human Resource Management, after completing my Masters in Management.

When my son was old enough to go to school, my mum wanted to return to work. She had worked in a supermarket (Countdown) after moving to New Zealand for a number of years but gave up the job to look after my son. She was in her late fifties by this stage and struggled to find any work at all. So, she started selling samosa in the local farmer's market. A few years later, she added hot sauces, pickles and finally curry pastes to her range of products for sale at the markets. Her extended family members thought it was embarrassing and lowly to be selling at a farmer's market. They don't think that now. Fourteen years later, my mum's curry paste range, Sobhna's, can be found in the largest supermarket retailer in New Zealand, Countdown. Yes, the very supermarket she used to work for all those years ago, and where she was unable to find any work later on.

My motivation for this study is my mum and so many women like her and like me. So many skilled migrant women struggle with their confidence, self-esteem, and talent in the host country. Their qualifications, experience and skill sets are diminished during the transition from their home country to their host country. But not all of them give up. It is important to understand what barriers they face and how they overcome them so that going forward, skilled migrant women can be prepared to face these barriers. It is important for countries and organisations to know what skilled migrant women's experiences are, so that they can put into place policies and interventions to ensure that the talent and skills skilled migrant women bring with them are nurtured, fostered, and valued.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis contains six chapters. Together they provide an outline of this thesis and a map of the research journey. The current chapter serves as background and justification for this study,

with an overview of the research question and objectives. The importance of this study is highlighted, and the context of the study is also provided. The second chapter serves as a synthesis of the migration research on the life and career experiences of skilled migrants in their home and host country, as well as their motivations to migrate. Providing an in-depth understanding of migration and post-migration career experiences that skilled migrant women undergo, this chapter highlights key themes that run through this study. An integrated conceptual framework of the seminal migration theories utilised in this study is developed to highlight the lack of any one cohesive framework to understand skilled migrant women's experiences as they attempt to rebuild their lives and careers in the host country. Chapter two also reviews traditional and contemporary career theories before moving on to critically analyse the career theories applied to the career experiences of skilled migrant women to unpack their narratives in this study. The literature review from Chapter Two and the highlighted gaps in knowledge, form the basis of the research design and framework which are explained in Chapter Three. The interview questions of this study are examined along with the data collecting process and participants selection. Additionally, Chapter Three discusses the philosophical stance taken in this study along with reasons for selecting the chosen methodology. Finally in this chapter, the ethical considerations are discussed. The following two chapters focus on findings and analyses.

Chapter Four addresses the first research objective, presenting the life stories of the participants to gain a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of how their careers unfold in the host country, including challenges they have identified in settling into their new environment. Chapter Five addresses the second research objective, by applying participants' career narratives to contemporary career theories utilised in this study, specifically the three-phase model of women's careers (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005) and the kaleidoscope career model (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). Lastly, Chapter Six concludes with an overall discussion of the findings,

implications, and contributions to theory, practice, and policy. Limitations of the research, methodology and findings are presented, along with directions for future research.

Chapter Two – Literature Review

Feminisation of Migration: Women on the Move

'Feminism isn't about making women stronger, women are already strong, it's about changing the way the world perceives that strength.'

G D Anderson

2 Introduction

This chapter explores the extant literature conceptualising the life and career experiences of skilled migrant women in order to understand how their careers unfold in the host country. Drawing on a broad range of research and literature across multiple disciplines including management, sociology, human resource management, geography/population, the aim of this study is to cultivate a comprehensive understanding of the theory and research on the career experiences of skilled migrant women. The following literature review includes studies exploring the experiences of self-initiated expatriates as well as migrants and skilled migrants. The reasons for this are firstly, the overlap between the definitions of the above constructs, secondly, the common experiences found in extant literature for each of these groups and finally, the paucity of literature exploring the unfolding nature of career experiences of skilled migrant women in their host country.

This chapter is split into two parts. Part One starts with a broader picture of the literature on skilled migration before moving on to focus on the skilled migration of women and their motivation to migrate, integration into the host country and finally their experiences of the host country labour market. Part Two of this chapter covers the migrant and career frameworks utilised in this study and why those have been selected.

Part One: Feminisation of Migration

2.1 Migration

With increasing numbers of globalised and international businesses, there is an increased need for global talent, and governments are facilitating movements across borders to increase the inflows of skilled labour (Al Ariss et al., 2018). Governments in developed countries are increasingly relying on skilled and talented migrant workers to fill essential skills gaps, arguing

that skilled migration has numerous positive implications for the economy (Ho, 2006; Rajendran et al., 2020, Sardana et al., 2016). Migration is filtered and regulated via an economic benchmark. The major pathway for migrants to enter countries such as New Zealand, Australia, and the USA, is via skilled migration programs (Howe, et al., 2019; Ressler et al., 2016). Each year the government adjusts the specific industries and skills that are awarded points to address the labour market requirements. The aim is to fill the skills shortages in the labour market as well as curb the impact of an increasing ageing population (Ambrosetti, 2022; Phan et al., 2015). Organisations and businesses in the host country benefit from the human capital that skilled migrants bring in, but only when it is fully utilised (Tan & Cebulla, 2022).

However, visa processes and social security regulations are usually the extent of government involvement (Remennick, 2003). Skilled migrants are advised to become acquainted with their host country's culture, with local governments providing courses to aid integration into the community. Skill accreditation, training, upskilling, and finding a job are matters left to the skilled migrants' own resources. Employers are not incentivised to employ skilled migrants, despite research finding that hiring skilled migrants has numerous potential benefits for organisations in terms of cost, speed to deployment and performance (McKenna & Richardson, 2007; Reitz, 2023).

The labour market in developed countries is becoming progressively competitive, not only with the influx of highly skilled migrants but also with the growing number of native-born specialists. Some scholars depict career-focused skilled individuals as purposeful, motivated, and valuable workers with boundaryless career choices (Carr et al., 2005; Habti & Elo, 2019; Zikic et al., 2010), keen to gain international experiences (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Dickmann & Baruch, 2011; Doherty & Dickmann, 2009). In contrast, other scholars argue that migration can negatively impact career-focused individuals' professions through underutilisation of their skills (Reid, 2012; Tan & Cebulla, 2023), directly impacting cultural adjustment and assimilation

(Huber, Landesmann et al., 2010; Mattoo et al., 2008) and destabilising their careers (Carr et al, 2005; Cooke et al., 2013; Peixoto, 2001). The experience of skilled migrants is often marked by precarious employment contracts, vulnerability in terms of stability, career progression, and wage parity, leaving them open to abuse, exploitation, and poor assimilation (Könönen, 2019; Zhan & Zhou, 2020). Skilled migrants face unique challenges, and their employment opportunities differ from those of native-born counterparts, often experiencing downward career mobility (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; O'Dywer & Colic-Peisker, 2016; Taylor, 2019; Zorlu, 2016). The assimilation of skilled migrants into the host country's culture is emphasised, but the responsibility for achieving this integration is placed squarely on the migrants themselves, without significant support or incentives from the government or employers.

In summary, the increasing reliance on skilled migration to address labour market needs in developed countries raises concerns about the treatment, utilisation, and support provided to skilled migrants. While the rhetoric may emphasise the benefits of their migration, the reality for many skilled migrants is marked by challenges, vulnerabilities, and limited career opportunities compared to their native-born counterparts.

2.1.1 Skilled Migration

Self-initiated skilled migrants with high levels of education and work experience not only fill important industry demands for a skilled labour force, but they also contribute more to taxes and social contributions than they receive in benefits (Boucher & Cerna, 2014). They arrive with skills that contribute to the human capital development of receiving countries (Cerdin et al., 2014; Lulle et al., 2021). They also provide a potential alternative to costly assigned expatriates (Biemann & Andresen, 2009), with no logistical costs involved. Likewise, skilled professional migrants would be more likely to accept lower paid roles compared to assigned expatriates since they have migrated with no job security and are typically in a more precarious financial position.

Andresen et al., (2014) defined an assigned expatriate (AE) as “an employee who is sent abroad by his/her company, usually receiving an expatriate contract” (p. 2295).

Skilled migration can significantly increase gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in the host country through an increase in labour productivity (Jaumotte et al., 2016; Skelton, 2020). Increases in human capital can boost the likelihood of entrepreneurship and innovation (Szarucki et al., 2016). An increasing number of studies have also found that with increased productivity attributable to skilled migrants, new jobs can be created for native-born workers (Kerr et al., 2017). Skilled migrants are not only reported to be highly committed employees, but they also bring diverse and international thinking and understanding. Regional proliferations of highly skilled migrants can “produce localised knowledge spill overs, positive externalities, and significant local multipliers generating additional boosts in regional economic vitality” (Wright et al., 2017, p.186).

The purported economic benefits of highly skilled migrants for the host country, as established by findings from the OECD (2014), are often overemphasised and require a more critical examination. While it is argued that skilled migrants can contribute significantly to national and regional development, such benefits hinge on their ability to find jobs that align with their skills (Abbas et al., 2018; Wright et al., 2017). New Zealand is no exception to the global trend, relying on managed labour migration and formal skilled migrant policies to address skill shortages. These policies, in theory, impose various requirements on skilled migrants, including qualifications, work experience, language proficiency, age, health, and criminal checks before granting permanent residency. However, the reality is far from ideal, as a majority of skilled migrants in New Zealand end up in lower skilled or mismatched jobs despite fulfilling these requirements (Ressia et al., 2017; van Tonder & Soontiens, 2014). It is important to note that New Zealand has a smaller economy, and thus career opportunities for senior professionals are fewer than those found in larger economies.

The challenges faced by New Zealand, and other countries alike, in creating appropriate immigration policies have intensified due to the increasing allure of their clean green image, lifestyle, and career opportunities. The drive to attract skilled migrants becomes counterproductive when they encounter significant difficulties in finding work commensurate with their qualifications and skills. The pursuit of skilled migrants to bridge the skills gaps in their host countries appears paradoxical in the face of such issues (Bauder, 2014; Risberg & Romani, 2021; Syed, 2008). Moreover, the notion that attracting skilled migrants will lead to enhanced social capital and economic growth requires a critical rethink. The reality is that many of these highly skilled individuals are not adequately utilised in their host countries, leading to missed opportunities for both the skilled migrants and the economies relying on them.

In conclusion, the idea that skilled migrants are an unequivocal boon to the host country economic and social development needs to be reevaluated. The existing challenges of mismatched job placements and underutilisation of skills should prompt policymakers to adopt a more cautious approach when formulating immigration policies based solely on attracting highly skilled individuals.

2.1.2 Defining a Skilled Migrant

The United Nations defines international migrants as people who are either living in a country other than their birth country or in a country other than their country of citizenship (United Nations International Migration Report, 2019, p.3), while a migrant worker is defined as a “person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a state of which he or she is not a national” (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2003, p.25).

Currently there is a lack of consensus as to what constitutes a ‘skilled’ migrant between countries and scholars. Governments tend to close their skill gaps through a variety of work visas and programs to attract qualified individuals from other countries (Boucher, 2020; Weinar & Von

Koppenfels, 2020; Wright, 2014). New Zealand immigration not only has the skilled migrant residency category visa but also other visas including the specific purpose work, essential skills, working holiday, post-study work, talent work, entrepreneur, and partner visas (for both student and work visas). They base their skilled migrant residency category visa entry criteria on the skills, qualifications, and work experiences that New Zealand needs. The USA have more complex criteria, with some professions requiring either 10 years of work experience or a Master's degree or PhD. For some industry sectors such as technology, however, requirement of a tertiary qualification is often waived as more importance is placed on experience by the receiving country (Boucher, 2020). This means that as the skill shortages change, so does the definition of skills (Boucher, 2020; Boucher & Cerna, 2014).

Most scholars have classified 'skilled' migrants as people on the move, possessing tertiary or professional qualifications and/or professional experience at the time they leave their home countries to seek employment elsewhere (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011; Cerdin et al., 2014; Crowley-Henry, O' Connor, & Al Ariss, 2016), while some have defined skilled migrants by means of wages (Chaloff & Lemaitre, 2009; Pagano, 2018). It is important to note that skilled migrants have been referred to in literature as qualified immigrants (Cerdin, Dine & Brewster, 2014), skilled immigrants (Dietz et al. 2015), international migrants (Guo & Al Ariss 2015), immigrant professionals (Fang et al. 2009) and even self-initiated expatriates (SIE) (Selmer & Luring, 2010; Suutari et al., 2018; Tharenou, 2010). The criteria for demarcation of these different forms are unclear (Doherty, 2013), leading to confusion amongst scholars and readers alike.

The difference between a 'skilled migrant' and a 'self-initiated expatriate' in literature is blurred, with considerable overlap between these terms, to the extent that they are applied interchangeably (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013; Andresen et al., 2014). The term 'migrant', irrespective of their skills and qualifications, often implies necessity to migrate rather than choice (Baruch et al., 2007; Al Ariss, 2010), while a SIE is viewed as someone who has made the choice

to move overseas through their own agency (Habti & Elo, 2019; Tharenou, 2010). While skilled migrants are viewed as individuals who move permanently for work, SIE's remain in their choice of country of residence at will (Agullo & Egawa, 2009; Andresen et al., 2014; Despotovic et al., 2022), enjoying great career opportunities and career progression as a result. Thus, skilled migrants are viewed as inferior to SIEs in the host country (Andersen et al., 2014; Al Ariss, 2010), working in harsh work conditions and predominantly underemployed or unemployed. While many scholars argue that SIEs have no definite time frame in mind for staying overseas (Tharenou, 2010), many SIEs do end up becoming permanent residents in the host country, thus becoming permanent skilled migrant workers (Al Ariss & Özbilgin, 2010). This distinction in terminology replicates and supports the stereotyped image of skilled migrants as less advantaged in terms of their home country and their ethnicity (Al Ariss & Crowley-Henry, 2013). Extant literature suggests that international career choices for SIEs are boundaryless, while for skilled migrants, the discussions focus on the career barriers they encounter. Andresen et al., (2014) concluded that the term 'migrant' was an umbrella term for all expatriates. This is contrary to previous research which declared skilled migrants and expatriates to be two exclusive groups (Al Ariss, 2010; Baruch et al., 2010)

For this study, the definition of skilled migrant women will be those who have a tertiary or professional qualification and/or professional experience and have crossed international borders to come to New Zealand to work, with the intention to live here permanently. Since research has identified that a significant number of skilled migrants have been found to accept entry-level or less-skilled work compared to their pre-migration career (Almeida et al., 2012), this study will consider skilled migrant women's pre-migration careers as well as post-migration career. The chosen definition of skilled migrant women in this study does not differentiate between women who are trailing a spouse and those who are either independent or primary applicants, this will be taken into consideration during the data analysis stage.

2.2 Motivation to Migrate

Skilled migrants are influenced by multiple drivers, including ‘conflict and political instability, demographic change and lack of economic opportunity in countries of origin’ (Guo & Al Ariss, 2015 p.1288), cultural issues such as patriarchy, family, or lack of career opportunities in their home country (Abramsky et al., 2018; Cerdin et al., 2014). There is also a combination of factors such as improved lifestyle and career/educational opportunities for themselves and their families which attract them to the host country (Damelang et al, 2019; Hajro et al., 2018; van Riemsdijk, 2013).

In this section, motivation to migrate will be discussed to gain a better understanding of whether the motivational factors impact personal and career outcomes. Past research has found that migrants who were motivated to migrate and start a new life, gain new experiences, and both personally and professionally develop, were more likely to embrace initial barriers faced during the settlement phase as challenges (Cerdin et al., 2014; Taylor et al., 2021). However, for skilled migrant women, motivations to migrate are much more relational and complex and there is a need for further investigation to understand how motivation to migrate impacts adjustment, acculturation, and assimilation.

2.2.1 Migration Decision-Making

The decision to migrate is inherently risky, despite their high intelligence and assuming therefore that some level of evaluation and research on their host country would have been conducted. With no guarantee of finding work matching their qualifications and experience, skilled migrants’ risk not only financial losses but also losses in social capital and professional status. There is also the risk of not integrating into the local community of the host country. While some academic studies have found that the motivation to migrate significantly impacts career success and integration (Cerdin et al., 2014; Burgelt et al., 2008), others have found no relationship (Tharmaseelan et al., 2010).

Lee's (1966) work on push and pull factors to understand migration decision making has been widely influential and commonly used in studies aiming to understand migrants motivations to leave their home countries and why they choose certain host countries (O'Connor & Crowley-Henry, 2020; Saunders, 2015). His theory proposed that migration is driven by the interplay of "push" factors (negative aspects in the home country that compel people to leave) and "pull" factors (positive aspects in the destination country that attract migrants). While Lee's (1966) framework has provided valuable insights, a critical analysis reveals that the complexities of contemporary migration require more nuanced understanding of migration motivations.

Recent research in the field of migrations has highlighted the limitations of the pull-push framework (Cerdin et al., 2014; de Haas, 2021; Van Hear et al., 2020). One major criticism is that the model oversimplifies the multifaceted and interrelated nature of migration motivations. In reality, migration decisions are influenced by a wide range of economic, social, political, and environmental factors that interact in complex ways. For instance, climate change-induced environmental pressures can exacerbate existing push factors and create new ones, leading to forced migration in some cases. Furthermore, the push-pull model often overlooks the role of agency and individual decision-making in the migration process. Migrants are not passive actors responding solely to external forces; they are active agents who make rational choices based on their unique circumstances, aspirations, and personal networks. Thus, it is essential to consider the agency of migrants and how their subjective perceptions shape migration decisions. Additionally, globalisation and advancements in communication technology have transformed the migration landscape. The digital era has created transnational social networks, allowing migrants to stay connected with their home countries while living in their host countries. As a result, traditional notions of push and pull factors may no longer fully capture the dynamic nature of contemporary migration flows. Recent research has also emphasised the importance of considering the intersectionality of migration motivations (Kelly, 2015; Khattab et al., 2020; Mohamed, 2021).

Factors such as gender, race, class, and education play crucial roles in shaping migration decisions and experiences. For example, studies have shown that women's motivations to migrate may differ significantly from those of men due to gender specific opportunities and constraints.

2.2.2 Perceptions of Migration

The relationship between motivation to migrate and migration decision-making, particularly concerning integration outcomes, has been a contentious issue. However, research has shown a more robust connection between integration and the perception and reality of migration (Burgelt et al., 2008; Mahonen et al., 2013). Integration efforts are often reinforced for migrants when their perceptions of migration align with reality (Cerdin et al., 2014). On the other hand, expectancy theory suggests that integration efforts decrease if migrants find their endeavours to be ineffective (Farashah & Blomquist, 2019; Giannoni et al., 2016). Similarly, skilled migrants' integration into the host country and labour market is significantly influenced by perceived barriers (Aten et al., 2016).

Existing research in the context of New Zealand has shown that many migrants lacked first-hand information and were predisposed to an idyllic image of the country as a clean, green utopia where finding work matching their skillset would be effortless (Burgelt et al., 2008). This perception is a result of the marketing efforts by the host country, which may not necessarily reflect the reality experienced by skilled migrants. As a consequence of these inflated perceptions and expectations, participants often faced a harsh reality upon arriving in New Zealand, struggling to live and work in a manner they had envisioned. This dissonance between the marketed image and the actual experience can lead to disillusionment and challenges in integrating into the host country.

To address this issue and increase the retention of skilled migrants, host countries need to take responsibility for the image they create. Merely promoting an idealised version of the country as an attractive destination for skilled migrants without addressing the actual challenges and

opportunities can be misleading and counterproductive. Furthermore, host countries need to also invest in meaningful integration support and resources for skilled migrants. Providing accurate and comprehensive information about the job market, living conditions, and cultural nuances can help set realistic expectations and better prepare migrants for the challenges they may face (Tharenou & Kulik, 2020). Additionally, offering targeted assistance in overcoming barriers to integration, such as language training and credential recognition programs, can significantly improve migrants chances of successful integration (van Riemsdijk & Basford, 2022).

To summarise, the perception and reality of migration play a crucial role in the integration outcomes for skilled migrants. The dissonance between migrants' expectations and the actual experiences they encounter can lead to significant challenges in their integration journey. To enhance the retention and successful integration of skilled migrants, host countries must adopt a more transparent approach in their marketing efforts and provide adequate support and resources to help migrants navigate the complexities of their new home.

2.3 Integration Into the Host Country

To establish stability, skilled migrants must adjust to work and nonwork conditions in the host country, experiencing disruptions to existing roles, identities, and social networks. Agha-Alikhani (2018) in their study of international academics found that over time, individuals often felt more subjective pressure to 'fit' into their new home country. The concept of integration is complex. Research has found a circular relationship between cultural and economic integration, with each facilitating the other (Vollebergh et al., 2017). Yet, socio-cultural integration into the host country remains predominantly the responsibility of the migrant (van Riemsdijk et al., 2016). Host countries and organisations need to play a role in the integration of migrants by changing their attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours (Farashah & Blomquist, 2021). Regardless of how much research and preparation a migrant might do prior to migrating, a new environment, a new work setting, and cultural dissimilarities can lead to stress and anxiety.

While there is an overlap between the concepts of integration and assimilation, the latter gives more power to the receiving host country and dominant culture. Heckmann (2005) defined assimilation as ‘an interactive process between migrants and the receiving society. The receiving society must learn new ways of interacting with newcomers and adapt its institutions to their needs. In this process, however, the receiving society has much more power and prestige’ (p18). Drawing on Anniste and Tammaru (2014), the definition for this construct will be ‘the inclusion of immigrants into all spheres of the host society’ (p.380).

Migrant interconnectedness with the host country is often assessed on structural and socio-cultural integration (Fokkema & De Haas, 2015; van Riemsdijk & Basford, 2022). Sociocultural integration describes the cognitive, behavioural, and attitudinal changes in conformity to the receiving societies’ dominant norms. This encompasses social intercourse, friendships, memberships to various groups as well as feelings of belonging to ethnic, regional, local, and national identity (King & Skeldon, 2010). Structural integration entails having the same life outcomes as the majority in the receiving country in terms of economic, housing, and political integration (Anniste & Tammaru, 2014). Economic, especially labour market, integration usually focuses on structural factors like labour market participants, income or skills mismatch and underemployment (Fong, 2023). However, these objective measures often do not match the skilled migrant’s perceptions (Becker, 2019).

2.3.1 Acculturation

Acculturation is the process of cultural and psychological change resulting from the meeting of two cultures (Sam & Berry, 2010). It involves renouncing some elements of the home country culture (culture shedding), while adopting and internalising some elements of the host country culture (culture learning) (Berry, 2001). In the migration literature, global mobility research has been exploring cross-cultural adjustment processes that migrants must go through, transitioning from their established and known cultural and organisational context, to an unknown

one (Bierwiazzonek & Waldzus, 2016; Ravasi et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2021). With technological advances enhancing contact with family worldwide, increasing numbers of people are viewing migration and cross-cultural adjustment issues differently than in the past (Agha-Alikhani, 2018). Regardless of these advances, there is unanimous agreement amongst scholars that migration is a critical life event.

While acculturation in the host country has been extensively researched and highlighted in the expatriation literature (Dong et al., 2022; Hajro et al., 2019; Haslberger et al., 2013; Potter & Richardson, 2019), early research focused on models built upon the three facets of psychological, sociocultural, and work adjustment from the acculturation literature (Searle & Ward, 1990). These models conceptualised adjustment as to the degree to which a person felt comfortable within their host country environment in three domains: adjustment to work, intercultural interaction with host country nationals, and general nonwork environment (Black et al., 1991; Black & Stephens, 1989). However, this model has been criticized for conceptualising adjustment as an outcome, and not having enough theoretical development of the three adjustment facets (Haslberger & Dickmann, 2016). Over time, the usefulness of this model has been questioned regarding understanding the challenges faced by the diversity in people migrating and their motivations for migration.

Skilled migrants with the largest cultural differences from the host country have been found to experience the most discrimination (Fokkema & De Haas, 2015; Sener, 2022), leading to suggestions that ethnic origin is a critical factor in the career success of skilled migrants in host countries (Dietz et al., 2015; Hakak et al., 2010; Schwartz et al., 2010). When the cultural gap between the host and home countries is minimal, skilled migrants might experience a smoother acculturation process. They may find it easier to adapt to the new cultural norms, language, and social practices due to similarities with their home culture. This can lead to a higher level of comfort and confidence in engaging with the host society, enhancing their ability to integrate successfully. However, when the degree of difference between the host country and the host

country cultural contexts is substantial, skilled migrants are more likely to face significant challenges during the acculturation process (Harjo, et al., 2019). The greater the cultural distance, the more pronounced the culture shock is likely to be. This can manifest in feelings of confusion, isolation, and frustration as migrants struggle to understand and navigate the unfamiliar cultural practices, communication styles, and the social norms in the host country (Lee et al., 2016). In such cases, acculturation might be a more prolonged and challenging process, as skilled migrants may need to undergo significant changes in their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours to fit into the new cultural context. They may face barriers in forming social connections, accessing opportunities in the labour market, and engaging in community life. This can lead to feelings of alienation and homesickness, impacting their overall well-being and ability to integrate successfully (Liem et al., 2021). Moreover, the presence of cultural stereotypes and prejudices in the host country can exacerbate the challenges faced by skilled migrants during acculturation. If they encounter discrimination or biased attitudes due to the cultural background, the integration process becomes even more complex (Harjo, et al., 2019). This can create a sense of identity conflict and hinder the development of a strong sense of belonging to the host country.

The inability to culturally adapt into the host country can be both physically and mentally detrimental to the health of skilled migrants, leading to further negative impacts on their career (Aalto et al., 2014; Abramitzky et al., 2020; Nakash et al., 2012; Newton et al., 2012; Ng & Metz, 2015; Shishehgar et al., 2017). In the media, migrants are often portrayed as taking jobs away from native workers (Becchetti & Acar, 2019), leaving migrants feeling threatened and struggling to integrate into the local community (Meijering & van Hoven, 2003). However, longer duration in the host country, improvements in language proficiency and social network support have been found to assist integration and acculturation to some extent (Lu et al., 2016).

2.3.2 Culture Shock

Oberg's (1960) original concept of "culture shock" provided a foundational understanding of the challenges faced by migrants when adapting to a new culture. Oberg (1960) outlined six aspects of culture shock:

- Strain, due to acculturation and adaption
- Sense of loss and deprivation related to things given up due to migration
- Feeling rejection by members of the host country culture
- Anxiety after becoming aware of cultural differences
- Feelings of impotence at lack of success with adaption

Oberg (1960) postulated that migrants go through four stages of culture shock. Firstly, the honeymoon stage where there is admiration and fascination for the host country and culture. Secondly, the crisis stage, where migrants become more aware of differences between the host culture and their own. Thirdly, the recovery stage, where feelings of inadequacy, despair and anger are gradually resolved through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values aligned to the host culture. Finally, the fourth stage, adjustment, where migrants are able enjoy the host country culture with only occasional feelings of anxiety of stress. However, subsequent research suggests that Oberg's (1960) original work may not fully capture the experiences of all migrants, especially skilled migrants in contemporary settings.

For example, Austin (2007) presented a contrasting perspective by suggesting that many skilled migrants anticipated cultural differences and actively sought support from co-ethnic migrant networks as a pre-emptive measure. These social networks played a significant role in their personal adaption and integration into the host country (Nayar et al., 2012; Gërkhani & Kosyakova, 2022). While these co-ethnic networks offered support and comfort, they also led to a potential drawback for skilled migrants. Choosing such networks often limited their interaction

and integration with the broader local community or professional networks, leading to inadvertent exclusion from important professional connections.

Further research has demonstrated that skilled migrants, owing to their higher education, access to information on social media platforms, language proficiency, and prior travel experiences, are generally better equipped to manage the challenges of acculturation in the host country (Gunasekera et al., 2019; Hajro et al., 2019; Lim & Pham, 2016). Consequently, they exhibit greater acceptance and respect for the host country's culture. Their awareness of cultural differences fosters the development of social capital as they actively seek to build new friendships and networks, thereby reducing the likelihood of experiencing severe "culture shock".

In examining the workplace as a primary context for social acculturation (van Tonder & Soontiens, 2014), it becomes evident that the workplace and colleagues play a pivotal role in the level of social contact and the process of acculturation and adaption for skilled migrants. For many skilled migrants, re-establishing their careers and securing employment may take precedence over emotional disruption caused by the loss of their social support networks.

Therefore, while Oberg's (1960) concept of culture shock initially provided valuable insights into the experiences of migrants, it is essential to critically consider the complexities and nuances faced by skilled migrants in contemporary migration contexts. The role of co-ethnic networks, the workplace, and the migrant's individual attributes all contribute to shaping their experiences of acculturation and adaption in the host country. A more comprehensive understanding of these factors is needed to help formulate targeted support systems to aid skilled migrant in navigating the challenges of cultural transition.

2.3.3 Lack of Social Networks

This section highlights the challenges faced by migrants, particularly skilled migrants, in accessing social and professional networks in their host country. Migrants are unable to draw on friends and family networks from their home country, to assist them in the host country. In the

absence of these networks, migrants draw on other forms of capital, either through connections with their ethnic communities for support (cultural capital) or through their workplaces, to fill social gaps (Bahn, 2015). While vertical bridging social capital (organisations based on shared ethnic, religious or nationality contacts) has been found to be valuable in gaining skill-appropriate employment, horizontal bonding social capital (friends, family, and contacts in the host country) alongside independent job-hunting, usually results in low skilled employment (Gericke et al., 2018).

This fits in with the work of Granovetter (1973) who argued that weak ties, social connections with individuals who are not part of one's close-knit social circle, such as family and close friends, play a crucial role in connecting different social groups and facilitating the flow of information, opportunities, and resources between these groups. These ties are considered "weak" because they lack the emotional intensity and frequency of interaction that characterise strong ties. Granovetter (1973) argued that weak ties are valuable because they provide access to novel information and opportunities that are not available within strong-tie networks, since individuals within this group tend to have similar information and resources. With regards to migration studies, Granovetter's (1973) concept of weak ties has been particularly relevant in understanding the social dynamics of migration. Studies have shown that weak ties often play a crucial role for migrants in the process of integration into their new societies and in accessing job opportunities and social support (Agha – Alikhani, 2018; Lang et al., 2022; Maher & Crawley, 2015). When migrants arrive in a new country, they may have few strong ties, such as family or close friends, but they may develop weak ties through social interactions, local community members or work colleagues. This is an area of research which is currently under explored.

However, "strong ties" are also evident in the literature as impacting skilled migrants' experiences. Having established friends and networks in the host country reduces the risk and increases the security in the migration decision-making process (Burgelt et al, 2008; Jaskulowski

& Pawlak, 2020). Friends can provide valuable insider information leading to a smoother settlement. Similarly, migrating as a family or a couple facilitates well-being by providing social support, reducing loneliness and shared experiences. While migrating as a family/couple could lead to reduced local community integration, migrating with children could potentially also facilitate the establishment of social contacts through their school friends, thus enhancing social support networks. However, children may also add an extra layer of challenges in the migration process (Cooke, 2008; Sime & Fox, 2015; Ryan & Sales, 2013).

Alternatively, a lack of social and professional networks in the host country means that skilled migrants are disconnected from valuable networks, such as university alumni or friends/family business contacts, which are crucial for career progression (Aure, 2013). Research has found that migrants are left to develop networks on their own in host countries and resort to informal social networks, mostly coethnic, in their attempts to integrate into their occupational field (Battisti et al., 2016; Varshaver & Rocheva, 2021), often settling into neighbourhoods where there is a larger concentration of migrants from similar backgrounds. Ethnic enclaves reduce communication issues while providing social support, information networks and access to employment opportunities (Rajendran et al., 2020), however they have also been found to be associated with discrimination (Morey et al., 2020). While some studies have found that ethnic enclaves can lead to a loss of developing wider host country networks which are detrimental to career progression (Ng & Bloemraad, 2015; Andersson, 2021), other studies have found that when highly skilled migrants also live in ethnic enclaves this can provide positive job satisfaction outcomes for newly arrived migrants (Rajendran et al., 2020) as they can offer career guidance and assist in finding work in the host country.

Migrants are not familiar with the local labour market in the host country, and thus have less access to the support networks, both social and professional, than native-born counterparts

have. Skilled migrants have lower levels of participation in professional occupations than native-born counterparts (Chiswick, 2011) and are also less likely to hold onto a good job (Farashah et al., 2023). Place-specific knowledge prior to migration helps migrants navigate the local labour market, accessing industry appropriate information and building non-migrant networks which can activate and mobilise skills (Aure, 2013). For skilled migrant women, the lack of family and friends support networks (Volpe & Murphy, 2011), the prioritization of a spouse's career and the gendered expectation to become the primary caregiver for the children (Ho & Alcorso, 2004; Kofman, 2018) can lead to further social isolation and inability to truly integrate into the host country's culture (Tan, 2023).

The next section further explores how the degree to which skilled migrant women differ from the host country nationals on the dimensions of skin colour, language, values, attitudes, religion, knowledge, education, or behaviour impacts their acculturation process and ultimately their integration into the job market.

2.4 Feminisation of Migration

While the feminisation of international migration - the increasing participation of women in international labour migration - has attracted increasing attention from scholars in the last two decades (Bastia & Haagsman, 2020; Ressia et al., 2017; Tittensor & Mansouri, 2017), this is still a very underexplored area of research, particularly in terms of experience (Bastia & Piper, 2019; Cooke et al., 2013; Kofman, 2013; Phan et al., 2015; Ruysen & Salomone, 2015). Highly skilled migrant women are more likely to be underemployed, working below their skill levels, and often have career trajectories characterised by discontinuity more than their male counterparts (Gerber & Wanner, 2019; Riaño, 2021; Shirmohammadi et al., 2019).

Women are migrating both short and long distances, for temporary or permanent periods, young and old, on their own or with their family (Fleury, 2016; Ghosh, 2009). An increasing trend

is women with children migrating for work but leaving their children with families to care for them back home (Cortes, 2015). While female labour migration is historical, academic research has focused predominantly on migrant women as a vulnerable group open to discrimination, abuse and violence (Abramsky et al., 2018; Chammartin, 2002), temporary contract workers with insecure residency rights (Piper, 2003b) sex workers who have been trafficked into sex-related industries (Abramsky et al., 2018; Piper, 2003a), or dependents of a principal spouse or family (Piper, 2008; González-Ferrer, 2010) rather than as skilled and professional women in their own right. Highly skilled migrant women are an untapped pool of talent with the potential to provide organisations both a competitive edge and market advantage (Bolzani et al., 2021; Kofman & Raghuram, 2015).

Female migrants and self-initiated expatriates are an under-researched and invisible group in the management community (Al Ariss & Özbilgin, 2010; Kofman, 2014; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2019). In the New Zealand situation, despite the growth of gendered migration from Asian economies especially, they have received very little attention (Badkar et al., 2007). Skilled migrant women could not only be a critical resource providing organisations a competitive advantage, but they could also counter labour shortages posed by an increasing aging population (Cole & McNulty, 2011). Yet, migrant women are more likely than migrant men to do work in jobs where they are over-qualified (Elidok & Nawyn, 2023). Migration studies often refer to the occupational penalty of migrant women using the double disadvantage argument, where they are penalised for the combined negative impact of birthplace and gender (Ballarino & Panichella, 2018). In many cases, it is a combination of gender, race, environment, and lack of recognition of their social and human capital (Al Ariss, 2010; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2019) that leads to skilled migrant women encountering more barriers in the host country labour market compared to men. These barriers include more difficulties in accessing the host country labour market, receiving lower wages, and being underemployed (Enriquez & Triandafyllidou, 2016). Those working in male-dominated

sectors then encounter gender-specific barriers that hinder career progression (Grimaldi et al., 2022), such as being assigned to less important jobs (Grigoleit-Richter, 2017) or considered as not career-minded and more family-orientated (Grigoleit, 2012).

2.4.1 Family Tied Migration

Studies have found that highly skilled or professional women who migrate as a dependent of a principal skilled spouse or partner are often penalised in the labour market (Ballarino & Panichella, 2018; Cooke, 2008; Cooke et al, 2013; Fosslund, 2013; Gerber & Wanner, 2019; Purkayastha & Bircan, 2021). They have also been found to feel less capable and struggle with self-esteem and their own sense of identity (van den Bergh & du Plessis, 2012). This may be, in part, that their skill levels may not be as valued in their host country as they are in their home country and they struggle to rebuild their careers, or it could be that they are forced into taking additional household and child-care responsibilities which do not allow them to continue with their career development (Riaño, 2021).

Although there have been an increasing number of studies seeking to understand the precarious employment status of the ‘tied migrant’ (Bolzani & Crivellaro, 2021; Cooke, 2008; McEwan, 2021), these limited studies concluded that women are less mobile than men and when they do migrate, it is most often ‘tied’ to the migration and career of their male partners. This shows support for the dual labour market theory, where the male partner has an established career while the female partner has assumed a secondary labour-market role even prior to migration (Cooke, 2007). This highlights the importance of exploring and understanding the decision-making processes that impact women’s careers choices in their home countries in order to understand. Significantly, the imbalance that tips the male partner’s career as taking priority, takes place long before the potentially disruptive impact of migration.

Skilled migrants are often culturally and socially embedded, shaped by family and social networks (Kofman, 2018). While research has found that both women and men may be dependent

migrants (Aure, 2013; Purkayastha & Bircan, 2023), highly skilled migrant women have been found to migrate more often than men for reasons other than career opportunities, subsequently experiencing barriers finding work aligned to their skills (Kofman & Raghuram, 2005; Ireland, 2005). Over the last decade, there has been more interest in understanding the interplay between women, work, and skilled migration, but knowledge in this field is still scant (Bolzani et al., 2021; Riaño, 2021; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2019).

While extant literature has suggested that young, single women are just as mobile as their male peers, levels of mobility have been found to decrease as women get more established in both their relationships and in their careers (Aure, 2013). In dual career situations, where both partners are equally qualified and experienced in their career field, migration usually results in the female ‘trailing’ partner exiting or failing to progress in their careers (Aure, 2013; Tan, 2023).

In a study of dual career scientist couples in Europe, Ackers (2004) found that in most cases, the female scientist spoke about the impact of being in a relationship on their careers and how they were expected to ‘follow’ their male partners. These highly educated and professional women were more likely to defer to their partners when making migration and career decisions, perhaps because they were socialised to place family first and their careers second when it came to critical decision-making (Aure, 2013; González Ramos & Bosch, 2013; Kou & Bailey, 2014). Furthermore, expectations of motherhood can remove women from their career field at a time when they should be establishing themselves in their professions (Liversage, 2009). Dual career strategies around work and family priorities and pathways reinforce gender inequalities, validating women in prioritising family to support their partner’s career (Ressia, 2014; Rusconi et al., 2013). In dual career couples, male partners tend to be more reluctant to follow their partners abroad than female partners, with women also having to choose between their career and partner more often (Känsälä et al., 2015).

The concept of dual career infers equality between partners in terms of status and autonomy (Ackers, 2004; Känsälä et al., 2015). It moves away from the idea that women belong to the secondary labour market or are just doing a job. However, research has found that despite the progress women have made in education and in their careers, the notion of ‘dual careers’, and the equality that implies, is not often realised. The progression of one always takes place at the expense of the other, and typically it is the female partner’s career which is forfeited or left to go stale (Gilmartin & Migge, 2016; Ramos & Martín-Palomino, 2015). The existence of pay differences also supports the economic underpinning of the human capital model of family migration, however it fails to explain how the differences arise (Ackers, 2004). Family migration decisions are multi-dimensional and even in cases where the female partner’s earning potential is high, the balance often still tips more in favour for the male partner’s career trajectory (Cooke, 2008).

2.5 Skilled Migrant Women and their Career Experiences in the Host Country

While common stereotypes of why women migrate still exist, such as following their spouse or family, or for unmarried women, going for marriage or work with a contractor, there is an increasingly wide-ranging diversity in the migration patterns of women (Ghosh, 2009; Boyd, 2014). Skilled women migrate not only for better pay and living conditions (Fleury, 2016), but also to escape from restrictive patriarchal cultures (Elitok & Nawyn, 2023) or build their careers (Tharmaseelan et al., 2010). The number of young women migrating for education is also growing, and this often leads to permanent migration because of employment. Most migrants who migrate without secure employment, despite their qualifications and extensive experience, end up underemployed in their host country (Ressia et al., 2017; Yao et al., 2015), unable to utilise their home country accumulated skills, qualifications, and work experience to the optimum. This usually also leads to poorer wages alongside longer working hours and lowly working conditions (Wright et al., 2016). Those with employer-sponsored work visas are often treated unfairly and are vulnerable to exploitation such as working for lower wages and/or longer hours (Carens, 2014).

Combined with a loss of social and professional networks, post-migration career and lifestyle can lead to a myriad of mental and physical issues for migrants (van Tonder & Soontiens, 2014).

Migrant women particularly, face complex challenges in rebuilding their careers (Cooke et al., 2013; O'Dywer & Colic- Peisker, 2016; Tan, 2023). Employment issues and challenges faced by migrant women in the host country are more intricate than those faced by their male peers, due to the weaving of gender with other forms of identity such as ethnicity, religion, and skills (Bolzani et al., 2021; Essers & Benschop, 2009; Fearfull & Kamenou, 2006; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2019; Syed & Pio, 2010). Previous research has highlighted the gender specific disadvantages that skilled migrant women face including occupation segregation (Kofman, 2014), lack of financial support and access to adequate childcare (Gerber & Wanner, 2019), migration policies that do not address gender disadvantages (Boucher, 2020) and employer biases against the qualifications and experiences of skilled migrant women (Riaño & Baghdadi, 2007).

Skilled migrant men have their qualifications and experience more readily accepted in the host country and advance further in their careers than skilled migrant women (Gerber & Wanner, 2019; Riaño, 2021). A lack of both social and workplace support for skilled migrant women, especially in helping them adapt to their host country labour market, leads to most of them working more frequently in low skilled jobs or a situation of unemployment (Cooke et al., 2013; Gerber & Wanner, 2019; Ressler, 2016). While the phenomenon of women opting out of a traditional career in their home country has been extensively researched (Volpe & Murphy, 2011), this has not been investigated adequately in the context of skilled migrant women. However, migration itself is an additional complexity for these women in their attempts to return to the workplace (Tharmaseelan et al, 2010). This is a key gap in the migrant literature, that despite the years since it was identified, has yet to be addressed (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005).

Although some skilled migrant women may find work in the host country and integrate into the host country successfully, many struggle to find work that matches their qualifications and

skills; they struggle to ‘re-start’ their careers, often ending up in low-skilled work (Elitok & Nawyn, 2023; Fosslund, 2013; Ramboarison-Lalao et al., 2012). During the transitioning period (the time from migrating to settling into the host country), migrants are often unemployed, and this increases their chances of having to take up low ranking or vulnerable work (Berry & Bell, 2012; Fang et al., 2009; Hardy, 2010). For skilled migrant women, the combination of gender, race, regulatory environment, the lack of recognition of human capital (Al Ariss, 2010) may result in them drifting into jobs where there are poor working conditions, pay and lack of opportunities (Ressia et al., 2017). Even when they can re-enter their career field, many women “opt-out” because their jobs are tedious, they have limited chances of advancement, or the working hours are unreasonable (Elitok & Nawyn, 2023).

Four strategies used by migrant women in an attempt to overcome barriers to obtaining work on par with their skills and qualifications have been identified (Riaño & Baghdadi, 2007). The first strategy is ‘re-skill’ whereby they improve their language proficiency as well as either redo their tertiary education or gain postgraduate studies. By doing this they are rebuilding capital as well as increasing their social participation. The second strategy relates to the labour market, where the skilled migrant woman will take up any job, regardless of skill level, engage in unpaid work or start their own business. It was found that this increases their self-esteem. Family planning is the third strategy, and women will postpone, limit, or have no children so that there is more time to either study or work and increase human capital. The last strategy is to withdraw from the labour market, stay at home and be the homemaker or return to their home country.

One of the key issues with migrant women taking a lower paid job is that while this inevitably gives them host country work experience, it also increases the time they are not working in their profession and field, leading them to be trapped in a downward occupational spiral. Likewise, to reskill means restarting their careers with potentially entry level roles. Two of the barriers experienced by skilled migrant women will be discussed below in more detail.

Over half of the professional migrants in New Zealand are in lower skilled occupations than they were in their home country, even after undertaking further education/training post-migration (Mace et al., 2012; Ressler et al., 2017). If a skilled role aligned to their career field is found, skilled migrants are willing to take lower wages and work in poorer employment conditions than native workers, to enter and remain in the workforce (Wright et al., 2016). Research has found that human resource management policies fail to fully use and support their international human capital resulting in career constraints (Syed, 2008), poor assimilation and adjustment (Richardson, 2009). Skilled migrants working in jobs that underutilise their skills and experience have also been found to have higher levels of work-related stress, poor quality of life and worse physical and mental health (Subedi & Rosenberg, 2016). Organisational integration policies are critical when it comes to the career outcomes of skilled migrants. Integration policies have been found to play a large role in skilled migrants' motivation to develop their career capital (Cerdin et al., 2014) with organisations viewing skilled migrants as a source of competitive advantage more likely to fully utilise their skills, knowledge, and experience (Zikic, 2015).

2.5.1 Recruitment and Selection

Despite meeting the rigorous qualifications, work experience, language proficiency, age, and health criteria, there are still significant numbers of skilled migrants in low-skilled jobs (Schuster et al., 2013; Trevena, 2011). The role of employers and organisations in the screening and recruitment of skilled migrants was, until recently, largely neglected despite the significant impact they can have in skill under-utilisation of the migrant population (Almeida et al., 2012). Skill under-utilisation impacts not only productivity and skill maximization of the labour force but if skilled migrant professionals are unable to work within their specific labour market, they are more prone to emigrate (Hugo et al., 2003; Pungas et al., 2012).

Almeida et al. (2012) identified three key organisational characteristics that significantly influence employers in their recruitment and selection processes of skilled migrants. Firstly, the

service or product delivered by the organisation to its clients plays a crucial role in determining the selection criteria. If the service or product is host country specific, employers may prioritise native employees, overlooking the qualifications of skilled migrants in favour of those with host country work experience. This practice can lead to the under-utilisation of skilled migrants' qualifications and experience (Bratton & Gold, 2007). Additionally, organisations that develop competency frameworks based on existing cultural values and behaviours may inadvertently disadvantage skilled migrant professionals whose qualifications, work experiences, and personal attributes differ from those of existing employees (Bratton & Gold, 2007; Farashah & Blomquist, 2022).

One significant issue faced by skilled migrants is the lack of recognition of their pre-migration work experience, even if their qualifications are accredited (Bauder, 2014). This lack of recognition contributes to the skill under-utilisation and inferior employment outcomes for skilled migrants. Discrimination and prejudices within the hiring process also play a pivotal role in hindering skilled migrants career progression (Syed, 2008; Markus, 2009). Particularly, migrants from NESB countries often face limited access to top-tier jobs aligned with their skills and qualifications, exacerbating the problem (Mulholland & Ryan, 2014). A second-tier factor influencing employers is the belief that native employees are more likely to adapt quickly and require minimal training and supervision (Almeida et al., 2012). Consequently, job descriptions may be overly rigid, leading to the early exclusion of skilled migrants during the shortlisting and selection process. Moreover, the availability of organisation resources for training and supporting new recruits plays a crucial role in hiring decisions. Larger organisations with more resources tend to offer better in-house training, which may favour native employees over skilled migrants (Almeida et al., 2012). Additionally, larger organisations may adopt a globalised and open recruitment approach due to their need to meet diverse client requirements, potentially leading to tokenistic hiring practices (Almeida et al., 2012).

The under-utilisation of skills among skilled migrants in low-skilled jobs is a complex issue that requires urgent attention. Employers and organisations play a significant role in contributing to this problem through discriminatory hiring practices and neglecting the recognition of pre-migration qualifications and work experiences. To address skill under-utilisation, employers and organisations need to adopt more inclusive and merit-based hiring practices.

2.5.2 Credential Recognitions

The lack of accreditation and recognition of foreign qualifications and home country work experience in their host country is often a surprise to most skilled migrants (Adhikari & Melia, 2015; Warman et al., 2015; Zikic et al., 2010), contributing to difficulties experienced by skilled migrants in gaining employment matching their qualifications and experience (Farndale et al., 2021; Pearson et al., 2012; Rajendran et al., 2017; Reitz et al., 2014; Sardana et al., 2017). Skilled and professional migrants therefore face the option of either retraining, taking lower skilled work or staying at home (Almeida et al., 2012; Hardy, 2010; Reid, 2012; Tian et al., 2018). Migrants who worked in professional fields such as medicine, law, or public sector jobs especially, faced significant institutional barriers in these regulated professions (Al Ariss, 2010; Peterson et al., 2014; Durano, 2015) limiting their ability to gain re-accreditation (Nakagawa, 2021).

Skilled migrant women have been found to face more accreditation hurdles than men (Iredale, 2001), and this is exacerbated even further for women migrants from developing countries (Khadria, 2001). Taking a lower skilled job has been referred to as de-skilling in skilled migration literature (Hardy, 2010), and while it is a common experience amongst all skilled migrants, it is more prevalent for skilled migrant women (Kofman & Raghuram, 2010; Naghsh, 2013; Qureshi et al., 2013). For example, highly qualified and experienced migrant Nepalis nurses in the United Kingdom suffered high levels of work-related culture shock after having their credentials ignored and being pushed into elderly caregiver roles (Adhikari & Melia, 2015). This can then lead to 'brain waste', whereby the skills held by highly skilled workers gained in their

former job are not utilised (Banerjee et al., 2019). The level of brain-waste has been found to be higher for women who migrate from developing countries than those who migrate between developed countries (Bang & Mitra, 2011; Elo, et al, 2020; Güngör, & Tansel, 2014). The inability to find work matching their skill level or qualification or having to work in low skilled jobs again can lead to poor physical and mental health, especially since many do not have the support of family or friends (Bahn, 2015). This leads to longer periods out of the labour market and harms the individual's self-esteem and confidence (Kofman & Raghuram, 2010).

Research in the field of skill and credential transferability has found that some qualifications, skills, and job experience are country specific (Williams, 2007; Chiswick & Miller, 2014), and how they operate or transfer into the new context can vary. Tied migrants or trailing partners are often not in a strong economic position to choose the location of migration, and post-migration, have restricted network access, especially in professional networks. Even skilled migrants who have native spouses experience isolation with regards to professional networks and contacts (Tan, 2023).

Al Ariss and Özbilgin (2010) identify two factors leading to underutilisation of skills by Lebanese migrants in France. The first is a general underutilization of their skills where participants were not offered jobs commensurate with their skills and qualifications, or where they had their work permits refused after finding employment. The second form of underutilization was gender related. Female participants spoke of their employment experiences in the wider context of their professional and family responsibilities. Career choices for this group had to be made based on what suited the family's needs first. In some instances, family responsibilities restricted workplace participation for many years, resulting in further age-related biases. Discrimination of migrants was also evident among the aforementioned Nepalis nurses in the United Kingdom, who were given the most dirty, dangerous, or degrading jobs, resulting in them losing their confidence to go back into the acute care sector, downward professional mobility, eventually becoming

deskilled (Adhikari & Melia, 2015). This phenomenon of deskilling prevented them returning to their jobs in their homeland - a common finding amongst migrant nurses worldwide (Korzeniewska & Erdal, 2021). Ironically, when skilled migrants apply for professional jobs lower than their qualifications and experience, the chances of getting them is limited as organisations deem the applicants overqualified (Benson-Rea & Rawlinson, 2003). The only options left open are low-skilled, low-paid work. This increases financial difficulties, loneliness, depression, and homesickness (Burgelt et al, 2008). This situation can extend from generation to generation of migrants and academics have referred to this as entrenched disadvantage (Celikaksoy & Wadensjo, 2018; Heath & Zwysen, 2018).

2.5.3 Language

Language and communication have been found to be significant barriers in finding relevant work as well as integrating within the host country, especially for migrants from non-English speaking background countries (NESB) (Peltokorpi & Xie, 2023; Ressia & Strachan, 2017). Professionals from NESB countries have consistently been found to have inferior labour market outcomes (Carangio et al., 2021; Hawthorne & To, 2014; Sardana et al., 2016). Poor knowledge of the host country language has also been offered as a justification for discrimination (Shirmohammadi et al., 2019; van Riemsdijk et al., 2016). A strong relationship has been found between language competence and increased participation and development of host country social life and social capital (Scholten & Penninx, 2016), thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of their new home country's culture.

Language barriers can also hinder work performance once a skilled migrant has started in employment, reducing promotion opportunities, resulting in lower employability and earnings (Garrido & Codo. 2017; Nimer & Rottmann, 2020; Sert, 2016). For skilled migrant women, lack of proficiency in the host country's language is of concern because, while men can attend language courses, women with childcare responsibilities are more limited in terms of access to these

opportunities (Aure, 2013; Jentjens, 2021). However, research indicates that even when skilled migrants from NESB countries have excellent language skills, they tend to earn considerably less than those from ESB countries (Almeida et al., 2012; Hardy, 2010; Ho & Alcorso, 2004).

2.5.4 Professional and Career Networks

As discussed, social identity, such as gender and ethnicity, also plays a critical role in the career trajectories of migrant workers (Ala-Mantila & Fleischmann, 2018). While extant literature has found that migrant women are more successful in finding work through networks (Samani, 2013) than through other forms of job search (Bolles, 2012), this is usually in lower skilled jobs rather than in a job aligned to the individual's skill set. Migrant women are also less likely to socialise with work colleagues as they struggle to feel comfortable attending social functions (Scott & Franzmann, 2007; Tharenou & Kulik, 2020). This is usually due a variety of reasons including cultural factors. This lack of socialising in the workplace detrimentally hinders the process of professional networking and can lead to negative consequences impacting career progression and development (Ali & Kramar, 2015).

2.5.5 Intersectionality

Several studies have used intersectionality to explore and understand the experiences of highly skilled migrant women (Farashah & Blomquist, 2021; Kaushik & Walsh, 2018; Murray & Ali, 2017; Ressia et al., 2017; Riaño, 2011; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2019). Intersectionality in migration research is a lens through which race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age as well as other individual characteristics operate as reciprocally constructing phenomena, providing “a multi-dimensional understanding of how gender is co-constructed in migration processes specific to its context” (Spadavecchia & Yu, 2021 p.4). It explores how oppression and resistance are constructed through merger of the above characteristics (Cole, 2009). Crenshaw (1989) initially coined the term intersectionality over 30 years ago, arguing that the “location of women of colour at the intersection of race and gender makes their experiences structurally and

qualitatively different than that of white women” (1991, p.1245). Visible minority migrant women, women who belong to racial or ethnic minority groups and have migrated to a different country, have been found to face unique challenges and experiences due to the intersection of their gender, ethnicity, and migration status. When it came to host country employment, visible minority migrant women were found to experience downward occupational mobility and pay disparity due labour market discrimination leading to economic hardship, which precipitated health and mental well-being (Sener, 2022; Sethi & Williams, 2015).

Intersectionality has contributed to clearly showing the interconnected and multiple forms of both oppression and privilege in migrant processes, challenging the primary focus on gender in migrant literature by showing how different forms of disadvantage can intersect to explain the experiences of migrant women. While the concept of intersectionality is critical in terms of providing a framework for analysing data, it is also difficult to operationalise as an approach to research. One way to understand intersectionality is to look at the less evident forms of prejudice to acquire a fuller picture of the person's lived experience (Spadavecchia & Yu, 2021). Theories of intersectionality state that to not recognise how isolated forms of oppression shape, and are shaped by one another, leads to one-dimensional analyses and vague interventions and policies. Most countries, including Australia, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand, do not recognise intersectionality, especially that of gender and race, in law (Syed, 2015). So, when a victim of intersectional discrimination files a discrimination complaint, they must base it on one type of discrimination or another. Syed (2007) found 34% of race discrimination complaints received by the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in 2003-2004 were filed by individual women. This suggests that a significant number of NESB women face discrimination in the workplace due to their multiple identities.

By applying an intersectionality approach, a deeper understanding of intra-group differences and experiences can be achieved. Created by societal power differentials,

intersectionality creates multiple disadvantages for people of difference (Ressia, 2014). The last decade has seen a proliferation of research in the field of migration using intersectionality as the main analytical framework (Ressia et al., 2017; Rodriguez & Scurry, 2019; Spadavecchia & Yu, 2021). However, there is limited research in understanding the career experiences of skilled migrant women in the host country using an intersectionality lens.

2.5.6 Work-Life Balance

While there are many definitions of work-life balance, most identify two key facets: firstly, engagement in multiple roles in work and non-work-life and, secondly, minimal conflict between work and non-work roles (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). A more simple and inclusive definition of work-life balance is to have “sufficient time to meet commitments at both work and home” (Guest, 2002 p. 263). With increasing globalisation and work intensification blurring the boundaries between work and family, migrant workers often struggle to achieve work-life balance in a new host country. Migrant women especially face multifaceted challenges, due to societal and cultural expectations and pressures, along with limited support in childcare (Elo et al., 2020; Ressia, 2014). Despite higher levels of skilled female migration in recent years, skilled migrant women are continuing to experience difficulties in fully participating in the workplace (Ali et al., 2017).

Even though there has been considerable research in the field of work-life balance, the concept of work-life balance is very much a western conceptualisation (Gregory & Milner, 2009), and there has been limited substantiation of work-life balance issues facing migrants, and in particular migrant women and their experiences in their host countries (Ivana, 2020). The general discourse on work-life balance has hovered between placing the responsibility on the individual’s choice of how they achieve a balance between home/family and work/organisation, to how organisations allow or inhibit access to work-life balance opportunities (Lewis et al., 2007). The latter discourse has gained significant importance in the last decade in the field of human resource management to resolve work-family conflicts and manage workloads. Both these discourses

emphasise choice and the exercise of human agency, without taking into consideration intersectionality challenges. Ignoring issues arising from multiple identities within work-life balance policies could potentially lead to these workers not benefiting fully from governmental or organisational work-life balance initiatives (Syed, 2015). In addition to this, the lack of literature on the impact organisational management has on migrant women employees' work-life balance in western contexts is a gap that also needs to be urgently addressed (Ali et al., 2017; Kamenou, 2008; Syed & Pio, 2010).

Past studies have found that ethnic migrant women are stereotyped as submissive, weak, and oppressed, coming from strong patriarchal cultures with additional challenges of family and work leading to work-life balance pressures as well as discrimination in the host country workplace (Ali, 2013). British South-Asian Muslim migrant women, for example, suffered 'triple' paralysis arising from a lack of 1) skills and training, 2) support for household/childcare responsibilities, 3) engagement in the wider labour market (Dyke & James, 2009).

Skilled migrant women face multiple levels of challenges when it comes to work life balance, due to the interweaving of work, gender, religion, ethnicity and both their home and host countries sociocultural contexts. Research has suggested that to successfully optimise work life balance policies in their workplace, migrant women must not only improve their self-efficacy but also develop their own strong networks within their organisations (Ali et al., 2017). However, a critique of this is the importance placed on individual agency to achieve WLB, while ignoring the role played by management in the workplace opportunities in the host country (IOM/OECD, 2014). Education opportunities are used to gain autonomy and independence (Beoku-Betts, 2008). This also encourages women to delay marriage and childbearing, enabling them to be increasingly mobile (Dumont et al., 2007).

2.5.7 Organisational Support

Skilled migrants who are welcomed and supported in their organisations feel more motivated to integrate into the host country (Cerdin et al., 2014). Diversity management practices and policies have been found to enhance workplace performance (Martin, 2015; Ng, 2008). Although adjustment is important in both work and non-work spheres, the focus is on the work domain (Agha-Alikhani, 2018). However, the organisational culture in most developed countries tends to stress individual achievement, competition, and rationality (Stone & Stone-Romero, 2004), making the ideal employee one who is individualistic and achievement-oriented. This significantly disadvantages migrants from collectivist societies.

Syed (2008) suggests that organisations per se are not able to manage skilled migrants, especially those coming from culturally diverse backgrounds. National culture tends to influence organisational culture and values, and these organisational values then impact job design, job specifications and prototypes of the ideal employee (Stone et al., 2007). This can lead to a host of negative consequences for individuals whose culture differs from that of the dominant culture in the host country. There are clear indications that organisations are changing their practices to be more inclusive. While recent migrant physicians in Finland, for example, did experience more positive organisational support compared to migrants who had been there longer, there were still clear distinctions between them and native counterparts in terms of being more on call, resulting in higher levels of stress (Aalto et al., 2014).

2.6 Summary of Migration

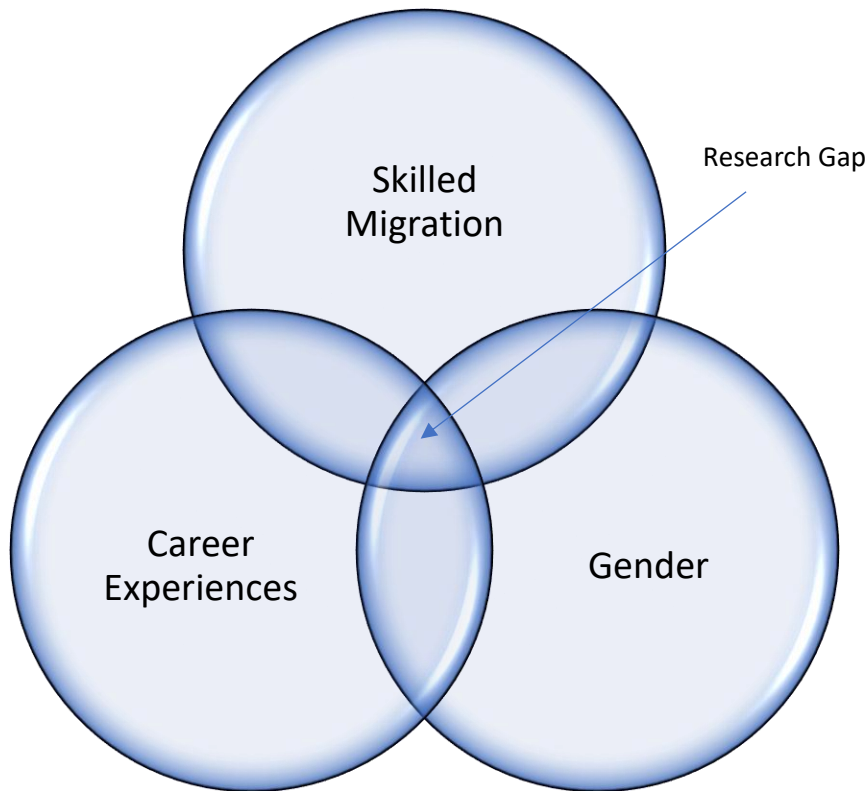
While the above literature review provides some insights into the lives and career experiences of skilled migrant women, further empirical studies giving skilled migrant women a voice are necessary to delve deeper into their multi-faceted and complex careers (and experiences). Migration itself is an additional complexity for skilled migrant women in their attempts to return to the workplace (Tharmaseelan et al., 2010). Lack of support networks from family and friends,

prioritising a spouse's career, and the gendered expectation that a woman be the primary carer for the family (Ho & Alcorso, 2004; Kofman, 2018) can cause skilled migrant women to become even more socially isolated and unable to fully integrate into the culture of the host country (Elo et al., 2020). In addition to this, there is a paucity of studies on the impact of organisational management on migrant women employees' work-life balance in Western contexts (Ali et al., 2017; Syed & Pio, 2010).

This study aims to provide a deeper contextual understanding of the career experiences of skilled migrant women in New Zealand using contemporary career theories as tools to facilitate this. Despite the increasing importance for more understanding of skilled migrant women's career experiences in the host country, there is currently no unifying framework from the migrant and/or career literature. Several theoretical approaches have been used by researchers to understand the experiences and outcomes of migrants in their host country. While some theoretical perspectives focus on the motivation to migrate and subsequent career and employment outcomes, others focus on the challenges faced, acculturation process and coping strategies utilised by migrants (Farashah & Blomquist, 2021). Figure 1 shows the research gap for this study.

Figure 1

Research Gap



Thus far, the literature review has provided an in-depth overview of the experiences of skilled migrant women as portrayed in the existing literature. The following sections will introduce and discuss seminal theoretical frameworks from the skilled migrant and career literatures which have attempted to explain migration and career pathways. These frameworks are critically examined and brought together in a cohesive manner to explore how they apply to the career experiences of skilled migrant women in New Zealand. This will then be used to frame this research and provide an in depth understanding of the interplay of multi-layered and multi-faceted experiences that shape skilled migrant women’s careers in New Zealand. First, key migrant theoretical frameworks will be discussed (Section 2.7) followed by several key career theories (Section 2.8).

Part Two: Migrant and Career Frameworks

2.7 Migrant Frameworks

This interdisciplinary study adopts a multifaceted approach by drawing on various academic disciplines to gain a comprehensive understanding of the process of career rebuilding that skilled migrant women undertake in their host country. Part two of this chapter delves into migration theories that are particularly relevant to this study, following an extensive literature review spanning migration, international migration, skilled migration, and the experiences of skilled migrant women. However, before delving into these theories it's crucial to revisit the foundations of the migration theory and delve into the concepts of human capital and social capital.

In the contemporary era, migration has grown both in volume and complexity. Although the 21st century has witnessed a surge in migration patterns, the research focus on international migrants initially centred around Human Capital Theory (HCT). This theory posits that migration is motivated by a cost-benefit analysis, wherein an individual's migration decision hinges on their skills, education, abilities, and knowledge (Almeida et al., 2012). HCT suggests that the skill level of a migrant is pivotal to their success in the host country's job market (Ho, 2006; Humphries et al., 2013). Yet, this perspective tends to overlook the significant influence employers wield over migrants' job placements, potentially leading to mismatches between skills and positions. While HCT anticipates that highly skilled migrants will contribute to the host country's labour market and result in brain gain, it often disregards the power dynamics in play and neglects the nuanced interplay between an individual's skills and their actual career trajectory (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011).

Critics argue that an over-reliance on HCT, particularly in quantitative research, tends to highlight success stories while ignoring the broader reality that skilled migrants encounter in the host labour markets (Al Ariss & Syed; 2011; Ho & Alcorso, 2004; Mahmud et al., 2014; Syed, 2008). This approach fails to capture the nuances and complexity of socio-cultural and

organisational challenges skilled migrants face. Additionally, HCT's limited focus on skills neglects the broader factors such as home country qualifications, pre-migration career trajectory, and motivation, which can significantly shape how migrants rebuild their careers post-migration. Furthermore, this singular emphasis on human capital has contributed to a skewed representation of skilled migrants' career journeys, often painting a grim picture of poor career outcomes and struggles in the host country (Crowley-Henry et al., 2018). Critics argue that a comprehensive understanding of migrant career development necessitates considering a range of capital types beyond human capital (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011; Tharmaseelan et al., 2010).

One alternative perspective that has gained traction is the incorporation of social capital. Social capital refers to an individual's network of social relationships, encompassing bonding, bridging, and linking relations (Shin & Choi, 2015). While bridging relations can enhance job opportunities and economic growth, co-ethnic networks also play a vital role in facilitating settlement and integration within the host country (Piracha et al., 2016; Sabatini, 2009). Social networks can aid in finding employment, but they often lead to lower-skilled jobs (Gericke et al., 2018). However, the interplay between social capital and human capital can potentially offer skilled migrants a quicker route into the host country's labour market, particularly for skilled migrant women.

Despite the advancements in understanding of the interplay between human and social capital, a holistic comprehension of skilled migrant women's career outcomes remains incomplete. The absence of interdisciplinary research has hindered a nuanced exploration of the challenges skilled migrant women face in their host countries. This deficiency overlooks the intersectionality of migration status with social role identities and presupposes a direct link between migrants skills and labour market achievements.

As this study delves into various theoretical frameworks to comprehensively analyse skilled migrant women's career experiences, it follows the trajectory of seminal migration theories

proposed by Syed (2008) and Tharmaseelan et al., (2010). These frameworks, followed by the works of van den Bergh and du Plessis (2012), Shirmohammadi et al., (2018), Al Ariss (2010), and Cerdin et al., (2014), collectively offer a comprehensive analysis of skilled migrant women's careers in their host countries. By employing these theories, this research aims to unearth a holistic understanding of skilled migrant women's career trajectories and experiences, considering various interrelated factors that shape their journey.

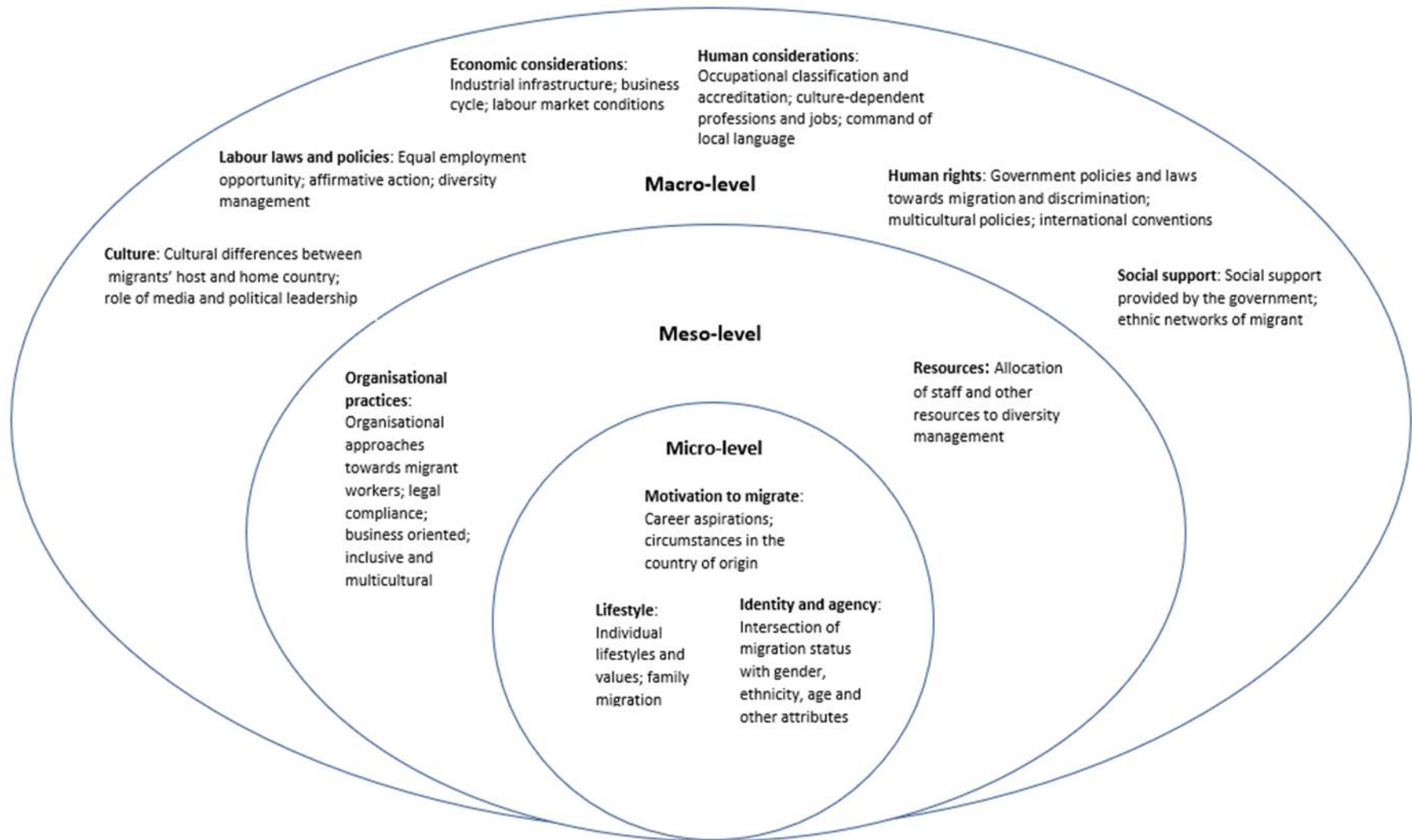
2.7.1 A Relational Perspective

Syed (2008) was one of the first to examine the relational perspective on employment prospects for migrant workers. Subsequently, there have been several studies applying the relational perspective in research on skilled migrants, gender equality and diversity research (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011; Fosslund, 2013; Hennekam et al., 2017; Rajendran et al., 2020). Using Bourdieu's (1986) theory of capital and conceptualisation of social, cultural, and economic capital as their starting point, Al Ariss & Syed (2011) offer a relational perspective to explain skilled migration capital mobilisation. This perspective considers the agency of skilled immigrants as well as the institutional and structural factors that determine their reality (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011; Erel, 2019; Kim, 2018). The labour market in the host nation presents skilled migrants with a number of interconnected and interdependent multilevel obstacles, according to Syed, who recognised the need to elaborate on the human capital theory. Syed (2008) focuses on the employment contexts of migrant employees at the micro (individual), macro (national/societal), and meso (organisational) levels, based on Syed and Özbilgin's (2007) relational framework for managing diversity, in an effort to capture the interplay of multilevel challenge as well as structural and intersectional aspects of equality (as shown in Figure 2). Syed argues that individual workplace experiences and perspectives do not exist in a state of independence but are interlinked and contribute to macro-national and meso-organisational consequences to diversity. It is important

to note that Syed's research focused on exploring the multilevel issues that skilled migrants from developing countries faced in their attempts to find employment in developed countries.

Figure 2

A Relational Framework for Managing Skilled International Migrants (Syed, 2008)



Economic context and human capital considerations play a key role in defining skilled migrants' career trajectories in the host labour market. Syed (2008), however, argues that unless issues of diversity and discrimination are simultaneously dealt with on multiple levels, organisations are limited in how they effectively manage migrant workers. The relational perspective posits that micro-individuals, meso-organisational and macro-national levels are interdependent, with individual workplace experiences, perspectives, and outcomes a result of multilevel challenges alongside structural and intersectional concerns of equality (Syed, 2008). Macro-national factors impacting the career trajectories of skilled migrants are societal factors such as ethnicity, language, religion, economic and legal factors. Syed (2008) stated that migration flowed predominantly from developing to developed countries, making economic context and human capital factors of migration important. Recognition and accreditation of foreign skills, qualifications and work experience is also critical to skilled migrant career outcomes and yet it is ignored in host countries (Adhikari & Melia, 2015; Warman et al., 2015).

The legal context at the macro-level is important for migrants at both the human rights level and the labour market level. From the human rights perspective, anti-discrimination legislation is in place to protect the rights of migrants. However, the onus of reporting and filing a discrimination charge is on the individual, and migrants are at a distinct disadvantage in this with limited knowledge, awareness, and resources to pursue any legal case. There is also the fear that it will lead to further difficulties for them in the labour market, especially in small countries such as New Zealand where networks play a significant role in finding employment.

The meso-organisational level sits between the macro-national and meso-individual levels and consists of workplace diversity policies. With increasing human rights and equal opportunity laws coming into effect, organisations have had no choice but to incorporate diversity and inclusion practices in the workplace. However, these diversity programs are not being implemented adequately as most organisations are not tapping into the pool of skilled

migrants and as a result new skilled migrant are underutilised (Burke and Ng, 2006). With regards to migrant workers, organisations are not going beyond minimum legal compliance, and this results in skilled migrants facing challenges in the labour market despite skill shortages. Any language except English is underrated and considered illiterate. With no legislation protecting the rights of migrants as equal in the workplace, cultural diversity remains neglected at the meso-organisational level. Organisations prefer to keep the status quo, or at most, only having gradual cultural change towards inclusive workplaces, complying only with the minimum legal requirements (Syed & Kramar, 2009). However, for migrants, positive and inclusive workplace experiences with host country colleagues can lead to increased integration and better career outcomes (Rajendra et al., 2020).

Lastly, micro-level factors relate to personal agency and the ability of migrants to progress in their host country. Despite macro-national and meso-organisational opportunities and barriers, some skilled migrants do progress in their career in the host country utilising their own resources. Therefore, it is important to understand the interplay between individual agency and the contextual factors in the host country that influence these migrant workers in their career aspirations and experiences. While human capital theory posits that migrants' home country skill and work experience explains their labour outcomes, Syed (2008) argues the relational interplay between employment opportunity structures and individual agency plays a more significant role. Several individual-level factors can have implications for migrants' careers, for example the individual's motivation for working abroad (Meijering & van Hoven, 2003). Skilled migrants are motivated to migrate for numerous reasons, such as the desire to work abroad, career development and new opportunities, personal development, financial gain, escaping unfavourable living conditions among some. All these motivating factors can influence skilled migrant's career trajectories in some way. Migrants wanting to escape undesirable living conditions might be more willing to accept lower skilled jobs, whilst those

wanting personal and professional development may be more open to retraining and upskilling in the host country.

Migrants' perceptions and expectations upon arrival into the host country are also relevant when considering the difficulties they face finding satisfactory employment (Hajro et al., 2018). A key psychological challenge faced by skilled migrants relates to whether they should accept a lower skilled, lower-paid job or wait to find an appropriate role aligned to their skills and qualifications. However, research shows that the longer the chronological gap skilled migrants have from their professional career, the more likely they are to lose motivation and capability (referred to as skills atrophy) and the more difficult it will be for them to get back into their career (Cameron et al., 2019; Farashah et al., 2023; Remennick, 2003). For skilled migrant women, this psychological challenge is further compounded with their multiple identities such as wife and mother (Mahuteau & Junankar, 2008; Riaño, 2021). Multiple and intersecting identities play a crucial role in the labour market outcomes of skilled migrants, especially women, in the host country (Rodriguez & Scurry, 2019).

The relational perspective helps develop a realistic and holistic understanding of the work-related issues and challenges faced by skilled migrants at macro-national, meso-organisational, and micro-individual levels. Understanding these challenges is critical to develop diversity management policies in organisations and in society at large (Syed, 2008). The relational levels are tightly interdependent and interrelated, with each of the three levels overlapping with the other in several instances. The example Syed (2008) provides is NESB migrants in Australia who report facing complex challenges arising from their ethnic identity as well as job-related attributes such as Asian qualifications and English language ability. The individual's social identity (micro) overlaps with the skill and human capital (macro and meso) factors in the host country. Thus, the human capital narrative of skilled migrants needs to be

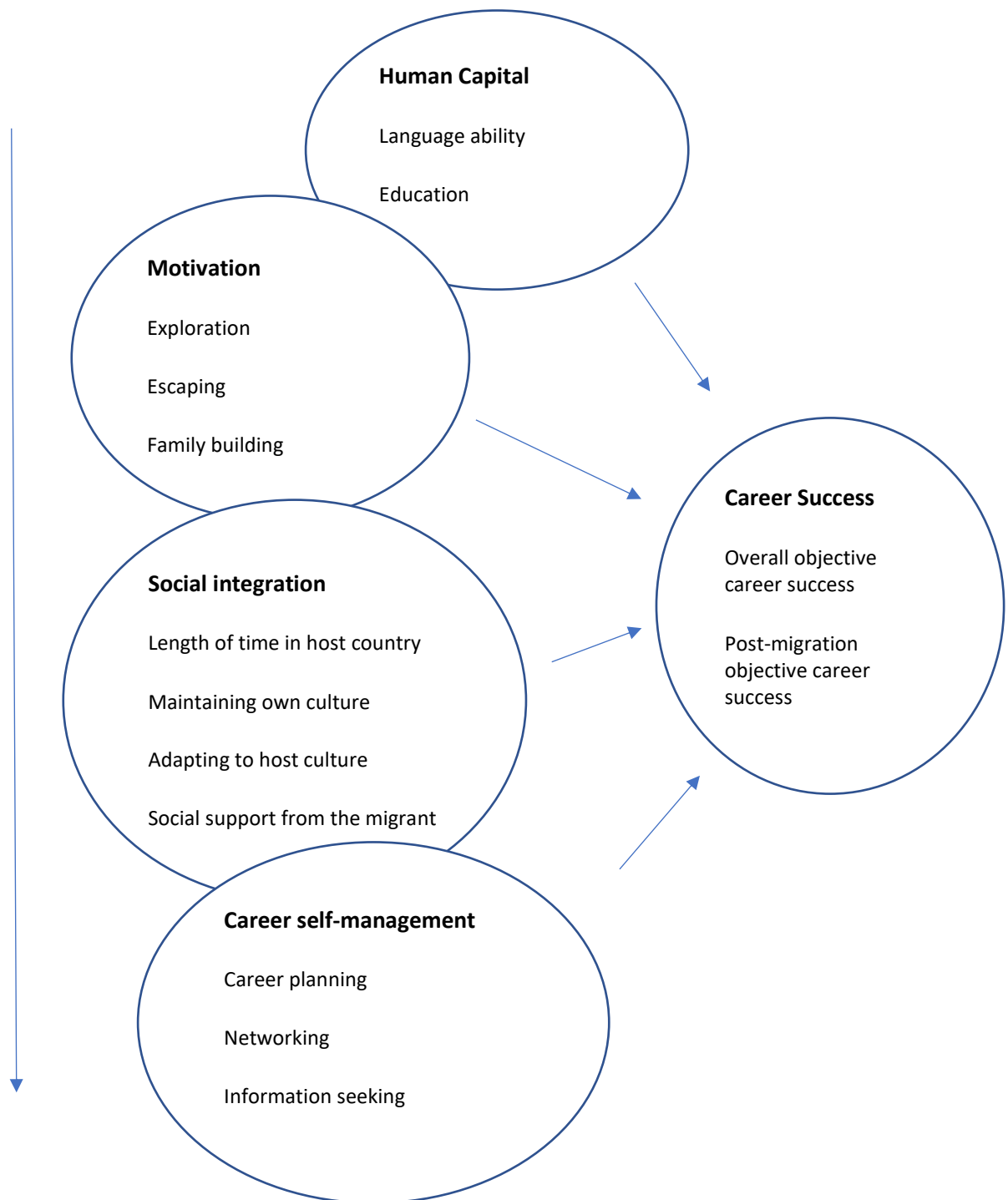
expanded to include the multilevel challenges such as socio-cultural, organisational, and psychological factors faced in the host country.

2.7.2 The Integrated Model

The integrated model assimilates the pre-migration and post-migration labour market to explore post-migration career outcomes (Tharmaseelan et al., 2010), and seeks to measure the degree to which migrants are able to progress in their careers post-migration. Human capital, motivation, social integration, and career self-management theoretical perspectives are taken into consideration to explain labour market outcomes (Figure 3). Key individual level predictors of positive career outcomes, incorporating pre-migration and post-migration aspects to get a fuller understanding of how the migrant careers progressed post-migration are examined within the context of coming from a lower-income economy, Sri Lanka, to a higher-income economy, New Zealand.

Figure 3

The Integrated Model (Tharmaseelan et al., 2010)



Pre-migration, the human capital perspective explained how migrants built up their careers through education and experience (Ng et al., 2005; Winterheller & Hirt, 2017). This then forms the base of their post-migration careers. The motivation perspective focuses on the migration process, after the career has been established. Post-migration, the social integration perspective explores the social isolation and cultural differences experienced by migrants in a new country. Accumulated social and professional capital may have no value in the host country, and acculturation may also be prominent. Social integration and acculturation in the host country could potentially assist skilled migrant women rebuild their careers (Berry & Sam, 1997; Hajro et al., 2019; Kavian et al., 2021). Adoption of acculturation strategies, increasing social capital as migrants' time in their host country increases and social support received from the local community as well as the migrants' own ethnic community will impact career progression and settlement.

The final post-migration perspective in the Tharmaseelan et al. model, is career self-management. This relates to the career planning and attempts by the migrant to enhance their career through further education, strategic planning, and professional networking. This links in with career literature, and the early career research that a traditional career is linear, within one company. Careers are now viewed as being agentic, proactively guided by the individual themselves (Akkermans et al., 2018; Inkson, 2015) through networking, career planning and further education.

Tharmaseelan et al.'s (2010) integrated model of migration and career success was one of the first initial attempts to gain an integrated understanding of the various predictors of career success during migration. A key finding of their study was that the home country education and career experience of migrants were not recognised in New Zealand, resulting in brain waste. For skilled migrants, failure to gain the desired job can result in feelings of relative deprivation when it came to subjective career success (Geurts et al., 2020). Motivation to migrate was also found to

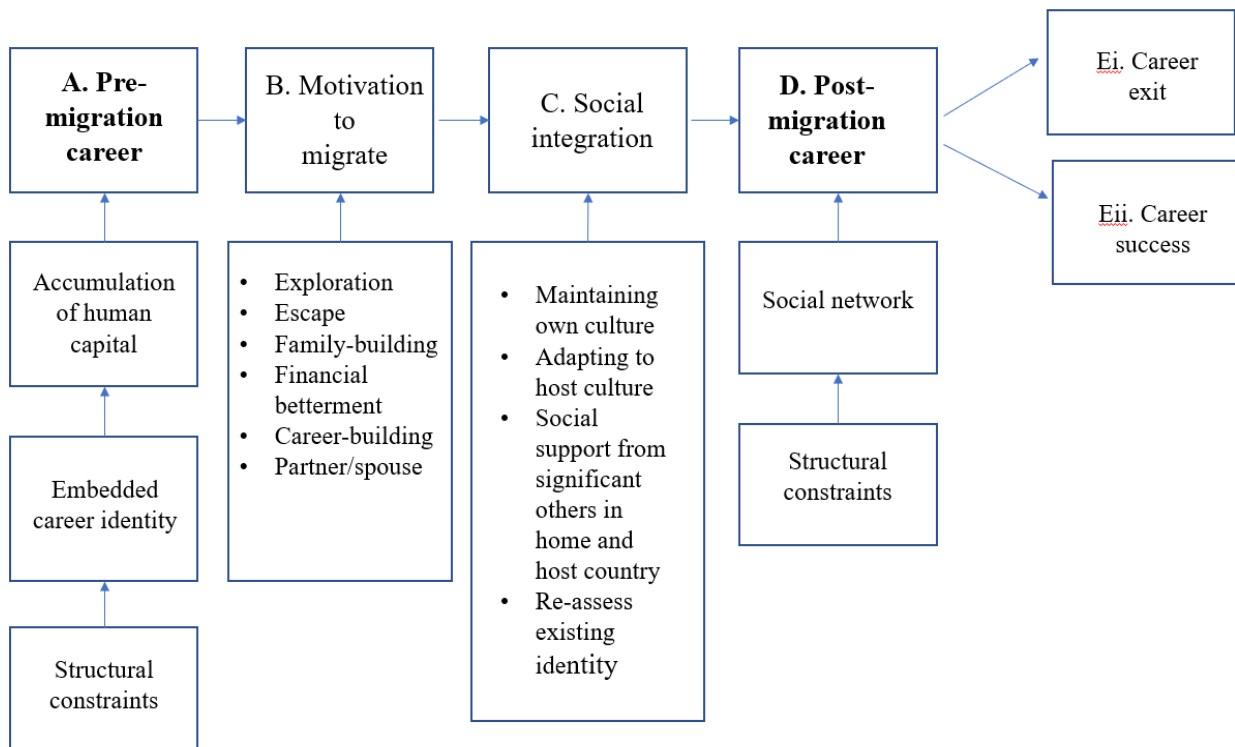
be least predictive in terms of career success, conflicting with previous research (Gibson & McKenzie, 2011) and subsequent research (Cerdin et al., 2014). The strength of this model is how it incorporates both pre-migration and post-migration factors in determining career success. In assuming a degree of permanence in the migration process regarding the skilled migrants' career before and after migration, it contradicts boundaryless and protean careers which promote the concepts of changeable and adaptable careers. This model also does not take into consideration organisational and national barriers (structural constraints) that skilled migrants face in the host country and which impact career outcomes.

2.7.3 Highly Skilled Migrant Women: A Career Development Framework

The theoretical perspectives of van den Bergh and du Plessis (2012) were the basis for a new systematic framework which integrates and expands on the theoretical perspectives of Tharmaseelan et al. (2010) and Volpe and Murphy (2010) to better understand skilled migrant women's career development in the host country (Figure 4). A key strength of Tharmaseelan et al.'s (2010) time-sequenced integrated model is consideration of the individual's career before and after migration, making it useful for the current study which seeks to understand how skilled migrant women's careers unfold over time. Volpe and Murphy's (2011) research focused on the influence of identity formation and social networks in order to understand why married women exit their careers. Developing this work, van den Bergh, and du Plessis (2012) suggest that migrant women inevitably have no choice but to re-build new careers in their host country. The aim with their conceptual framework was to understand the career development of skilled migrant women pre-migration and post-migration, as well as explore and interpret their career experiences.

Figure 4

A Conceptual Framework of Highly Skilled Migrant Women's Career Barriers and Support Structures (van den Bergh & du Plessis., 2012)



Starting with the pre-migration career, this model expands on Tharmaseelan et al., (2010) by adding embedded career identity and structural constraints as key drivers in the career choices women make in their home country. Women's identities are entrenched in the various roles and social networks they are part of in their home country and this embedded identity influences their career pathway. Likewise, their home country career options are also influenced by the structural constraints they may face (Volpe & Murphy, 2011).

Moving to motivation to migrate, the addition of partner/spouse is the only difference to the Tharmaseelan et al., (2010) model. Previous studies have found that having a native host country partner or spouse can be a critical factor in opting out of the home country career and building a new career in the host country (Volpe & Murphy, 2011). Motivation to migrate was found to influence structural barriers for skilled migrant women by van den Bergh and du Plessis

(2012). Migrating as a partner of a native citizen made them feel as if they were not as competent as expatriate transferees. While Tharmaseelan et al., (2010) found no predictive relationship between motivation to migrate and career outcome, Cerdin et al., (2014) and Froese (2012) in their later studies, found a positive relationship between motivation to migrate and adjustment, integration, and career outcome in the host country.

In post-migration, social integration is considered critical to skilled migrant women's career outcomes as well as acculturation into the host country. The key difference between this framework and Tharmaseelan et al.'s (2010) model is that it omits length of time in the host country but has the addition of identity which it links to the individual's embedded career identity pre-migration. Women's career identities are strongly influenced and rooted within their relationships and social networks (Volpe & Murphy, 2011) and therefore play a large role in how they rebuild their career identities in the host countries. The impact of adapting to the host country culture was an ongoing process which significantly influenced skilled migrant women's identity, with some claiming that it meant losing part of themselves in the process. A critical finding by van den Bergh and du Plessis (2012) is the increased contact participants had with their support networks in their home country - a finding that potentially reflects increasing technology.

Despite fluency in the native language, and trying to overcome their accents, individuals found that they were labelled foreigners. Likewise, employers were reluctant to take them on due to their status of being 'foreigners'. The final career outcome in van den Bergh and du Plessis's (2012) model are career exit or career success. Unlike Tharmaseelan et al. (2010), only subjective career success is considered as women have been found not to consider their career as a separate entity in their lives. Participants who exited their careers post-migration did so predominantly due to the burden of childcare and household duties. Post-migration career exit can potentially be correlated to several inter-related factors such as discrimination, lack of inclusive human resource organisational policies limiting opportunities to skilled migrants, socio-economic issues, or lack

of home country credential and experience recognition in the host country (Al Ariss, 2010; Al Ariss & Özbilgin, 2010; Tharmaseelan et al., 2010). Organisations need to create workplace environments which foster opportunities for women to create networks and share knowledge (Park, 2009). This would help women achieve personal career satisfaction and increase retention.

Previous research on migration acculturation suggests that moving to another country means that these women need to rebuild not only their careers, but also their lives (Al Ariss & Özbilgin, 2010; Tan, 2023). They must rebuild social support structures to replace life-long ones from their home countries. For women in a life phase where she would be seeking stability, she needs to start at the beginning in both her career and social life. Adapting to a new country also has a big impact on skilled migrant women's identities and self-esteem. A lack of positive reinforcement and numerous external barriers can potentially increase feelings of uncertainty and lead to opting out of their careers. A key theme that needs further exploration is the role of age and life phase development on post-migration careers for skilled migrant women. Women migrating at the start of the career pathway may struggle to establish themselves and their identity in the host country, especially if they feel they are considered a foreigner. Older women in the 35–40-year age group with established careers embedded in their home countries have to re-establish themselves when opting to migrate. They must rebuild their careers and support networks.

A key gap identified by van den Bergh and du Plessis (2012) in the migrant women literature is the role of age and life phase development on their career progression and development. This is taken into consideration in this research through the inclusion of O'Neil and Bilimoria's (2005) three-phase career model of women's career development (Section 3.2.1). While van den Bergh and du Plessis' (2012) study is limited to challenges faced by women migrating within Europe, it can be utilised to understand the experiences of women from other countries.

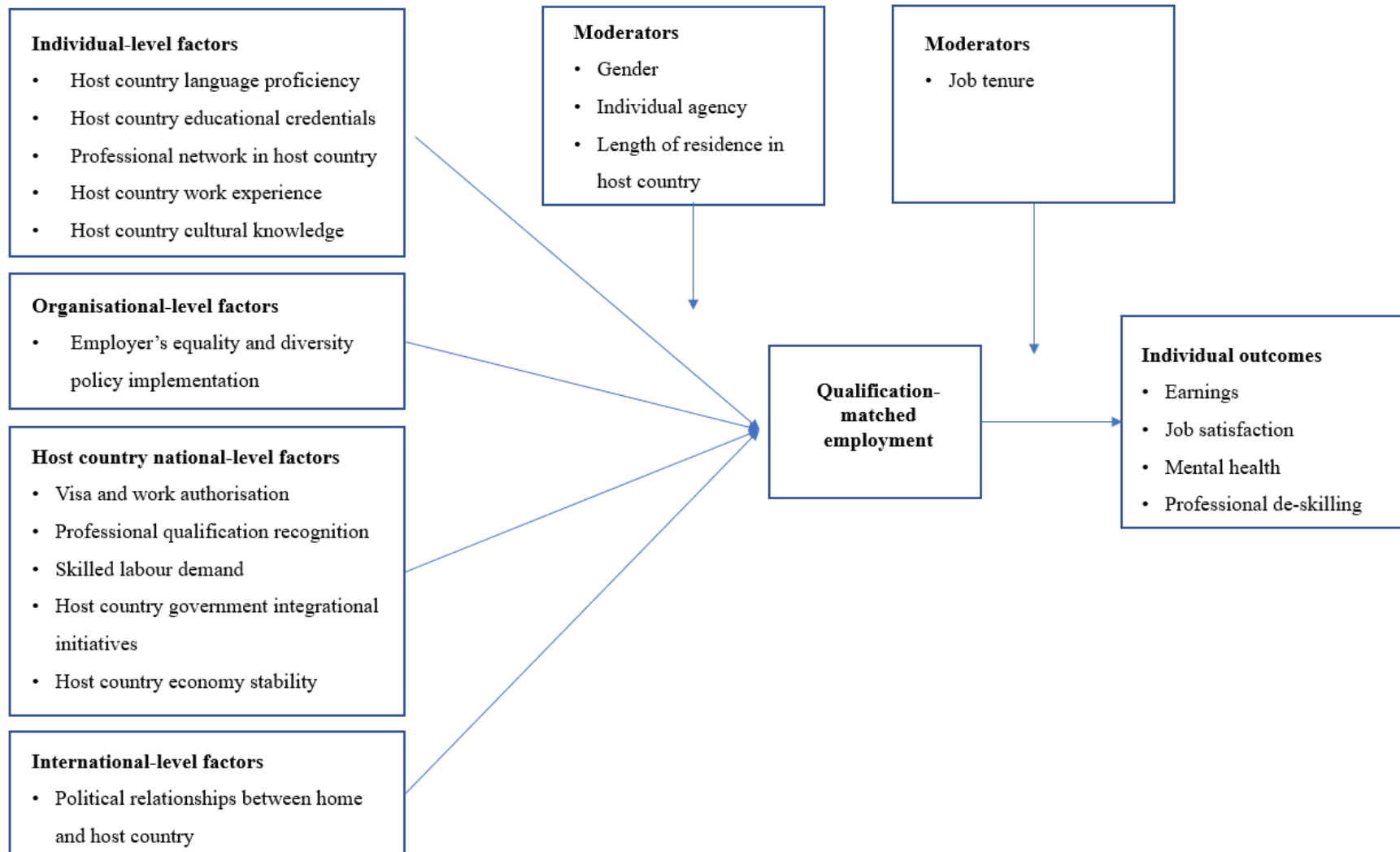
2.7.4 Skilled Migrants' Qualification-Matched Employment

Recognising that international migration is multidisciplinary, Shirmohammadi et al. (2018) undertook a systematic literature review, where they synthesized the findings of 106 empirical studies published between 1990 to mid-2017 in journals across five disciplines: management (17), demography (17), economics (16), geography (14), and sociology (10). Their analysis suggested that skilled migrant employment in the literature could be situated into two classifications: qualification-matched or qualification-unmatched employment. For a skilled migrant to be in the qualification-matched status, their skills and professional background needs to match the criteria of the job that they obtain in the host country (Banerjee & Mai, 2014). A skilled migrant who has accepted a job below their skillset and not in line with the qualifications is deemed to have qualification-unmatched status (McDonald & Valenzuela, 2017). After integrating the results from the review, Shirmohammadi et al (2018) developed a conceptual model (Figure 5).

The conceptual model of Shirmohammadi et al. (2018) is informed by Syed's (2008) relational framework. Comparable to Syed's (2008) micro-, meso- and macro-levels contributing to skilled migrants' employment prospects, Shirmohammadi et al.'s (2018) focus on factors linking to skilled migrants' qualification-matched employment at the individual, organisational, and host country national, and international levels. Their conceptual model integrates research findings related with qualification-matched employment with individual level outcomes and elucidates factors functioning as moderators of the relationships among qualification-matched employment, its antecedents, and its outcomes. In the model, individual-level factors, organisational-level factors, host country national-level factors and international-level factors play a key role in whether skilled migrants can find qualification-matched employment. Shirmohammadi et al. (2008) also elucidate factors which moderate the relationship between its antecedents and its outcomes.

Figure 5

Conceptual Model of Skilled Migrants' Qualification-Matched Employment in Host Country (Shirmohammadi et al., 2018)



For the individual level factors, host country language proficiency was found to be important. Those with lower levels of proficiency struggle to obtain qualification-matched employment in the host country (Mulholland & Ryan, 2014; Peltokorpi & Xie, 2023; Winterheller & Hirt, 2017). However, having host country qualifications increased skilled migrants' opportunities in obtaining work aligned to their experience and qualifications (Oreopoulos, 2009), compared to those with qualifications from countries other than their host country (Rejendran et al., 2020). This has led to skilled migrants choosing to gain new credentials or retrain in their host country to level the playing field with host country graduates (Banerjee & Mai, 2014; Zikic et al., 2010). Social networks (also referred to as social capital) have a positive relationship with employment opportunities for skilled migrants in the host country. Social networks ranged from co-ethnic, family, friends, personal contacts, as well as professional networks. Studies have found that pre-existing professional networks in the host country were the most efficient during the early stages of settlement in terms of enabling skilled migrants to gain work aligned to their skills and experience (Shirmohammadi et al., 2019; Thondhlana et al., 2016). Skilled migrants whose networks were limited to family members and co-ethnic networks faced the most difficulty and challenges in finding employment within their industry and on par with their home country qualifications and experiences (Winterheller & Hirt, 2017).

Also included in the individual level factors are host country work experience and cultural knowledge. A lack of host country work experience is highly detrimental to skilled migrants' ability to rebuild their careers (Liversage, 2009; Thondhlana et al., 2016). Lack of recognition of skilled migrants' home country experience by employers is a significant barrier to secure appropriate industry-related work (Mahmud et al., 2014). Skilled migrants who do, however, take on lower skilled but industry-specific work experience, then increase their chances of rebuilding their careers (Blackmore et al., 2017). Likewise, cultural understanding of the host country is essential for skilled migrants applying for work in businesses which primarily served local markets

(Aure, 2013; Fosslund, 2013), and a lack of understanding is a significant barrier for skilled migrants in obtaining appropriate industry-related employment (Kim et al., 2014).

With regards to organisational-level factors, there are many studies which have found that skilled migrants experience both recruitment and selection discrimination (Blackmore et al., 2017; Dietz et al., 2015; Waxin et al., 2021). In most cases, skilled migrants' experiences of discrimination transpire due to their employer's perceptions and biases (Dumitru, 2018; Hajro et al., 2019). Employer biases in selection against specific countries of origin (usually developing countries) reduce skilled migrants' career opportunities (Adamovic, 2022; Gandini & Lozano-Ascencio, 2016). Skilled migrants from developed countries benefit from employer positive perceptions in terms of obtaining employment matching their skills and qualifications (Faaliyat et al., 2021).

Host country national-level factors include visa and work authorisation, professional qualification recognition, skilled labour demand, host country government integrational initiatives and host country economy stability. Skilled migrants' access to appropriate employment in their industry, career development and salary negotiations have been found to be impacted by the visa they hold when they enter the host country (Campbell & Burgess, 2018; Kim et al., 2014). Those on temporary work visas are the most vulnerable (Wright & Clibborn, 2020), and this has increased in recent years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Clibborn & Wright, 2020). Female migrants accompanying their partners are also more likely to become deskilled and re-domesticated (Elitok & Nawyn, 2023). Professional migrants who require rigid credential licensing through specific professional bodies find it more difficult to obtain work in their career field at any level (Peterson et al., 2014), compared to skilled migrants in less regulated fields (Banerjee & Mai, 2014). Professional bodies acting as 'gatekeepers' control employment opportunities for skilled and professional migrants through the process of misrecognition of

migrants' qualifications, skills, and experiences (Kiseley et al., 2020; McHögberg et al., 2020; Webb, 2015).

Skilled migrants have a better chance of finding employment at their career level in labour market sectors most needed by the host country, and where there is a limited supply of native workers (Cantwell & Taylor, 2013; Groutsis, & Arnold, 2012). Governments, industry sectors, and organisations experiencing high demands for specific skills tend to have fewer rigid recruitment and selection criteria (Harris, 2014), would offer visa sponsorship (Bahn, 2015; Wright & Constantin, 2021), and often directly recruit from overseas (van Riemsdyk, 2013). There is a paucity of literature focusing on the integration initiatives for skilled migrants' career development by host country governments. Studies have found, however, that skilled migrants who undertake training programs offered by governments increase their chances of finding employment in their career fields (Myles et al., 2006). Unfortunately, there is a shortage of government integration initiatives and high-quality language courses which could assist migrants overcome barriers to career success. Lastly, skilled migrants are more likely to accept lower skilled jobs during times of economic instability in the host country (Gandini & Lozano-Ascencio, 2016; Kler, 2006).

The final level - the international-level factors - consists of political relationships between home and host country. While only a small number of studies have explored the impact of international factors on skilled migrants' career progression in the host country (Cantwell & Taylor, 2013; van Reimsdijk, 2013; Shirmohammadi et al., 2019), findings suggest that the political relationship between countries can impact skilled migrants' opportunities to gain qualification-matched work. For example, the September 11 terrorist attacks subsequently led to restricted access for residents of specific countries to Western labour markets and has led to a significant change in the perception of migrants in the eyes of the public (Hawthorne, 2010).

Shirmohammadi et al., (2018) found three moderators of the relationships between qualification-matched employment and its antecedents. The first one is gender, which has been explored in 18 studies. Skilled migrant women have less access to career opportunities on par with their skills and qualifications (Riaño, 2021), with only a small number being able to gain employment matching their skills and qualifications and numeration expectations (Gandini & Lozano-Ascencio, 2016; Kler, 2006). Female migrants are under-represented in business administration, engineering, and information technology, while their presence in the hospitality, caregiving and pre-school education sectors has increased (Gandini & Lozano-Ascencio, 2016). The second moderator is individual agency, which was found in 13 studies to assist skilled migrants overcome barriers finding appropriate employment in the host country. This agency includes further education (Thondhlana et al., 2016), improving language proficiency and extending social networks (Winterheller & Hirt, 2017), or showing resilience by persisting in job-hunting until they secure employment in their career field. The final moderator, length of residence in the host country, has a positive relationship between skilled migrants and gaining qualification-matched employment. Studies found that skilled migrants experienced some career mobility (Banerjee & Mai, 2014), after multiple job transitions (Liversage, 2009) and language proficiency improvement (Pelrokorpi & Xie, 2023; van Riemsdyk, 2013) over a long period of time in the host country.

Job tenure impacts skilled migrant women's earnings, job satisfaction, mental health, and professional de-skilling. If skilled migrants can secure employment, not only in their career field but on par with their skills, qualifications, and experience, then in most cases their incomes would be equal to or higher than in their home country (Lopez, 2012). However, a mismatch between their jobs and their skills not only has a negative association with their income (McDonald & Valenzuela, 2017), but skilled migrants who start with low-paid jobs are not able to catch up with native counterparts (Weiss et al., 2013). Challenges in the labour market, and the inability to

rebuild their career, has been found to result in anxiety and depression (Fong, 2023; Subedhi & Rosenberg, 2016). Skilled migrants who did find work aligned to their skills and experience, still reported a higher risk of burnout compared to native counterparts (Aalto et al., 2014).

Lastly, skilled migrants who end up in unskilled or lower skilled employment, even if it is in their own career field, felt they had become professionally de-skilled (Adhikari & Melia, 2015; Aure, 2013; Humphries et al., 2013). Job tenure moderates the relationship between qualification-matched employment and its outcomes. While some studies have shown that skilled migrants are more likely to suffer mental health and stress-related issues the longer they spend time in jobs not utilising their skills and qualifications (Subedi & Rosenberg, 2016; Tharenou & Kulik, 2020), other studies have suggested that skilled migrants in low-paid, low-skilled jobs could never catch up with the wages of their native counterparts (Weiss et al., 2003; Villarreal & Tamborini, 2018).

In summary, Shirmohammadi et al.'s (2018) conceptual model specifies antecedent, outcome, and moderating variables related to skilled migrants' qualification-matched employment in their host country. This highlights the multilevel nature of factors which impact skilled migrants' employment opportunities and addresses the paradox of why skilled migrants despite having professional skills and qualifications, are unable to gain employment commensurate with their qualifications. At the individual level, educational credentials, work experience, and professional networks are more closely linked to qualification matched employment when obtained in the host country. At the host country national level, government integration initiatives are important, and require further research so that these initiatives can better inform policy and practice. At the international level, the political relationship between home and host country must impact skilled migrants' employment. This aspect is unique as it goes beyond Syed's (2008) micro-, meso-and macro-level factors. With ongoing political unrest worldwide (for example, continuing Brexit issues, Iranian conflict, trump administration and impeachment and Russia's

war against Ukraine), this variable is argued to be critical to skilled migrants' professional lives and careers, yet largely outside their control.

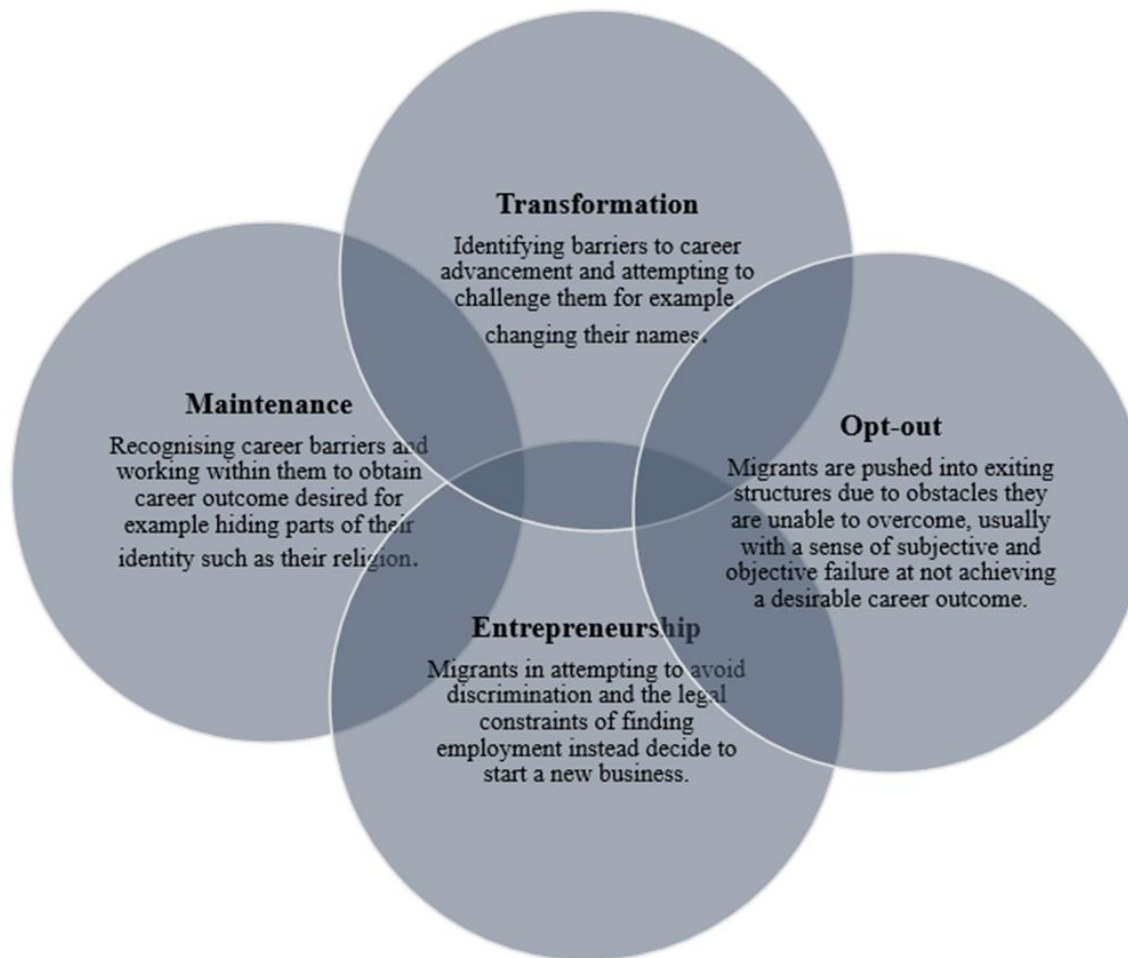
2.7.5 Modes of Engagement

Al Ariss (2010) developed a conceptual framework for analysing strategies utilised by skilled professional migrants to manage barriers they face in their careers in the host country. The framework is based on the career-centred approach by Duberley et al.'s (2006) and Richardson's (2009) concept of 'modes of engagement'. This conceptual framework is important in this study for two reasons. Firstly, it goes some way to explain how skilled migrants navigate structural barriers impacting their careers in their host country, which is a core part of this research, and secondly, Al Ariss (2010) uses Arthur et al.'s (1989) definition of career development ("the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time" p.8) allowing the precedent and merging of career theory with migration theory. In addition, this framework recognises that career success for skilled migrants is not just a linear process, but a dynamic and multifaceted journey shaped by various factors.

Duberley et al. (2006) and Richardson (2009) identified two modes of engagement, maintenance, and change. Al Ariss (2010) extends these concepts to four dominant modes, maintenance, transformation, entrepreneurship, and opt out (Figure 6). Migrants draw on these four modes of engagement at different times to develop their career, with transformation and entrepreneurship most often used. The four modes are interlinked, and individuals can transition from one mode to another.

Figure 6

The Interconnectedness of Modes of Engagement (Al Ariss, 2010)



The modes of engagement framework encompasses three key dimensions, agency, strategic flexibility, and sociocultural integration. Skilled migrants exercise agency by making deliberate choices and strategic decisions to navigate their career paths. They adapt their skills, education, and experiences to fit the host country's context and respond to labour market demands. This includes adjusting their professional identity, networking strategies, and job-seeking behaviours. Strategic flexibility underscores the importance of being adaptable and flexible in response to the evolving demands of the host country's labour market. Skilled migrants may need to switch industries, undertake further training, or accept lower-skilled positions temporarily to gain a foothold in their desired field. Finally, effective integration within the host country's sociocultural context is crucial for career success. Skilled migrants engage in social and cultural practices that enable them to establish connections, build relationships and gain insights into the local job market. This involves networking with diverse groups, understanding workplace norms, and participating in social activities. By combining these three dimensions, Al Ariss' (2010) illustrates how skilled migrants actively shape their career trajectories through intentional decisions, adaptability, and socio-cultural integration. This framework provides a more nuanced understanding of skilled migrants experiences beyond the traditional focus on skills and qualifications.

Al Ariss (2010) attempts to address three critical limitations in the internationally mobility literature: careers of professional migrants from developing countries, neglect and under research of ethnicity, and finally expansion on career barriers faced by migrants and their coping strategies. However, it's important to note that while Al Ariss' framework sheds light on migrants' active agency in their career development, it also raises questions about the structural constraints they may encounter. Human capital alone is not enough to overcome organisational and institutional barriers restricting skilled migrants' integration into the labour market. As discussed earlier, women and ethnic minorities are especially vulnerable and discriminated against in the workplace,

with women from ethnic minorities penalised twice. The extent to which they can exercise agency depends on factors such as discrimination, institutional barriers, and labour market conditions. While legal constraints and discrimination have been found to hinder skilled migrants' career development, Al Ariss (2010) found that individuals can manage their career trajectories by utilising the four strategies from their modes of engagement model to manage constraints and opportunities.

2.7.6 *Theory of Motivation to Integrate (TMI)*

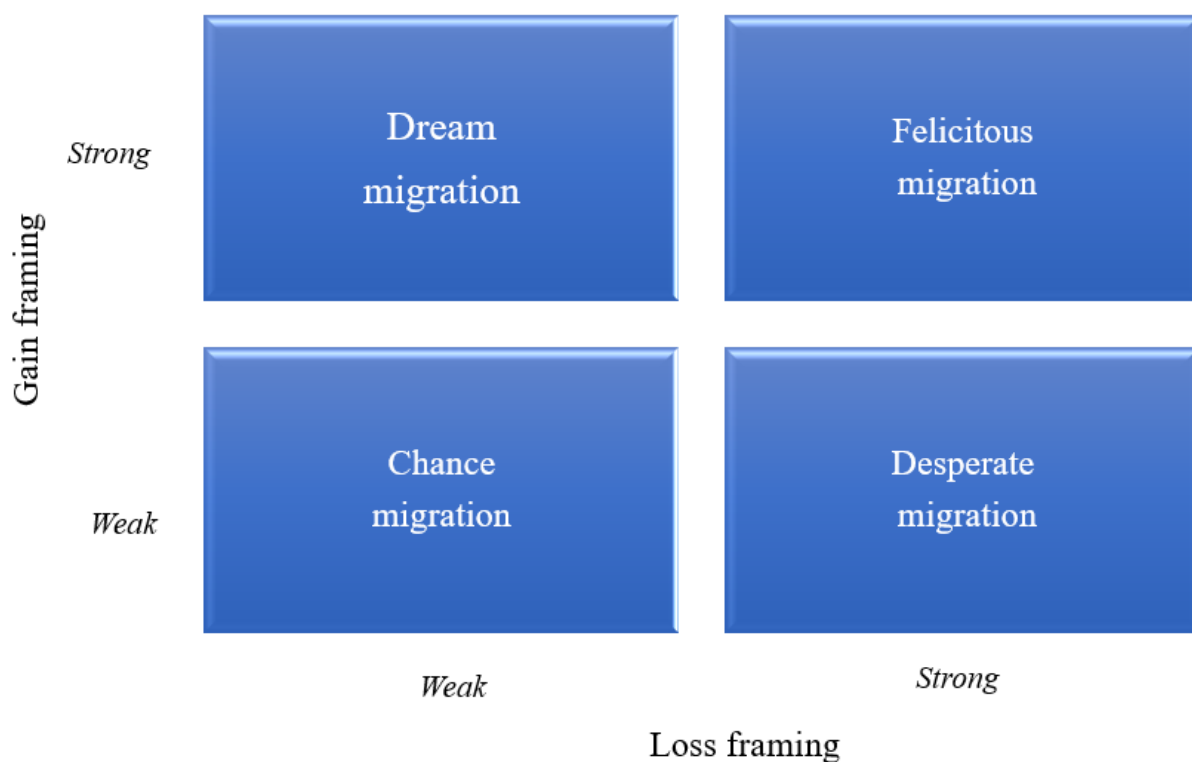
The relationship between motivation to migrate and subsequent integration requires further investigation especially in the context of skilled migrant women (Cerdin et al., 2014). The theory of motivation to integrate (TMI) is proposed to understand how skilled migrants motivation to integrate into their host country is a function of how they frame their migration experience in terms of gains and losses, prior to migrating. TMI, like Tharmaseelan et al.'s (2010) framework, considers both pre- and post-migration factors to understand migrant career outcomes, examining the relationship between motivation to migrate, motivation to integrate and integration into the host country (and subsequently the workplace). While the theory is well argued, it was important to include because the TMI has not been empirically tested.

The reasons behind migrating are usually a combination of factors embedded in the individual's life story, ranging from political and economic factors, career opportunities and family factors such as marriage to a native citizen. For women, the need to escape a difficult environment or an oppressive government in the home country can be an important driver. Cerdin et al. (2014) developed a fourfold classification typology of skilled migrants decisions to migrate, framing their motivation in terms of gains (in the host country) and losses (in the home country). The four typologies developed by Cerdin et al. (2014) are dream migration, chance migration, felicitous migration, and desperate migration (as seen in Figure 7). Post-migration was the only time that skilled migrants could ascertain the gap between expectation and reality. Motivation to

integrate increased if the reality was met or better than expected, while if not met, then it would decrease. So, for those who dream of a perfect outcome from migration, if the reality is negative, it can be devastating. This is like the response for felicitous skilled migrants; however, they were found to be more vulnerable than dream skilled migrants. For chance and desperate migrants with low expectations from their host country, any positive experience can have a strong impact on their efforts to integrate, while negative experiences simply reinforce their expectations and thus lead to reduced efforts to integrate into the host country. These migrants are considerably less vulnerable to negative experiences than dream or felicitous migrants.

Figure 7

Typology of Skilled Migrants Mobility according to their Motivation to Migrate (Cerdin et al., 2014)

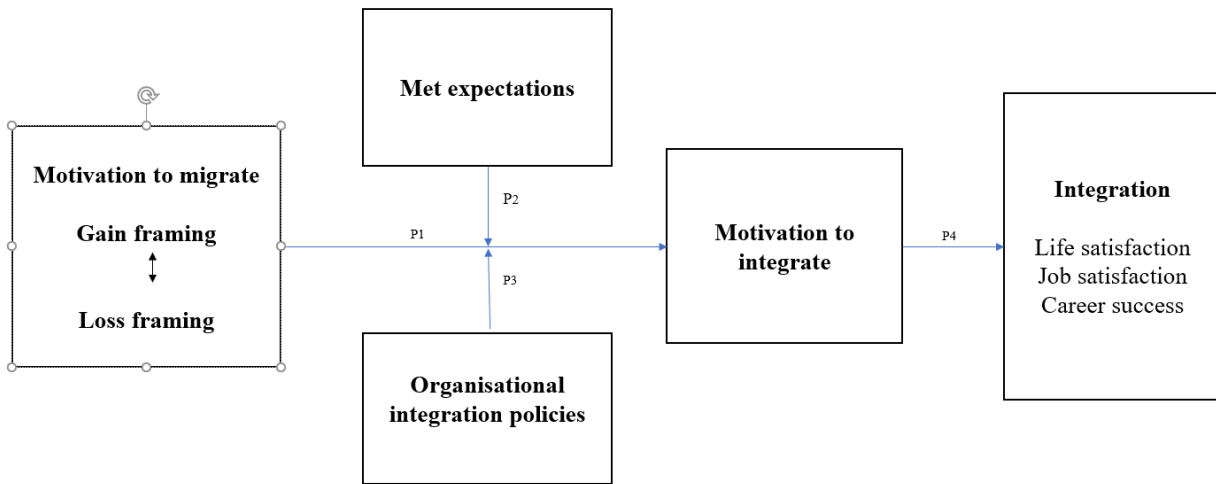


There is also a link between organisational policies and skilled migrants' motivation to integrate (Cerdin et al., 2014). Migrants who feel supported by their organisations are more motivated to integrate. Organisational integration policies allow skilled migrants to compensate

for losing their home career and therefore make the relationship between motivation to migrate and motivation to integrate stronger. So, motivation to integrate is dependent on whether skilled migrants' expectations of migration are met or not, as well as integration effects by the organisation. Figure 8 demonstrates how framing migration in terms of gains or losses allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the motivation to migrate. TMI builds a relationship between the decision to migrate and the effort in integrating, emphasizing the importance of motivation to integrate as critical to skilled migrants' integration. Skilled migrants are increasingly important to organisations, and the TMI framework adopts an integrative approach useful to international business literature. Met expectations and organisational integration policies moderate the relationship between motivation to migrate and motivation to integrate, varying in levels for the various types of skilled migrants. While met expectations will mediate this relationship through gain framing, organisational integration policies moderate through loss framing. The last part of the framework recognises a relationship between motivation to integrate and integration success. In this framework, integration success is both objective and subjective success encompassing life and job satisfaction and career success. The more skilled migrants were motivated to integrate, the more likely they would achieve life satisfaction, job satisfaction and career satisfaction.

Figure 8

Theoretical Framework of Skilled Migrants' Integration (Cerdin et al., 2014)



While the four types of skilled or qualified migrants provide a good base for future research on the relationship between motivation to migrate and motivation to integrate, this may not be adequate in understanding the true complexity skilled migrant women face in terms of integration. The theoretical framework does fit with existing literature and considers not only decision-making prior to migration but also the lived experiences in the host country. The focus seems to be leaning towards skilled migrants needing to adapt and integrate into the workplace culture, rather than the implementation of integration policies. Providing mentoring and training to minority groups to integrate into the new host country's workplace culture may not necessarily lead to them feeling more committed and loyal to the workplace. Integration training may be more beneficial and effective if it is provided to native and dominant employee groups to enhance their inclusion and acceptance skills. This would, in turn, encourage more acceptance of diverse thinking and workplace practices. Cerdin et al. (2014) suggest that their framework will assist HRM professionals to manage their migrants appropriately, by considering their differences and then taking steps to increase their motivation to integrate. The authors do not expand on how this

would work in practice. However, TMI offers an improved understanding of antecedents and moderators of integration for skilled migrants. For the purposes of this study, TMI is a useful framework by which to develop understanding the role motivation to migrate plays in terms of how migrants integrate into the local community and workplace.

2.7.7 Summary of Migrant Theoretical Frameworks

As can be seen from the Table 1, none of the theories examined above give a complete picture of the career and life experiences migrants have in their host nation. Instead, each theory provides a separate piece of the puzzle. While Syed's (2008) relational perspective offers a holistic comprehension of the challenges skilled migrants face across different levels of analysis, he doesn't take into consideration any pre-migration factors such as the skilled migrants human and social capital, identity, or structural constraints. Nor does it explore the career outcomes of skilled migrants beyond factors impacting them post-migration. Tharmaseelan et al. (2010) and van den Bergh and du Plessis do consider pre-migration, motivation to migrate, post-migration and career outcomes, they each focus on different elements of skilled migrant women's experiences.

Table 1 provides a chronological comparison of these various migration theories across the entire migration journey. What is immediately apparent from this table is that there is no one theory which currently considers all factors of the migration. The most recent theory for example, (Shirmohammadi et al., 2018) focuses only on the latter stages of the journey, beginning at post-migration. The most inclusive theory is the one developed by van den Bergh and du Plessis which incorporates all aspects but fails to consider the societal, organisational, and individual characteristics which can impact the journey. Together, these five theories illustrate the current body of knowledge, and demonstrate the complex dynamics in the skilled migrant women's migration journey. Most of these theories have been developed from an examination of migrants, and only one model focuses on skilled migrant women. They have also been explored from different contexts, and over a time period of 10 years, so there may be other factors which need to

be considered. While this integrated framework provides a useful starting point, further research is required to empirically examine how these frameworks fit together and how they apply to the migration of skilled migrant women entering New Zealand.

These integrated theories form the basis of this research. By bringing these models together, it is possible to identify five broad stages of the migration experience that shape host country experiences for skilled migrant women: pre-migration, motivation to migrate, post-migration, moderators, and career outcomes. Data collection (see the Interview Schedule, Appendix 1) and analysis was based upon these five stages and a critical analysis of the findings against these existing models was undertaken to examine the applicability of each of the models and their relevance as an integrative framework to better understand the full migration experience of skilled migrant women.

Table 1

Integration of Seminal Migration Frameworks

| Authors | Framework | Pre-Migration | Motivation to Migrate | Post-Migration | Moderators | Career Outcomes |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|---|
| Syed, 2008 | A Relational Perspective | | -Career aspirations -Home country circumstances | -Lifestyle in host country -Identity/agency in host country -Organisational practices and resources -Political and economic context -Human capital, societal factors, support network | | |
| Tharmaseelan et al., 2010 | The Integrated Model | -Human Capital | -Exploration -Escaping -Family building | -Social Integration -Career self-management | | -Career success -Overall objective career success |
| Al Ariss, 2010 | Modes of Engagement | | | -Strategies to manage barriers in host country | | |
| van den Bergh & du Plessis, 2012 | Highly Skilled Migrant Women: A Career Development Framework | -Human Capital -Embedded career identity -Structural constraints | -Exploration -Escape -Family-building -Financial betterment -Career-building of partner/spouse | -Maintaining own culture -Adapting to host country culture -Social support from significant others in home and host country -Re-assess existing identity | | -Career exit -Career success |
| Cerdin et a., 2014 | Theory of Motivation to Integrate (TMI) | | -Gain/loss framing -Integration into host country | | -Expectations met -Organisational and integration policies | -Integration -Life satisfaction -Job satisfaction -Career success |
| Shirmohammadi et al., 2018 | Skilled Migrants' Qualification-Matched Employment | | | -Host country national, international, organisational, and individual-level factors | -Gender -Individual agency -Length of residence in host country -Job-tenure | -Individual outcomes -Earnings -Job satisfaction -Mental health -Professional de-skilling |

2.8 Career Theories

In this section, the career literature, especially in relation to women's careers will be explored and discussed. Over the last two decades, conceptualisations of career have evolved, with more research on non-traditional careers, characterised by more frequent interruptions, be it family, education or travel, increasingly new ways of work, changes due to technology and globalisation (Baruch & Sullivan, 2020). In this section, an overview of traditional and contemporary career theories is provided before moving on to the career theories that will be utilised in this study and why those have been selected. To develop a more nuanced understanding of the unfolding career experiences of skilled migrant women, it is important the selected career theories can assist in the exploration of this study. The theories that have been utilised in this study are the three-phase model of women's careers development (O'Neil And Bilimoria, 2005), and the kaleidoscope career model (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). These will be explained and discussed in terms of their likely applicability to the career experiences of skilled migrant women. First, however, I provide a background to career theories by discussing traditional and early contemporary career theories and how they have shaped current conceptualisations of career.

2.8.1 Traditional and Contemporary Career Theoretical Frameworks

The field of career studies is multifaceted and complex with no clear or consistent definition of what a career is. Careers and career development in this study are defined as the "evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time" in relation to both their personal and professional desired outcome (Arthur et al., 1989, p. 8). Traditionally, careers were considered as progressing in a linear direction within one or two organisations (Levinson et al., 1976; O'Neil et al., 2008). With foundations in career guidance and counselling in the Western world (Leung, 2008), traditional career theories allow us to explore the unfolding interactions

between the individual, workplace, and society over time (Arthur et al., 1989). Traditional career development theories were mostly life stage theories in the early part of the 20th century. After challenging the personality trait career theory, Super (1957) developed a life stage theory. Life stage theories assume there are key stages of an individual's career which can be related to age and to other events occurring outside the work-life (Super, 1957). These chronological stages became an important consideration in understanding career experiences. While other proponents of Super's early model have extended the original model (Levinson, 1996; Schein & Schein, 1978), the common notion with all is that certain events occur at predictable times through an individual's career. Super (1990) adapted his life stage model with more flexible transitions over the lifespan. However, life stage theories have been argued to be too prescriptive and based on exclusively male-dominated professions at a time when staying in one organisation was the norm (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007). With success measured in objective terms, progress is viewed as climbing the ladder or in terms of increase in pay. It is important to note that traditional careers do still exist (Hart & Baruch, 2021), however, critics have contended that the theories need to be reinvented and updated to meet the dynamic changes present in the current work environment (Blustein et al., 2012).

In contrast, contemporary career theories are often viewed as dynamic and less linear and predictable (Tomlinson et al., 2018), leading to the study of careers to be continually evolving and multidisciplinary. Contemporary career theories place more emphasis on the individual rather than the organisation in terms of developing their careers, moving away from the linear and chronological stages of career to more dynamic and fluid career patterns with multidirectional trajectories. Familiar metaphors for careers such as ladders, mountains, highways, summits, and destinations have, in recent years, given way to steppingstones, spirals, labyrinths, and kaleidoscopes, highlighting the shift from a singular pathway to multiple pathways (Cohen, 2014; Crowley-Henry, 2012). Environmental changes such as increasing

globalisation, technology, diversity in the workplace, the expansion of outsourcing, and more part time and temporary workers have altered traditional organisational structures and work contexts leading to change in how individuals enact their careers (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014; Baruch & Sullivan, 2022). This change promotes a more holistic and flexible way of viewing what constitutes a career, with contemporary theories viewing careers occurring both within and beyond the boundaries of an organisation (Defillippi & Arthur, 1994), without the mutually exclusive, distinct career phases (Nagy et al., 2019). Career theorists have emphasised the increasing importance of moving away from traditional career development models to life stage frameworks where career construction is accentuated rather than career development (Wehmeyer et.al, 2018). However, within career literature, the difference between contemporary careers and traditional careers is not empirically evidenced (Crowley-Henry et al., 2019).

2.8.2 Boundaryless and Protean Career Concepts

Boundaryless and protean career concepts emerged as forerunners for what a contemporary career entailed and have advanced the study of careers (Baruch & Sullivan, 2022). The term ‘boundaryless’ refers to transcending multiple boundaries that support traditional careers (Hart & Baruch, 2021). The boundaryless career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) was one of the first models to recognise individual agency and the development of the career between employers, organisations, and countries. According to Arthur and Rousseau (1996), the boundaryless career included several facets where a career:

1. Moves across the boundaries of separate employers,
2. Draws validation from outside the current employer,
3. Is sustained by external networks or information,
4. Involves breaking traditional organisational career boundaries,
5. Involves rejecting career opportunities for personal or family reasons,

6. Is viewed as boundaryless irrespective of structural constraints.

The boundaryless career theory, on the other hand, may not be adequate for fully explaining the career experiences of skilled migrant women. To begin, while the definition views boundaryless careers at a meso-level, with careers moving across employer boundaries rather than international boundaries, several studies have expanded on this definition and used boundaryless career concepts in studying international careers (Wiernik & Kostal, 2019). With reference to points 2 and 3 in the list above, skilled migrants would have limited external networks to call on for validation in the host country, making it difficult to rebuild their career with these limited resources. Furthermore, as mentioned in Arthur and Rousseau's point 4, women's careers are heavily influenced by their personal and social networks. Finally, in terms of careers being viewed as boundaryless irrespective of structural constraints, this is very precarious as all countries, and their labour markets, are bound by laws and policies. There are also additional structural constraints that migrants have to face in their host country, such as economic, cultural, and social support constraints (Syed, 2008).

Alongside the boundaryless concept, the protean career concept also emerged (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Hall, 1976) with more of an emphasis on the individual's psychological orientation (Inkson, 2006; Sullivan & Baruch, 2022). The protean career orientation is driven by two facets. The first facet is self-driven, referring to managing and driving one's own career proactively and exploring and making career decisions. The second dimension is values-driven, which is striving to meet personal meaningful values and goals (Briscoe & Hall, 2006). A key critique of 'protean' is around the role of the individual as the lead agent, without taking into consideration the role and impact that other actors can have on the individual (Baruch & Rousseau, 2019).

Many scholars have postulated that adopting protean and/or boundaryless career orientations results in positive benefits for individuals in their careers (Direnzo et al., 2015;

Gunasekera et al., 2021), especially in uncertain career environments (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Waters, Briscoe & Hall, 2014). However, there is little consensus over the construct validity of boundaryless and protean careers, with proponents maintaining that protean and/or boundaryless career orientations are related but distinct constructs (Baruch, 2014; Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Inkson, 2006), while other career scholars treat protean career orientation and the psychological component of the boundaryless career concept as the same (Segers et al., 2008). It is also argued that the negative aspects of boundaryless career and protean career orientations, such as the toll of career self-management, managing job insecurity and engaging in continuous learning, are ignored (Baruch & Vardi, 2016). Further critique suggests that the boundaryless career theory does not capture the complexities of contemporary career experiences (Rodrigues & Guest, 2010). This argument led to more critique (Inkson et al., 2012), highlighting issues with the loose definition, the overemphasis on personal agency, and the lack of empirical support for the boundaryless career. These theories do, however, still represent the dominant thought in career scholarship, and as skilled migrants are inherently crossing at least one boundary, a geographical boundary, it is relevant to include discussion of the theories here.

2.8.3 Theoretical Frameworks for Women's Careers

There have been a second generation of contemporary career theories and concepts developed since the mid-2000s (Baruch & Sullivan, 2022), however, there are a limited number of contemporary career models that have been developed for the examination of women's careers. In the last two decades, career theories, originally developed to provide meaning and understanding to the career experiences of men in the workplace, have extended their research to women's career development (August, 2011; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; Pringle & Mcculloch Dixon, 2003), yet this attention still lags behind the reality of women in the workplace. The existing research does highlight differences in the careers of women and men,

reflecting developmental differences, as well as organisational and societal factors (Eagly & Carli, 2018). However, career theorists have yet to study skilled migrant women's career development. Highly skilled, educated women are more likely to migrate than their male counterparts (Andresen et al., 2012; IOM/OECD, 2014). It may be that they are looking to acquire better career opportunities (Fitzgerald & Howe-Walsh, 2008) or that they are trailing spouses (Tharenou, 2010). Applying career theories to skilled migrant women's career experiences not only allows in-depth understanding of the career experiences of this under-researched population, but provides an opportunity to explore, and potentially develop, a more inclusive career theory which is representative of the career experiences of the increasingly diverse workforce.

There are a limited number of contemporary career models that have been developed for the examination of women's careers. One of the early theories, the life-career model (Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003) evolved after their dissatisfaction and critique of how career theory applied to women. The life-career model proposes that women experience four key chronological stages in their careers: explore, focus, rebalance and revive – each of which is broken up by periods of reassessment whereby the individual positively reflects on their next step in their career. This model, however, suffers from criticism applied to all life-stage theories in that it is too restrictive. It recognises, that for women, movement through these stages is likely to be less linear, with cycles of reflection, reconsideration, and new directions. However, the last two decades have seen gender norms changing. With increased gender equality, diversity, and inclusion organisational policies in place, more women choosing to remain child-free (Blackstone, 2019), and an increasing number of men planning to be stay-at-home fathers (Kramer et al., 2015), women may experience fewer career interruptions (Baruch & Sullivan (2022).

By comparing the participants' life career narratives to the three-phase model of women's career development (TPM) (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005) and the kaleidoscope career model (KCM) (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005), elements of both traditional and contemporary career models will be incorporated in this study. These two theoretical frameworks were chosen after an all-encompassing exploration of the literature from the last two decades focusing on skilled women's career development. Both theoretical frameworks explored the career experiences of women which was critical to this study. While the TPM has been shaped by the traditional career perspective of age/stage models, the KCM is more aligned with the contemporary career viewpoint. The following review will first discuss the three-phase model of career before moving onto the KCM to examine how each of the models evolved, and how they could potentially be applied to skilled migrant women.

2.8.3.1 Three-Phase Model of Women's Career Development (TPM)

The foundation of career theory has been shaped by the age/stage models of career development. The larger life contexts impacting women's career development have not been taken into consideration. O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) developed a three-phase model of women's career development after specifically exploring the career experiences of women. Three critical factors make women's career development vastly different to men's careers. The first of these factors is family responsibilities. Even though more women are moving into the workplace, they continue to be the person primarily responsible for the home and children (Aure, 2013; Pinho & Gaunt, 2021). The second factor is that for women, relationships are significantly more influential in their approach to career choices and career patterns, with the boundary between personal and professional lives blurred (Aure, 2013, González Ramos & Bosch, 2013; Kou & Bailey, 2014). The third factor is under-representation in the top-level corporate roles, despite the fact that women make up over half of the workforce (Avolio, et al., 2020; Seo & Huang, 2017).

In the TPM theory, careers of professional women in their 20s through to their 50s were examined to capture an array of career and life development choice points (O’Neil and Bilimoria, 2004). The sample varied by age, marital status, and number of children, but not by ethnicity with over 80% of participants white. Over half of the sample were highly skilled, and almost half had mid-level roles in the organisation. A strength of the study was that four distinct aspects of careers were considered together. Career pattern was identified as either ordered (stable and hierarchical) or emergent (reactive and serendipitous). An emergent career pattern is considered reactive, with unexpected twists and turns, along with interruptions for non-career activities, whereas an ordered career pattern is characterised by stability and strategic planning to move through the workplace hierarchy. Career locus described the focal point from which career orientation, motivation and success emanate and could be internal (planned and persistent) or external (passive and dependent). An internal career locus denotes planning, persistence and problem solving, while external locus is referred to as passive and dependent. Emergent and ordered career patterns and internal and external career loci are considered temporal and dependent on life and career contexts. A finer grained coding separated these further, with career pattern being either emergent, combined or ordered, and career locus being external, combined, or internal.

Career context was the third aspect, providing information of the reasons for the women’s choices and the positive and negative organisational, societal, and relational factors which had influenced their lives. Finally, career beliefs were included – the meaning of careers in their lives, the relationships between work and non-work, and their visions for the future. Hence there were a large number of factors assessed, and an even larger number of combinations and variations.

The sample for this study was divided into three age ranges, largely reflecting earlier work by Levinson (1996) and Sheehy (1995). These phases, based on age, are shown in Figure

9, with the label for the phase, and the key factors. In this study, women in Career Phase 1 were found to have a strong internal career locus and an emergent career pattern, with this moving to an external locus and ordered career pattern by the time they reached Career Phase 3. However, for migrant women, regardless of which career phase they are in, the strong internal career locus that potentially pushes them to migrate is likely to change to external career locus and emergent career pattern on arriving in the home country because of the loss of career self-management. It is possible that both the internal career locus and emergent career pattern may also only be temporary for skilled migrant women, while they settle into the country. If this changes after the skilled migrant women become acclimatised to the host country, and how long this potentially takes, will be a critical finding of this study.

Figure 9

Women's Career Development Phases (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005)

| Career Phase 1 | Career Phase 2 | Career Phase 3 |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early career ages 24-35 • Idealistic achievement • Internal career locus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid career, ages 36-45 • Pragmatic endurance • Ordered and emergent career patterns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced career, ages 46-60 • Reinventive contribution • External career locus • Ordered career pattern |

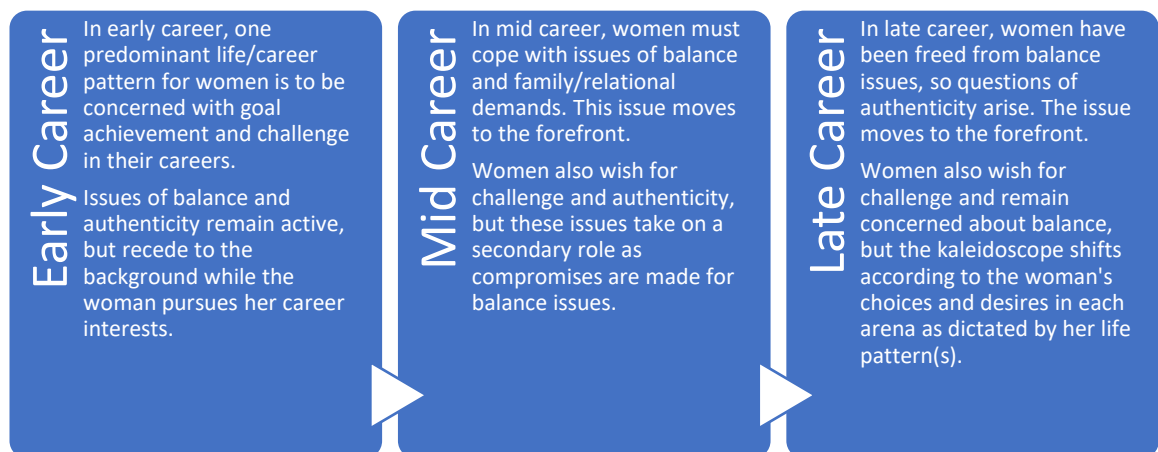
2.8.3.2 The Kaleidoscope Career Model

Just like in a kaleidoscope, where the glass chips form new patterns when rotated, an individual can change the pattern of their career by rotating aspects of their work and non-work-life to form new relationships and roles (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). The Kaleidoscope Career Model (KCM) posits that individuals focus on three career parameters (like the three mirrors in a kaleidoscope) when making career decisions: authenticity (being true to oneself),

balance (achieving balance between work and non-work interest) and challenge (achieving their needs for stimulating work and career advancement). Based on these parameters, the individual seeks the best fit between work demands, constraints and opportunities as well as relationships, personal values, and interests (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008). Each parameter is always active, simultaneously influencing career decision-making and transitions, however, they are nonoverlapping with one parameter usually taking priority in shaping the individual's choice (Sullivan et al., 2009; Baruch & Sullivan, 2022). Figure 10 clarifies the KCM parameters identified for early, mid, and late career stages for women as found by Mainiero and Sullivan (2005).

Figure 10

The ABC Model of Kaleidoscope Careers for Women (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005)



The KCM was originally developed to explore the “opt-out” revolution, a term given to highly skilled women who do not aspire to senior roles within organisations (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). It has also been used to explore generational differences in attitudes to work (Sullivan et al., 2009), the changing pattern of women's careers (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008), the role of career capital in global kaleidoscope careers (Kirk, 2016), women's later life career development (August, 2011), the careers of women entrepreneurs in Japan (Futagami & Helms,

2009), work-life balance for women (Tajlili, 2014), as well as to test the assumption that institutional and structural barriers caused underemployment of skilled migrants (O'Connor & Crowley-Henry, 2020). In the latter study, it was found that skilled migrants opted out of their home country careers by prioritising balance over challenge and authenticity. Studies have shown that over the course of the individual's life span, the individual constantly makes changes to their career to accommodate these various needs and constraints (Godshalk et al., 2007; Mutter & Thorn, 2018; O'Neil & Jepsen, 2019; Smith-Ruig, 2008).

The KCM has been used extensively to understand women's career experiences, highlighting the importance of potential gender differences in career paths (August, 2011; Cabrera, 2007; Mainiero & Gibson, 2018; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008; Tajlili, 2014). It provides a framework to understand the phenomenon of women's careers to improve organisational policies and structures. For women, career decisions are an interplay of multiple needs (August, 2011) with relationships being an inherent component (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). As such, KCM aligns well with the life stage model as it captures the evolution of women's careers, shifting focus on authenticity, balance, and challenge over time (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). However, O'Neil et al (2008) have argued that terms such as 'opt-in' and 'opt-out' have a negative connotation and reflect inherent gender biases by looking at women's career decisions and experiences within male-dominated organisational norms. While the KCM has been recently been applied to the career experiences of skilled migrants (O'Connor & Crowley-Henry, 2020), it has not been applied to the career experiences of skilled migrant women.

Distinct gendered patterns emerged from extensive research, with women predominantly adopting a beta career pattern of challenge, balance and finally authenticity (CBA), while men traditionally displayed an alpha career pattern of challenge, authenticity and then balance (CAB). For skilled migrant women, especially those migrating with a spouse and

family, the gendered expectation to become the primary caregiver for the children (Kofman & Raghuram, 2010; Gerber & Wanner, 2019) means that balance becomes a critical career parameter straight after migration. Challenge and authenticity may be a slow transition or possibly never even achieved for skilled migrant women who are unable to find skilled employment in the host country (Ho & Alcorso, 2004). With numerous disruptions, skilled migrant women would be expected to have beta career patterns post-migration. While previous studies using KCM have found that older women are concerned predominantly with authenticity (August, 2011; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005), similarly aged migrant women may be more concerned about the issue of challenge and finding work offering them responsibility and career development opportunities. Also, it may be that for skilled migrant women, both challenge and balance are equally important and remain an ongoing struggle. So, while it is likely that authenticity, balance, and challenge are applicable to the career experiences of skilled migrant women, the salience of each dimension at the stages of migrant careers is unknown.

2.8.4 Summary of Career Theories

In contemporary career research, migration is fast becoming a critical issue that needs attention, with both developing and developed countries increasingly dependent on the migrant workforce. Over that last two decades, self-managed careers and interorganisational mobility have received increasing attention. With the boundaryless career defying traditional assumptions of organisational focused careers (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006), and protean career suggesting self-directed careers based on personal values to achieve psychological success (Hall, 2004), the image of careers is now entrenched as one of freedom and not bounded by organisations or countries. While skilled migrants clearly display a boundaryless career, as they relocate across geographical boundaries (Arthur, 2008), they still

face considerable constraints, challenges, and limitations in re-establishing their careers in the host country (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011; Elitok & Nawyn, 2023).

In the skilled migration literature, there is substantial evidence of career self-management (Wilhlem & Hirschi, 2019), although the emphasis is more on international mobility and less on careers. International migration shows no signs of slowing down, and despite ever-increasing diversity in the workplace, career theorists have yet to explore the career experiences of skilled migrants. The under-utilisation of migrants' skills not only negatively impacts migrants' mental and physical health but the economic cost to organisations and countries has been shown to be in the billions of dollars (Waxin, et al., 2021). Skilled migrant women are a group whose careers are impacted significantly from migration, yet their career experiences have received little research attention from career theorists.

Career theories allow meaning to be provided to career experiences to enhance understanding of how careers develop. They consider the interplay of internal and external factors as well as the relational context of the individual, workplace, and host country to provide deeper and insightful knowledge into the phenomena of career experiences. This critical review has identified that the career experiences of skilled migrant women is under-researched, but that there might be some insight gained from existing career theories. Indeed, there may also be aspects of skilled migrant women's careers that are not captured by these existing models.

2.9 Summary of Migration Literature Review

In summary, this literature review highlights the need for further research on skilled migrant women's career experiences, particularly in New Zealand. The existing literature shows that while some insights have been gained, more empirical studies are necessary to provide skilled migrant women with a voice and understand the complexity of their careers and

experiences in the host country. Migration itself poses additional challenges for skilled migrant women attempting to return to the workplace, including lack of support networks, prioritizing a partner/spouse's career, and gendered expectations regarding caregiving. These factors can lead to social isolation and hinder their integration into the host country's culture.

This study aims to provide a contextual understanding of skilled migrant women's career experiences in New Zealand, using contemporary career theories as tools to facilitate this understanding. However, there is currently no unified framework from the migrant and career literature to comprehensively explain their experiences. The existing theoretical frameworks examined lack a complete picture of skilled migrant women's career and life experiences in the host nation. Therefore, an integrated model is proposed to gain a fuller understanding of their migration journey, motivation to migrate, and moderators impacting their lives and careers in the host country.

While contemporary career research has focused on the self-managed careers and interorganizational mobility, the experiences of skilled migrants, who exhibit boundaryless careers by relocating across geographical boundaries, remain constrained by challenges and limitations in re-establishing their careers in the host country. Despite evidence of career self-management among skilled migrants, career theorists have yet to explore their experiences extensively, leading to under-utilisation of their skills and negative impacts on mental and physical health, and economic costs to organisations and countries. Career theories are essential for understanding how careers develop, considering internal and external factors and the relational context of the individual, workplace, and host country. However, the literature review highlights that existing career theories might not fully capture the experiences of skilled migrant women, and there may be aspects of their careers not covered by these models. Further

research is required to address this gap and gain deeper insights into the career experiences of skilled migrant women.

Chapter Three - Methodology

'Research is the process of going up alleys to see if they are blind.'

Marston Bates

3 Introduction

This chapter discusses the paradigm and methodological approach which clarifies the research aim and rationale for this study, before explicating the research strategy and research assumptions that underline this study. It will then detail the research design, data collection and analysis processes undertaken. The final sections of this chapter will cover research rigour, the researcher's role, and ethical considerations, before summarising the chapter.

This research aims to make two important contributions to literature. The first aim is to provide a more nuanced understanding of the migration and career experiences of skilled migrant women both pre-migration and post-migration. Once a more holistic understanding of this is attained, the findings are utilized as the basis of addressing the second aim of this research, which is to examine existing contemporary migration and career theories and identify future inclusive development avenues that can capture the nascent experiences of skilled migrant women in their host countries.

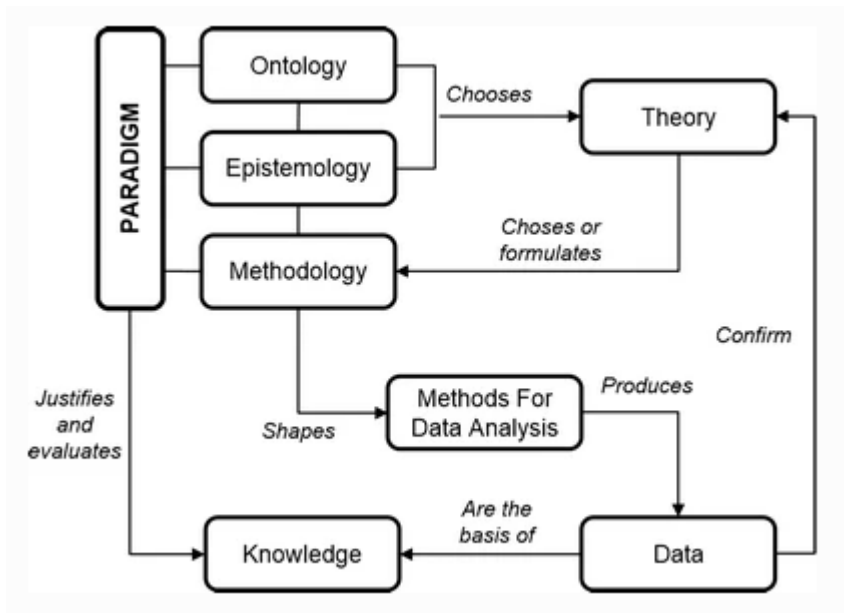
3.1 Justification of Paradigm and Research Strategy

Everyone brings a worldview (paradigm) to their research, explicitly or implicitly (Creswell, 2015). Research philosophy, also known as research paradigm, is often referred to as the theoretical framework (Mertens, 2019), influencing the way knowledge is studied and interpreted (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). In terms of designing and implementing a study, understanding the research philosophy is essential. Philosophical paradigms guide the researcher's approach to data analysis, establishing the importance of different issues and concepts to the research (Mackey, 2005). The research objectives for this study on skilled migrant women focus on their experiences of migration and the unfolding of their careers in their host country. It seeks to explore and understand the participants' stories of pre-migration life, their motivations for migrating and their career and lives post-migration.

A paradigm consists of ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods (Scotland, 2012). Ontology is the researcher's approach to the nature of the world and whether they feel that reality is multiple or single. Epistemology is concerned with the nature and forms of knowledge (Cohen et al., 2007), and the types of evidence used to make claims (Creswell, 2015). Different paradigms have differing assumptions of reality (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology) underpinning their specific research approach (Scotland, 2012). Well thought out assumptions constitute a credible research philosophy, which will underpin the methodology and method the researcher uses. Methodology refers to how the 'reality' is to be studied and the research methods used to do this. It is concerned with the why, what, from where, when, and how the data is to be collected and analysed (Scotland, 2012). While methods are the specific procedures, tools and techniques are used to collect and analyse the data, and these are typically either qualitative or quantitative. The strong relationship between paradigms and methods, and the iterative process of the research can be seen in Figure 11. Together they guide the design, planning and implementation of research (Carter & Little, 2007; Iofrida et al., 2018).

Figure 11

Relationship between Paradigms and Methods (Carter & Little, 2007; Iofrida et al., 2018)



3.1.1 The Interpretivist Paradigm

There are several paradigms within social research from which the philosophical position of the researcher can be determined (Creswell, 2007). However, the lines between them are usually very fine and often a little blurred. Two major theoretical perspectives currently dominate the social science research arena - positivism, and phenomenology or interpretivism (Creswell, 2012, Saldana, 2011). Positivism traces its origins in the great theorists of the 19th and early 20th centuries in social science, such as Francis Bacon and Auguste Comte (Saunders et al., 2018). The positivist, under the objectivism epistemology, applies the methods of natural sciences to the study of societies and human behaviour. Understanding phenomena therefore needs to be measured and supported by evidence (Hammersley, 2013), without being influenced by interpretation of human bias (Scotland, 2012). Knowledge is objective, and science should focus on directly observable phenomena. The idea that there is a fixed, external social reality available to elucidate or that the researcher

can be totally unbiased in relation to the participants or themes of the study can be considered a critical problem with the positivist approach in social science research (Alcoff, 2007).

The interpretivist paradigm emphasises humans as being different to physical phenomena because they create meanings. Interpretivists argue that people from different cultural backgrounds, different circumstances and different times create and experience various and complex meanings and social realities, which would be lost if these insights are reduced to a series of law-like generalisations (Saunders et al., 2018). The ontological stance of interpretivism states there are multiple realities socially constructed by social actors through their actions and interactions (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This fits with the current research, where the participants provide their individual construction of 'reality'. Interpretivism attempts to gain a deeper understanding of phenomena and its complexity. It is subjective with a focus on the richness, complexity, and multiple meaning and interpretations. Phenomenology also plays a role in this research, emphasising the relationship and interactions between the researcher and the phenomena that is being explored. As a skilled migrant woman, the researcher in this study can enter the social world of the participants and try to understand their world. Table 2 provides a summary of positivism and interpretivism.

Table 2

Comparison of Positivism and Interpretivism (Saunders et al., 2018)

| Ontology (nature of reality or being) | Epistemology (what constitutes acceptable knowledge) | Axiology (role of values) | Typical methods |
|--|--|--|---|
| Positivism | | | |
| Real, external, independent One true reality (universalism) Granular (things) Ordered | Scientific method Observable and measurable facts Law-like generalisations Numbers Causal explanation and prediction as contribution | Value-free research Researcher is detached, neutral and independent of what is researched Researcher maintains objective stance | Typically deductive, highly structured, large samples, measurement, typically quantitative methods of analysis, but a range of data can be analysed |
| Interpretivism | | | |
| Complex, rich Socially constructed through culture and language Multiple meanings, interpretations, realities Flux of processes, experiences, practices | Theories and concepts too simplistic Focus on narratives, stories, perceptions and interpretations New understandings and worldviews as contribution | Value-bound research Researchers are part of what is researched, subjective Researcher interpretations key to contribution Researcher reflexive | Typically inductive. Small samples, in-depth investigations, qualitative methods of analysis, but a range of data can be interpreted |

This study adopted an interpretivist philosophical approach aligned with a constructivist stance focusing on how the individual made sense of their career, specifically on how they construct and experience their career (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015; Schwandt, 1994). For interpretivists, meanings are created by people as they interpret the world that they live in based on their social and historical perspectives. Understanding of their world is believed to be socially constructed because of the interactions and relationships formed between members within society. With an interpretive epistemology, the researcher and participant influence which parts of social reality are to be meaningful (Charmaz et al., 2018). Likewise, career is seen as a social practice, whereby actors, alongside their relationships with others, move through time and space to create their own social reality. Hence, there is a need in qualitative research to return to the data multiple times, as each time, new forms and

interpretations can appear to create new layers of meaning, building, extending, and adding depth to the data (McAllum et al., 2019).

3.1.2 Ontology: Subjective

Ontologically, the researcher's view in this study is subjective, as it is based on shared meanings and perceptions which is appropriate for this research context (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). Subjectivists view reality as a condition of the human mind, giving meaning to its surroundings through its consciousness and creative nature. The subjective view contrasts with the objectivist view, which sees social entities as existing separately from social actors, finding general laws to anticipate human behaviours by using natural science approaches and measures to investigate a social reality (Bell & Bryman, 2007). This creates knowledge that is personal and experiential, given the autonomous characteristic of the human mind, unavoidably nuanced or biased (Elliott & Lukes, 2008). So, the researcher's role is to appreciate the meanings that individuals place on their stories and lived experiences, instead of objective and external factors. Migration is complex, and stories of the migration experience enable understanding of these complexities from the individual's perspective (Ghosh, 2007).

3.1.3 Qualitative Methodology

The research strategy, or methodology, entails the selection of the research design and the methodical plan of required actions. There are two types of methods that can be adopted in social science research, quantitative or qualitative. Bell and Bryman (2007) state that "quantitative research can be constructed as a research strategy that emphasises quantification in the collection and analysis of data" while "qualitative research can be construed as a research strategy that usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data" (p.28). Qualitative research regards truth as a subjective reality, which is experienced differently by everyone (Vishnevsky & Beanlands, 2004).

Taking into consideration the complex multi-directional and multi-dimensional phenomena of skilled migrant women's careers within their host country, as well as the intrinsically subjective nature of this study, a qualitative approach is deemed most appropriate for conducting this research. The qualitative approach enables the exploration of an understudied group such as skilled migrant women and their career experiences, allowing for the collection of rich data (Krauss, 2005). The researcher in social qualitative research relies on text data, analysing the text to understand the meaning of human action (Schwandt, 2001; Gair & van Luyn, 2016), asking open ended questions about phenomena that occur in context (Carter & Little, 2007). For qualitative researchers, understanding people from their own frames of reference and experiencing reality as they experience it, is critical (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gair & van Luyn, 2016). The use of qualitative methodologies is encouraged by researchers studying migration flows in international careers, so that the richness of human experience can be captured (Al Ariss, 2012). In terms of career theory, the research strategy was guided by the importance of being able to elucidate the ways in which individuals made sense of their careers as they unfolded through time and space (Cohen & Mallon, 2001; Creswell et al., 2007).

Critiques have raised ethical questions around the appropriateness of researchers interpreting narratives, especially around issues of authenticity (Bell, 2002). While these have been found to be valid ethical concerns, it is important to note that contemporary qualitative researchers are aware of these concerns and the highly constructed nature of narrative analysis. In response to these criticisms, researchers ensure authenticity by documenting, exploring, and highlighting the constructed nature of their sources as well as their own role in how the research data is shaped and presented (Gair & van Luyn, 2016). Above all, life stories highlight insider perspectives and can raise awareness and contribute to change by generating debate (Foster,

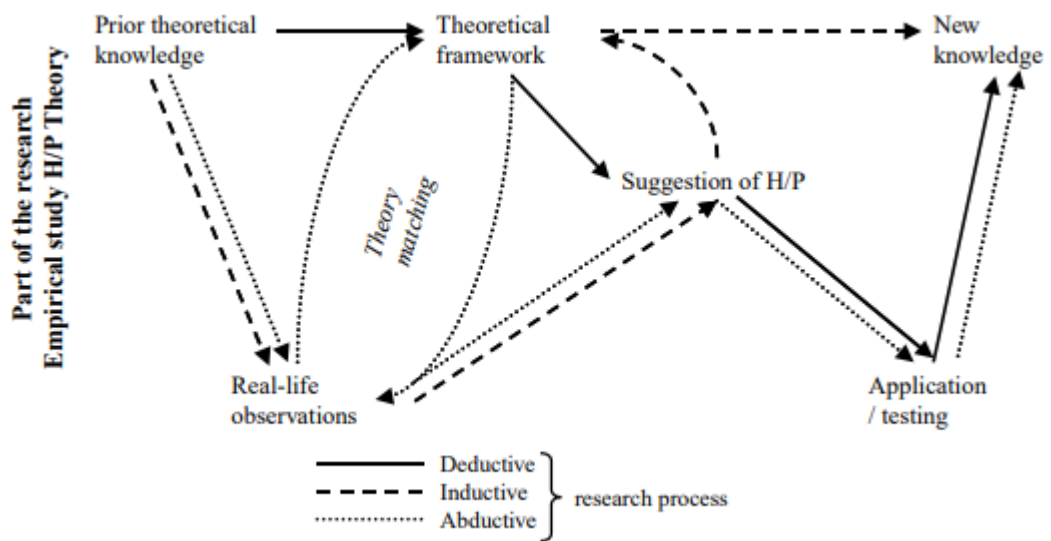
2012). Life stories can challenge historical narratives and promote social inclusion (Gair & van Luyn, 2016).

3.1.4 Abductive Approach

There are two main approaches in research which result in the acquisition of new knowledge, inductive and deductive research approaches. Qualitative research is considered inductive, where the researchers develop concepts and understandings from patterns in the data to assess predetermined hypotheses, models, or theories (Taylor et al., 2015). However, detractors of inductive reasoning contend that no amount of empirical data will necessarily enable theory-building (Saunders et al., 2018). The deductive research approach falls under quantitative research methods, starting with scanning theory, developing hypotheses, and designing a research strategy to test the hypotheses (Saunders et al., 2018). The deductive process appears linear, which is not always the case as the data may not fit with the original hypotheses (Bell & Bryman, 2015). However, there is a third approach, and this is the abductive approach. While it follows neither the pure versions of deductive nor inductive, it leverages the benefits of both approaches enabling a logical exploration of knowledge (Spens & Kovács, 2006). Abduction refers to “an inferential creative process of producing new hypotheses and theories based on surprising research evidence” (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012 p.170). It is the process of moving from the meanings given by people to categories that create the basis of an explanation of the phenomenon described (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). It starts with prior theoretical knowledge before beginning data collection, continually matching this with theory, and finally concluding with a new knowledge that can develop new theory or extend an existing framework. Figure 12 shows each research approach and their pathway to new knowledge. H/P in the Figure refers to hypothesis/proposition.

Figure 12

The Three Approaches to Research (Spens & Kovács, 2006)



Abductive reasoning is the approach adopted in this study for several reasons. Firstly, abduction is like induction in that it fits with the interpretivist philosophy and the constructivist stance of this study. Inductive approaches also begin with basic conceptual frameworks developed from a review of the literature to guide the research, like this study. However, unlike induction, abduction accepts existing theory, which might improve the theoretical strength of lived experiences analysis (Esterberg, 2002; Järvensivu & Törnroos, 2010). Theoretical frameworks of migration (Syed, 2008; Tharmaseelan et al., 2010; van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012; Shirmohammadi et al., 2018; Al Ariss, 2010; Cerdin et al., 2014) alongside specific career theoretical frameworks (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994; O’Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005) were integrated to guide this study of skilled migrant women’s career experiences in New Zealand. Secondly, the abductive approach allows social actors to tell their lived experiences and reality (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). While inductive reasoning is valuable for discovering patterns and generating generalisable theories, it does not always provide the same level of insight into complex or novel phenomena (Haig, 2005). In the

abductive approach, the researcher moves between the data and the theoretical approaches many times in a cyclical process, exploring potential explanations that may not be immediately apparent from the data and to incorporate existing knowledge and theories into the process. This iterative process, where the phenomena is revisited over time, allows the researcher to reexperience it and is a “way to harness temporality in the service of theory construction” (Timmerman & Tavory, 2012 p.176).

3.1.5 Research Design Framework Narrative Analysis: Life Stories and Storytelling

“As we enact our careers, we create ‘stories’ A career story is based on the events, such as job moves and job titles of the objective career, but also includes memories of subjective career phenomena such as satisfactions, emotions, and ambitions.”

(Arthur, Inkson, & Pringle, 1999, p. 42)

Life stories allowed the participants in this current study to explain, in their own words, their migration and career experiences in chronological sequence. Telling stories is one way of sharing and making sense of past and recent experiences, being able to recount important events as well as those that are everyday happenings. They are core to the individual and collective construction of identity (De Fina & Tseng, 2017). The biggest advantage to story telling is that it provides a voice to minority groups, such as migrants, to tell their own individual lived experience and reality through stories and anecdotes (Eastmond, 2007; Saltsman & Majidi, 2021). In migration and career studies, the diversity of pathways and outcomes in the context of migration can be identified by narrative studies (Collins, 2018; De Fina & Tseng, 2017).

The use of narrative analysis has been widely acknowledged in social science research (Wagner & Childs, 2006; Mahmoud & Tehseen, 2021), since it permits the researcher to endow the migration and career experience with meaning (Bujold, 2004; De Fina & Tseng, 2017; Tsoukas & Hatch, 2001). By looking at migration and career experiences as part of a larger narrative, embedded within a social and cultural context, researchers can capture a richer and

multi-faceted picture (Cohen & Mallon, 2001; Mahmoud & Tehseen, 2021; Sahlstein Parcell & Baker, 2017). Narratives describe the subjective understandings and practices of people in their daily lives and allow the analysis of connected relationships and casual sequences (Kolar et al., 2015; Mahmoud & Tehseen, 2021). This provides the potential for meaningful interpretations and findings. This method has also garnered popularity in international migration literature which has explored the careers of the globally mobile (Beoku-Betts, 2008; Dickmann & Harris, 2005; Ho & Alcorso, 2004; Ramboarison-Lalao et al., 2012; Sang et al., 2013; Shan et al., 2016; Zikic et al., 2010). As such, narrative analysis offers the opportunity to contribute theoretically to both the skilled migration and career literature (Cohen & Mallon, 2001). Moreover, it is suggested that preconceptions and cultural impositions when classifying the data can be prevented by grounding analysis of careers in stories (Pringle & Mallon, 2003). Stories delivered in the first person allow for the retrospective sense-making to elide the distinction between objective and subjective features, resulting in an integrated picture (Cohen & Mallon, 2001), more aligned to the holistic overview of the career and life experiences of skilled migrant women in this current study. The following section details the specific techniques used in this study.

3.1.6 Life History Approach and Semi-Structured Interview Design

An exploratory career life history approach was utilised for this study (Caven, 2006; Cooke et al., 2013), where participants recounted their pre-migration career in their own words, outlining why they migrated and detailing their post-migration career experiences. This was appropriate for the exploratory nature of this study, and also aligned with the researcher's interpretivist philosophy, where the researcher and participant are involved in a collaborative meaning-making experience. A life history approach enables a participant to reconstruct events subjectively and meaningfully in their social and cultural context in their own words (Bell & Bryman, 2007; Dhunpath, 2000).

Qualitative interviews, usually semi-structured or unstructured, are one of the most powerful and flexible ways of capturing people's voices and understanding the way people make meaning of their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Rabionet, 2011; Bell & Bryman, 2007). Other methods of qualitative data collection, such as ethnographic research or participant observation, were considered but deemed as disruptive and time consuming to participants and thus not appropriate. In-depth semi-structured interviews were also appropriate for the qualitative abductive research approach (Spens & Kovács, 2006). To ensure consistency, a semi-structured interview schedule was developed to guide the interviews as well as to record demographic information. A completely un-structured interview may have led to omissions of critical events and milestones in their career and migration journey (Bell & Bryman, 2007). In this study, the participants were provided with an opening statement on the direction of the interview and then asked to tell their individual stories. For some participants, recalling their first jobs in their home country took them back 25 years. They were guided along by a few general questions to fill in any gaps and elicit conversation.

Semi-structured interviews have several additional benefits. They allow the exploration of a phenomena that is under-researched, thus allowing existing theoretical knowledge to be extended with additional insights. Currently, there is limited theoretical understanding on how the careers of skilled migrant women unfold post-migration. Semi-structured interviews also allowed the researcher to probe participants for more depth of information, and thus allow the collection of rich and meaningful data. The open-ended probing questions (see Appendix 1) were developed from the literature and relevant migrant and career theoretical frameworks to enrich existing knowledge and identify new themes. The expansion of existing theoretical knowledge was the aspiration of this study.

The participant interview was made up of two main components. The first component was a timeline, which would be mapped out with the participant. Timelines have been utilised

in a variety of qualitative studies, and the visual method of using a timeline in tandem with a qualitative semi-structure/narrative interview has been found to enhance data collection especially when researching marginalised populations (Adriansen, 2012; Kolar et al., 2015). Key benefits of using a timeline were establishing an active and co-constructive relationship between the researcher and participant encouraging rapport building, enabling the participant to navigate and reflect on major life events thus accurately recalling experiences, and for some, provide an almost therapeutic impact when reviewing positive and negative events (Kolar et al., 2015). This strengthens the data and findings, allowing the research to be placed in the context of the participants' life events.

Participants were first provided with an explanation of the timeline as a tool to assist the researcher in understanding the critical migration and career experiences of the participants. The participant and researcher would co-construct the timeline together. A parallel timeline was created, with one side highlighting key personal events including relationships and migration, while the other side highlighted education and career. Participants were able to add to this timeline during the interview if they wanted to. It started from when they finished their tertiary education in their home country, moving to their first job and progressively their career experiences until they migrated to New Zealand. It continued then to map out their career in New Zealand. The timeline would include gaps in their career both in their home and host country, as well as including critical events in their personal life such as marriage, children, migration, major cultural or civic events. The timeline was designed and incorporated into the research design as it provided a snapshot of the participant's personal and career life in a visual format, as well as allowing a quick understanding of what stage in their personal and career life the participant was in. This meant that during the interview process, the researcher was more aware of what areas in the participant's migration experiences needed to be further explored, and what areas may not be relevant or applicable to the participant. After constructing

the timeline, the rapport would also have been established between the participant and researcher and so then moving to the semi-structured interview was easier. In many cases, the participant did not need any prompting but would freely and openly talk about their experiences in the labour market.

The second part of the interview process was the semi-structured interview schedule, which was designed to encompass the theoretical framework which is made up of two career theories (KCM and life-stage career model). While the data collection method was to hear the participants' stories, the interview schedule was designed primarily to prompt the participants and guide them. Hence, the questions were predominantly open-ended which, as Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggest, allows new themes to emerge. The semi-structured interview schedule was made up of five parts. The first part was the demographic information section. The following four parts covered the participants' pre-migration life and career experiences, their motivations to migrate, their post-migration life and career experiences, and finally their experiences of network building (and integrating into the community) both in the home country and their host country. The interview schedule was designed primarily as a prompt for the researcher, to ensure all aspects were covered, and to bring them back onto topic, if necessary. It was flexible enough to allow participants to extemporaneously deviate away onto topics relating to careers and migration.

3.2 Sampling and Data Collection

Having an organised sampling plan is essential for a researcher to ameliorate validity concerns (Lee & Lings, 2008), especially if they want the results of their study to be extrapolated to the wider population they are studying (McEwan, 2020). Sampling is a critical part of this qualitative research, with a relatively small and initially purposive selected sample chosen with the aim to increase the depth of understanding of a phenomenon. When selecting

the most appropriate sampling technique, a key aim was to ensure that participants chosen would be those who could yield the most useful information (Kelly et al., 2010).

For this study, there were specific criteria that needed to be met in the selection of participants. The definition of 'skilled migrant' women utilised in this research is women who have moved to New Zealand with the intention to stay permanently with tertiary education and /or professional experience. Additional criteria for selection were that they had lived in New Zealand for a minimum of two years, and a maximum of 10 years. This timeframe not only allowed a good level of participant recall and captured career progression over time, but based on previous similar studies, is an appropriate timeframe for the proposed research (Agullo & Egawa, 2009; Cooke et al., 2013; Ho & Alcorso, 2004). Participants would also have been considered skilled prior to migrating to New Zealand. The selection criteria ensured that the participants had completed either their tertiary or professional educational qualifications in their home country, and most had some professional work experience prior to migration. Purposive sampling was therefore considered appropriate for this research (Patton, 2015).

Invitations to participate in this study were first disseminated by the researcher to several community groups to share with their members. Simultaneously, an internal Massey media release was also placed on the Massey website, as well as on their LinkedIn and twitter pages. Altogether this generated significant interest, with several potential participants making contact to participate in this research. During these interviews, participants were asked for interviewee referrals. This snowball sampling technique was very successful when a participant tagged a LinkedIn contact who worked at Immigration New Zealand. The momentum resulted in over one hundred potential participants emailing the researcher for more information, wanting to tell their story. Each potential participant was contacted, and those who matched the criteria for the study were sent further information.

3.2.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Interviewees

A total of 40 skilled migrant women participated in this study. Participants ranged in age from 25 to 55 years old. As an exploratory study, the research did not focus non-English speaking countries (NESB) or English-speaking countries (ESB), or specific careers or visa that the skilled migrant women came to New Zealand on. Full details on the participants, including their home countries, education background, age and careers are provided in Table 3. They have all been given pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. This study had 72% of participants who were married or had partners, 55% with children compared to O'Neil and Bilimoria (2004) who had an even split of married and single, and 62% without children.

Table 3

Participant Demographics and Characteristics

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Age</u> | <u>Country of Origin</u> | <u>Marital Status</u> | <u>Children</u> | <u>Education /Qualification</u> | <u>Date of arriving in NZ</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Last Occupation in Home Country</u> | <u>Current Employment in New Zealand</u> | <u>Visa on Arrival</u> |
|-------------|------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|--|--|--|
| Adriana | 36 | South Africa | D | 2 (10,7) | Post grad Bus Mgmt | 31/05/2008 | Auckland | Head Developer | Vice President, Product | Skilled Migrant Work visa - Primary applicant |
| Alexas | 40 | Korea | M | 1(4) | Masters (Psy) | 24/03/2013 | Auckland | Psychologists | Housewife | Married NZ citizen |
| Anna | 28 | South Africa | M | N/A | Bcom Hons Tourism | 25/01/2015 | Auckland | Trade Marketing Ops | Digital Rep | Partner visa |
| Ariana | 25 | Philippines | M | N/A | Nurse | 1/03/2016 | Auckland | Nurse | Self employed | Partner visa |
| Hadas | 54 | Iran (via Jamaica) | M | 3 (18+) | MSc Counselling and MSc Nutrition | 7/11/2012 | Auckland | IT Manager | Self employed | Tourist visa - found job and transferred it to work visa |
| Biyu | 41 | Singapore | M | 3 (3,6,8) | BSc Zoology | 22/06/2011 | Auckland | | Admin Sec | Partner visa |
| Bina | 35 | Iran | W | 2 (7,5) | Post grad Structural Engineering | 17/07/2008 | Auckland | Student | Admin Sec | Partner visa |
| Cyra | 29 | Iran | M | 0 | MSc Chemistry | 19/10/2015 | Auckland | Chemist / Scientist | PhD student and part time lab demonstrator | Partner visa |
| Cari | 40 | Turkey | M | 2 (7,11) | PhD Economics | 1/06/2008 | Auckland/ Ex PN | Student | Assoc Prof | Joint Skilled Migrant Work Visa |
| Cleo | 43 | England | M | 0 | MSc Communications | 20/09/2010 | Wellington | | Public Relations Director | Permanent Residency Visa - Primary applicant |

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Age</u> | <u>Country of Origin</u> | <u>Marital Status</u> | <u>Children</u> | <u>Education /Qualification</u> | <u>Date of arriving in NZ</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Last Occupation in Home Country</u> | <u>Current Employment in New Zealand</u> | <u>Visa on Arrival</u> |
|-------------|------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---|-------------------------------|-----------------|--|--|--|
| Camila | 42 | Brazil | M | 2 (6,9) | MBA | Oct-10 | Wellington | Software Developer | Software Developer | Permanent Residency |
| Diana | 37 | Germany | S | 0 | Masters majoring in Geography, plus publishing qualifications | 31/10/2011 | Wellington | | Marketing Advisor | Silver Ferns Visa (2 year work visa) |
| Sara | 28 | Indonesia | M | 0 | Medical Degree | Feb-14 | Wellington | Doctor | Healthcare Co-ordinator | Study visa, then Partner visa (husband got 2 year work visa) which led to PR |
| Dina | 49 | Zimbabwe | M | 17,14 | BA Languages, LLB Law, Teaching Cert | Apr-08 | PN | Teacher | University Tutor | Partner visa |
| Donna | 42 | England | M | 0 | BA Languages, Post grad Art History | Oct-15 | Wellington | Recruitment Consultatn | Principle Recruitment Consultant | Skilled Migrant Work Visa - Partner |
| Aabha | 33 | India | M | 1 (7) | B(e)engineering | Jul-13 | Wellington | Software Tester | Software Developer | Skilled Migrant Work Visa - Partner visa |
| Emily | 45 | England | M | 1 (12) | Masters HR | Jun-09 | Wellington | HR Manager | Office Manager | Permanent Residency- Partner |
| Helena | 36 | Chile | M | 1 (17mt) | BA Psychology | Oct-10 | Wellington | Talent Manager | Recruitment Advisor | Working Holiday Visa - changed to Permanent Visa (husband's job) |

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Age</u> | <u>Country of Origin</u> | <u>Marital Status</u> | <u>Children</u> | <u>Education /Qualification</u> | <u>Date of arriving in NZ</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Last Occupation in Home Country</u> | <u>Current Employment in New Zealand</u> | <u>Visa on Arrival</u> |
|-------------|------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|--|--|--|
| Hina | 39 | Yemen | S | 0 | PhD Computer Science | Jul-15 | Wellington | Assistant Lecturer | Unemployed | Refugee |
| Hazel | 47 | England | M | 0 | PhD Education | Dec-13 | Hamilton | Lecturer | Contractor | Work to Resident Visa - gained PR in 90 days |
| Imogen | 47 | England | M | 1 (14) | Postgrad Dip Media | Nov-09 | Wellington | Market Insights Manager | Library Research Analyst | Two year working visa, Partner was a Kiwi and so he sponsored her and PR came through very quickly |
| Iris | 35 | Mexico | P | 0 | Postgrad Dip Leadership | May-10 | Wellington | Recruitment Associate | Recruitment Advisor | Working Holiday visa |
| Irina | 42 | India | M | 2 (2,4) | Postgrad Teaching | Apr-08 | Wellington | Primary School Teacher | Test Analyst | Married a Kiwi - so entitled via Partner |
| Isla | 55 | Venezuela | D | 4 (Adults) | Agriculture Degree | Apr-15 | New Plymouth | Draftsperson | Labourer on Carnation farm | Family visa - 3 out of 4 of her children live in NZ and are in a position to support her |
| Jaya | 49 | Sri Lanka | M | 2 (17,20) | PhD Biological Sciences | Jan-13 | Auckland | Senior Associate Registrar | P/T Lab Technician | Student Visa - came here to do PhD, now on Skilled Migrant Work Visa |

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Age</u> | <u>Country of Origin</u> | <u>Marital Status</u> | <u>Children</u> | <u>Education /Qualification</u> | <u>Date of arriving in NZ</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Last Occupation in Home Country</u> | <u>Current Employment in New Zealand</u> | <u>Visa on Arrival</u> |
|-------------|------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--|-------------------------------|-----------------|--|--|--|
| Juno | 33 | England | M | 0 | Batchelors Hons French plus GTP which is a qualified Teachers status from the UK | Jan-16 | Taupo | High School English Teacher | After school care | Working holiday visa, converted to Skilled Migrant Visa (Job offer) Married to Kiwi now so has Permanent Residency |
| Katharina | 37 | USA | M | 2 (6,8) | Bsc Health and Phys Ed | Dec-14 | Wellington | Camp Manager | Senior Community Recreation Programmer | Married a Kiwi - so entitled via Partner |
| Leah | 56 | England | S | 1 (34) | Bsc Computer Science | Dec-14 | Wellington | Senior Software Developer | Software Tester | Tourist visa - found job and transferred it to Skilled Migrant Work Visa |
| Mahati | 35 | Indian | M | 2 (3,11) | Masters in Biotechnology | Jun-08 | Auckland | Scientific Academic Journal Editor | Senior HR Advisor | Partner Visa - husband was here on Student Visa and then Work Visa |
| Ona | 35 | Chile | P | 0 | Bsc Civil Industrial Engineering | Jun-15 | Auckland | Manager - Finance Analysis Team | Waitress | Working Holiday Visa - Partner got Skilled Migrant Visa so now Partner Visa |
| Olivia | 38 | USA | M | 2 (13,16) | Doctorate Clinical Psychology | Jun-16 | Rotorua | Private practice - Psychologist | Clinical Psychologist-DHB | Skilled Migrant Work Visa (had job offer) - Primary Applicant |

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Age</u> | <u>Country of Origin</u> | <u>Marital Status</u> | <u>Children</u> | <u>Education /Qualification</u> | <u>Date of arriving in NZ</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Last Occupation in Home Country</u> | <u>Current Employment in New Zealand</u> | <u>Visa on Arrival</u> |
|-------------|------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--|-------------------------------|------------------|--|--|---|
| Phoebe | 37 | South Africa | D | 0 | PhD | May-16 | Palmerston North | Researcher (Institute) | Lecturer | Skilled Migrant Work Visa (had job offer) - Primary Applicant |
| Regan | 33 | Australia | S | 0 | PhD | Apr-15 | Palmerston North | Academic | Academic | Skilled Migrant Work Visa (had job offer) - Primary Applicant |
| Silvia | 45 | Hungary | M | 2 (7,10) | Masters in English language and literature | Jan-08 | Auckland | High School English Teacher | ESOL Teacher | Partner visa - husband had Skilled migrant visa |
| Tracey | 38 | Canada | M | 3 (4,7,9) | BA Kinesiology Phys Ed, BA Education | Aug-08 | Wellington | Relief Teacher | Part-time Kiwi Sports Project leader (council) | Married a Kiwi - so entitled via Partner |
| Tia | 32 | Peru | M | 0 | BSc Food Science | Nov-13 | Whanganui | Junior Supervisor | Technical Officer | Working Holiday Visa - then work visa (sponsored by husband who also had a work visa)- then Primary applicant for Permanent Resident Visa |
| Ursula | 36 | Serbia | M | 1 (5) | BSc Meterology | Aug-16 | Wellington | Forecaster | Forecaster | Skilled Migrant Work Visa (had job offer)Primary Applicant |

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Age</u> | <u>Country of Origin</u> | <u>Marital Status</u> | <u>Children</u> | <u>Education /Qualification</u> | <u>Date of arriving in NZ</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Last Occupation in Home Country</u> | <u>Current Employment in New Zealand</u> | <u>Visa on Arrival</u> |
|-------------|------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--|-------------------------------|-----------------|--|--|---|
| Valentina | 42 | Philippines | S | 0 | PhD Economics plus Postgrad Public Policy | Mar-14 | Wellington | Academic | Principle Analyst (MBIE) | Skilled Migrant Work Visa - Primary Applicant |
| Valeria | 40 | Hungary | M | 2 (7,12) | BA Economics, BA Nutrition, Postgrad Dip Public Policy | Jun-13 | Christchurch | Educational Policy Advisor | Cleaner/ Cleaning Company Owner | Tourist Visa |
| Vian | 40 | China | M | 1 (6) | Master of Arts Management | Sep-13 | Auckland | Waikato University Chinese Rep | International Recruitment Officer | Skilled Migrant Work Visa (had job offer) - Primary Applicant |

3.2.2 Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews

The interviews were conducted over a ten-month period in 2018. Forty interviews were conducted, 16 of which were face-to-face, 21 over skype and three were via phone. Interviews on average lasted between 75-90 minutes. After a potential participant made contact, the information sheet and consent form were sent via email to them (Appendices 2 and 3). Once it was ascertained that they met the participant criterion and were prepared to be a part of the study, a suitable time was booked for the interview. Participants were provided with the option of having the interview face-to-face, phone or by skype. Most of the interviews were conducted via skype as this allowed for more flexibility, and interviews could be conducted in the evenings and the weekends in the security of their own homes and away from their work environment. This allowed for an extra layer of privacy and comfort, and also meant that there were no time restraints on the interview which there would be if the interviews were conducted during work time or in their scheduled lunch breaks.

All the interviews were audio-recorded, then transferred into and transcribed verbatim using QSR NVivo software. Recording the interviews ensured the richness and depth of data was not lost. An additional benefit of recording and then transcribing the interviews was that it allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of and connection with the data. The timeline was prepared prior to the interview jointly by the researcher and participant, and supplementary field notes were taken by the researcher during the interview. These field notes assisted with verification of the transcripts by providing context, insights and observations that can help ensure the accuracy and reliability of the transcript. By taking field notes, the researcher was able to note down key points, main themes, and critical details during the interview, and these served as a means of cross-referencing during the transcription process, helping ensure that important information is not omitted or altered. Additionally, a reflexive journal was kept, in which personal and theoretical reflections were noted after the interview.

In the consent forms, participants were asked if they would like the transcripts sent back to them to check for accuracy (Appendix 3). All of the participants requested they be sent the transcripts for checking and were asked to contact the researcher if there were any discrepancies. None of the participants identified a correction or any additional information. This ensured that the interview data was authentic and correctly transcribed. To some extent, the data collection and data analysis phases merged, with themes evolving as interviewing and transcribing continued concurrently.

3.2.3 Timeline methodology

Timelines have been widely used in healthcare research, especially in the fields of stress and coping. They allow a temporal element to be added to the research context, providing a visual of how skilled migrant women's careers evolve/devolve over time along with the impact of a macro-transition such as migration. An additional benefit of utilising the timeline in this study is that it provides an additional form of data and a prompt when used alongside the semi-structured interview. A graphic illustration in the form of a timeline of the pathway followed by skilled migrant women in their life and careers was employed in this study. An example of a timeline constructive from several participant interviews is provided in Appendix 4. It was jointly developed between the researcher and participant and was a graphic representation of key events and periods in the participant's life. It was used as a research tool to enable a logical sequence of the participant's lived experiences which would provide a clearer understanding of their career pattern and how it unfolded/transitioned from the home country to the host country. A life course perspective provides a way to demonstrate how each life stage informs subsequent life stages. The timeline was a linear graphic illustration. One end was anchored from when the participant finished school, and the other end anchored to the date of the interview.

3.2.4 Pilot Study

Pilot studies are invaluable as they allow the pre-testing of the research instrument (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). They can give advance warning on areas where the research project may fail, whether the method or instrument is inappropriate, as well as if the sampling frame is effective. A key purpose of the pilot study is to refine the interview questions to ensure that the data collected answers the key research objectives (Saunders et al., 2018). Four pilot studies were conducted to ensure that the data collection tool was appropriate for the purposes of this study. The pilot study included two face-to-face, one phone and one skype interview to ensure consistency across all these data collection methods. The timeline was found to be particularly useful for participants and the researcher in terms of reminding the participant and allowing the researcher to probe for further information of significant events. The semi-structured interview schedule was found to correlate with the research objectives and theoretical framework closely. Each interview was transcribed within a few days and checked by re-listening to the recording. On average, each pilot interview took approximately 90 minutes.

3.2.5 Face-to-Face Interviews

Five face-to-face interviews were conducted in a public place, while two were conducted in the workplace, and one was conducted in the participant's home. All the face-to-face interviews were conducted during the daytime. Face-to-face interviews have key benefits such as there are no technological disruptions, the researcher is also able to read body language, facial expressions, and other non-verbal signals more easily, and subsequently be able to make the participant feel safer and more comfortable during the interview (Saarijarvi & Bratt, 2021; Seidman, 2006). The interviews conducted in the workplace and in the home were all in private spaces with minimal (if any) interruptions and no time restraints. The interviews conducted in the public places were in coffee shops and public libraries. The coffee shops, while not noisy

or overcrowded, did have several interruptions from either people coming in or going out. While this did not negatively impact the interview in terms of how open and forthright the participants were, it did mean that on a few occasions the participants would lose the thread or flow of the conversation. The interviews in the libraries were in private rooms which were booked beforehand so there was no interruption.

3.2.6 Skype/ Phone Interviews

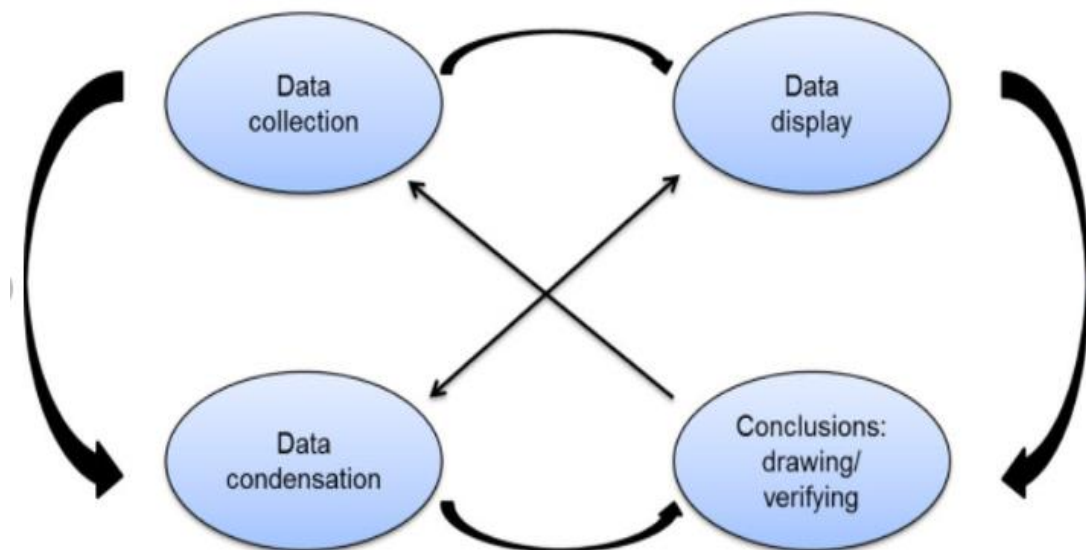
Twenty-one interviews were conducted via skype, and three were conducted via phone. While the face-to-face interview is the favoured option for qualitative interviews, electronic interviews are increasingly becoming more common as a data collection method, and for this study they were a means of being able to connect with participants across the whole of New Zealand (Saarijarvi & Bratt, 2021). Face-to-face interviews can also be time-consuming and expensive. However, the added benefit of electronic meetings is that people can participate in the study regardless of where they live. Skype also provided visual cues and facial expressions, which allowed both the researcher and the participant to be more aware of why there may be a pause between questions or answers. Use of software such as skype provides synchronous interaction between the researcher and the participant (Hanna, 2012). However, technological connectivity issues can be disruptive, and this was experienced during this study on a few occasions. All the phone interviews were conducted during the daytime, while the participant was not at work. In the phone interviews, participants would ask for more information on anonymity and needed assurance that they would not be identifiable in the study compared to face-to-face or skype interviews. Telephone interviews were also slightly longer, due to having to clarify some of the responses, and it was slightly more difficult to gauge how the participants felt during the interview (Saarijarvi & Bratt, 2021).

3.3 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis can be seen as three parallel flows of activity: data condensations, data display and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2014). As can be seen in the interactive analysis model for qualitative data (Figure 13), qualitative data analysis is an iterative and continuous process, where the three flows of activity are interwoven. The qualitative analysis process is cyclic, requiring the researcher to return to the data and coding repeatedly (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). There are several techniques utilised to analyse qualitative data including grounded theory, discourse analysis, content analysis, narrative analysis, and framework analysis. For this research, narrative analysis will be utilised. This fits in with the life story approach, where skilled migrant women can give voice to their lived experience of migration and the impact it has on their careers in the host country.

Figure 13

Interactive Analysis Model for Qualitative Data (Miles et al., 2014)



Narrative analysis is a prominent qualitative approach used in social science research (Neuman, 2014). In the migration and career literature, it is considered integral as it allows the examination of a sequentially told life story (Mahmoud & Tehseen, 2021). While some scholars

view narrative and storytelling as different (Smith & Sparkes, 2008), most social science researchers use the terms interchangeably (Spector-Mersel, 2010). Narrative inquiries reveal life stories that enable individuals to make sense of their ever-changing world (Murray, 2018). Narrative analysis allows researchers to interpret those stories within the research context to explore and understand the phenomena studied and it embraces the constructivist view that humans intersubjectively construct their social realities and through interactions with one another (Lincoln et al., 2018). There are four forms of narrative analysis generally used in a study: structural, functional, thematic and dialogic/performance. This study uses thematic analysis to study the narratives' substance and identify and determine the themes which exist in stories.

3.3.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was deemed suitable for this study for several reasons. Thematic analysis is a flexible method that can be modified depending on the requirements of the research, with the potential to provide 'a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data' (Braun & Clarke, 2006 p.78), often drawing on the explicit meanings of manifest data content, as well as the underlying ideas of latent data (Joffe, 2012). It can be utilised for identifying, analysing, and reporting themes within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). At the latent level, Braun and Clarke (2006) claim that thematic analysis goes beyond "the semantic content of the data, and starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations – and ideologies – that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data" (p.84). This fits with the constructivist paradigm of this research. Thematic analysis can be used for a variety of data sources, allowing large data sets to be reduced into smaller more manageable sets of common themes, assisting in the production of a clear and organised report (King, 2004). A theme can be defined as a specific pattern of meaning within a data set and can contain manifest or latent content (Joffe, 2012). Thematic analysis allows themes to be drawn from

theory (deductive) and organically from raw data (inductive), thereby having some preconceived themes derived from theories, while remaining open to new themes that will emerge organically (abductive) (Graebner et al., 2012). Thematic analysis allows the researcher to highlight similarities and differences by investigating the perspectives of different participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006; King, 2004). For data analysis, this research will follow Braun & Clarke's (2006) six step thematic analysis method (as seen in Table 4). The thematic analysis was conducted in NVivo.

Table 4

Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006 p.87)

| Phase | Description of the process |
|---|--|
| 1. Familiarizing yourself with your data: | Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas. |
| 2. Generating initial codes: | Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code. |
| 3. Searching for themes: | Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme. |
| 4. Reviewing themes: | Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis. |
| 5. Defining and naming themes: | Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme. |
| 6. Producing the report: | The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis. |

Within both the migration and career fields, thematic analysis is a valuable qualitative data analysis tool due to its flexibility in analysing in-depth interviews of skilled migrant women's career experiences using an integrated migration and career theoretical framework. Analysing forty interviews, averaging 75 minutes each, is a huge task. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps enabled this task to be completed in a logical, organised, and iterative process. Next, the detail of the data analysis process is described. NVivo was adopted at the beginning of the study as an invaluable tool for analysis especially with the amount of initial data there was. Although there are six steps to Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis process, in this research steps three to five needed repeated engagement and immersion with the data. Thematic analysis is not strictly a linear process, despite the six phases, with the researcher

often moving back and forth between the different phases as occurred in this study (Terry et al., 2017).

3.3.1.1 Data Familiarity

It took ten months to conduct all 40 semi-structured interviews and transcribe them verbatim. All the raw data was documented, audited, and filed in Word and Excel folders on the university's hard drive, which is protected. A reflexive journal was also started at the beginning of data collection to document personal and theoretical reflections, initial analysis thoughts, interpretations, and questions. The latter part is critical in qualitative studies to mitigate any researcher bias from entering the research. This stage requires the researcher to be fully immersed and actively engaged in the data. This encompasses transcribing the data and then reading it, and then re-reading it alongside the timeline constructed with the participant mapping their career both pre- and post-migration. It suggests jotting down initial ideas and potential themes. This first stage stresses that the researcher needs to have a comprehensive understanding of the data content and is completely familiar with all aspects of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and forms the foundation for the ensuing data analysis stages.

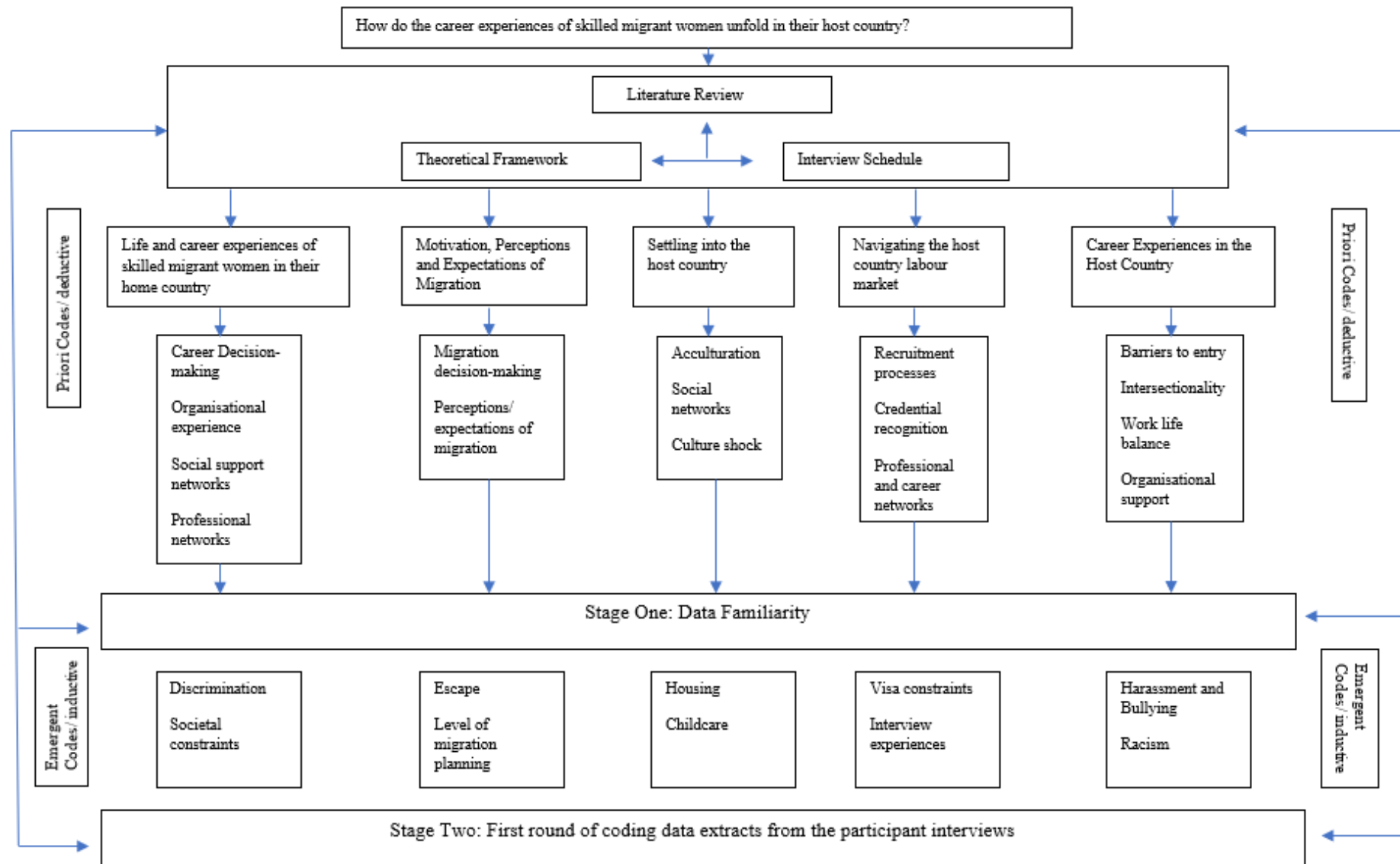
Initially the interviews were transcribed by the researcher within two days of the interview. This was important as the interview was fresh and allowed reflections to be made on nonverbal and emotional aspects of the interview (Maclean et al., 2004). Verbatim transcription and researcher notation of participants' nonverbal cues has been cited as central to reliability, validity, and authenticity of qualitative data collection (Maclean, et al., 2004). This study is underpinned by a phenomenological theoretical framework where a strong relationship between the researcher and data is critical to the research design. Having the interviews transcribed verbatim was critical as the focus was the exploration of meanings, experiences, thoughts, and feelings characteristic of skilled migrant women and how their careers unfolded in the host country. Having verbatim transcripts also allows a clear audit trail

of the data analysis. All transcripts were carefully transcribed in this study, the last fourteen interviews being transcribed by a university-approved transcriber. Using a transcriber saved time, however the transcripts were often incomplete or contained numerous errors. The researcher, therefore, had to carefully check to ensure the transcripts matched the interview recordings verbatim. At the end of this check, the researcher had equal familiarity with both the transcripts she had transcribed, and those done by the university-approved transcriber.

After transcribing, each transcript was printed, read, and re-read, in addition to being listened to by the researcher. Transcripts were released to the participant to read and amend as appropriate as per the 'Authority for the release of transcript' document (Appendix 5). Supplementary reflections, patterns and questions were also noted on the documents (field notes). This was in addition to the reflexive journal entries which were completed immediately after the interview. Although this was a time-consuming process, it allowed the researcher to become more familiar and engaged with the data. It is important to note that a conceptual framework and semi-structured interview schedule had produced an *a priori* coding schema before data collection stage. An *a priori* coding schema approach was considered appropriate for this study as it allowed having a predefined set of codes established before data collection commenced (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018; Mihas, 2019). These codes were based on existing theories, concepts, and prior research, identified in the literature review. Additional emergent coding was added to this scheme during the data stage. This process can be seen in Figure 14 below, illustrating stage one and the start of stage two analysis for this study, showing the iterative process for data analysis as this is repeated until the themes are finalised in stage four.

Figure 14

Illustration of Data Coding Stage One and Two of Braun and Clarke's (2006) Thematic Analysis



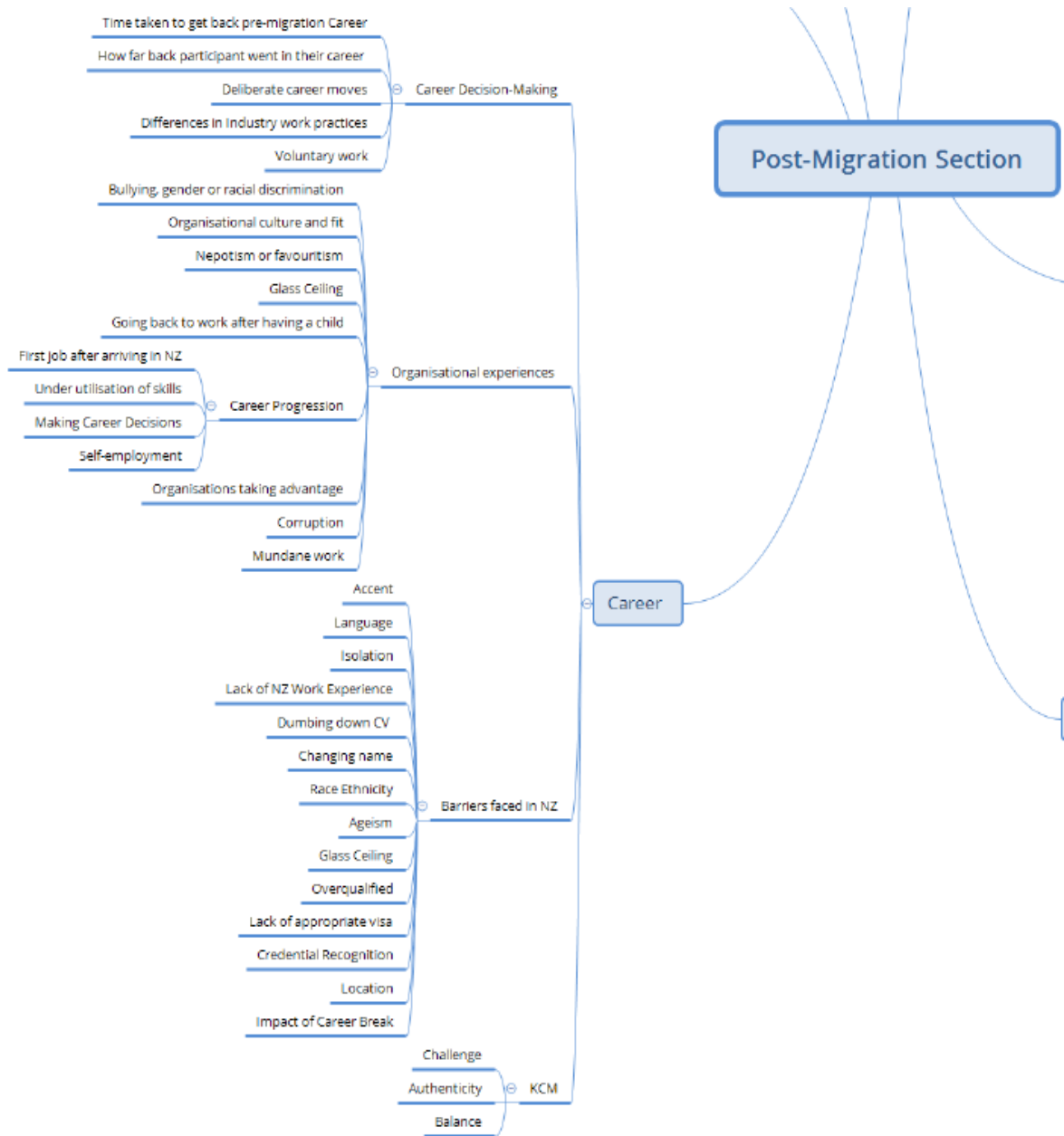
3.3.1.2 *Generating Initial Codes and Searching for Themes*

While Braun and Clarke (2006) refer to generating initial codes and searching for themes as two separate stages, in this study the researcher found it easier to work on both concurrently. Preliminary codes are aspects of the data that are meaningful to the study and address the aims of the research objectives. These are broad codes which are more specific than themes. Codes have been argued to be either inductive/data driven (generated from the raw data) or deductive/theory driven (generated from the prior theories). However, a hybrid approach merges both approaches by using *a priori* and emergent coding in the coding process (Wilson, 2014; Miles et al., 2014; Graebner et al., 2012). In this study, *a priori* codes were developed from prior theories and literature, and then emergent coding arose from the analysis of raw data. Researcher subjectivity here is viewed as more integral to the process of analysis (Clarke et al., 2015), and so consistency in how themes were determined was essential. In this instance, mind maps were utilised to explore and display relationships in the data. The *a priori* coding schema had its foundation in the integrated seminal migration frameworks table (Table 1) developed from the migration theories utilised in this study. Emergent coding was then added during the familiarity phase. Coding was, as suggested by Terry et al., (2017) latent, organic, and flexible and based in a repeated immersion with the data. Therefore, this flexible and hybrid coding approach was adopted in this study. This iterative process of engagement with the data moves analysis beyond just surface level and enabled more depth to be achieved, as well as emergent themes to develop while coding simultaneously.

As outlined above, NVivo was initially used for coding, producing a 65,000-word report with over 200 codes and data extracts. These multiple codes were transformed into two mind maps (pre-migration and post-migration) to make it easier for the researcher to sort and analyse the complex and large amounts of the data. Part of the post-migration mind map is shown below, in Figure 15. The full mind map can be found in Appendix 6.

Figure 15

Mind Map showing Results from the NVivo Coding Report



While this sounds extensive, the mind map and the collated report enabled the researcher to work efficiently in coding large amounts of complex data. It allowed broad coding of data extracts in multiple themes, facilitating meaningful and in-depth analysis. All the relevant data extracts were then arranged according to the overarching themes (Braun &

Clarke, 2006). An example of how coding data extracts was achieved can be seen in Table 5 below. While it was important to be guided by the research objectives and question, themes that did not seem relevant were not disregarded while doing the initial phase of coding. Instead, these were placed in a separate ‘miscellaneous theme’ to be reviewed later. Detailed notes were kept on the development of themes for audit purposes.

Table 5

Example of Coding Data Extracts

| Theme | Example of data extract | Researcher reflections |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Applying for jobs | Alexas: I recently I applied for job community support worker, and they gave me an opportunity to have an interview.... They didn't mention phone interview. But she called me and then I think simply she wanted to check my English, that is how I felt. | Alexas has low levels of confidence in her English-speaking skills, even though she speaks perfectly well. This is emphasised in her choice of career change options; she is considering ECE but not primary because she thinks at primary school the children will mock her. |
| | Biyu: well, the one feedback I got was 'do you have any New Zealand experience' and I said no and that was it. And that for me, I hate that. Because every new person that comes into the country has that issue. | Impact of this led Biyu to give up her job preference to apply for a low skilled job to just enter the labour market. |
| | Hadas: Finding a job in New Zealand is about who you know and not what you know, and employers don't really look at qualifications. | Importance of having networks to get a foot in the door, sense of frustration from participant. |

3.3.1.3 Reviewing Themes

The fourth phase involved delving deeper into the identified themes, reflecting on whether to combine, refine, separate, or discard initial themes. In the first level of reviewing, all the emergent themes with coded extracts were re-read to ensure repeated patterns of codes and themes were either removed or merged. Then a complete and comprehensive review of the data was undertaken to ensure that the themes developed represented an accurate representation

of the data. In addition to this, an Excel chart was developed to show a snapshot of the frequency of themes and sub themes (Appendix 6 and 7) to assist in further refinement. The themes were split into six core segments, each segment contained themes and sub-themes. The total number of final themes was 17, with 35 sub themes derived from the data extracts.

3.3.1.4 Defining and Naming Themes

In this phase, the themes and sub themes were provided with names and clear definitions capturing the essence of the story they were attempting to tell the reader. Once all the theme and sub theme stories were encapsulated and ordered, it was clear that a unified story emerged from the data to understand the experiences that skilled migrant women undertook during their migration journey and how their careers evolved or devolved. Through this process, there was some re-ordering of themes to better reflect the story and data.

3.3.1.5 Producing the Report

Finally, the report is produced. The themes are interwoven into a story with powerful extracts relating to the research objectives, question, and literature. The report is the last chance for the researcher to ensure that the research question, objectives, and literature are addressed.

3.3.2 Research Rigour

While qualitative research generates knowledge to address social change, qualitative researchers struggle with concepts of objectivity, truth, and validity in their research processes (Fush et al., 2018). Thus, qualitative researchers need to prove the rigour and trustworthiness of their study and the processes they used (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Thorne, 2000). Rigour is defined as the strength of the research design and appropriateness of the method to answer the research questions (Morse et al., 2002). Qualitative researchers search for meanings, understanding and extrapolation to similar contextual situations, while quantitative researchers seek causal determination, prediction, and generalisations (Golafshani, 2003). Reliability and validity have always been referred to in assessing the rigour of the standardised procedural

processes of quantitative research, however, they have not been deemed to be adequate when it comes to qualitative research (Morse et al., 2002). While it is agreed that rigour is essential in qualitative research, several leading qualitative researchers argued that reliability and validity related to the positivist quantitative paradigm and is not germane to qualitative research (Morse et al., 2002). Lincoln and Guba (1985), in their seminal work, replaced reliability and validity with the concept of trustworthiness, which is made up of four criteria - credibility, dependability, transferability, and conformability – as essential for quality research (Bell & Bryman, 2007; Gair & van Luyn, 2017). Authenticity was added as a check for fairness, ontological, educative, catalytic, and tactical authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Creswell (2014) refers to several validity strategies that were appropriate for qualitative studies. These include:

- Triangulation and/or member checking (parallel to credibility and internal validity)
- Using an external auditor to review the project (parallel to dependability and reliability)
- Reporting using thick descriptive narrative (parallel to transferability and external validity)
- Reflexivity, peer debriefing (parallel to conformability and objectivity)

Credibility refers to the extent which the research findings and conclusions can be considered authentic (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). With the possibility of multiple accounts of social reality, it is going to be the credibility of the account that the researcher presents, that will determine how accepted it is by others (Bell & Bryman, 2007). Two strategies that can ensure that the researcher is confident that their understanding of the research participants, context and processes are as accurate as possible are ‘participant validation’ and triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). With regards to participant validation, every participant was provided with a copy of their transcript via email, and asked to contact the researcher if there were any

discrepancies in their transcripts. A follow-up email was sent to participants a week later, and 37 participants replied confirming they were satisfied with the accuracy of their interview transcripts via email, and 3 replied via text message. All the participants in this study accepted the opportunity to review their own interview transcripts and the data findings, and no discrepancies were noted. Hence, member checking was a key part of ensuring credibility in this study. Graneheim and Lundman (2004) suggested heterogeneity of participants as another source of credibility. The skilled migrant women who participated in this research ranged widely in terms of age, career experience, host country and stage of life. This increased the possibility of understanding the phenomena in question from a diverse range of characteristics, contributing to a richer, and more in-depth findings as well as establishing credibility. Credibility can also be demonstrated by how “well categories and themes cover data” (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004 p.110). One way of doing this is to provide verbatim quotes from the transcribed texts so that the reader can judge the similarities and within and differences between categories and themes. Both the findings and discussion chapters contain supporting quotes from the data analysis process.

Transferability refers to whether readers of the research can determine if the findings can be transferred to other contexts from the details provided. This is inherently difficult in qualitative research which entails the study of a small group or individuals who share specific characteristics (Bell & Bryman, 2007). Migrant and career research is highly contextual in nature, however one way to obtain transferability in qualitative research is to produce ‘thick description,’ a term introduced by Geertz (1973). Thick descriptions are deep, dense, and detailed accounts. Thick and rich data provides a detailed account of the culture, context and circumstances surrounding the phenomena being studied to enhance the understanding of meaning and importance of behaviours and events. Upon reading this, the reader should feel that they have or could experience the events being described, thus establishing credibility

(Creswell & Miller, 2000). The rationale for the method chosen in this study, a clear outline of the research process, how participants were chosen alongside a clear description of the participants, how data was collected and analysed is provided to demonstrate to the reader that as much detail as possible has been provided to them to ensure trustworthiness in the research process and reporting (Curtin & Fossey, 2007).

Dependability, concerned with consistency and repeatability of the research findings, can be achieved by the researcher ensuring that the research process is logical, traceable, and clearly documented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles et al., 2014). One way a study can demonstrate dependability is for its processes to be auditable by peers (Koch, 2006). However, peer auditing has been viewed by some as too demanding due to the copious amounts of data that qualitative research generates, and as such has not become a popular approach (Bell & Bryman, 2007). This study did document all evidence, steps and measures taken during both the data collection and analysis stages. These were reviewed and discussed in great depth with the researcher's doctoral supervisors and peers.

Confirmability is concerned with the extent that findings of the study are clearly derived from the data and not researcher bias (Bell & Bryman, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Establishing confirmability should be the objective of audit trails (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), requiring the researcher to show how conclusions and interpretations have been reached (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Confirmability, according to Guba and Lincoln (1989), is achieved when credibility, transferability and dependability are all achieved. In this study, detailed step-by-step data collection and data analysis processes were followed and recorded. An in-depth reflexive diary was kept with notes and is discussed in more depth in the below section. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis were applied diligently for the initial coding, to generate themes and relationships, interpret and report findings from the empirical data.

3.3.3 Researcher's Role and Reflexivity

Reflexivity has become fundamental in social science research, and there are increasing calls for more reflexive methodologies in the field of migrant career research (Al Ariss et al., 2012). Based on the idea that research is an interpretive activity, it is central to the construction, application, and analysis of interviews (Kolar et al., 2015). Reflexivity encompasses reflecting on the way research is conducted and understanding how the process of research shapes its outcomes (Nadin & Cassell, 2006). It recognises that research is dependent on the position of the researcher (Nadin & Cassell, 2006), and, in the case of migrants, is not a process free of value judgment and politics (Al Ariss et al., 2012). Thus, reflexive research enables the researchers' vested interests and standpoints to be made explicit, improving both accountability and rigor in the study (Freysteinson et al., 2013). Reflexivity improves transparency in the researcher's subjective role, allowing them to apply the necessary changes to ensure credibility in their findings (Finlay & Ballinger, 2006). Qualitative researchers empathise and identify with the people they study to understand how those people see things. This is a core precept of qualitative research, with the intent to share stories and transmit rich experiences that enhance collective awareness and understanding (Gair & van Luyn, 2017). Although ethical questions about the sincerity and authenticity of the empathy demonstrated by qualitative researchers have been brought up (Lather, 2009; Watson, 2009), scholars have maintained that it (empathy) is an essential and crucial element in qualitative social science research (Gair, 2012; Neuman; 2006).

The researcher's role in this study became a conduit through which the participants could tell their stories freely. While objectivity has advantages, there are equally numerous benefits to researchers bringing in their own values to a study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In the current study, the researcher's own background as a skilled migrant woman enabled full immersion and understanding of the participants' points of view. This not only allows them to

engage in substantive discussions with the participants on shared experiences, but it also enables the creation of empathetic relationships (Jootun et al., 2009; Smith, 2006). This potentially provides the researcher with more access to knowledge and experiences from participants that they may not necessarily have shared with another researcher who was not able to relate to them through similar experiences. Having a shared common background with participants also meant that the researcher needed to ensure that they separated their experiences and beliefs from the extrapolations made (Rolfe, 2006). To mitigate this, there was a need to constantly reflect on their role and be attentive to how they conducted the interviews (Jootun et al., 2009; Finlay & Ballinger, 2006). However, being on an equal platform to the participants in terms of many shared experiences meant that they were privy to more in-depth information, and this outweighed all other potential limitations. This has also been found to assist in theory construction (Weick, 2002), where increased attention and deeper thinking is directed towards spotting excluded voices.

The researcher in this study adopted a reflexive diary as an aid and a way to continually self-reflect on their own epistemological assumptions (social constructionism) and avoid biases (Nadin & Cassell, 2006). A self-reflective journal was kept during the research to facilitate reflexivity, noting experiences, thoughts, and feelings in an attempt to create more transparency in the research process. It was very difficult to remember to self-reflect straight after an interview, especially when an interview had lasted over an hour or where multiple interviews were completed in a day. At times, it felt like some of self-reflections were not of any value to the research. However, transcribing the interview and engaging fully with the transcripts allowed further critical self-reflection on the interview and this enabled the researcher to be confident in the direction of the study and the approach used. Within the constructivist paradigm, reflexivity is essential in the cocreation of knowledge between the researcher and the participant. It is important in a reflection of research processes to consider the passing of

time and the impact this may have on the research. In this research, the data was collected in 2018, and the data analysis and writing process took four years, interspersed with COVID, the establishment of a business and life. The impact of COVID on PhD studies has been identified, with the erosion of scholarly support networks, poor work-life balance and mental health problems hindering progress (Pyhältö et al., 2023). However, the connection to the stories and the participants was not lost in this research, and intense sessions of re-emerging with the data occurred throughout this time.

3.3.4 Ethical Considerations

A critical consideration in qualitative narrative-based meaningful and authentic research is ethics. Confidentiality, informed consent, welfare of participants including potential risks and harm are all important. The protection of participants in any research study is vital. This study went through a full ethics application process at Massey University which means that it is bound by the Massey University Code of Ethical Conduct for research, training and evaluations involving human participants (Appendix 9). The reason for a full ethics application, as opposed to a low-risk application, was the acknowledgment that in-depth narrative interviews could elicit anxiety and trauma (Kolar et al., 2015) as participants reflected on their experiences of migration and the outcomes associated with it. It was important to ensure that no undue stress resulted from the interview process, and that participants were aware that they could stop the interview at any stage (Saunders et al., 2018). The benefits of the research should never outweigh risks to participants. Participants had a say in how the research proceeded and this was necessary to facilitate trust in the researcher-participant relationship (Kolar et al., 2015). If at any stage the participant was uncomfortable about any information, they had inadvertently revealed that they had not planned on, the researcher assured them this would be deleted from the recording and any field notes.

It was critical that all the participants were given the right to give informed consent with regards to participating in this research. Therefore, prior to the interview the potential participants were provided with an information sheet (Appendix 2) which included the following information:

- Information on the research team and contact details
- Project description and invitation to participate
- Participant identification/sampling frame
- Project procedures
- Data management
- Participant's rights
- Contact details for support services (as the researcher was not qualified to offer support or advice)

The information sheet also advised the potential participants that the research had obtained full ethics approval and contact details of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. All participants were assured their identities would be held in full anonymity and raw data would not be released to a third party. Likewise, recordings, notes and transcripts were stored under false names to protect participants. Consent was provided via email and confirmation at the beginning of the interview was gained to ensure that the consent was voluntary. Due to the sensitivity of the information provided, the timelines have not been presented in this dissertation. Any information that may identify any individuals or their workplaces as been withheld. This was deemed essential as several participants had shared their fears of backlash within their industry if they were identified in this study.

3.4 Summary

This chapter has detailed the philosophical considerations of the research methodology and approach employed in this study. It explained the rationale behind adopting an interpretivist philosophical approach aligned with a constructivist stance, where participants provide their individual construction of ‘reality.’ Ontologically, the researcher’s view is subjective, as it is based on shared meanings and perceptions. An exploratory research design was utilised to gather rich data with the view to gaining deeper insights into the career experiences of skilled migrant women in their host country. Given the exploratory and interpretivist nature of this study, a qualitative methodology was deemed the most appropriate to understand the complex multi-directional and multi-dimensional phenomena of skilled migrant women’s careers. Finally, the reasoning and justification behind the selection of the abductive approach was discussed.

The next section of this chapter was dedicated to the research design framework and the use of life stories and narratives as the research tool to analyse migration and career histories. Justification of using the life history approach was provided alongside reasoning behind utilising semi-structured interviews and data collection method. Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six phases of thematic analysis were utilised in this study for both flexibility in meeting the requirements of the research but also, its potential to provide rich data. Lastly, research rigour, reflexivity and ethical considerations were outlined in terms of showing the trustworthiness and authenticity of this study. The next two chapters will examine and discuss the findings of this study.

Chapter Four – Findings and Discussion

Life and Career Before and After Migration

“There’s a moment where you have to choose whether to be silent or stand up.”

Malala Yousafzai

4 Introduction

This chapter is first of two findings and discussion chapters, and addresses the first research objective of this study:

- ❖ To provide more in-depth understanding and meaning to the life and career experiences of skilled migrant women.

It also addresses part of the second objective of this study:

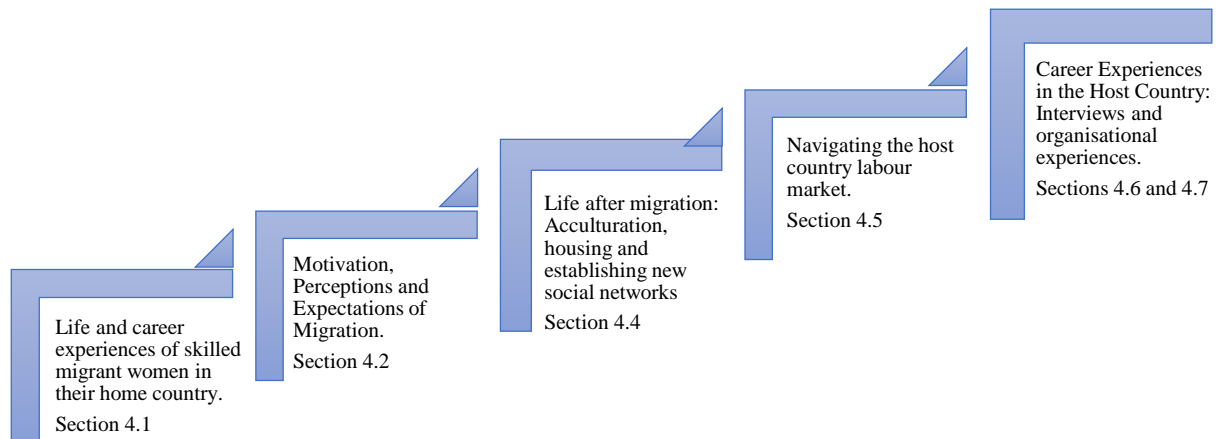
- ❖ To contribute to existing migration theories by exploring the applicability of migration theories to the career experiences of skilled migrant women.

This chapter presents the key pre-migration and post-migration findings from the semi-structured interviews with the skilled migrant women participants. Linking post-migration reality to pre-migration life, motivation to migrate and perception of the host country and post-migration life will provide insight into skilled migrants' career progression and development. Participants' life and career experiences pre-migration, settling into the host country, navigating the host country labour market and subsequent career experiences can be viewed as following a process or a pathway.

This study explores the themes in this pathway, and, in doing so, contributes to the relationship between the past and present career and life experiences of skilled migrant women. This migration pathway, and structure for Part One of this chapter, is depicted in Figure 16.

Figure 16

Skilled Migrant Women's Migration Pathway as depicted in Part One



The themes identified at each stage of the pathway echo the different stages of skilled migrant women's careers, from experience in their home country to the present day in their host country. They highlight the manifold, multifaceted and interdependent nature of skilled migrant women's lives and careers. By the end of this chapter, a more in-depth understanding of the career experiences of skilled migrant women will emerge.

Part One – In the Home Country

4.1 Life before Migration

For most participants, their career decision pathway and their personal lives were strongly woven together. This reflects Aabha's career choice which was heavily influenced by her cousins who predominantly worked in IT. The home country environment, societal values, family support and career opportunities in the home country all played critical roles in the career and migration outcome decisions for participants. The development of skilled migrant women's career identities in their home country is potentially an important dynamic to consider if a deeper understanding is to be gained of their experiences in the host country. Table 6

highlights the three key sub-themes emerging with regards to skilled migrant women’s career experiences in their home country: career decision-making, networks, and organisational experience.

Table 6

Career Formation and Experiences Pre-Migration Themes

| | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Career Formation and Experiences Pre-Migration | <i>Career decision making</i> | Determined career pathway |
| | | Flexible/ Persuadable |
| | | Fell into ‘career’ |
| | <i>Networks</i> | Cultivating professional networks |
| | | Securing work through social networks |
| | <i>Organisational experience</i> | Discriminatory |
| | | Politically infused |
| | | Lack of work-life balance |
| | | Limited career progression |

4.1.1 Career Decision-Making

This study found that highly skilled migrant women came from very differing backgrounds, with varying levels of agency in their career decision-making choices in their home country. However, one common denominator amongst them was the importance of education, the opportunities that it would provide for them be it independence or migrating overseas.

Many participants from NESB (Non-English Speaking Background) countries spoke of being strongly influenced by cultural, familial and environment factors in the career choices

they made. Participants from Asia particularly were strongly influenced by their families. Ariana and Sara both came from families of medical practitioners. Sara spoke about how “my parents wanted me to (become a doctor) and I come from a family of doctors, so it was an expectation for me to be a doctor.” Irina also spoke about how she “was really motivated to work with computers, but my mother wanted me to be a teacher.” She trained to be a teacher, but in the evenings would take computer classes. Participants were tractable in their career choices, allowing themselves to be persuaded pre-marriage by their family, and post-marriage by their husbands. Post-marriage, the husband’s careers generally took priority. Jaya spoke about her ambition to work as a scientist after her marriage “but most of the research institutions are in stations out of Colombo, and my husband worked in Colombo so I couldn’t go into science. I eventually went into administration and management.”

However, several participants had a clear steady goal when it came to their careers and made career decisions independently of their family. Several participants spoke about seeking a career that would give them independence from their families, some willing to move to another town or city to establish their careers. Past research has found that more women were accessing higher education and professional qualifications so that they could achieve independence (Beoku-Betts, 2008; Le & Nguyen, 2021; Malik & Courtney, 2011). Other participants saw education as a channel to leave their home country which was either patriarchal or did not fit in with their personal values or goals from a young age and so worked towards this goal. They studied and built up their career capital solely for the purpose of having a smooth career transition in their host country. Even choosing New Zealand as the host country was a careful choice. For example, Cressida recalls “when I was 18 years old, someone asked me ‘why don’t you move abroad?’ and since then I had this in my mind. I work a little by little to achieve this goal of moving out of Brazil.” These participants were determined that their career choice would allow them to migrate and did whatever they needed to do to attain this

goal. Managing a smooth transition into a new company in their chosen host country was their priority.

4.1.2 Importance Of Networks in Career Progression

The participants in this study valued social networks when it came to landing their first job and progressing in their careers at home. This was especially true for those from NESB countries. Jobs were often found through family or friends:

A friend of mine, who I'd done my first degree with, said to me 'why don't you come and take my job for the term?' I then basically got offered the job because I was already in the system. (Dina)

This was contrary to the experiences of most skilled professional women from ESB (English Speaking Background) countries. They all talked about applying for jobs via advertisements or through recruitment agencies. For these participants, professional networks had to be proactively built in their respective industries but, once established, they would allow participants to progress rapidly in their career trajectory. For example, Donna found that "building professional networks in the UK helped me realise the importance of having contacts and what they can do for you." Participants from ESB countries often maintained a separation between social and professional networks, while most participants from NESB countries found the lines between social and professional networks very blurred.

4.1.3 Organisational Experience

The theme of organisational experience captures reflections by participants on aspects of their career and workplace in their home country. While some participants struggled to progress their careers in their home country, others had rapid career trajectories, facing little discrimination. Part of this was due to their career fields, with some such as IT being more male dominated, but part was also cultural. Several participants spoke about growing up in a patriarchal culture where women were not expected to have serious career aspirations and the

husband's career was prioritised. In this section, the career experiences of the participants in their home country will be expanded on.

4.1.3.1 Discrimination

Discrimination in the workplace was spoken of by many participants in this study. It was experienced in various forms including age, gender, marital status, education. Helena spoke about how when “I was looking for a job in Chile, they would ask your age, your religion, your marital status, if you're planning to have kids, where you live.” While participants were vocal about experiencing various forms of discrimination, a few acknowledged that support from the organisation meant that it did not negatively impact their career progression. For example, Adriana spoke about “one of the senior male managers (who) said that they would resign rather than work for a woman. The organisation invited them to submit their resignation.” Participants, especially those working in male-dominated environments such as technology, finance, and academia, and especially those from NESB countries, referred to the strong and blatant presence of gender discrimination in the workplace. While some of the participants progressed well in their careers in their home country, it often meant working extremely long hours without speaking up, and career progression was rarely at the same trajectory as their male colleagues.

4.1.3.2 Work-Life Balance

Working longer hours meant lack of work-life balance. This was mentioned by several participants, predominantly from South America, Asia, and Eastern Europe. Participants without children spoke about how sacrificing work-life balance was expected of them if they wanted to progress, saying “I really enjoyed my work and wanted to progress in my career.... the only thing missing was work-life balance” (Ona) and “The thing is that in Mexico you know the competition is fierce. If you don't do the work someone else is going to do it” (Iris). Participants with children would often continue to work long hours, but felt they needed to if

they were to progress in their career. Taking a break would mean losing all the career capital they had accumulated, especially in countries like Asia where there was no parental leave. In these countries, however, the impact of the longer hours was often mitigated by the presence of extended family, sharing the childcare and household responsibilities.

4.1.3.3 Societal Constraints and the Glass Ceiling

Politics and corruption were key themes mentioned by participants when referring to promotional opportunities within their career in their home country. Ursula believed that "...because I was not openly supporting the main political party that handed out those high roles, if I had stayed there, maybe I could have been a manager of an irrelevant unit." There were limited opportunities for progression. Cari, also, found that "even though you qualify, and you sit at the interviews, you also need some support, some big uncles, you always need that sort of additional support." Several participants referred indirectly to the glass ceiling as a barrier to career progression, accepting that there was only so far they could go in their career due to societal constraints in their home country. Vian knew that if "I continued there, it would only be in a baby-sitting role (as an assistant or secretary), and I wanted to develop myself and progress." Likewise, Tia knew "the next step would be as a supervisor and that was all.... I didn't have any direction to grow." Migrating was their only option to progress in their career. Previous studies have found that increasing numbers of young women are migrating for better employment opportunities (Beoku-Betts, 2008), better pay and living conditions (Fleury, 2016), as well as escaping from patriarchal cultures (Badkar et al., 2007). While the majority of the participants in this study were in their early career stage at the time of migrating to New Zealand, most of these participants did not make the decision to migrate until they had already worked for several years in their home country. The decision to migrate was not an easy decision for most of the participants in this study. For many, they did attempt to build a strong career in their home country initially.

4.2 Motivation, Perceptions and Expectations of Migration

A wide range of diversity in the migration patterns of skilled migrant women has been identified in literature (Abramsky et al., 2018; Cerdin et al., 2014). While the common stereotype of women following their spouses or family still exists to some extent, educated women are increasingly more likely to migrate on their own for better pay and living conditions (Ghosh, 2009), education opportunities (Beoku-Betts, 2008) or to escape patriarchal cultures (Badkar et al., 2007). The outcome of migrating on your own compared to coming with a partner/husband and/or children will be analysed and discussed in the post-migration experiences (Section 5.4).

The motivation, along with the perception and expectations of migrating, can play a key role in the outcome of the migration experience (Cerdin et al., 2014; Burgelt et al., 2008). In this section, first the motivation to migrate sub-themes will be discussed, followed by perceptions and expectations of migration, ending with the level of planning engaged with by participants. Finally, any potential relationships between these three themes will be explored.

4.2.1 Motivation to Migrate

The findings of this study suggest that participants' motivations for migrating are strongly interrelated with their personal lives. Several participants stated that they chose to migrate for family and/or lifestyle reasons, but these motivations were often interlinked with career opportunities that they believed would be available to them (and/or their partners) in New Zealand. Table 7 presents the four key sub-themes that emerged as relevant to this stage of skilled migrant women's career experiences: career opportunities, family networks in New Zealand, lifestyle, and escape.

Table 7

Motivation, Perception and Expectation - Key Themes

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| Motivation, Perceptions and Expectations | | SMW has secured a job |
| | <i>Career Opportunities</i> | SMW's partner/ husband has secured a job |
| | <i>Family networks in New Zealand</i> | Partner/ husband is a native New Zealander Close family members living in New Zealand |
| | <i>New Zealand Lifestyle</i> | Perceived work life balance and stress free living Escape from home country structural constraints Image of New Zealand as clean green and safe |
| | <i>Escape</i> | From a Patriarchal Culture From Economic Constraints From a corrupt, crime-ridden country |

4.2.1.1 Career Opportunities

Migrating to enhance career opportunities was a strong theme emerging from 10 participants. Yet only three participants migrated to further their own career opportunities, with the remaining doing so for their partner's career opportunities. This aligns with findings from previous studies on dual career couples, where highly skilled women were more likely to migrate overseas for their partner's career (Ackers, 2004; Aure, 2013, Kou & Bailey, 2014). Cari was the outlier here. She migrated to New Zealand for a specific career opportunity, although only on the condition that the organisation also employ her husband. So, it was for their joint careers that she chose to migrate.

Phoebe and Valentina, both in the early stages of their careers, felt that overseas experience would offer them more opportunities to progress in their fields. Phoebe had applied for several academic positions around the world before accepting an offer from a New Zealand university. Valentina applied for a work visa to New Zealand after a colleague had spoken of migrating there and convinced Valentina to apply. She had completed her PhD in Japan:

After living in Japan for nearly five years and having been exposed to an environment where you are constantly pushed to succeed and do research, going back to the Philippines where we don't have enough funding to do research....

That was my one big push.

Phoebe had a partner who followed her to New Zealand with the expectation of continuing his career there. Several participants gave up their careers to follow their partner/husband to New Zealand. Anna left behind a very successful marketing career to come to New Zealand on a tourist visa with her partner, who was struggling “to get a good job in South Africa, and he wanted to be the main provider.” Likewise, Ariana left behind a growing business to accompany her husband after he was offered a job opportunity in New Zealand: “he was determined to go, and I didn't want him to be alone there.” Like Ariana, Mahati and Bina had only been married a short time before their husbands told them of their decision to migrate. Mahati relinquished a highly successful academic science journal editor role. Extant research has found that skilled migrant women from Asia were more likely to migrate for their partner's career opportunities. Having to forsake their careers often led them to later have issues with self-esteem and identity post-migration (van den Bergh & du Plessis, 2012).

4.2.1.2 Family

A major factor in the decision to migrate to New Zealand for Emily and her husband was that they did have some family members living in Wellington. In this research, three participants chose to migrate to New Zealand because of family there. Five participants married

native New Zealanders and, while they had met overseas, it was a deciding factor in making New Zealand home for them.

Tracey, Katharina, and Imogen had all married a New Zealander they met while working overseas. Tracey and her family moved to New Zealand after her husband was offered a good career opportunity in Wellington. Katharina and her husband (who worked in youth camps in the US) moved to New Zealand after they got “tired of bouncing around from camp to camp, and my husband’s parents were having more significant health problems.” Likewise, with the economic situation in London slowing down, Imogen and her partner decided the lifestyle in New Zealand would be better for their young daughter. They concluded that “we’d just give it a go, we could always come back.” Neither Katharina or Imogen, nor their husbands, had secured any work prior to migrating. In all three cases, the native New Zealand partner had been away from their home country for several years.

Leah and Iris migrated to New Zealand solely because they had very close family there. Leah’s daughter, who had come to study in New Zealand, married and decided to settle here. Being single herself, with no ties to her home country, Leah came hoping that she would be able to find a suitable IT job post-migration. Similarly, Iris’s family were already New Zealand residents. Having close friends or family in a country can be a major consideration in migration decision-making. Family ties in the host country have been found to influence migration (Baruch et al., 2007), and can ease adjustment and settlement in the host country.

4.2.1.3 Lifestyle

Research has found a higher level of integration into the host country when the motivation to migrate is not solely for financial needs or seeking better working conditions (Fokkema & Haas, 2015). The overwhelming perception of New Zealand held by most of the participants in this study was of a clean, green, beautiful, and friendly country. This image was

further strengthened by the ease of the visa application process that many experienced. Aabha spoke about how “for Canada, we had to show a huge bank balance and apply through this points system, while here we just needed to show we could survive for six months without a job.”

Six participants spoke of the New Zealand lifestyle as the critical factor in their motivation to migrate. Donna exemplified what all the participants in this group felt when she said, “the lifestyle, the weather, the pace of work, of life....it wasn’t an easy decision, but it was one we were confident making.” Donna, Cleo, and Emily (all from the UK) moved to New Zealand only after securing residency. While Donna and Cleo obtained employment prior to migrating, Emily assumed that being highly skilled and qualified professionals, both she and her husband would easily find career opportunities post-migration. The marketing rhetoric well established on various websites, including Immigration New Zealand, influenced potential skilled migrants with “how desperate they were for highly qualified people like me, how there were so many opportunities, and come here and make your dreams come true” (Hazel). All the participants in this group had good careers in their home country. However, New Zealand offered the opportunity of lifestyle beyond what they had and for this they were willing to leave behind family and careers.

4.2.1.4 Escape from Home Country Structural Constraints

Structural constraints can be defined as various political, economic, social, and cultural factors constraining individuals’ decision-making ability. Sixteen participants were strongly motivated to migrate due to various structural constraints that existed in their home country, and which heavily impacted their day-to-day lives. For them, migration was a risk worth taking. This was the strongest theme cited amongst participants with regards to motivation to migrate. Broadly, the following two sub themes emerged: patriarchal culture, and political, economic, and civil volatility.

4.2.1.4.1 Patriarchal Culture

An escape from a patriarchal culture enticed Helena and her partner to consider permanent migration after spending several months working and travelling in New Zealand. Helena and her partner realised that they did not want to return to the perilous environment of Chile, where long hours at work and an insecure and precarious lifestyle was the norm, especially for women. For Helena, living in New Zealand was the first time she could go out at night safely without worrying about anyone harassing her. This was echoed by most of the participants from South America and Asia. Research has found that migration from patriarchal societies is often an escape for female migrants (Anthias & Lazaridis, 2000), and an opportunity for them to become independent. While some research has indicated that female migrants from patriarchal societies are less likely to integrate into their host country than male migrants (Azmat & Fujimoto, 2016), other research (Fokkema & Haas, 2015) has found them to be more open to socio-cultural integration. One reason for this could be that those female migrants, especially from patriarchal societies, must overcome higher social, cultural, and economic barriers prior to migrating and so they actively build up their skills set.

4.2.1.4.2 Political, Economic and Civil Volatility

Family was a fundamental migration consideration for participants who came from countries where economic and civil instability was manifest. Improving their living standard was a critical factor in migrating - a finding reflected in the literature (Badkar et al., 2007; Cerdin et al., 2014). Several participants were prepared to take backward steps in their careers to escape their home countries and rebuild their lives in New Zealand. Adriana made the sole decision to migrate for her family, stating “I swiftly realised how unsafe South Africa is to raise any child, and very particularly to raise a female. The rate of rape and murder is just enormous.” Being the primary breadwinner in her family, her partner was not given an option as Adriana went about finding employment in New Zealand – according to Adriana, the easiest country to

migrate to quickly at that time. Ursula, Valeria, and Silvia made the decision to migrate jointly with their husbands after economic and civil instability in their home countries increased. All of these participants had very young children, and the decision to migrate was based on what was best for the whole family. Migrating as a family unit, with young children, and more often as the dependent of a husband/partner, can further precipitate challenges for skilled migrant women in the labour market (Ballarino & Panichella, 2018; Gerber & Wanner, 2019; Purkayastha & Bircan, 2021). They are usually the ones left having to balance childcare responsibilities, household duties and job hunting.

4.2.2 Perceptions and Expectations of Migration

Participants in this study came with some expectation of what it would be like living and working in New Zealand. A common finding amongst the participants, despite the variance in motivations to migrate, was their perception and expectation that finding a job would be relatively a straightforward process. Several participants acknowledged that it might take time and they might have to face some challenges, however nothing too difficult. Past research has found that perceptions held by migrants of their host country potentially set their level of expectations of living and working there (Burgelt, 2008; Cerdin et al., 2014). In this theme, the participants' expectations of working in and living in New Zealand will be reviewed.

4.2.2.1 Career Expectations

Participants came to New Zealand with positive expectations of the labour market. Valentina represented the participants' common viewpoint when she said that New Zealand "was being marketed to potential migrants that, you know, when you go to New Zealand, there are opportunities, there are jobs." Almost half of the participants believed that it would be relatively easy to pick up their careers post-migrating. Many knew their qualifications were recognised in New Zealand or were on the skills shortage list and this made them confident in rebuilding their careers. Participants who were married to or in relationships with native New

Zealanders had positive career expectations. For example, Alexas thought “I could find a job, because that is what my husband said.” Alexas was a qualified and experienced psychologist in her home country. Likewise, Irina felt that “at least I should be able to support myself financially. Although I hadn’t worked in New Zealand, I know the basics of both teaching and computers, and if you work hard then you can progress anywhere.” Anna felt that with a large concentration of South Africans in New Zealand, it would be a home-away-from-home and finding work would be easy with a supportive community established already in their host country. Several participants expected they would have to improve their English language skills, possibly retrain, or go back a level in their careers or potentially even change their career paths completely. However, most were optimistic that everything would work out and felt that the sacrifices would be worth it.

4.2.2.2 Living Expectations

Almost three-quarters of the participants migrated to New Zealand never having been to the country beforehand. Their perception of living in New Zealand was shaped by their home country experiences, second-hand information from friends and family, and what they had seen portrayed in movies and read on official New Zealand Government websites such as ‘Live and Work New Zealand’. Most surmised that “...people in New Zealand are really friendly, so it would be easy to make new relationships” (Silvia). For several participants, there was an element of urgency to leave the turmoil and conflict happening in their home country and it was ease of migrating to New Zealand that was the deciding factor. After being held at gunpoint, Adriana just wanted to get out of South Africa as quickly as possible.

Approximately a quarter of participants had visited New Zealand prior to deciding to migrate permanently, with several having spent up to a year here. Donna, however, was the only migrant who had a good understanding of living and working in New Zealand, after spending time in Auckland when her husband had been posted on a job assignment. Alexas

and Helena, who both came from countries which restricted their freedom and exerted a level of control over their lives, found that New Zealand offered them a sense of freedom they had never experienced before. They were prepared for difficulties and challenges.

4.2.3 Level of Planning Pre-Migration

The level of pre-migration planning skilled migrants engage in has the potential to impact the ease of integration into the host country. This has not, however, been discussed in the literature previously, so this hypothetical link needs to be explored in further detail. The levels of planning prior to migration varied between participants. Table 8 presents the three levels of prior planning which emerged amongst participants, with research and information from different channels. Each level up builds on the previous level of planning. Most participants in this study only did minimal or limited planning prior to migration.

Table 8

Levels of Planning Prior to Migration

| Levels of planning prior to migration | <i>Minimal</i> | Official Immigration New Zealand websites and channels |
|--|-----------------|---|
| | | Friends, family and blogs |
| | <i>Moderate</i> | Visa options, including work, study and permanent residency Labour market and/ or study options available in New Zealand Accommodation options considered |
| | <i>In-depth</i> | Detailed knowledge on living, working and education in New Zealand Official New Zealand Labour market insights, housing and finance reports |

4.2.3.1 Minimal Planning

Almost a third of participants gained their knowledge of living and working in New Zealand from second-hand sources such as family or friends, and the official Immigration New Zealand website. Most of the participants who migrated with minimal prior planning were doing so due to a fortuitous career opportunity either for themselves or their partner or because they had family in New Zealand (husband/partner or children). Alexas (from Korea) married a native New Zealander, accepting her husband’s word that she would be able to find employment matching her qualifications and experience post-migration. Bina and Irina also accepted what their partners had told them without exploring the lifestyle or labour market in New Zealand themselves. Hadas migrated to New Zealand based on what a friend had told her

years ago about the country. These participants struggled to integrate into the local community post-migration. This finding supports that of de Haas (2010), who found that migrants reliant on knowledge acquired from their social network prior to migration tend to integrate less with the local community. Part of the struggle was that these participants preferred to integrate within their own ethnic/religious group as they could talk in their own language and so they were more comfortable. Also, several participants spoke of the difficulties integrating into their local community, where people already had their existing social networks and groups. This will be discussed more in the acculturation section (Section 5.4.1).

4.2.3.2 Moderate Planning

Moderate planning prior to migration ranged from ensuring relevant and correct work visas, talking to friends and family, understanding the housing market, exploring the host country labour market, and securing permanent residency or, at least, exploring the pathway to residency. Participants in this group felt confident about the pathway they had to follow to secure their dream of living and working in New Zealand. While the priority for most of this group was escaping the structural constraints in their home country and/or seeking a more stress-free life, they believed they would be able to rebuild a career in their field.

Participants often started their job search prior to migrating to New Zealand. However, what most of them found challenging was contacting organisations directly and getting no response. To counteract this challenge, Vian and Adriana both travelled to New Zealand prior to migrating to secure employment. Vian flew to New Zealand for 48 hours to attend an interview, while Adriana came for ten days to meet with recruiters. These participants were migrating for a better life, and they were willing to put their career on hold, believing they would be able to rebuild it over time. Their priority at the time of migrating was to do it as quickly as possible and be prepared to face challenges in the host country afterwards.

Others, however, believed they would be able to work in their professions in New Zealand without the need to study or retrain. Emily and her husband applied for a permanent residency visa two years before migrating to New Zealand. They assumed having a permanent residency visa and family in New Zealand would enable their transition but failed to explore their options in terms of geographic location or labour market opportunities. Emily assumed that having universal skills meant that she would not need to study or retrain in the host country and would easily find work in her field at the same level as in her home country. When this did not happen, it was devastating. For Emily, who was unable to understand why she needed to retrain, it resulted in going from a Human Resources Manager in her home country to an entry-level administration office role. The loss of her career impacted her mental health, with feelings of dejection and despair still continuing several years later.

4.2.3.3 In-Depth Planning

Only a very small group of participants engaged in in-depth planning prior to migration. Cressida and Aabha planned every minute detail:

When we decided that we would move, we started to prioritise how we were spending our money.... We had enough saved for four or five months without a job. And the first thing that we did here was get our driver's license. (Cressida)

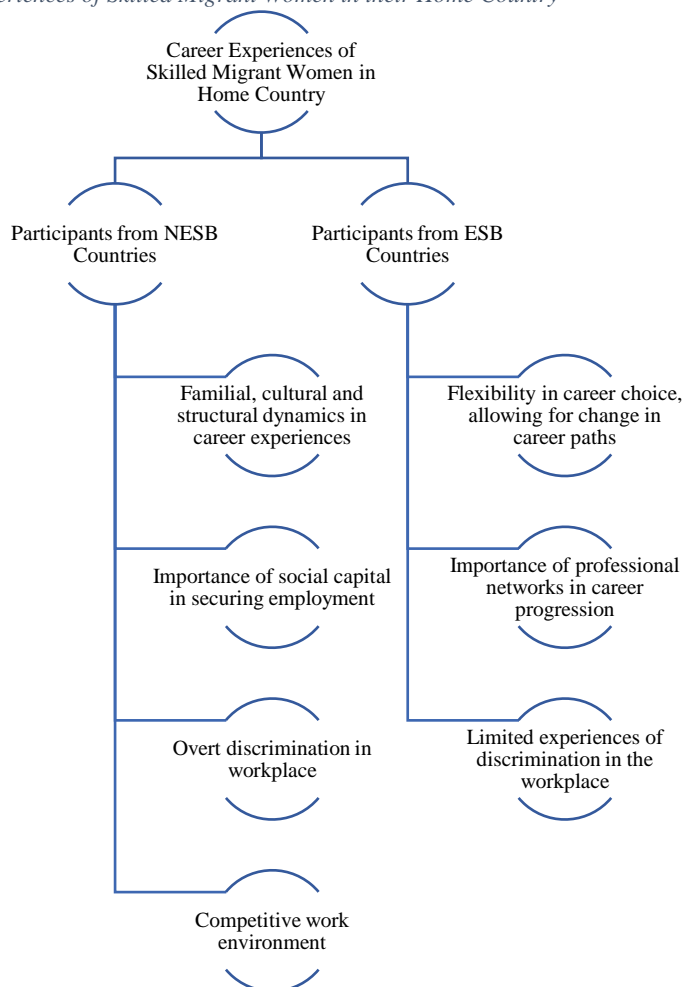
The fact that Cressida and Aabha both had a young child at the time could have been the impetus for the in-depth planning. These participants were willing to take it slowly to ensure a smooth transition for themselves and their families. Donna, Cleo and Cressida waited almost a year before migrating. These participants spoke to friends, read blogs and websites on living and working in New Zealand, researched the labour market in-depth, applied for jobs, and ensured they understood the migration process to apply for permanent residency. They were prepared for challenges and difficulties and were determined to make it work.

4.3 Summary

This section explored the life and career experiences of the skilled migrant women in their home country, including how they came to make those career decisions, the importance of networks in their careers (both social and professional), organisational experiences, their motivation to migrate, along with their perceptions and expectations of migration. Many of the differences in experiences noted within the themes appear to be linked to whether participants are from NESB versus ESB countries. Participants from NESB countries were more likely to be persuaded in their career choices by familial, cultural, and structural influences (including economic and political). This is highlighted in Figure 17 below.

Figure 17

Career Experiences of Skilled Migrant Women in their Home Country



Social capital was found to be important to the career trajectories of participants from NESB countries, compared to most participants from ESB countries. Likewise, participants from countries such as Asia, South America, and South Africa experienced overt and blatant discrimination. For several, discrimination was present in both their societal and organisational environment, and they had become resilient to it. They did not let it impact their careers, although they did admit that their workplaces were very competitive, and they had to work long hours (especially childless participants). This section has highlighted thematically the key experiences of skilled migrant women in their home country prior to migration. How these experiences may potentially influence these women's career paths post-migration will be further elaborated in the second part of this chapter.

Part One of this chapter also explored the motivation, perceptions and expectations of migration and the subsequent level of planning participants engaged in. The findings show that the motivation and ensuing decision to migrate for participants is multi-faceted and interrelated. While most participants had a primary motive for migrating (either a career opportunity, family circumstances, lifestyle or escape from their home country structural constraints) it was clear that several factors came into play when deciding whether to migrate. Escape from home country structural constraints was the biggest motivation to migrate, followed by career opportunities. Participants migrating because they had a job opportunity, or they had close family in New Zealand, felt the most confident with regards to rebuilding their career post-migration. Those who were migrating for the lifestyle in New Zealand, while equally confident, were also happy to step back in their careers to facilitate the migration. Likewise, despite more than half of the participants having never been to New Zealand, their perception of living and working in New Zealand was positive and their expectations high.

This study has found that participants who lacked first-hand information on New Zealand were more likely to perceive it as a beautiful utopia and thus had high, and in some

cases unrealistic, expectations in both lifestyle and career opportunities. Equally, those who perceived they had more to gain and less to lose through migration (usually participants migrating to escape structural constraints), were also less likely to undertake adequate research into living and working in New Zealand. Participants migrating for career opportunities, those who either were in a relationship with a native New Zealander or had family in New Zealand, were likely to do minimal planning prior to migration. Participants who were migrating to escape structural constraints in their home country tended towards engaging in a moderate level of planning and research into their home country, regarding both career and living. However, it was participants migrating predominantly for a better lifestyle who were more likely to engage in in-depth research and planning to ensure a smooth transition.

To summarise, four key themes are established as critical for skilled women in the decision-making process for migration to New Zealand. This study found a strong relationship between life and career experiences and motivation to migrate. Consequently, their motivation to migrate plays a significant role in both their perceptions and expectations of migrating and their level of planning. While almost all participants had positive perceptions of both living and working in New Zealand, their levels of expectations varied depending on their reason for migration. For example, participants who were migrating as an escape had the most to gain from migration and least to lose, and so were more open to challenges in integration.

Part Two – In the Host Country

4.4 Life after Migration

Participants had varying positive and negative experiences in their host country, dependent on a variety of factors such as the migration pathway they chose, their home country, age, and skillset. However, many studies have discounted the impact of personal characteristics and participants' identities when it comes to migration outcomes. Four key themes emerged as

significant in participants' life and career experiences in their host country (seen in Figure 18 below); these are: acculturation, navigating the labour market, organisational experience, and career shock. In this chapter, these key themes and sub themes will be discussed, exploring participants' career experiences and outcomes to understand if they are interwoven with their home country experiences.

Figure 18

Life after Migration Themes



4.4.1 Acculturation

Settling into a new country is always difficult, particularly if an individual has not visited the country before or if it has a completely different culture and way of living compared to their home country. Age has been shown to be a significant factor in acculturation, with younger migrants integrating into the social and labour market with more ease than older migrants (Cheung et al., 2011; Guven & Islam., 2015). This could in part be because they have

longer to acculturate into their host country, but also, they are possibly less set in their habits and ways of living in their home country. Most participants had never been to New Zealand prior to deciding to migrate and make a new life there. In this theme, the challenges participants faced settling into New Zealand will be explored. The three key themes and associated sub-themes that emerged are shown in Table 9 and will be discussed in turn.

Table 9

Acculturation Themes

| | | |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Challenges Settling into the Host Country | <i>Cultural Shock</i> | Isolation/ Loneliness |
| | | Cultural Challenges |
| | <i>Housing/Day-care</i> | Finding a Home |
| Child-care support | | |
| <i>Social Networks</i> | Mental Impact | |
| | Local community integration | |
| | Communication | |

4.4.1.1 *Cultural Shock*

For migrants, cultural shock is an omnipresent stage in acclimatising to their new surroundings. Almost three-quarters of the participants spoke about differences between their new and their home country environment and the impact of these differences on settling into New Zealand. Several participants referred to the loneliness they felt. Phoebe referred to the “... booming silence I experienced for the first five months.... I was an outsider and I felt like an outsider.” The term ‘outsider’ was used by several participants to describe how they felt in the first few months post-migrating.

A key part of feeling an outsider for many participants was not having any social networks from their own ethnic groups in close vicinity. Co-ethnic migrant networks have been argued to play an important role in assisting new migrants integrate into the host country (Gërxhani & Kosyakova, 2022). A lack of co-ethnic support was particularly felt by participants who came from countries where culture and family were strongly meshed into all aspects of their lives. For example, Alexas spoke about her dependency on her husband (a New Zealander) when she was pregnant because in Devonport there were “not any Asians, especially not Koreans” and she was not confident speaking English (although she spoke fluently during the interview, she believed she was incoherent) and could not drive. After having her son, Alexas did voluntary work in the local community house while continuing to look for work, and while this helped with the some of the isolation, she still feels resentment towards her husband “because he said I could find a job, but it was a lie.” Alexas continues doing voluntary work and perseveres in her attempts to integrate into her local community. Her upbringing in Korea impacts on her wellbeing; from a very young age, the ethos of working hard and not giving up was ingrained and despite her lack of confidence and disappointment in losing her career, Alexas stays positive and continues to keep trying to find work that will make her less dependent on her husband. Past research has found that choosing co-ethnic support networks can result in migrants not integrating into local professional and community networks, negatively impacting their work opportunities (Gërxhani & Kosyakova, 2022). This was a strong finding for several participants from NESB countries. Hadas, Biyu, Bina, Vian and Jaya spoke about their preference to socialise with people who came from their home country or from the same religion as them. They did not join local community groups or professional groups, and this consequently resulted in them struggling to find work on par with their qualifications.

Despite participants coming from a range of countries, with a range of different ages and career experiences, over half of the participants in this study found life in New Zealand culturally challenging. Participants from Asia and South America viewed cultural challenges as encompassing both living and working in New Zealand, whereas participants from the UK and North America believed they would not face these challenges as they came from countries with the same language and similar lifestyle and culture. When some of them did struggle to integrate into the community and find work as expected, it was a shock hard to recover from. For example, Emily was convinced that she would be able to find employment on par with their home country jobs since:

It's HR, and we are going to Wellington where there are government departments and not-for-profits. I've worked in a charity for ten years, so I assumed my skills would be transferable. I never envisaged the thought of having to do training of any type.

Emily was not willing to entertain the idea of any further training or compromise on the role she would accept. This can be contrasted with participants from Asia and South America, such as Irina who spoke about how she knew she “would have to work at adjusting. I adjusted without complaining, although there are moments when you feel you cannot accept it.... But people were friendly, and I feel safe.” Safety played a significant role in how much participants from Asia and South America were willing to adjust and /or compromise on to make a new life in New Zealand. “In my house in Venezuela, we have bars in all the windows and doors. Here the windows are crystal clear, it feels weird for me, but I feel secure” (Isla). Studies have found that development of social capital is facilitated by a stronger understanding of cultural differences, with migrants making significant efforts to create new friendships and networks (Burgelt et al, 2008).

An additional source of cultural shock for newly arrived migrants is finding good housing and/or daycare/schools and the associated costs that go with this. For some participants, the cost of living in their host country can be vastly higher than in their home country and this could lead to participants accepting subpar accommodation. This is explored in further depth in the next section.

4.4.1.2 Finding Good Housing and Day Care

Finding good housing and daycare can be linked to the lack of social support networks migrants find when moving to a new host country (Ryan & Sales, 2013; Sime & Fox, 2015). Without any friends, family or networks, participants struggled with the house hunting process. They did not know where the good areas were, or how school zones worked. Landlords were also apt to take advantage by letting sub-standard housing to participants. Similarly, with regards to childcare, a lack of friends and family made work and childcare a precarious juggling act, and one that predominantly falls under the woman's responsibility irrespective of whether she is the primary carer.

One of the key themes to emerge within this subtheme was the absence of connections that could assist participants securing accommodation. Ursula was only able to find a house for her family after a work colleague helped her. Prior to this, no landlord would even consider them. Lack of references and the lack of transparency in the rental process in New Zealand left many participants stuck in long fixed term contracts in damp, mouldy, and uninhabitable homes.

We didn't have proper heating in the house, so we had these standing gas heaters which are just awful, they make everything damp, it was very, very grim. That first winter, and I remember it rained every weekend for ten weekends in a row, it was hell....it was very depressing. (Dina)

There were two aspects to childcare that impacted participants settling into New Zealand. Firstly, not having any support in help with childcare, and secondly the difficulty in finding fulltime daycare. Tracey found coming to New Zealand with “no family support..... the toughest year that first year. I knew I wasn’t going in a good direction mentally and emotionally.” Unable to work, and with very young children, she struggled to integrate into the local community or build friendships, leaving her lonely and isolated while her husband was at work. Especially in dual career couple situations, the burden of childcare primarily fell in the wife’s lap with the husband looking for (and in most cases finding) a job first. Emily and Aabha spoke about having limited time during the day, when their children were at kindergarten, to focus on the job hunt. “I only had those few hours while she was in the kindy when I could sit down and look at stuff.” (Emily)

4.4.1.3 Establishing New Social Networks

Over half the participants in this study spoke about the difficulties they had integrating into the local community and making friends. However, most participants felt it was very difficult to gauge authenticity in New Zealanders, making it difficult to establish relationships, “they would come and ask, ‘can I give you a hand?’ or ‘do you need any support?’ but when you really need it, they won’t even look at you” (Julia). Phoebe found ‘kiwis [New Zealanders] kept me at arm’s length’. Over half of the participants felt that while native New Zealanders were friendly, it was only superficial social niceties. They already had their established social networks and consequently did not feel the need to extend them. Leaving close friends and family behind and establishing new support networks in the host country is an extremely difficult process. Research has identified that migrants who proactively integrate into their local community are able to rebuild their careers faster (Aalto et al., 2014; Abramitzky et al., 2020; Hardy, 2010; Nakash et al., 2012; Newton et al., 2012; Ng & Metz, 2015; Shishehgar et al., 2017). Language and communication were also found

to be barriers for several participants establishing new social networks. Studies have found a strong relationship between host country language competence and integration into the host country society and culture (Scholten & Penninx, 2016). Several participants spoke about how their accent impacted their ability to integrate into the local community: “They thought I was uneducated, not very smart for a start” (Adriana). Participants for whom English was a second language also found it to be mentally draining to be constantly talking in English, preferring to socialise with people who shared their language and culture. Vian summed this up very succinctly when she said “I have no communication issues in English, but I am still Chinese, and so apart from work, I prefer to interact mostly with Chinese friends.... When you use another language, it’s quite tiring.” This, along with the difficulties of breaking into existing social networks, led Vian, Hadas, Biyu, Bina, Cari, and Jaya to integrate only within their own ethnic and cultural community, to the extent that their networking, voluntary work and even business would only be done within their own ethnic community.

While co-ethnic relationships have been found to provide new migrants with social support, information networks and access to job opportunities (Rajendra et al., 2020), this is, however, usually in lower wage jobs (Gërkhani & Kosyakova, 2022; van Tubergen, 2011). The lack of family and friends and the inability to establish any social networks in the host country had a huge impact on the mental health of several participants. For example, Cari and Alexas both spoke about the emotional trauma they went through during their pregnancies in New Zealand with no support. A lack of family networks in the host country impacted not just the participants but also their children who were “unmoored from all our history. The lack of family and personal networks has been devastating (Adriana).”

4.4.2 Navigating Labour Market

Trying to navigate the host country labour market can be confusing and complex for migrants. They are already on the back foot with limited social capital resources, and for many,

the process of finding a job is vastly different to their home country. Almost all the participants in this study believed they had universal and transferable skill sets fitting the New Zealand context. Pre-migration, over half the participants in this study believed they would easily be able to find a job within their broader career field in their host country, while the remainder were also positive that over time, they would be able to rebuild their pre-migration career. However, previous research has highlighted the extensive gender specific disadvantages that skilled migrant women face in the host country labour market (Boucher, 2020; Kofman, 2014). This section is specific to the experiences of skilled migrant women in the New Zealand labour market. While it cannot be generalised to other host countries, it does highlight the differences between countries in terms of recruitment channels, and job application and interview processes. Table 10 provides a succinct summary of the five key themes highlighted in this section with sub themes that emerged for each.

Table 10

Navigating the Host Country Labour Market Themes

Navigating the Host Country Labour Market

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Perceptions of the Job Search</i> | No language barriers versus need to improve language skills |
| | Lots of jobs available versus will be difficult and risky |
| | Credentials recognised versus need to study further |
| <i>Applying for Jobs</i> | Temporary visa constraints versus long term visa autonomy |
| | Impact of unsuccessful job applications |
| | Learning to market transferable skills |
| <i>Job Seeking Channels</i> | Recruitment agencies |
| | Online job market |
| | Directly to organisations |
| | Via contacts / networks |
| <i>Interview Experience</i> | Lack of authenticity from hiring manager |
| | Importance of organisation fit |
| | Lack of New Zealand work experience |
| | Requirement for specific and exact skillset |

All participants came to New Zealand with a perception of what it would be like navigating the labour market, and for most, the reality was starkly different to this. A core barrier they faced was the not having a full understanding of the channels most suited for finding work in their specific field, and the process of marketing their skills. This, along with participants interview experiences and the emotions they felt when they were unsuccessful in their job search, will be further discussed below.

4.4.2.1 Perceptions of the Job Search

Most participants were optimistic about finding a job within their career field in their host country. However, while many were open to further training and starting at a lower level, several participants assumed that the absence of any language and cultural barriers meant they would have no issue finding employment in their field and at their skill level:

.... I expected I would be able to get a job and pick up any differences in legislation. I joined several agencies [after arriving in Wellington] and was applying for jobs for six months solid. I think I only got two interviews; it was incredibly demoralising. (Emily)

I would say I had a lot of self-confidence and really thought I was a top candidate...and I was really shocked to find out that here (New Zealand) people did not view me like that. My confidence has really dropped, and it's made it hard to apply for other positions. (Anna)

I obviously didn't have a language barrier, and quite a lot of things are very like Britain so there was a lot I could relate to, you know, you drive on the left. But the process seemed so slow...and of course I went to live with family and was applying for jobs in Dunedin, and I think that was the biggest challenge for me because there were no jobs to apply for there. (Leah)

The expectation that it would be easy to find a job on par with the skills, experience and qualifications was shared by almost all participants from ESB countries. For some like Emily, Anna and Leah, this belief was so strong that it was a huge shock when things did not work out as they assumed. Even participants from South America who came prepared to find the job-hunting challenging, found that they had underestimated how difficult it would be. “I thought it was going to be hard, but I never thought it would be that hard... I knew that my English needed to be better” (Helena). While Helena improved her English-speaking skills by doing a short course and participated in career workshops and networking events at every opportunity to help her find employment, this was a core difference in the approaches taken by participants in navigating the labour market from NESB compared to participants from ESB.

Most participants with professional qualifications did moderate to in-depth research prior to migrating to ensure they could practice in their profession. For example, Silvia, Dina, and Tracey all assumed they would be able to continue working as teachers, “I was a senior teacher in a very well-regarded school (back home), and I kind of thought that would be good enough” (Dina). Valentina, an academic in her home country, spoke of her perception of working in her profession in New Zealand on the information she had garnered from the official New Zealand Immigration website:

It’s a mismatch between how the country is marketed to potential migrants....
that when you go to New Zealand there will be opportunities, there are jobs. It
was as if jobs were waiting for people but they’re not. (Valentina)

Several participants secured a job prior to migrating to New Zealand, not wanting to take the risk of struggling in the labour market post-migration. Adriana believed that coming to New Zealand without the security of a job would have:

.... been crippling. I don't know if that would have worked. I could never have been one of those people who hopped on a plane, came over and just hoped for the best...which is terrifying, terrifying.

However, it is important to note that this did not mean that they did not struggle in their jobs post-migration. The security of a job did take away the initial pressure of moving to a new country, but these participants faced many new workplace challenges unique to them being a skilled migrant woman as will be discussed further on.

4.4.2.2 Applying for Jobs

Valentina succinctly summed up how most of the participants in this study felt about applying for jobs when she spoke about how she “had to learn how to market myself. I think as a migrant... I think one common denominator when I talk to my friends is that we all had to learn how to apply for a job.” The key themes to emerge in this section were the importance of the visa type held by migrants in assisting with applying for jobs, and the need for specific and exact skill sets required by organisations. All participants in this study agreed that the type of visa held by a migrant impacted their ability to secure an interview and subsequently a job. Several participants only migrated after securing permanent residency, noting the difference in coming on a permanent residence visa or skilled migrant work visa compared to a temporary work visa. Olivia spent 17 years preparing to migrate, working towards “making sure that when we got here, I had my Kiwi Saver from the first day of starting work, we were able to own a home.... We were residents from the get-go” (Olivia). However, what is important to note is that those who secured permanent residency and permanent jobs prior to migration (Olivia and Cleo) were more likely to progress in their career fields than those who only came out with temporary work visas (Cressida, Emily, Isla). This comes back to the importance of planning prior to migration.

Sara elaborated on the challenges faced in the labour market when on a temporary work visa, including the inability to negotiate pay or role boundaries when on temporary work visas:

.....to be honest I was too afraid to negotiate because I feel like I'm on a visa and there are not many people who want to take me on and I hope in five years I am not going to have this fear, because I would like to be in a job that I can negotiate in. (Sara)

On average, participants applied for up to 100 jobs before even getting an interview, with most applying for up to 10 per day. Often, they would get no response to applications. The longer participants were unemployed, the more indiscriminate they became about the jobs they were applying for. The impact on their psychological wellbeing was significant as Diana noted, "the biggest, hardest part is the mental game about it". Several participants were given the feedback that they were unsuccessful for the role because they did not have the exact skill set the role required. The broader skills that professional migrants brought with them were ignored. Participants found that employers wanted not only role specific skill sets but also host country specific skill sets, which was on a much more personal level.

4.4.2.3 Job Seeking Channels

This section looks at the initial channels that participants utilised in their job search - recruitment agencies, online channels such as Seek and Trade Me, and finally directly approaching the organisations. A fourth channel mentioned by most of the participants was formal and informal networks and contacts. This was cited as being very important yet the least accessible channel in the host country for migrants.

For several participants there was an overlap in the channels that they utilised. Over time the channels they would use changed, and this is discussed in the overall individual outcomes section.

4.4.2.4 Recruitment Agencies

Approximately one quarter of the participants registered with recruitment agencies to assist in the job hunt. The consensus amongst participants on their experiences of recruitment agencies was negative. Emily and Leah found that agents were not proactive in finding any work, and the whole process was very slow and ultimately demoralising:

In the UK it would be, you apply for a job, and they'd say can you go for an interview tomorrow. They want to place somebody soon, here it seemed to take weeks before somebody even looked at my CV (Leah).

Hadas felt that recruitment agents in New Zealand worked for the large corporate organisations, not the people looking for work. Only Cressida was able to secure a job matching her skill level through the recruitment process. For the remaining participants who secured a job in this manner, they were entry level jobs and only accepted as a last resort for residency requirements. Participants spoke about how they were led to believe that once they had an entry level job in the organisation, they would be able to show their skills and experience and progress into the roles that they were qualified for. Anna said:

It wasn't my dream job to work in a contact centre, but I was on a promise that if I worked hard then I would get into marketing. The recruitment agent told me that the company were focused on upskilling you, and I would easily move to another role quickly. I was desperate for work because I had been unemployed for so long and interviews were not going well, so I took it.

It took Anna over a year to move out of the contact centre role, but it was into another entry level role in the public relations team. She continues to struggle in that role, unable to progress despite extensive experience and applying for promotion several times.

4.4.2.5 *Online Job Market*

Searching for jobs online was the most popular method of search, yet least effective option for participants to utilise, with over half of the participants in this study registering and applying for jobs via online recruitment sites such as Seek and Trade Me both prior to and post-migration to New Zealand. None of the participants who applied for jobs through this channel were able to secure work at their level within their industry. Several participants did secure work in their field; however, it was entry or mid-level at the best, and only after, on average, 40 job applications. Cleo applied for approximately 50 jobs over a period of six months on Seek prior to migrating, before securing four interviews “three of these were Wellington-based and one was in Palmerston North, but this was the only job offer I got.” Cleo was one of the lucky ones. Cyra applied for an equal number of jobs, getting no replies for most, while Diana had completed over 100 job applications with no success. This suggests that New Zealand organisations, despite the increasingly diverse nature of society, are still prejudiced towards migrants and those without New Zealand work experience. Helena found that having professional networks was critical when applying for jobs via Seek: “When I applied for this job via Seek, the hiring manager knew my previous manager and so while we had never met, he knew my name and had heard of me.”

4.4.2.6 *Direct Approach to Organisations*

Several participants in this study approached organisations directly, without knowing if they had a vacancy or not. They did so for a variety of reasons. For some, it was because they wanted to work in a specific industry with limited opportunities, while for others it was desperation after exhausting all other channels. Three participants were successful applying directly to an organisation, however only one found work relevant to her industry and on par with her experience and qualifications.

Donna indirectly used her contacts to directly approach an organisation prior to migrating to New Zealand:

I sort of thought, right, who do I know in New Zealand....so I had a friend who had worked in recruitment in Auckland and looked up a couple of her contacts (on LinkedIn). Contacted one of those organisations....

Valentina was not so successful, despite the numerous CVs she sent to academic institutions, and the extensive academic and leadership experience she had. Significantly, she had no contacts in the industry that she could approach indirectly or directly. Ona and Cyra attempted the door-to-door method of directly approaching organisations. However, these were for low-skilled roles such as retail assistants and waitressing after they were unsuccessful in getting even an entry level role on par with their qualifications and experience. Cyra, out of sheer desperation:

..... went to Queen Street asking every store 'do you need someone' and then one store said that they needed a sales assistant.....but you had to be available every day. I said that I can work 24/7 and they said they could hire me now.

While these were low skilled retail/hospitality roles, it is important to note that for participants, especially those from NESB, any opportunity to get on the employment ladder was critical. This led them to take on low-skilled work in the hope that once they had some host country work experience they would be able to rebuild their careers. However, for some, like Ona, it led to them being unable to exit these low-skilled roles.

4.4.2.7 Via Contacts / Networks

A critical challenge when trying to find work that resonated with many participants, was the lack of social and professional networks they could call on for assistance in the job market post-migration. Having a network in the host country, be it social or professional, was found to be hugely beneficial to several participants in this study finding work after arriving in

the host country. Several participants spoke about starting in low-skilled, low-paid roles to gain New Zealand experience and build up a social network that would assist them in rebuilding their careers. For example, Irina, a trained and experienced teacher with a passion for computers, initially worked with her mother-in-law at the local kindergarten as an early childhood caregiver. After several weeks, one of the parents at the kindergarten, who knew Irina had qualifications in the information technology field, told her to give him her CV and subsequently:

..... he asked me to come for an interview at Datacom, and then another one, and then a third one with the team where he thought I would fit. That's how I got the job.

However, most of the participants in this study were not as lucky as Irina and continued to struggle for many years to gain that initial break in their career field despite having networks in the host country.

Hadas had been able to persuade a social contact from her co-ethnic network to create a role for her in his organisation. However, while it assisted her in gaining her work visa, it was far below her qualification and did not assist her in rebuilding her career. Iris was able to secure work in the host country in the same organisation she worked for in her home country. However, the job was tied to her work visa, and for two years Iris experienced discrimination on an almost daily basis. Once her two years were completed, Iris resigned and actively started looking for roles that would assist in progressing in her career. Having networks in the host country did help participants find employment initially, but it did not necessarily mean they were able to rebuild their careers. What was critical was being able to extend that network. Hadas was not able to extend her network beyond the organisation she initially started working with, however Iris proactively rebuilt a professional network in her host community leading to her rebuilding her career over time.

4.4.3 Interview Experience

Being invited to an interview was a critical achievement for most participants in this study. Four themes emerged in this section; each highlighting how difficult it can be for migrants to be successful in interviews. The first theme to emerge was around gauging the level of authenticity from the hiring manager during the interview. The second theme to emerge was employers only wanting to hire employees who would ‘fit’ into the organisation. The necessity of having New Zealand work experience is the third theme which will be discussed. Finally, the last theme to emerge from the data was the importance placed by hiring managers on specific skill requirements at the cost of understanding the broader level expertise and experience of participants.

4.4.3.1 *Authenticity During the Interview by the Hiring Manager*

Several participants spoke about coming out from an interview feeling positive:

..... convinced that that was it, you were going to get the job and it turns out that that was not the case, it’s just that they were friendly.... So that was really confusing in the beginning. (Emily)

Adriana felt that New Zealanders wanted to be viewed as friendly and “they don’t do rejection really well, so that was really confusing in the beginning.” This matched the social experiences, where participants found that native New Zealanders were so nice, but it was superficial with no substance under it. This impact of perceiving an interview as successful and subsequently not getting the role, left participants confused, disappointed and feeling directionless.

4.4.3.2 *Organisational Fit*

Anna spoke about feeling that hiring managers were focused more on her personality than her skills. This was a strong finding in this study, with many participants feeling that hiring managers was more concerned about whether they would ‘fit’ into the organisation than around the experience, knowledge, and skills that they would bring to the role:

.... The questions were based more on my personality rather than my skills.... I would leave the interview thinking they don't really know much about my capabilities. (Anna)

While diversity and inclusion rhetoric are currently in trend amongst organisations, practice and reality is far from this. Several participants felt that they were being discriminated against for being different to most of the employees in the organisation, and this was a fundamental motive for not being successful in the labour market. This will be further discussed later in the section discussing the barriers participants found stopping them from rebuilding their careers.

4.4.3.3 New Zealand Work Experience

Several participants found not having New Zealand work experience detrimental to their job hunt in their host country. Over half of the participants in this study expressed how frustrating it was hearing 'we need someone with New Zealand experience':

....in every interview to be asked do you have kiwi [New Zealand] experience?

....in one of the interviews I did ask the person, only if someone gives an opportunity, we can gain kiwi experience. We are new to the country. (Aabha)

A lot of kiwi employers are quite biased, and they don't want to employ people without that 'New Zealand experience' and so you get the horrible chicken-egg thing..... (Donna)

Initially, most participants tried to find work in their fields at a skill level close to their own, but over time this lessened to entry level roles and then finally to low skilled, low paid jobs in the hospitality industry, server roles or cleaning work. Yet, even in those positions, many struggled without New Zealand work experience. Sara experienced this when she came to Dunedin: "I applied to be a cleaner in a restaurant and they said oh, we need New Zealand experience for that....it was ridiculous." Working in low-paid, low-skilled employment

fulltime left very little time to search for a role in their career field. Words and phrases like ‘desperate’, ‘frustrating’, ‘continual rejections’, and ‘mentally tiring’ were often mentioned by participants when describing how they felt when losing opportunities due to lack of New Zealand work experience.

I don’t mind working in entry level jobs.... But it’s like, I need to get in, and that’s the hardest part. (Ona)

Previous research has found that host country employers do not recognise work experience gained by skilled migrants in their home country (Bauder, 2014), leaving skilled migrants in a very precarious position.

4.4.3.4 Skillset Requirements

When applying for jobs, participants noted that unless they had the exact skillset required for the role, they would be rejected. This was especially dominant in professional industries such as IR, HR, and medicine. Hadas summed it up when she said:

I kept hearing people from networking say IT, oh there are so many jobs in IT, right? So, when I applied for jobs in IT and was not getting any interviews.... That was when I realised that it is specialised, and I didn’t have the exact skills for what they needed.

Leah and Cressida also spoke about the need to have an exact skill match, without employers understanding the broader range of skills that they could bring to their roles. It was for this very reason several participants decided to retrain, or study further in their field to rebuild their career. Cyra decided to do a PhD, while Aabha did some specific computer training courses. However, research has found that while foreign qualifications may be discounted or negated in the host country when it came to employment outcomes, having host country qualifications does not necessarily provide a better career outcome (Hawthorne, 2016; Sardana et al., 2016).

4.4.4 Organisational Experience

In this theme, participants' experiences in the workplace are explored. Five key sub-themes were identified in this study and are explored in depth in this section (see Table 11). These will provide a clear picture on some of the challenges faced by skilled migrant women in the workplace including the barriers they face in rebuilding their careers in New Zealand. Some of the findings in this section have not been discussed in previous literature but could potentially be generalised.

Table 11*Host Country Organisational Experiences*

| Organisational Experience | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Workplace Experiences | | Lack of support |
| | | Favouritism |
| | | Lax work culture |
| | | Skills discounted, under-utilised or exploited |
| Barriers to rebuilding their careers | | Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying |
| | | Language and Accent |
| | | Lack of New Zealand work experience |
| | | Credential Recognition |
| | | Visa Restraints |
| Professional Networks | | Importance of workplace relations |
| | | LinkedIn |
| Work-life Balance | | Reality of work-life balance policies |
| | | Achieving work-life balance |

4.4.4.1 Workplace Experiences

Research has found that organisations who support skilled migrant integration in the workplace increase their motivation and job performance (Cerdin et al., 2014; Martin, 2015). Unfortunately, most organisations in developed countries stress individual achievement, competition, and rationality (Stone & Stone-Romero, 2004) which conflicts with skilled migrants coming from collectivist societies. A critical theme to emerge in this study was the lack of support participants had from within the organisation. They struggled with feelings of isolation and inferiority, with no support in learning new processes and unable to ask for help. Favouritism was also a key theme highlighted by participants as a hindrance to both fitting into and progressing in the workplace, along with outdated and lax work culture in the workplace which they were not used to. Finally, having their skills either discounted or exploited is the last sub-theme in this section.

4.4.4.1.1 Lack of Support

Starting a new job in a new country, without a social support network, can be incredibly daunting for migrants. The skilled migrant women in this research spoke about having to depend on workplace colleagues, yet at the same time, finding it difficult to build that network within their organisation because they wanted to fit in and not be viewed as not up to the job. Adriana spoke about having to depend on her colleagues to order a taxi:

.... Automated systems didn't understand my accent, so trying to order a taxi using an automated system was impossible. I had to get colleagues to order a taxi for me. There is something about asking a colleague to order a taxi for you where they think you are treating them like your secretary.

Cari summed up the experiences and feelings of most of the participants:

I didn't get any support from anybody.... I felt they will think of me less, they will think of me as if I don't know, so I didn't go to my (head of school). I had my husband luckily.

Not being aware of or being given access to workplace policies such as parental, sick, and annual leave was commonplace and experienced by most of the participants in this study, leading to negative workplace experiences.

4.4.4.1.2 Favouritism

Finding work but then not being able to progress further within the organisation due to favouritism was a common theme amongst participants. Several participants experienced this, despite being considerably more experienced and qualified in their roles than their workplace peers. Internal work networks, friends and family members being given preference and promoted ahead despite not having the equivalent level of education or experience was a core grievance felt by participants:

I know they would favour certain people. You don't want to put yourself through that stress when you know what the outcome is going to be.... I have applied for three positions since working here, and I have always been second or third. Two out of the three times it was family members of managers who were appointed. I would always be second best. (Anna)

Losing out on a promotion, not because of a lack of skills, experience, or qualifications but because of a lack of internal social networks within the workplace, impacted participants' mental health to the point that it led some to give up on rebuilding their careers. To progress, the boundaries between friends and work colleagues needed to be merged as Imogen was advised:

I'm friendly, I will go out for a coffee and have a chat, but I am not going to be Facebook friends with everyone I work with. I'm not going to be going to their house for dinner or holidaying with them...it's not what we did in the UK and the feedback that I received was to progress in New Zealand was that you must be on a more friendship basis with people you work with.

This lack of communication between all organisation employees meant that often opportunities would not even be known about until someone was promoted. Networking within the organisation, having coffee or lunch with team managers and even going to their house for dinner was deemed the quickest way to climb the career ladder. This was a finding that has not been discussed in the existing literature.

4.4.4.1.3 Lax Work Culture

Several participants from the United Kingdom, South Africa and Europe stressed how they found the New Zealand work culture very lax, with poor management, work ethic and outdated work practices:

A friend of mine from South Africa said to me that 'people are cruising'. I said that is a great phrase, because I feel like I am the one doing all the work and everyone else is 'oh, I might go and get a coffee and then I will look at the text on my phone and then I might do some work'. (Leah)

Participants spoke about how they would often get the work assignments that nobody else wanted to do, and which were normally more labour intensive. These jobs were also usually not recognised as important and so while they were doing more work than their colleagues, they were not getting recognition and would be regularly overlooked for promotions. Hazel talked about people in New Zealand just shuffling paper around their desk and answering the

occasional email “doing what they call busy work.... They tell lots of people over and over again, I’m so busy at the moment, and if you say something often enough it becomes the truth”. Participants found that workplace relationships were more important than how much work was completed and despite their high work ethic they struggled to integrate into the workplace.

4.4.4.1.4 Skills Discounted/Lack of Credential Recognition

For Emily, not having her credentials recognised and being asked to complete a course on employment legislation in New Zealand was the impetus for relinquishing her career. Discounting of home country skills and qualifications have played a large role in the career outcomes of skilled migrants (Adhikari & Melia, 2015; Hawthorne, 2015). Several participants in this current study found that while they were able to find work within their field, it was not commensurate to their qualifications and experience. Some were able to rebuild their careers and work their way up to a position almost on par with what they were doing in their home country, but, on average, it took them eight years to do this. This was a minority group, however, with most remaining trapped in roles they were overqualified for. This finding aligns with previous studies, where foreign qualifications and work experience are not recognised, leading to employment in lower skilled work (Almeida et al., 2012; Hardy, 2010; Reid, 2012; Syed, 2008; Tian et al., 2018) de-skilling (Hardy, 2010) and brain waste (Banerjee et al., 2019).

For some participants, not being able to fully utilise their skills or being exploited caused conflict within the workplace, leading to toxic environments and, in a few cases, harassment and bullying from management (discussed further in Section 4.4.5.2). Work practices in many New Zealand organisations were deemed far behind those in many other countries, which meant their skills were not fully utilised and nor were their opportunities for career development. Hazel was under the perception that the educational practices in New Zealand would be innovative, contemporary, and holistic, based on her research. However, her

experience was that resources that “had been regurgitated for 20 odd years” were used for teaching in classes. Likewise, Cressida spoke about how she felt like “I went back 10 years, people are doing such old practices, even flexible work, all of these things are so out of date here (New Zealand)”.

Several participants found themselves exploited by being given a lower grade job but then utilised for their extensive skills. For example, Leah was a software developer with extensive leadership experience, yet despite an extensive job search, she was only able to secure a role as a software tester. Leah’s software developer skills were often utilised by the company, however they refused to give her the salary or the title for the work. Leah’s manager suggested she was doing a favour by providing Leah with more interesting and challenging work. Leah was initially happy to be able to utilise her skills, it was on the understanding that she would be given the developer role salary in the following year. It soon dawned on her that she was being taken advantage of when year after year, they gave an excuse for not giving her the title and salary associated with the job. She felt she had no choice but to stay with the company because her visa was tied to them, and this allowed them to exploit her.

A tactic that helped several participants in this study to gain both New Zealand work experience and eventually find employment in their sector was to prepare two versions of a Curriculum Vitae (CV), one listing credentials and one downplaying them, omitting specialist skills. However, this was more difficult for those in professional roles such as medicine and teaching for example:

My CV screams out ‘teacher’, so they don’t want to employ me in an admin role.... I have thought about removing my teacher’s qualification on my CV but my past three jobs have been in teaching so that is hard. (Juno)

Hazel struggled with this too as leaving out her professional qualifications and experience left her with an unexplained gap in her CV.

Being asked to retrain or complete a short course to have their credentials recognised, like Emily, was a common experience amongst participants. Retraining was not just a time issue but a cost issue too. For teachers, courses ranged from twelve-weeks to one-year with fees starting at NZD\$4000. Out of the five fully qualified and experienced teachers in this study, none are working as teachers currently or are likely to in the future. Hadas has had to take up office administration work after struggling to find work as a counsellor. Despite having a Master's qualification and extensive experience, she has to complete a course in New Zealand first. While some participants are willing to retrain, these are usually those who are younger with either no children or financial pressure to work straightaway. Most participants in this study did not have this luxury.

4.4.5 Barriers to Rebuilding Their Careers

This section summarises the challenges that talented migrant women encounter when trying to restart their careers in New Zealand. Table 12 highlights the five themes that emerged strongly from participants. These were discrimination and bullying, language and communication, New Zealand work experience, credential recognition and finally, visa restraints. Over half of the participants in this study spoke about experiencing discrimination and/or bullying in the workplace, as well as the impact of their accents or imperfect English language and communication skills on career progression. Approximately half the participants stated that lack of New Zealand work experience and education resulted in them struggling to rebuild their careers. This goes conjointly with the many participants who found their qualifications and experience were not recognised by organisations and employers in their new home country. Finally, nine participants spoke about how the visa they were on hindered them in terms of jobs they gained.

Table 12

Barriers to Rebuilding Skilled Migrant Women's Careers in the Host Country

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Barriers to rebuilding their careers | Race/Ethnicity |
| | Gender |
| | Age |
| | Intersectionality |
| | Harassment and Bullying |
| Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying | |
| Language/Accent | |
| Visa Restraints | |
| Professional networks | |
| Work-life balance | |

4.4.5.1 *Discrimination*

Over half of the participants in this study reported experiencing discrimination in the workplace, impacting both their career progression and mental health. Three forms of discrimination were strongly experienced by participants: race, gender, and age. This discrimination often occurred contemporaneously, highlighting the impact of inter-sectional discrimination faced by migrant women. Yet, it is important to note that for many NESB migrant women, racial discrimination was the fundamental barrier to rebuilding their careers in their host country. Gender discrimination was viewed as an inequity they were accustomed to facing in their home country. However, the impact of inter-sectional discrimination is a

significant aspect of this research and needs further understanding and exploration as it creates overlapping and co-dependent discrimination and disadvantage for migrant women in their host country.

4.4.5.1.1 Racial /Ethnic Discrimination

Racial/ethnic discrimination was the most mentioned form of discrimination experienced by the participants. It was highlighted by almost half of the participants in this study, predominantly those who came from NESB countries. Several participants felt it when navigating the labour market, where, as Hadas exemplified, they felt the undercurrents of covert discrimination: “They give preference to local kiwis and not migrants”. While ethnicity has been observed to have a negative effect on the careers of ethnic minority migrants, it has also been discovered that women are more susceptible to encountering ethnic identity conflicts at work (Almeida et al., 2012; Booth et al., 2012). This study echoes this finding.

Mahati spoke about her first job which was dominated by native staff, even though the company kept talking about their diversity strategy. Iris found that people said that “we are not biased, we love diversity” but it was not true. Organisations would pride themselves on their diversity and inclusion policies, but they would not translate into reality when it came to the recruitment of migrant women. Iris found herself constantly being pushed to back-office roles despite her extensive work experience, because “they were ashamed to put me in the front because I wasn’t British or a New Zealander.” Iris found the experience completely demoralising and humiliating. Many participants spoke about withdrawing into themselves, feeling intimidated, isolated, and feeling like failures in the workplace.

When I am at work I become really reserved. Which is the total opposite of how I was in South Africa. You just feel really intimidated by Kiwis, who have lived here their whole lives and feel comfortable. (Anna)

These are clear themes that are evident in Anna's story with feelings of isolation, covert bullying, and feelings of inadequacies. While some participants such as Iris fought against these and worked harder to prove herself, several participants like Anna withdrew into themselves. This inevitably led them to become invisible within the workplace, missing out on career opportunities.

4.4.5.1.2 Gender Discrimination

Most participants spoke about experiencing gender discrimination in the work environment in both their home and host countries. Most also had strategies in place to minimise its impact on their career progression. Although, it is important to note that most ESB participants agreed that "I probably felt more gender discrimination in New Zealand than elsewhere" (Regan), none believed it was a critical factor impacting their ability to progress in their careers:

I have a peer male in his fifties, and he's very old school.... I often feel he looks down on me or treats me like, you know, a little girl.... We don't really work together, and I feel that his male ego almost gets in the way. (Cleo)

Even though dismissing the behaviour as 'ego' or "being discriminated against a tiny bit" (Donna) and invalidating the behaviour as immaterial, most of the participants from ESB countries found New Zealand to be more regressive in terms of equal opportunities in the workplace for women.

Likewise, confident in their own abilities, most NESB participants did not let gender discrimination derail them from their career pathway:

They wanted an older white man in the role because they felt that he was more relatable to investors. I put up with that for a year and four months, and nothing changed. And I went, you know what? I do want the title that goes with the job I am doing. (Adriana)

4.4.5.1.3 Age Discrimination

Age was found to be significant in terms of discrimination in the workplace by a small number of participants post-migration. Iris found that her young age did not sit well with those in the office in Wellington she had been transferred to, despite her extensive knowledge and experience in her field and within the parent company. The discrimination Iris faced was in many forms, from being treated like a junior assistant and made to do chores like picking up dry-cleaning, to not being allowed to directly work with clients. Despite having been in a senior position in the parent company in her home-country, Iris found herself being relegated to jobs no-one else wanted to do in part because of her age.

On the opposite side of the age spectrum, Leah and Isla, both in their mid-fifties, felt that their age was a definitive barrier to rebuilding their career. Despite applying extensively for jobs, both at their level and below, they struggled to get any interviews.

I knew that because of my age it was going to be difficult to find a job in my area, even if in this moment I went back to Venezuela, it would be impossible to find a job because of my age. (Isla)

Leah, after moving to Wellington, was able to secure work in her field, albeit in a much lower skilled role. Isla, however, continues to struggle in low-paid and unskilled work. As we saw with Emily, as the gap between working in their field and migrating grew, the more difficult it was to find work in their field. Migrants who arrive at an older age have been found to struggle with social and labour market integration, struggling to make career progress (Cheung et al., 2011). Despite having accumulated more skills and knowledge in their expertise field, participants in this study who were over the age of 45 found that finding employment on par to their home country experience and skills was near impossible.

4.4.5.1.4 Intersectionality

The impact of intersectionality in this study was highlighted by the level of negative career experiences that NESB skilled migrant women had compared to ESB skilled migrant women. Participants who had a different ethnicity, who looked different, and whose first language was not English and/or had a strong accent often found themselves more discriminated in the labour market. Their skill levels, qualification and experience were assumed to be far inferior to those who came from a similar country to the host country and had English as their first language.

Having a lack of knowledge of local processes and not being part of the local community also played a critical role in the career outcomes of skilled migrant women. Having the status of ‘migrant’ instantly made many of them feel like outsiders, unable to integrate into the local community. Not understanding the labour market job seeking processes also made it difficult for them to secure jobs in their career field. This is discussed in more depth in Section 4.4.5.5 where participants found that informal channels such as LinkedIn and professional networks played an important role in not only finding but advancing in their career field.

One key finding that contradicted previous studies, was that children did not play a role in career outcomes of skilled migrant women (Boucher, 2020; Ressia et al., 2017). They did not cause any permanent or even temporary career damage. Most participants with young children felt that there were adequate childcare options available that enabled them to work full-time and attempt to rebuild their careers. In some cases, the spouse or partner was able to take on the primary caregiver role (as in the cases of Ursula, Katharina, and Imogen).

4.4.5.2 Harassment and Bullying

Harassment and bullying within the workplace were highlighted by several participants in this research, with nearly all emphasising the covert nature it takes in New Zealand. Imogen

found in her home country “if someone is rude to you, then you go deal with it and you move on. But here (New Zealand) it simmers and simmers.” Participant experiences ranged from “horrific, absolutely horrific” (Adriana), and “the worst experience in my life” (Iris) to “the most toxic environment I have ever experienced in my whole working career” (Hazel). Adriana spoke of how the behaviour was often condoned because the perpetrator was a top performer within the organisation. Likewise, Imogen found that the level of workplace bullying was far more than anything she had experienced or seen in working in London because it was covert and so, more difficult to deal with. While most participants did voice their experiences, there were many who were unable to:

For two years, there were people in the team who did not like me.... Personal emails about me were sent..... I thought, just interact professionally, do your work, and go home. Everyone knew, sometimes you cry because you are alone and far from your family and home.... They (the harassers) are still here, but I am in a different team now. But it was difficult. (Irina)

Being in positions of vulnerability led to many participants staying in toxic work environments, unable to speak out or ask for help. However, long after the incident, the memories remained.

Several participants believed that harassment and bullying was an accepted culture within the workplace and that speaking up often meant losing all hope of rebuilding their career, due to the close-knit professional networks in New Zealand. Hazel was a victim of this, losing her high-achieving academic career, after refusing to give in to the increasing bullying and intimidation by both peers and management:

If you're a tall poppy and you've had lots of books published, and lots of peer-reviewed articles, you know the right people in the right places, then you are a threat to people....

While some participants silently put up with the continual harassment or bullying with the hope that it would get better (Irina, Imogen), others resigned, not able to sustain the continual persecution and intimidation (Iris, Adriana, Hazel). Neither pathway could be considered the better option. For Irina, things did improve, however Imogen is still struggling. In Iris and Adriana's cases, they were able to step back and rebuild their careers, but Hazel lost hers forever after being forced to resign from her academic job.

4.4.5.3 Second Language/Accent

Previous studies have consistently found that skilled migrants from NESB countries have inferior labour market outcomes compared to those from ESB countries (Carangio et al., 2021; Foroutan, 2008; Hawthorne & To, 2014; Sardana et al., 2016). Adrian spoke about how her accent in the workplace was viewed as 'alien' and this resonated strongly with most of the participants from Asia and South America (NESB countries) and even some of those from the north of England. They felt that having an accent, regardless of their English language fluency, impacted their ability to be successful in interviews as well as progress in the workplace:

In most cases the issue was more to do with not sounding like a New Zealander.

If I could speak like a Kiwi, I think it has something to do with my accent. I think they give priority to people who are native speakers. (Julia)

The phrase 'native speaker' along with feelings of not belonging were mentioned several times. All participants in this study were fluent in written and spoken English. Alexas was a psychologist in Korea, Hadas an IT manager in Jamaica, and Juno an English teacher in the north of England.

Several participants like Alexas had their confidence further impacted when recruitment agents or hiring managers would call them unexpectedly to check their spoken English language proficiency. Alexas' spoken English was excellent, however her confidence diminished over time as she struggled to find a job, leading her to progressively applying for

lower-skilled lower-paid jobs where there was a minimal requirement for spoken English. Some participants silently endured the negative comments around their accents, but others, like Iris and Adriana, were defiant and opted to leave the organisations they worked in after getting discriminatory feedback. A recruitment partner told Iris that her “Mexican accent is starting to dilute, that’s good, I like it.” Most participants concluded that their “English will never be as good enough” (Valeria), and however much they tried they would never sound like a New Zealander, and this would always hinder them in both their social and work-life experiences. As more than one participant averred, men with accents are deemed sexy, but women with accents are deemed stupid. The impact on participants’ self-esteem was extensive, to the point where several opted for low-skilled and low-paid roles losing their skills, qualifications, and experience permanently.

4.4.5.4 Visa Restraints/ Exploitation

The type of visa a migrant comes to New Zealand on is very important in terms of their experience in the host country labour market and is a significant and critical finding in this study. Participants in this study came on a variety of different visas, ranging from tourist to permanent residency and everything in between. While participants spoke about the difficulties of finding work, it was those awaiting a partnership/work visa or on a temporary work visa who struggled the most in finding employment in their sector. Jaya found herself often shortlisted for a role “but when they asked for my visa, I don’t have a resident visa, so obviously I get rejected.”

This led to many accepting roles well below their credentials just to get into their field again, often leading to employee exploitation:

My first salary was very low....it was a bitter pill to swallow, but once you’re in that visa position, you’ve got to work there two years, and I felt that they were then using that against me, they know I can’t leave, so they’re not going

to give me a pay rise, but they were utilising those (computer developer) skills by sending me to jobs which they wouldn't be able to send other software testers. (Leah)

Several participants spoke about how vulnerable they felt when their work visa was tied to an organisation. This vulnerability for some led to far worse experiences than being used for their extensive skills while being paid at a lower skilled wage rate. Iris and Adriana both spoke about the extensive workplace harassment and bullying they experienced while on similar work visas (discussed in Section 4.4.5.2 Harassment and Bullying).

4.4.5.5 Professional Networks

Almost three quarters of the participants in this study spoke about the importance of cultivating professional networks in New Zealand for career development and progression. Donna, a senior recruitment consultant, summed it up:

Relationships are probably more important here than they are in the UK because it is a smaller community, everyone pretty much knows everyone, there is the whole two degrees of separation thing and I think that is one of the biggest challenges for migrants.

The idea that everyone knows each other in some form filters through into the employment recruitment culture, where hiring managers are more likely to employ someone they know, or who is recommended to them, rather than a stranger. Several participants felt they had lost their careers permanently because of the lack of professional connections in New Zealand. Living and working in a country with such closely connected network circles also had another downside, as Ursula found out to her detriment as “at some point I did think there was blacklist.” Hazel has had to forge a career in a new direction after being forced out of her job, but it has not been easy.

Adriana now feels that using a recruitment agent was a very “migrant” way of applying for a job. She did not think relying on employment platforms such as Seek or Trade Me was conducive to progressing in her career field. Helena and Cleo agreed with Adriana, stating that while you may find a job on those platforms, it would be the network you subsequently built that would get your career progression in your field. LinkedIn was found by most of the participants to be critical in building up networks in their professional fields, and essential to that next job:

I think in New Zealand, I’ve noticed it’s about who you know. For example, when I came to New Zealand, I remember somebody saying to me have I look on LinkedIn for jobs...and I have met various contractors who all seem to get jobs from their LinkedIn contacts. (Leah)

While Donna secured her first job via a LinkedIn contact, Tia found that in her professional career it is crucial to be on LinkedIn, and Ona was advised by a government agency to connect to potential employers via LinkedIn. Network groups on LinkedIn and the meetups organised by them were beneficial to some participants, helping them progress and develop in their career fields. Adriana and Cressida both mentioned women in tech groups on LinkedIn through which they were able to meet like-minded women, helping and supporting each other in their industry, and alleviating the isolation and loneliness each felt in the male dominated industry.

One of the difficulties many participants experienced was the blurring between social and professional networks in their host country, with both “business and private networks very much floating into each other here (Diana).” For migrants, who were used to keeping social and professional networks separate, this was a big cultural change and one that impacted them strongly in terms of career progression. Mahati spoke about the “cultural shift,

(where) in India, you work hard, you get promoted. I did not know the New Zealand culture is ‘tap someone on the shoulder’ That was a cultural shock.”

Apart from the cultural differences, establishing professional networks in New Zealand takes time and effort, and for participants, this was incredibly difficult. Many, for financial reasons, did not have this time. The first year in New Zealand was a critical juncture for many participants in terms of whether they would be able to rebuild their career or not. However, the findings here are echoed by previous research on the importance of network building in finding work on par with migrants’ experience and qualifications (Carangio et al., 2021; Ho, 2006; Ressia, 2014). Knowing someone in the industry can play a fundamental role in accessing employment opportunities.

4.4.5.6 Work-Life Balance

The struggle with work-life balance was found to be a common experience amongst participants in this study. While a handful of participants spoke positively about work-life balance in New Zealand, most of these participants stated that it took time as they became more acclimatized to the workplace culture, policies and practices. Most participants in this study felt that while many New Zealand organisations spoke about work-life balance (WLB) and even had policies around them, they very rarely followed them through in practice. There is a dearth of research on the effects of organisational work-life balance policies (or lack thereof) on skilled migrant women, which calls for immediate attention (Ali et al., 2017; Syed & Pio, 2010). Adriana found that it was only once she moved into more senior roles that she was able to achieve better WLB. Until then “I was working day and night from early hours in the morning to late at night, weekends were standard. It was brutal”. Similarly, Cressida found her request to reduce her hours after returning from parental leave rejected, and it was only after moving to a different organisation which was “respectful, inclusive and flexible” that she was able to work the hours she wanted as well as work from home.

Since they have few support networks to aid them with household and childcare chores, skilled migrant women have been found to be particularly vulnerable to the lack of work-life balance in the host nation (Ali et al., 2017; Ressia, 2014). Challenges in managing work and family was a strong theme amongst participants and one that dominated the early years post-migration. Mahati shortened her parental leave in fear of losing her job, while Aabha struggled taking time off when her son was sick lest her employers thought she was work-shy. Several participants who migrated with very young pre-school children and partners, spoke about how the burden of settling their children into daycare, as well as managing the house while trying to find work, fell on their shoulders:

The family have not really adapted to the fact that I have a whole lot less time now, so it's quite stressful for all of us...I always expected that the kids would step up but it's still all mine. (Dina)

Participants from NESB countries struggled with balancing family and work more than those from ESB countries, reluctant to take time off work even if they had sick children at home, fearing that this would jeopardise their career prospects. Extant research supports this, finding that women from ethnic minority groups face multiple levels of challenges when it comes to WLB due to the interweaving of work, gender, and ethnicity (Dyke & James, 2009).

4.5 Summary

In this chapter, the pre-migration and post-migration life and career experiences of skilled migrant women have been elucidated. For many participants, especially those with extensive experience in their career fields, it was not about rebuilding their career so much as regaining it. To have spent ten, fifteen or sometimes twenty years in a field and to then be told they have to retrain or do a course in the host country if they wanted to work in that field again was soul-destroying, as explained by several participants in this study. The greater the difficulty in obtaining a job that uses a participant's talents and experiences, the faster that participant's

skills deteriorate and become obsolete. Most of the participants in this study lost their careers in the host country despite have excellent qualifications and extensive experience. Far from being an asset in their host country they found themselves isolated from their professional field and in many cases socially too.

This research found that previous studies have neglected to explore the importance and depth of planning that skilled migrant women do prior to migrating and how this impacts their career outcomes in the host country. This has resulted in most migration theories disregarding the pre-emptive actions skilled migrant women may potentially take in order to have a better life in the host country. Previous scholars have also not considered the continual iterative aspect of how skilled migrant women's careers unfold and evolve over time in the host country and the subsequent cathartic impact this has on participants.

The next chapter will apply the career experiences of skilled migrant women from this study to the existing career theories, the kaleidoscope career model and the three-phase life stage model, to gain a better understanding of how skilled migrant women construct their career paths post-migration.

Chapter Five –Findings and Discussion

The Evolving/Devolving Career

'You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, and how you can still come out of it.'

Maya Angelou

5 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the key findings of life and career experiences of skilled migrant women both pre-migration and post-migration were presented. In this chapter, the second research objective will be addressed using the career theoretical frameworks adopted in this study. Transdisciplinary research has increasingly been found to be more beneficial to research in the social science field in the last two decades (Buizer et al., 2015; Roura, 2017). The purpose of this study is to understand the process of the career rebuilding skilled migrant women undergo after the career disruption caused by international transition. Previous research shows that the career trajectories of skilled migrant women in the host country are characterised by discontinuity (Nardon et al, 2021; Riaño, 2021). Career rebuilding for the purposes of this study does not mean restoration of the home country career alone, but includes the restructuring of pre-migration skills, qualifications, and experiences to recreate a new career which is both objectively and subjectively satisfying to skilled migrant women, contributing to their overall wellbeing in the host country.

The research findings have been presented in this chapter to answer the second research objective:

- ❖ Contribute to existing career theory by exploring their applicability to the career experiences of skilled migrant women.

5.1 The KCM and the TPM

In this study, the kaleidoscope career model (KCM) and the three-phase life stage model (TPM) were used to gain a better understanding of how skilled migrant women construct their career paths post-migration. International migration has been found to be highly disruptive to the careers of migrants (O'Connor & Crowley-Henry, 2020; Zikic & Richardson, 2016).

This study explores how skilled migrant women navigate the challenges and opportunities from this international career transition. The KCM model will be evaluated alongside the three-phase life stage model to examine how applicable they are to skilled migrant women's career paths in the host country.

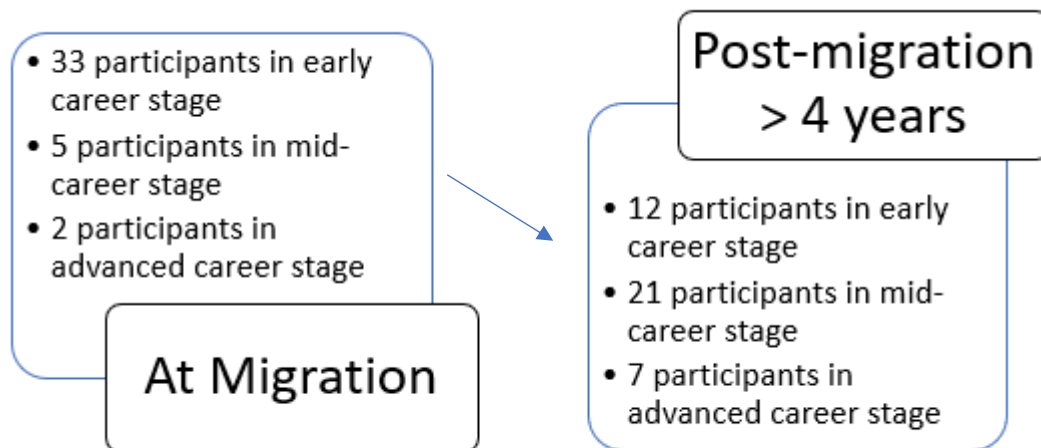
The kaleidoscope career model (KCM) posits that when women make career decisions, they do so based on three parameters: authenticity, balance, and challenge. The KCM has not been used to understand the career experiences of skilled migrant women, and how they seek to fit the work demands, constraints, and opportunities in the host country alongside relationships, personal values, and interests. In the 'traditional' KCM presented by Mainiero and Sullivan (2005), women were found to select the parameter best fitting their career stage. Those in the early career stage actively pursued and prioritised their career interests, with balance and authenticity receding to the background (Cabrera, 2007). Those in the mid-career stage, where family priorities were more demanding, valued balance and this came to the forefront with challenge and authenticity fading to the background (Mainiero & Gibson, 2018). Women in the later stages of their career, while valuing challenge and balance in their life, are now at a stage where their own choices and desires come first (authenticity) (August, 2011). The KCM was developed almost twenty years ago, and women's career patterns have evolved significantly since then. There are increased childcare options, the ability to afford home help, and online shopping options and meal bag services available to assist with household responsibilities, as well as increasing numbers of fathers becoming primary caregivers, thus minimising the number of interruptions for non-work activities that impacted women in the past. Also, it is important to note that this model has been primarily used to study the careers of white women from ESB countries, and not women of colour or those from NESB countries. There have been a few exceptions such as O'Connor and Crowley-Henry's (2020) study where they applied the KCM to skilled migrant's careers to show how they shifted career parameters

in response to career disruptions resulting from migration. A key differentiation with this doctoral research is the focus on the career experiences of skilled migrant women utilising both the KCM and TPM to gain a deeper understanding of how careers for this group of participants evolve over time in their host country.

Most studies that have referred to life-stage career models have used age as an indicator for career stage. In O'Neil and Bilimoria's (2005) model, Career Phase 1 (early) is defined as 24-35 years, Career Phase 2 (mid) is 36-45 years, and Career Phase 3 (late) is 46-60 years. Applying this to the KCM, Career Phase 1 matches its interpretation of the KCM's early career stage parameters, where challenge is predominant with a focus on career pursuits and moving through the workplace hierarchy. Career Phase 2 aligns with the KCM's mid-career stage parameters, where balance is the leading parameter as skilled migrant women focus more on their family. Finally, Career Phase 3 matches the KCM late career stage parameters to some extent in that career takes a back seat to other more personal interests (authenticity). Women's careers evolve as they move through each stage, with mid-career being the most turbulent stage as women experience conflict between having a family and continuing work. Early career stage and late career stage are considered positive in terms of women's careers experiences, while mid-career is viewed as negative in the three-phase life stage model (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). Taking the career age ranges from O'Neil and Bilimoria's (2005) model, Figure 19 shows the career stages of participants in this study immediately prior to migration and then at time of participating in this study. Figure 19 demonstrates that a significant number of participants went from early career stage (at the time of migrating) to mid-career stage (at the time of participating in this study). This represents a unique opportunity in this study of being able to explore in depth the continuing evolving nature of the participants careers in their host country, including how their KCM parameters differ from previous studies over time.

Figure 19

Participant Career Stages at Time of Migration and Post-Migration



5.2 The Kaleidoscope Career Model and Skilled Migrant Women

Migration is a major career disruptor that is not accounted for by the KCM (Fernando & Patriotta, 2020; Magnano et al., 2022; O'Connor & Crowley-Henry, 2020). Thinking back to the KCM theory explained in Section 2.8.3.2, the alpha career pattern (CAB) is more commonly identified with men's careers, while the beta pattern (CBA) is more commonly associated with women's career patterns. In this study, challenge is considered the primary KCM parameter for women in their early careers, and the majority of participants in this study migrated while in their early career stage. With regards to the participants in mid-careers, most did not have children or if they did it was traditional for extended family to take care of them in their home countries.

Studies using the KCM argue that one parameter always takes the forefront in each career stage, with the other two parameters active but residing in the background. However, this study found that in skilled migrant women's career decision-making, it is possible to have a strong

influential second parameter which drives the pre-dominant parameter. This will be more evident in Adriana's story in the next section.

Table 13 shows the findings from this study for the skilled migrant women, with the KCM parameters at significant pre-migration and post-migration stages. As a reminder, participants in the early stages of their careers would be expected to have the CBA pattern, in mid-career, BCA and in latter career, ABC. The table below indicates the participants names, and their ages at the time of the research. This is followed by the pre-migration KCM parameter pattern. The first letter denotes the parameter at the forefront during that career stage, the second parameter denotes the secondary parameter influencing the participants and the final parameter, is the parameter least in play. Unlike the traditional KCM model where one parameter is at the forefront, and the other two secondary, this study found the two receding parameters are not equal and one is potentially more influential as a driver of the predominant parameter. This will be further clarified in the next section.

It is important to note that all three KCM parameters were applicable and relevant to skilled migrant women, with no major new parameters emerging. However, a significant finding of this study was that migration produced new meanings for the existing KCM parameters of challenge and balance for skilled migrant women. The following section will highlight these findings from the participants' stories.

Table 13

Skilled Migrant Women's TPM/KCM Alignments

| Participant name | Age at time of research | Pre-migration | Career Stage at Migration | KCM Parameters Post-Migration first year | Career Stage at time of this research | KCM Parameters Post-Migration after 4yrs plus |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| Ariana | 25 | B C A | Early | B C A | Early | C B A |
| Anna | 28 | C A B | Early | C B A | Early | C B A |
| Dion | 28 | C A B | Early | C A B | Early | C A B |
| Celia | 29 | C A B | Early | C B A | Early | C A B |
| Tia | 32 | C A B | Early | C A B | Early | C A B |
| Regan | 33 | C A B | Early | C B A | Early | C B A |
| Juno | 33 | C A B | Early | C A B | Early | C B A |
| Aabha | 33 | C B A | Early | C B A | Early | C A B |
| Bina | 35 | B C A | Early | C B A | Early | B C A |
| Iris | 35 | C A B | Early | C B A | Early | C A B |
| Mahati | 35 | C A B | Early | C B A | Early | C A B |
| Ona | 35 | C A B | Early | C B A | Early | C A B |
| Adriana | 36 | C A B | Early | C B A | Mid | C A B |
| Ursula | 36 | C A B | Early | C A B | Mid | C A B |
| Helena | 36 | C A B | Early | C A B | Mid | C A B |
| Diana | 37 | C A B | Early | B C A | Mid | C A B |
| Katharina | 37 | B C A | Early | C A B | Mid | C A B |
| Phoebe | 37 | C A B | Early | C A B | Mid | C A B |
| Tracey | 38 | B C A | Early | C B A | Mid | B C A |
| Olivia | 38 | C A B | Early | C A B | Mid | C A B |
| Hina | 39 | C A B | Early | C A B | Mid | C A B |
| Alexas | 40 | C A B | Early | C A B | Mid | C B A |
| Ceres | 40 | C B A | Early | C B A | Mid | C A B |
| Valeria | 40 | B A C | Early | C B A | Mid | C B A |
| Vian | 40 | C A B | Early | C B A | Mid | C B A |
| Biyu | 41 | B C A | Early | B C A | Mid | C B A |
| Valentina | 42 | C A B | Early | C A B | Mid | C A B |
| Camila | 42 | C B A | Early | C B A | Mid | C B A |
| Donna | 42 | C B A | Early | C B A | Mid | C B A |
| Irina | 42 | C B A | Early | C B A | Mid | C A B |
| Cleo | 43 | C A B | Early | C A B | Mid | C B A |
| Emily | 45 | C A B | Early | C A B | Mid | B C A |
| Silvia | 45 | C A B | Early | C B A | Mid | C B A |
| Hazel | 47 | C A B | Mid | C A B | Adv | C A B |
| Imogen | 47 | C A B | Mid | C A B | Adv | C B A |
| Dina | 49 | C A B | Mid | C B A | Adv | C B A |
| Jaya | 49 | C B A | Mid | C A B | Adv | C A B |
| Hadas | 54 | C A B | Mid | C A B | Adv | C A B |
| Isla | 55 | C B A | Adv | C A B | Adv | C A B |
| Leah | 56 | C B A | Adv | C A B | Adv | C A B |

B A C Balance, Authenticity, Challenge
 C A B Challenge, Authenticity, Balance
C B A Challenge, Balance, Authenticity

5.2.1 Skilled Migrant Women's KCM Career Stories

Several participants exhibited traditional KCM parameters along with the beta career pattern, pre-migration, and post-migration. However, there were also some participants, while they displayed the traditional beta career pattern pre-migration, their KCM patterns did not match Mainiero and Sullivan's (2005) KCM career stages. Career patterns also shifted between alpha and beta (or vice versa) as a result of migration. In this section, career stories from participants will be told, exemplifying how the meanings for the KCM parameters may be open to new interpretations for these skilled migrant women. The first career story narrated will be Katharina's.

Katharina is passionate about her career, but while in her home country it took a back seat to her family's needs. Trained as a teacher, she initially worked as a substitute teacher. After marrying her husband, he "found a permanent position in youth camps and so I was working part-time in the camps and part-time substitute teaching", but after the children were born, Katharina:

.... gave up on the teaching and stuck with the recreation and outdoor (camps) stuff, because we were constantly moving states because of my husband's work so I was constantly having to get new registration. There's all of this red tape, and even after ten years I was only considered a new teacher because of this.

Balance was at the forefront of her KCM parameters (BCA), and not challenge as expected for women in their early career stage (as Katharina was). Balance is an archetypal KCM key parameter for women with young children, however in the KCM model childcare and balancing family relationships would usually occur in the women's mid-career stage. Katharina was in her earlier career stage at the time of migrating to New Zealand. The decision to migrate to New Zealand was made in order to support her husband's elderly parents who

“were having significant health problems.” On arrival, Katharina found work first and within the first year in the host country. Challenge moved to the forefront of her KCM parameters, followed by authenticity and balance as she became the primary breadwinner. Migration for skilled migrant women can be deemed tantamount to a career stage transition, in that it brings a different parameter to the fore. Her husband stayed at home to look after their children.

So, because of the age of our children, and how different childcare works, he ended up with some temporary work. It’s not life-altering but it’s something that brings in extra money and it means that he can take care of the kids after school while I work full-time (Katherina).

Over the last few years, Katharina’s career trajectory has climbed steadily, and she now is thriving in her work. She is also able to work from home, thus enabling her husband to be able to do more contracting work. Katharina’s career story is a strong example of a skilled migrant woman whose career pattern has shifted from balance to challenge and, although within the traditional meanings of the KCM parameters, it is not representative of the model as presented by Mainiero and Sullivan (2005). Katharina is now in her mid-career stage; however, challenge remains her key KCM parameter and not balance as per the KCM model.

Jaya’s career story highlights how the KCM parameters may be open to a different interpretation and meaning for skilled migrant women. Despite being in her mid-career stage in her home country, challenge was the primary KCM parameter (CBA) and not balance as expected for women. Jaya had wanted ‘to be a scientist’, however after marriage, she had to move to where her husband lived and there were no opportunities for her to work in her field. She ended up taking an administration role at the local university. When her husband’s firm transferred him to the Dubai office, her family helped her with childcare, so she was able to

carry on working full time. This was a common finding amongst participants from South Asian countries, who had minimal conflict between career and childcare as they had support from family or paid home help, so balance did not become a primary KCM parameter. Jaya made the decision to migrate to New Zealand after she was given two years of extended leave from her workplace and airfares to anywhere in the world as a benefit of her university job. Wanting to fulfil her ambition of working in science, Jaya decided to explore the option of doing a PhD. After several months of applying for scholarships, Jaya was offered a monthly stipend by Zespri to do research in the kiwifruit industry. After speaking to her husband, they decided that it was a good opportunity for Jaya, and she came to New Zealand with her children. Hence, while challenge remained the key KCM parameter post-migration, migration shifted Jaya's secondary KCM parameter from balance to authenticity (CAB), as her desire to work in science (authenticity) was realised. The importance of a secondary parameter driving the key parameter is highlighted as an area requiring further research. Finding a job on par with her qualifications and in the science field post-migration was not easy. Challenge for Jaya, however, did not have the same meaning as the traditional KCM denotation. Challenge was not about the nature of the work, but about the difficulty of finding commensurate work. For Jaya, and many of the other participants, it signified a continuation in their attempts to find work (preferably in their field) even if that meant taking on lower-paid and lower-skilled jobs to get onto that first step. On her labour market experiences, Jaya said:

I was applying for jobs, even when I think there is no chance of getting the job.

I apply for laboratory technician and admin roles, even medical laboratory roles.

I am concentrating on developing a skill set that native New Zealanders don't have, it's going to be hard, but I have to try every possible way that I can to do it.

Adriana's career story is another example where the meaning of challenge was interpreted differently to the traditional KCM meaning. Adriana had a strong career in her home country, with challenge the primary KCM parameter, followed by authenticity and balance (CAB). She was able to pay for a nanny and home help, and was in a career she thrived in. Adriana had rapidly climbed the career ladder in her home country, stating that she "would still be working in that company if I hadn't migrated to New Zealand", indicating that her career would have followed a traditional career model if she had not migrated. Upon arriving in New Zealand, Adriana started working in an entry level role in her industry, while her partner stayed at home to look after the children. Adriana's primary KCM parameter remained challenge, however her secondary parameter changed to balance, followed by authenticity (CBA), because her career decision making now revolved around her family and settling into the new environment. For Adriana, post-migration, challenge reflected that of supporting her family.

I deliberately applied for jobs that were significantly less stressful, shall I say, than the job I was in. I knew immigrating would be hard, and I had a toddler and I just wanted to do something that would pay my bills until we fully settled in.

While balance was a significant driver of the jobs that Adriana accepted, challenge was at the forefront of her career decision-making – challenge establishing a secure home for her family in the home country, and not necessarily an opportunity that would enhance her career possibilities. It did not need to be stimulating or on par with her qualifications or experience, and she acknowledged that "I set myself back around four years career wise, and then I stayed in those roles for another four years." Once her children were older and settled, Adriana forged ahead with her career, and authenticity took precedence over balance (CAB), similar to her

home country KCM parameters. The meaning of challenge also reverted to the traditional meaning of the KCM parameter.

I think we were settled, and we decided we were going to stay in New Zealand long term, we had started to build up close friendships and networks and things. It just felt like I finally had the head space to challenge myself again.

This interpretation of challenge post-migration was a significant finding in many career stories in this study. This suggests that while skilled migrant women are prepared to put their careers on a temporary hold while settling into their host country, challenge remains their key KCM parameter, but it has a different connotation to the traditional meaning. Also important to note was that challenge remained the primary KCM parameter for Adriana even after moving to her mid-career stage when the expectation of the KCM model for women was that their primary KCM parameter shifted to balance.

The next career story highlights the changing meaning of balance for skilled migrant women. Ariana reluctantly migrated to New Zealand, after her husband was offered a career opportunity in Auckland.

Everything was so fast. My husband got the job offer in January and we moved in March. At first, I was really hesitant, like what will I do there. I think I have a better life at home, my family is there and in New Zealand it will just be the two of us. But thinking of him on his own made me sad. When we sent the visa application, I told myself if it doesn't get accepted then I will be happy.... but it was accepted.

In her home country, Ariana's primary KCM parameter was balance despite being in her early career stage. She came from a family of doctors and nurses and had been pushed into training as a nurse.

My whole family is in the medical field. All of my aunts and uncles are doctors or nurses, and they kept insisting that I should get into nursing. In the third year, I almost quit, but my family just told me you are almost finished, just keep going.

However, she did not enjoy it and soon quit. She decided to start her own business but ended up being persuaded into managing her husband's business while he worked full-time. The balance Ariana displayed at this stage was putting her husband's career first and assisting him in that business. Post migration, Ariana was unsure what to do. Her husband was at work all day, and she was bored and lonely at home. Ariana really wanted to start her own business as she had back home but felt that it was not an option.

I think it's better to work here than open up a business. In the Philippines, you can have a business where you can earn money and still have time for yourself. But here, it seems very difficult, you have to do everything yourself, and it is very expensive to employ someone.

Ariana had several low-skilled jobs within the first two years in New Zealand. Balance remained her primary KCM parameter, but not in the traditional meaning of balance. For Ariana, the meaning of balance was just doing a job – it was a compromise. Ariana spoke about wanting to have her own business again, possibly as a beautician. But she was not sure if and when this would be possible since it was “very expensive and a six-month course.” At the time of being interviewed for this research, it was just a dream.

Ariana's interpretation of balance is similar to Emily's, irrespective of the difference between them in age and career stage. Emily had a very traditional career in her home country. She had been with the same company for many years, with a strong career trajectory. Like Adriana, if she had not migrated to New Zealand with her family, she would have stayed with the same organisation. She struggled to find work in her field in the first-year post-migration and she switched from challenge being the primary parameter to balance now the primary parameter, with migration being the reason for this shift. She eventually decided to work as an at-home early childhood educator. This allowed her to stay at home while her daughter was young. Once her daughter started to go to school, Emily went back into the labour market, working as an office manager. She does not enjoy the role and finds it boring. However, she feels she has no choice but work "for the sake of having a job and something to do."

5.3 Three-phase Model of Women's Career Development Phases

A key component of this study is that most of the participants migrated while still in the early career stage, Career Phase 1 (n=33), but at time of interviewing, most had moved to mid-career, Career Phase 2 (n=21). The implication of this is that it is difficult to apply the three-phase model across the participants' experiences for all three career stages due to the limited number of participants in mid and advanced career stages (n=7). However, the benefit is that the transition between the early and mid-career stages can be explored in greater detail to identify key characteristics highlighting the unfolding nature of their career longitudinally. This has not been attempted or achieved in prior research for skilled migrant women.

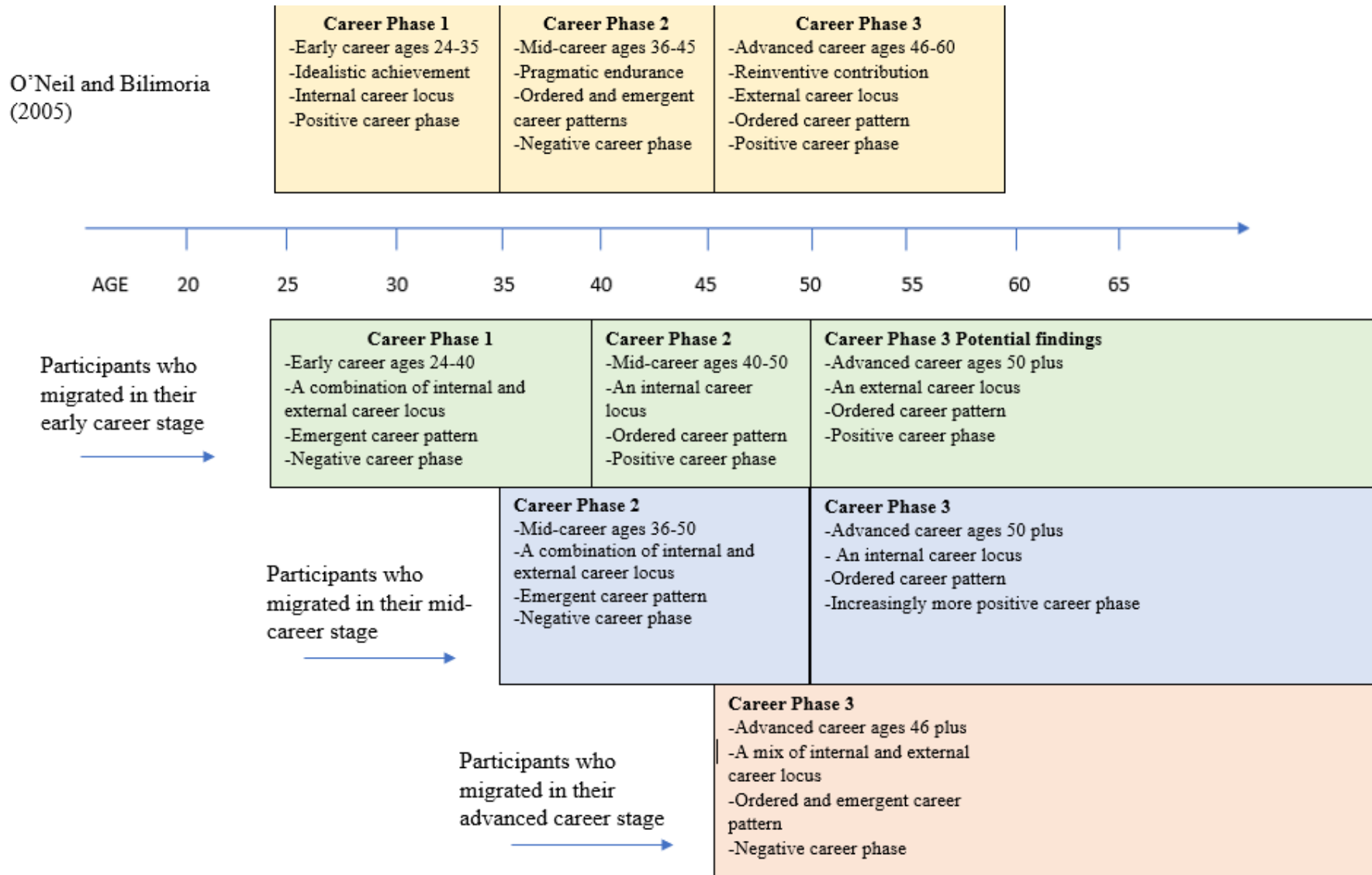
The findings for the advanced career stage, Career Phase 3, are based on the findings from the seven participants who migrated while in their mid or advanced career stage. It is important to understand how the careers of mid and advanced career participants unfold in the host country and based on the findings from this study, it seems that they are at most risk of

losing their career capital post-migration predominantly due to age. This is an under-explored area of research, and further research is needed to understand the dynamics of career development for them.

A key assumption in this study was that the skilled migrant women would fit the age groups for each career phase in the TPM. However, irrespective of which career stage participants migrated, migration for most caused them to regress in their careers. The characteristics for the skilled migrant women's career experiences also do not match their respective career stage in the TPM. This would lead to the supposition that the TPM with its three career phases does not explain how skilled migrant women's careers unfold. It is important to note that the findings in this chapter are limited for the advanced career stage skilled migrant women due to the small number of advanced career stage participants in this study and further studies would be highly beneficial in identifying further characteristics in each of the three-career phases. Figure 20 contrasts O'Neil and Bilimoria's (2005) TPM and the findings of this study, with the yellow boxes representing the TPM stages, and beneath that, the findings from this study. Each group of participants in their respective career stages have had their careers charted along the timeline.

Figure 20

A Contrast Model between the TPM and Skilled Migrant Women's Career Phases



The green boxes in Figure 20 represent what happened to skilled migrant women who migrated while in their early career stage and then moved to their mid-career stage. Their Career Phase 3 characteristics were conjectured based on how their careers were unfolding in the first two career phases. The blue boxes represent the skilled migrant women who migrated in their mid-career stage, while the pink box is representative of the advanced career stage participants. The career stage characteristics for the blue and pink boxes are based on the limited data from the seven mid and advanced career stage participants. Future research should look at conducting a longitudinal study to fully understand the unfolding nature of skilled migrant women's careers in their host country.

5.3.1 Migrating during the Early Career Stage

Career Phase One

In terms of the TPM of women's career development phases, the early career phase of positive career experiences with a strong emphasis on internal locus and with an ordered career pattern (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005) did not align with the career experiences of most of the early career stage skilled migrant women in this study. In O'Neil and Bilimoria's (2005) study, Career Phase 1 is where women focus on growing their careers – they are confident of success and have an internal career locus. For most of the participants in this study who migrated during their early career stage, migration caused participants to fluctuate between an internal and external career locus, as they lost confidence in their own abilities during the early years in their host country due to the inability to find work on par with the experience and qualifications in their career field. Participants spoke about having career aspirations, believing they would be able to restart their careers and rebuild them to where they had left them in their home country. However, they instead experienced unexpected obstacles and barriers, as well as loss of control over their career, correlating more strongly with the mid-career stage of O'Neil and Bilimoria's (2005) theory. Ariana and Anna, both in their early career phase, went from

positive career experiences in their home country to negative career experiences in New Zealand. Their experiences aligned to those found in the TPM mid-career phase, even four years after migration.

Alexas found that, despite being highly educated and experienced in her career field, finding even a lower-level position in her field (psychology) was difficult. She struggled for several years, working in voluntary positions to gain New Zealand work experience, to try and find work. This early career phase in the host country was very turbulent for her, with continuous rejection and increasing feelings of loss and dejection. Cyra also found her science qualifications and experience became worthless post-migration. She felt that if she wanted to work in her field, the only option she had was to gain New Zealand qualifications. Fortunately, she was able to secure a scholarship to do her PhD, alongside part-time work at the university. Most of the early career stage participants lost their professional qualifications. Tracey, Katharina, and Silvia were all qualified and experienced teachers who were not able to work as teachers in New Zealand due to the cost of re-certification.

In O'Neil and Bilimoria's (2005) model, early career stage age is 24-35 years. However, the findings of this study suggest that the early career stage age was more in line with the 24–40-year range. This was a result of the extensive career disruption they experienced due to migration, which ultimately extended the time they spent in this early career stage. The four-year extension is only indicative of the findings in this study, based on the average time most participants in this study struggled with settling down in New Zealand and re-starting their careers. It is an area that needs further research.

Also, it is important to note that most participants in this study had children during the early career phase, either in the home country or in the host country. In their home country, several participants (Jaya, Aabha, Adriana, and Dina) spoke about having extended family support and often domestic help allowing them to focus on their careers. Post-migration, in the

host country, several participants accepted jobs that were below their skills and qualifications so that they could be more financially stable and help settle their family in the new environment. This was highlighted by Ariana's story in the previous section.

Career Phase Two

Due to the career disruptions participants experienced on arrival into the host country (discussed in the previous section), most participants stayed in the early career stage for an extended period. Mid-career therefore started for most skilled migrant women (who arrived in their early career stage) in this study at the age of 40, when many of them were able to re-focus on their careers.

Again, in the original study, women in Career Phase 2 (mid-career) were found to experience more negative career experiences, with an increasing number of career and life decisions not in their control (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). This is contrary to the findings of skilled migrant women in this study who had more positive career experiences and a more ordered career pattern as they started to feel more in control of their career path. Several participants spoke about having a more realistic perspective of the career pathway by the time they reach the mid-career phase, and after being in the host country for several years. While many were still not working in their home country occupation, they had tried to stay in the same industry. Helena worked in human resources in her home country but found it very difficult to re-enter this field in New Zealand. The HR role she had in Argentina was very different to the HR role job description in New Zealand. The initial years were very challenging for Helena in terms of gaining an understanding of the broader HR functions and where she wanted her career path to go and then trying to gain experience in this sector. By the time Helena entered her mid-career phase, she was working in recruitment. Her career and life were more ordered, and she had a clear and realistic idea of her career trajectory in this field. Unlike the first few years, she was now in control of her career and her life. Similarly, Alexas who

faced turbulence in the early years post-migration had a more positive mid-career phase, after finding her first role as a student advisor and then moving to a student counsellor role.

The skilled migrant women in this study did not match O'Neil and Bilimoria's mid-career (36-45 years) characteristics. Not all of the participants were able to re-build their home-country careers, but many had found a more holistic definition of career. Valeria for example, became an advocate for migrants in her community, organising work fairs, women's support groups and much more. She was working alongside influential non-profit groups and the local Council to create solutions to the problems many migrants experienced coming to New Zealand - problems that she herself had experienced. In addition to this, participants stayed in this career phase longer than found in the TPM, resulting in an increase of the age range for Career Phase 2 to 50 years old.

Career Phase Three

Participants in this study had only been in New Zealand for a maximum of ten years, so the findings for Career Phase 3 for the skilled migrant women who had migrated in their early career stage were hypothesised based on the previous two stages. There is a strong case to be made for this group of participants to have a positive advanced career stage. Most of the participants were re-establishing their careers in Career Phase 2, and it could be theorised that by the time they reached Phase 3, they would have stable careers and authenticity would potentially be emerging as their critical KCM parameter.

5.3.2 Migrating during the Mid-Career Stage

Career Phase Two

Only five participants in this study were in their mid-career phase at the point of migration to New Zealand. Hazel, Imogen, Dina, Jaya and Hadas all had well established careers in their home countries prior to migration. At the time of being interviewed, these

participants had transitioned to O'Neil and Bilimoria's (2005) advanced career phase as illustrated by Figure 20.

On arrival into the host country, these participants displayed similar characteristics to O'Neil and Bilimoria's (2005) mid-career stage. Participants spoke about the challenges of having to re-evaluate their career pathway. Dina, previously a high school teacher, struggled finding teaching work on arrival to New Zealand. She took any work she could find, in the belief that it would help grow her network and would help when she needed references. Eventually she did find some casual teaching work, and then was offered some casual work at the university her husband worked at. Hadas also only managed to secure part-time work after several months. It was a role that she was overqualified for but gave her some New Zealand work experience. Hadas wanted to rebuild her career in counselling but found it difficult to find any opportunities in this field. Most participants in this career stage found that they were having to re-evaluate their career options. It was more akin to the emergent career stage, with predominantly negative career experiences. The only participant in this group who was able to secure a job in her field was Hazel, however, even she ended up losing her job after a serious dispute in her organisation. Participants in this group struggled with re-adjusting their career perceptions, values, and ethos with those of the host country. This could be due to having worked for a major part of their career in a very different cultural work environment. However, although the TPM posits that women experience increasing negative career experiences during their mid-career stage due to childcare and family commitments, for the participants in this study the negative career experiences were due to disruption caused by migration. Again, participants in this study found that they stayed longer in the mid-career stage compared to the original TPM due to the career disruption caused by migration. The findings from this study suggest that skilled migrant women migrating in their mid-career stage stay in Career Phase 2

for approximately five years longer than what was found in the TPM, and as such the age range for this group was extended until 50 years old before moving to the next Career Phase.

Career Phase Three

Despite the struggles that participants in this group faced, they did eventually start taking control of their careers. Their expectations had changed, and they were prepared for their careers to diverge from their home country careers, not prepared to give up on having a meaningful and stimulating career. Over time, they did have more positive career experiences, with their career locus shifting from emergent to internal. Dina went from trying to rebuild her teaching career to working as a tutor at the local university. Hadas did some counselling courses and pro-bono work to increase her opportunities of working in the counselling field. Hazel lost her career in academia, however she segued into doing more work with government agencies while continuing to do research and publications in the academic sphere. It was very difficult, but critically, these participants kept their focus and never gave up, reinventing a career in their host country.

5.3.3 Migrating during the Advanced Career Stage

Career Phase Three

Career patterns have changed immensely in the two decades since O'Neil and Bilimoria's (2005) study and women are working well past the age of 60 years old, and therefore 46-60 years old could be considered no longer an adequate age bracket for the advanced career phase. For participants migrating in their advanced career stage, the age bracket for this phase has no age limitation at the end, however this is only indicative of the limited findings in this study. Only two participants in this study migrated while in Career Phase 3. According to O'Neil and Bilimoria's (2005) Career Phase 3 is a more positive career phase for women, with ordered career patterns and an emergent career locus. However, this was not the case for the participants in this study who migrated during this career phase.

Two participants, Isla, and Leah, migrated to New Zealand in Career Phase 3, as defined by O’Neil and Bilimoria’s (2005) three-phase model age ranges. Both Isla and Leah were optimistic about rebuilding/restarting a career they were passionate about. However, they found that they experienced all-encompassing career obstacles leading to turbulent and chaotic career experiences in New Zealand. Due to their age, they knew it would be challenging to find work on par with their experiences, however over time their confidence slowly ebbed away as they continually had negative experiences in the labour market. This fits with the overall pattern seen in this study, where skilled migrant women struggle during the initial period of arrival in the host country rebuild their careers. For women over 50 years however, they do not have the time to rebuild their careers and so potentially could be impacted more negatively than skilled migrant women who arrive in their early or mid-career stages; they will potentially struggle not only more in the labour market but also in terms of rebuilding their social network.

5.4 Summary

While not all of the participants in this study were able to rebuild their home-country careers, many found a more holistic definition of career. The participants in this study all had their own reason for migrating and their career was not always the central motivation for it. Several participants did speak about their inability to progress further in their careers in their home country, but there were a multitude of dynamics in play as to why they chose to migrate. Improved lifestyle, educational opportunities for themselves/their children, and escape from conflict were some key motivations to migrate. While many participants struggled to rebuild the careers they had in their home country, they were able to pivot and re-start new careers in New Zealand - some in the same field, others in completely new fields. However, neither the TPM nor the KCM in their current constructs are able to assist in elucidating this evolving nature of skilled migrant women’s careers in the host country.

The next chapter will expand on the findings and discussion from Chapter Four and Chapter Five to highlight the key contributions that this study makes to both career and migration literature.

Chapter Six - Contributions

'No country can ever truly flourish if it stifles the potential of its women and deprives itself of the contributions of half its citizens.'

Michelle Obama

6 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings from Chapter Four (life and career before and after migration) are integrated and mapped to gain a more holistic understanding of the pathway that skilled migrant women follow in their careers and lives before and after they decide to migrate. Findings will be applied to the six migration frameworks that were selected, based on their contribution to the understanding of life and career experiences of skilled migrants/skilled migrant women (Table 1, Section 2.7.7). Studies on skilled migrants were included in Table 1 due to the limited number of studies on skilled migrant women. Most of the migration theories focused on the challenges faced by skilled migrants in the host country in terms of rebuilding their lives and careers post-migration and the career outcomes and not the pre-emptive actions that skilled migrant women may potentially take in order to have a better life in the host country. This research found that previous studies have neglected to explore the importance and depth of planning that skilled migrant women do prior to migrating and how this impacts their career outcomes in the host country. This has resulted in most migration theories disregarding the pre-emptive actions skilled migrant women may potentially take in order to have a better life in the host country. Previous scholars have also not considered the continual iterative aspect of how skilled migrant women's careers unfold and evolve over time in the host country and the subsequent cathartic impact this has on participants.

Following this, the key contributions from Chapter Five (career findings and discussion) are highlighted. The career experiences of skilled migrant women from this study are applied to the kaleidoscope career model and the three-phase life stage model to gain a better understanding of how skilled migrant women construct their career paths post-migration.

6.1 Towards a Migration Career Model

The conceptual framework of seminal migration studies (Table One) in Chapter Two (Section 2.7.7) and the findings from this study are used as the basis to develop a spatio-temporal migration career model for skilled migrant women. This model, for ease of explanation, has been split into two models. Figure 21 shows the pre-migration pathway, and Figure 21 shows the post-migration pathway that skilled migrant women navigate in their migration journey.

In this section each part of that pathway will be discussed, starting with the pre-migration pathway (Figure 21).

6.1.1 Pre-Migration Conceptual Pathway

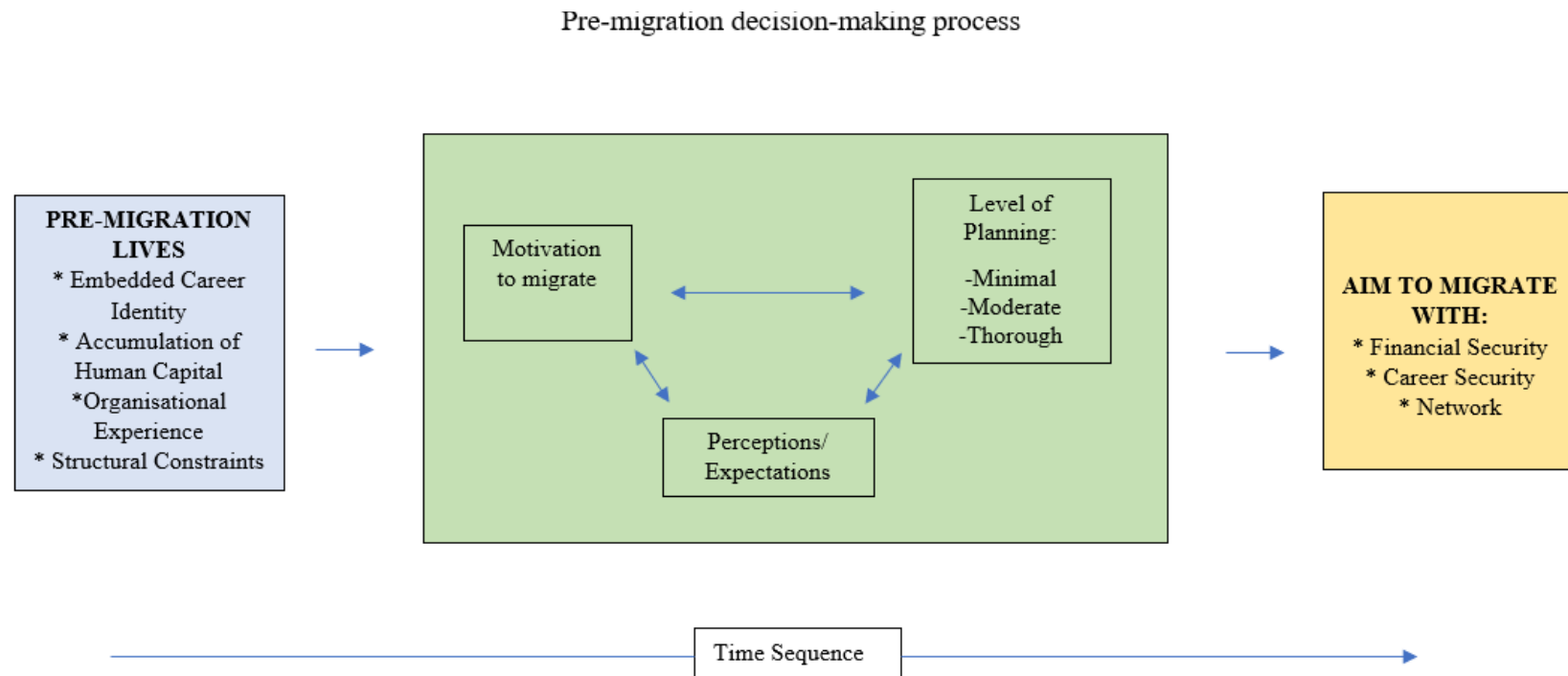
Most of the participants in this study were in their mid-life career stage at the time of being interviewed for this study with a mean age of 39 years, having lived in New Zealand for an average of 5 years. Prior to migrating, the participants had accumulated career (human) capital through a combination of education and work experience. The participants in this study were all highly educated, highly skilled women with varying levels of work experience in their industries, with the majority having held at least mid-senior level roles.

Looking first at the blue box in Figure 21, previous studies have found that skilled migrant women's career identities are embedded in their social environment (van den Bergh & du Plessis, 2012). Career decision making was heavily influenced by family members for several participants in this study, especially for those coming from NESB countries. Irina wanted a career in computers but was pressured by her mother to go into a career in teaching. Both Ariana and Sara were expected to follow their family footsteps with careers in medicine. Another key factor impacting their pre-migration lives and career decision making was the structural constraints of their home country. Several participants from South America and Asia

spoke about patriarchal culture, discrimination, and lack of safety for women in their home countries. Career progression was difficult in certain work environments, where women had to work longer hours to achieve similar career trajectories to their male peers, and even then, the glass ceiling was a reality that they found hard to shatter. Lack of individual agency was a critical barrier for several participants in career decision making in their home country. Jaya, who had always wanted to work in the science field, had to settle for an administration role in a university because her husband's career was a priority.

Figure 21

Migration Career Model – Pre-Migration Pathway



An iterative process which can take several years to reach decision on whether to and when to migrate.

Moving to the green box in Figure 21, three core components were identified as influential in terms of deciding whether to and when to migrate in this study. Motivation to migrate, level of planning and perceptions and expectations are interlinked in deciding when to migrate, however, each component also plays a critical role individually in the post-migration outcome. The migration decision-making process depicted in this model is an iterative process that can take anywhere from a few days to several years (or 17 years in Olivia's case) to navigate, prior to migrating. Migrating is not an easy decision for skilled migrant women, and this was evident in narratives shared by some of the participants. For women, the decision to migrate is complex and strongly interwoven with their personal lives. Yet, several participants spoke about the minimal amount of planning they did prior to deciding to migrate to New Zealand due to their perception/expectation of living and working in the host country. Perceptions and expectations of the host country can influence both the motivation to migrate as well as the level of planning undertaken prior to migrating. The level of planning can subsequently increase or decrease the positive perceptions and expectations of life post-migration, which in turn can sway skilled migrant women's motivation to migrate. While studies have shown a relationship between motivation to migrate and perception/expectation of living and working in the host country (Cerdin et al., 2014), there is a gap in the literature on the relationship between the level of planning, motivation to migrate and the perception/expectation of living and working in the host country. This iterative process can go through one or several cycles until the participant is confident of their decision to migrate.

As discussed in Part One of Chapter Four, this study found four core reasons for participants wanting to migrate:

- Career opportunities
- Family networks in the host country

- Lifestyle in the host country
- Escape

Participants who had either obtained a job offer or were following their partner/spouse who had secured work in the host country, and/or who had family networks in the host country were found to have undertaken minimal planning prior to migrating. Planning could involve finding more information on the host country's labour market, housing, economy, education, and visa options. Yet, participants who had secured a job in the host country or were following a partner/spouse who had a job secured in the host country were found to have the highest levels of perceptions and expectations of living and working in the host country. They expected it to be easy to settle into a new country, and a new career but this wasn't always the case. They struggled integrating into the local community, finding good housing, and developing professional networks. Participants who had family in the host country tended to do even less planning prior to migrating, since they had a support network in place, they expected it would be easy to find good housing and work in their field.

Participants who were migrating for the lifestyle offered by the host country were found to have done a moderate level of planning, although they too had a high perception and expectation of life in the host country. These participants were usually older, with established careers in the home country. They were opting to migrate to have a better lifestyle for themselves and their children. Since most had well-established careers with extensive experience in their field, and were predominantly coming from an ESB country, they expected finding a job in their field and at their level would be the same as securing new employment in their home country. These participants tended to migrate with permanent residency and with enough funds to be able to buy their own home post-migration.

The final group of participants migrating, did so to escape the structural constraints in their home country. The participants in this study spoke of the patriarchal culture which inhibited career progression in their home country. The skilled migrant women were focused and determined to rebuild their careers in their host country. They expected difficulties and challenges and came prepared to face them. They did in-depth planning, researching in detail what they needed prior to migration, to make the transition as smooth as possible. They also actively built up their skill sets and resilience. Those who migrated in a family unit with their partner as the primary breadwinner, however, found it more difficult to integrate into the local community and secure work. Instead, they usually were the ones left with the home and childcare responsibilities, further hindering their ability to rebuild their careers.

The migration decision-making process is important as it plays a large role in the skilled migrant women's post-migration experiences. Figure 21 also highlights the critical roles played by both level of planning prior to migration and the skilled migrant women's perceptions and expectations of the host country in terms of career and life aspirations. These are two aspects that have been largely ignored in the extant literature. Also neglected in literature is the iterative nature of the decision-making process migration for skilled migrant women. For example, several participants in this study spoke about gaining more work experience or an additional qualification in their home country after they had started to consider migrating to New Zealand, to increase their chances of successfully rebuilding their career. There is a perpetual cycle of decision-making prior to migration that is dependent on the levels of motivation to migrate, planning and perceptions and/or expectations of migration which needs to be explored in future studies. Finally, it is important to note that most of the participants in this study wanted to migrate with some degree of financial and career security and network in the host country (as seen in the yellow box of Figure 21). While some saved to ensure that they would not struggle

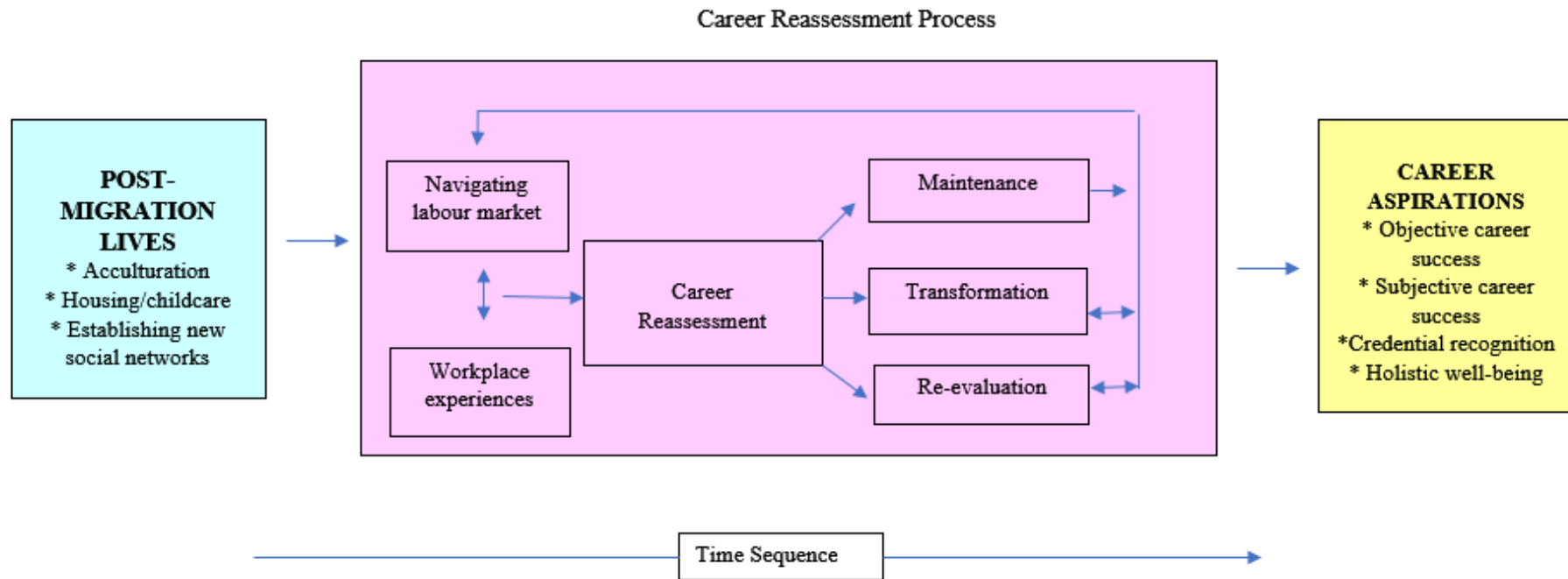
financially for at least several months during the job-hunting process, others only migrated after securing a job in the host country. Having a support network in the guise of a co-ethnic network or friends was important, especially for participants who came from NESB countries where social networks played a large role in both their personal and career support system.

6.1.2 Post-Migration Conceptual Pathway

The second part of this migration career model (as seen in Figure 22) continues mapping the skilled migrant woman's pathway into the post-migration period. The initial priority for migrants' post-migration is settling into their host country, specifically the local community. The light blue box in this model highlights the three primary issues facing skilled migrants immediately following migration, as found in this study. Even participants who migrated either with a job, or with a partner who had secured a job, had only a week or two to secure accommodation, which often placed a lot of pressure on them leading to substandard accommodation. Those with children had the additional stress of finding suitable childcare. Usually with limited, if any, networks within the community to help them, it is against this backdrop that participants found themselves also having to navigate the host country labour market. The first-year post-migration is a critical juncture for many participants in terms of whether they can rebuild their career or not and additional pressures of finding housing and childcare were found increase participants stress levels. Balancing home and work was difficult during this first year. More assistance is required from organisations to help skilled migrants integrate into their local community as well as workplace, especially in terms of providing guidance on housing and childcare.

Figure 22

Migration Career Model - Post-Migration Conceptual Pathway



An iterative process showing how SMW navigate the host country labour market to achieve their goals.

Navigating the host country labour market for most participants in this study was an evolutionary and iterative process (the pink box in Figure 22). Participants applied for and gained workplace experiences which resulted in a shift in their pre-migration expectation of the host country labour market, and it also produced a change in their own mindset as they adjusted to new workplace cultures. Most of the participants in this study migrated to New Zealand without securing a job, or without a permanent residency visa. This made it difficult for them to secure employment either on par with the careers in their home country or in the same industry. Dynamics like having to learn new ways of applying for jobs, navigating different recruitment channels, building industry networks, and experiencing different workplace cultures were all challenges experienced by participants in this study. While some participants were able to find work within their industry, it was often at a lower level than they were at in their home country. Most of the participants struggled to find work in their industry at any level. It is important to note that some participants who came to New Zealand with a job still experienced challenges in the workplace. Adriana found her work environment toxic, while Phoebe and Regan experienced gender discrimination.

In this study, career reassessment is defined as participants asking themselves if they were still passionate about their career field in the host country, and did it fulfil their subjective and objective needs. Only three participants in this study did not move to the career reassessment stage. All three participants had secured work in their industry on par, if not above, their home country jobs and were content in the organisational environment. Their experiences in applying for jobs (navigating the labour market) and in the workplace were found to play a large role for many participants when re-evaluating their careers. Ultimately, participants would either decide to make compromises in their current jobs and attempt to adapt to their work environment or reset their careers. Most of the skilled migrant women in this

study were passionate about their careers and did not want to sacrifice their skills and experience, however not being able to secure a job in their field or toxic workplace experiences ultimately influenced the choice they made when it came to reassessing their career. The main reasons for participants moving to the career reassessment stage were:

- Inability to secure a job in their industry
- Unable to secure any job
- Only able to find low-skilled or low-paid work
- Found a job but the workplace environment was toxic

Career decision-making for participants in this study was one of reassessment. Participants experienced both peaks and troughs, evolution, and regression perpetually. Al Ariss (2012) stated that skilled migrants managed their career trajectories by utilising four modes of engagement: maintenance, transformation, opt out and entrepreneurship. These modes of engagement were not all found in this study. Rather, participants were found to utilise three *strategies* - maintenance, transformation, and re-evaluation at the career reassessment stage. Figure 21 shows that in this study, entrepreneurship has been omitted, as this is really one form of “opting out”, and not an outcome in its right. Likewise, opt out has also been omitted as it represents such a negative outcome, and implies that people leave the workplace. In this study, it is replaced with re-evaluation, as this seems to more accurately reflect the process that skilled migrant women go through. This is discussed in further depth below.

Maintenance is defined by Al Ariss (2012) as recognising barriers within the workplace, accepting that host country employment conditions are unassailable and therefore navigating discrimination to obtain the desired career outcome. The example provided by Al Ariss (2012) was hiding your religion to be accepted by work colleagues and the organisation. In this study,

maintenance included not challenging the discriminatory behaviour in the workplace with the hope that 'it will get better eventually' and actively trying to acculturate to the workplace culture. Most of the participants experienced discrimination in varying degrees, however few opted for this maintenance strategy as a long-term solution. Cari initially did not wear a hijab, tried to learn the role requirements and new systems herself and integrate into her work and community environment. However, over time this led to frustration and anger, especially when the outcomes did not meet her efforts. She found herself working long hours, missing out on promotion, and feeling isolated both at work and in the local community. Finally, she took control back. She went back to wearing her hijab, demanded more support at work, and in due course, requested re-location to a city where there was a stronger co-ethnic support network. This was akin to the experiences of Anna, Phoebe, and Regan where they recognised barriers within the workplace and attempted to navigate them unsuccessfully. Maintenance, in this study, was found to be an untenable option in the long term, with most participants either shifting to transformation or re-evaluation and ultimately back to navigating the labour market.

Transformation is defined as identifying barriers to career advancement and trying to alter or challenge them (Al Ariss, 2012). The examples provided by Al Ariss (2012) was changing your name to one more common in the host country, studying further to increase opportunities and get a better career outcome, and/or changing your migrant status to citizenship. Although none of the participants in this study opted to change their name to a more anglicised name, several opted to increase their career capital and study further to increase their career opportunities and/or gain citizenship to reduce feelings of 'otherness'. Bina, Sara and Jaya spoke of being advised to change their names to ones easier to pronounce. Bina and Jaya (pseudonyms) both felt their names were part of their identity and refused to even consider it. Sara did consider changing her name but did not go through with it. Most of the participants

who chose to retrain or study further in the host country were predominantly in their early career phase (early-twenties to mid-thirties). When they went back to navigating the labour market, they found an increase in their career opportunities, although not necessarily in the same role as they were in their home country. Cyra worked in the food industry in her home country but after completing her PhD in the host country, opted to work in teaching. Valentina went from academia to an analyst role, while Sara went from medicine to healthcare co-ordinator. This still represented a utilisation of their skillset, and in a similar industry but just a different role. Not all participants who chose the transformative strategy were able to find work in their field.

While Al Ariss (2012) defined opt out as subjective and objective failure to developing the career outcome wanted by migrants due to discrimination and legal constraints, this does not fit with the experiences of the skilled migrant women in this study. Participants were found to be more resilient and did not quickly give up on their career and skill sets. If they were unable to rebuild their home country career, they refocused, re-evaluated their options and reassessed their careers in a new direction utilising their existing skill sets, knowledge, and experience. In this study, opt out is replaced with re-evaluation. Participants re-evaluated their career options when they decided to leave a job. Adriana re-evaluated working in a toxic work environment, where the executive team condoned the bullying behaviour of a senior manager. Jeannette re-evaluated working in her first job where she experienced racism from her direct manager on a regular basis, while Camila re-evaluated working for an organisation which promised flexible working but then did not allow employees this option. All these participants went on to find more fulfilling roles. While it took Jeannette several years to find the role she wanted, she was resilient and worked steadily towards that goal. Not every work experience was positive, however, it contributed to a positive accumulative experience which eventually

helped her reach her goal. In this model, re-evaluation includes participants who decided to start their own business. A critical finding in this study was the regaining of individual agency by several participants with regards to their careers. Jeannette previously allowed her family to persuade her to study nursing, then allowed her husband to persuade her to manage his business ventures. Four years after migrating, she finally started working in cosmetology, a field she had always wanted to pursue. Jaya is now following a dream of working in food technology. Irina is working in the computer technology field and not in teaching. Cleo has left public relations and is following a personal dream of teaching fitness. Several participants spoke about regaining the confidence to follow their career dreams in the host country.

The iterative process presented in the pink box in Figure 21 emphasises the interconnectedness of the maintenance, transformation and re-evaluation strategies participants select when re-evaluating their career options. Each of these options can loop skilled migrant women back through navigating the host country labour market, re-evaluating their career options leading them to make potentially different decisions in terms of the strategy they select to manage the constraints they face in the labour market. For some participants, they re-evaluate their career after spending time in the workplace, however for most it was after facing barriers finding a position on par with their home country job. This is a repetitious cycle, which several of the participants are still traversing.

Four career aspirations were desired by participants in this study (the yellow box of Figure 21). Objective and subjective career realisation, credential recognition and holistic well-being. These outcomes are broad in the sense that it was not necessary to rebuild the same career participants had in their home country to achieve these aspirations. Objective and subjective career realisation could only be achieved if participants were able to obtain stimulating and rewarding work where they were able to use their skills, qualifications, and

experience. Credential recognition was found to be critical for participants' holistic well-being, even if they were not able to find a job utilising all their skill sets. To have their qualifications and skills recognised was important. Sara spoke about not being able to work as a general practitioner in New Zealand due to the difficulty of getting a work placement in a hospital, but the fact that her current employer recognised her skills and credentials made her feel valued and assisted in rebuilding a career within the health care industry. Participants wanted to rebuild some semblance of their home country career, or develop a new direction, achieving a balance of objective and subjective career success along with a more holistic well-being.

The theoretical model developed from the findings in this study is a more comprehensive understanding of how skilled migrant women's careers unfold and evolve in their host country.

6.2 Career Theory contributions

In the previous chapter, neither the TPM nor the KCM in their current constructs were able to assist in elucidating the evolving nature of the skilled migrant women's careers in their host country. The TPM (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005) requires significant alterations if it is to assist in understanding skilled migrant women's careers which become disjointed due to migration. It would, however, with some adaption, be beneficial to utilise in a longitudinal study to understand how the career experiences of skilled migrant women unfold over time. However, this study was only able to do this for skilled migrant women who came to New Zealand in their early career stage. It could also be theorised that three stages are inadequate in understanding how women's careers unfold, and this is especially for skilled migrant women whose careers are disrupted through the migration process. The key findings from this study suggest that, irrespective of which career stage skilled migrant women migrate, their careers

regress and it can take several years for them to rebuild some semblance of what they had in their host country. Early career stage skilled migrant women experienced negative career experiences similar to the TPM mid-career stage characteristics, before they are able to start to rebuild their career (at which stage their career experiences are comparable to Career Phase 1 with the emergent and positive career characteristics). Mid-career stage and advanced career stage skilled migrant women also face negative career experiences in the initial post-migration years, some are able to overcome these to, while others are not and consequentially forgoing their home country careers.

With regards to the KCM, while it has been used extensively to understand the career patterns of skilled women, a key contribution of this study is that the career patterns of skilled migrant women do not necessarily fit the traditional meanings for the KCM parameters. Some participants shift back and forth as they struggle rebuilding their careers in the host country. Migration can disrupt the career pattern, due to skilled migrant women often putting their careers on hold so they can settle their family in the host country. Many take on low-skilled jobs to gain some financial security, before attempting to rebuild or restart their careers. With regards to the traditional meanings for the KCM parameters, skilled migrant women's career experiences in the host country offer different interpretations to those Mainiero and Sullivan (2005 & 2018) postulated in their model. These are highlighted from participant stories and summarised in Table 14 below.

Table 14

Skilled Migrant Women's KCM Parameter Interpretations

| Current KCM Parameters Definitions (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005) | Contributions to the KCM gained from Insights from Skilled Migrant Women |
|---|--|
| Authenticity | |
| The individual's quest to be true to themselves, behave and demonstrate their attitudes in accordance with their genuine inner self. | The individual's decision and act of migrating highlights their desire to find a better/different way of living. |
| Balance | |
| The individual wishes to have quality experiences in both home and work settings, for example, working part-time, opting out of the workforce temporarily, arranging workloads to prioritise work-family balance. | The individual takes a job they do not really want to because they feel they have no other option, either as a result of multiple rejections, or to earn money for the family. They are unable to do what they really want, and the balance becomes a compromise |
| Challenge | |
| The individual needs to participate in stimulating and motivating work, develop and extend skills and make progress in their career. | The individual needs any job to gain access to the host country labour market and allow them to financially gain some stability in the host country – the challenge was to find a job rather than have a stimulating career. |

The next chapter summarises the thesis and highlights future directions for research offering more insights into the careers of skilled migrant women.

Chapter Seven - Conclusion

'People do not like to think. If one thinks, one must reach conclusions. Conclusions are not always pleasant.'

Helen Keller

7 Introduction

Skilled migrant women are an untapped pool of competitive advantage, yet they have been largely neglected by their host countries and organisations (Webb, 2015). The career experiences of skilled migrant women have also remained largely invisible in academic literature (Khattab et al., 2020; Ressia, 2014). The aim of this study was to address this gap. This research was guided by the following question:

- ❖ How do the career experiences of skilled migrant women unfold in their host country?

There were two underlying research objectives to this question:

- ❖ To provide a more in-depth understanding of the career experiences of skilled migrant women.
- ❖ To contribute to existing migrant and career theory by exploring their applicability to the migration and career experiences of skilled migrant women.

This final chapter melds the findings and discussion from this study to provide a clearer understanding of the lived experiences of skilled migrant women, both in their home country and host country, New Zealand. By answering the research question, this study contributes to both the skilled migrant women and international career literature. The theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions of this research are highlighted in this chapter, followed by limitations and suggestions for future research.

7.1 An Overview of the Research

Despite comprising almost half of the migrants in the world, little is known about the career experiences of migrant women (United Nations, 2020). The limited numbers of studies on skilled migrant women's careers have identified some of the barriers that impact their

careers (van den Bergh & Du Plessis, 2012), but there are still aspects that have yet to be explored. Skilled migrant women's careers are interwoven with their whole lives. To understand their lived stories, a multi-disciplinary approach was imperative. After an extensive literature review, seminal migration theories and career theories were selected in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of skilled migrant women's career experiences. These theoretical frameworks were selected based on their contribution to the understanding of life and career experiences of women, skilled migrants, and skilled migrant women.

There is a need for a more in-depth and holistic understanding of how careers unfold over time for skilled migrant women. Through the lens of interpretivism, this qualitative research gives skilled migrant women a voice to narrate their lived reality and give meaning to their career experiences. Adopting an exploratory life history approach, 40 skilled migrant women recounted their pre-migration and post-migration career experiences in this study. A semi-structured interview approach was adopted, utilising a lifeline perspective. The latter allowed the participant to graphically illustrate significant life and career events along a timeline. This anchored critical events, enabling participants to reconstruct experiences subjectively and meaningfully in their own words. This was a key methodological contribution and is discussed further in Section 7.3.

The first objective of this study was to provide more in-depth understanding of the career experiences of skilled migrant women. Skilled migrant women's careers are all-encompassing, thus a complete understanding of their lived experiences both in their home and host country was essential. The findings and analysis presented in Chapter Four addressed this objective. There were two parts to this chapter. The first part recounted participants' lived experiences in their home country, their motivation for migrating, and their perceptions and expectations from this macro transition. A key finding from this section was the importance of perception and expectation of migrating, which influenced the level of planning participants did before

deciding to migrate. This iterative stage of pre-migration has not been explored in previous studies for skilled migrants but is an integral part of their migration journey. It plays a fundamental role in the participants' settlement in the host country.

Part Two of Chapter four focuses on participants' experiences of acculturation and navigating the host country labour market. Participants spoke about their job interview experiences, and the challenges they faced as they perceived employers felt they did not 'fit' into the organisation. The lack of New Zealand experience was also a common reason participants were unsuccessful in securing work. Participants were frustrated that their skills, experience, and qualifications held no value. Part Two of this chapter also expounded participants' workplace experiences. This included lack of support, not having their skills recognised, multiple forms of discrimination (gender, race, and age), harassment and bullying, and the inability to build professional networks. Some felt they were being exploited in the workplace due to visa restraints. The findings from both parts of this chapter make a practical contribution to government agencies and organisations. This is further explicated in Section 7.4.

Chapter Six tied together the findings from Parts One and Two of Chapter four to develop an integrated migration career model. This model was developed from the integrated table of seminal migration frameworks (Table 1) developed from the literature in Chapter Two and integrated with the findings from this study. There are two components to this spatio-temporal conceptual framework, the first path is based on the migration decision-making process in the home country while the second path focuses on the process skilled migrant women follow in order to rebuild their careers in the host country. Together these components show a comprehensive pathway that skilled migrant women take in migration journey. This framework makes a theoretical contribution to migration theory in a number of ways. Firstly, it acknowledges the importance of the depth of planning that skilled migrant women do prior to

migration. This has been largely neglected by scholars. Secondly, for skilled migrant women, their migration decision-making and how their careers subsequently unfold in the host country is an iterative process. This will be further elaborated on in Section 7.2.

The second objective of this study was to contribute to existing career theory by exploring their applicability to the career experiences of skilled migrant women. This objective is addressed in Chapter five. While the Three Phase Model and the Kaleidoscope Career Model were both developed to gain a better understanding of women's careers, the TPM has been shaped by the traditional career perspective of age/stage models while the KCM is more aligned with the contemporary career viewpoint. Both theoretical models were also developed from research on white women in the developed world. It is not surprising then, that neither model accurately portrayed nor explained the unfolding of the migrant women's careers. The findings from this chapter, therefore, makes a second theoretical contribution from this study.

In addressing the two research objectives, this thesis adds to the knowledge and understanding of international migration, skilled migrant women, and career literature. Theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions are made, while also extending current knowledge of skilled migrant women's career experiences.

7.2 Theoretical Contributions

In contextualising the findings of this study, three theoretical contributions to the understanding of how skilled migrant women's careers unfold are made. The first contribution is to existing international migration literature. The second contribution this study makes is to career theories. The third, and critical, contribution this study makes is the nexus of international migration and career literature together. The careers of skilled migrant women are under-explored and under-theorised in both these literatures.

7.2.1 International Migration Literature

There is a paucity of literature on skilled migrant women's migration experiences within the international migration literature, and this study answers the exigent call for further research in this area. The literature review highlighted the limited number of studies that took into consideration the spatio-temporal aspect of migration in determining career outcomes in the host country. Table 9 illustrated the current theoretical landscape of skilled migration. It shows that scholars have also not explored the continual iterative aspect of how skilled migrant women's careers unfold and evolve over time in the host country and the subsequent cathartic impact this has on participants. In response to this penury, a two-part theoretical model was developed (Figures 21 & 22) from the findings to provide an in-depth elucidation of how skilled migrant women's careers unfold in the host country.

There are six key contributions from the model developed in the previous chapter.

These are:

1. This is the first holistic model of the complete migration journey for skilled migrant women, incorporating the pre- and post-migration decision-making processes from the first thought of migration through to the career aspirations in the host country,
2. This model is the first to recognise the importance of the planning phase in the decision to migrate and the migration outcome. Thorough and applied research resulted in more positive integration and career outcomes in the host country for these skilled migrant women.
3. The model provides a clear illustration of the iterative nature of pre-migration decision-making as the migrants considered if, and when, they would migrate.

4. Post-migration, the model contributes to migrant career research by explicating the components of the process of assessment and reassessment of career options by skilled migrant women.
5. The model also proposes a more nuanced examination of Al Ariss' (2012) modes of engagement framework, removing the opt-out and entrepreneur modes, and replacing these with re-evaluation of career decision-making.
6. The inclusion of credential recognition and holistic wellbeing as career aspirations reflects the longer-term orientation of these skilled migrant women, not reflected in earlier theory.

Together, these contributions provide a useful starting point for future skilled migrant women research.

7.2.2 Career Literature

As previously discussed, many career theories were developed based on the experiences of Western men (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; Sullivan, 1999). In the last two decades, career theories have been developed to better reflect the career experiences of women (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005; Pringle & McCulloch Dixon, 2003), although they have yet to explore the career experiences of skilled migrant women. With ever-increasing diversity in the workplace (Martin, 2015), this research explores the applicability of existing career theories to the experiences of skilled migrant women and contributes to the development of a more inclusive career theory that is representative of the career experiences of the increasingly diverse workforce. Two career theories were selected, the Kaleidoscope Career Model (KCM) and the Three-Phase Model (TPM) of women's career development phases. The KCM and TPM were both career theories expressly developed to understand women's careers. While the KCM aligns with contemporary career theories emphasising more dynamic and fluid career patterns

with multidirectional trajectories, the TPM incorporates traditional career models with its foundations in the life stage theories of the early 20th century.

The Kaleidoscope Career Model

While the KCM parameters are all evident in this study, the model does not take into consideration career transition/disruption caused by migration. This study found that skilled career women's careers did not align with the KCM model once they had migrated to the host country. Migration caused several participants to shift their KCM parameters, leading them to transform their career pattern. No matter what professional level individuals were in when they arrived in New Zealand, challenge was the most important KCM parameter, according to the study's first major conclusion. All participants spoke about how much they wanted to rebuild their home country career in their host country. The KCM model suggests that women's KCM parameters usually reflect a beta career pattern, with challenge the primary KCM parameter in the early career stage, balance in the mid-career stage and authenticity in the advanced career stage. The remaining two parameters are still present but reside in the background. In addition to this, another significant finding was that in career decision-making where challenge is a primary KCM parameter, balance or authenticity do not equally reside in the background. One has a stronger influence than the other, hence becoming a secondary parameter. For most of the participants, their priority was rebuilding their career in the host country, however while in the home country, their secondary focus was authenticity (ie doing a job they were passionate about), in the host country, rebuilding their careers was driven by the need to balance work and home life.

A key contribution from this study in relation to skilled migrant women's careers is that migration and the experiences of the skilled migrant women produced new meanings for the KCM parameters. Authenticity only featured pre-migration, but perhaps was a motive for

migration and the participants' desire to find a better way of living and working. Balance was no longer defined as seeking a way of managing both work and home life, but was considered a compromise, occurring when participants felt they had no choice but to take on a job they did not want, because of the need to earn money for the family. Finally, challenge for the participants in this study was not focused on the desire for stimulation and enjoyment in their work, but on the challenge of finding employment and gaining access to the labour market, hence providing some financial stability in the host country. Substantial changes to the KCM, including both the expansion of the definitions, and the impact of migration on the career pattern of skilled migrant women are important factors to consider. Other career shocks (Akkermans, Seibert & Mol, 2018) may similarly impact career patterns.

The Three-Phase Model of Women's Careers

Similarly, the TPM model does not fit the career experiences of skilled migrant women in this study. The career experiences of the participants were mapped against the TPM model (Figure 20) to visually highlight the differences. This study identifies the potential of the TPM to provide longitudinal data of skilled migrant women's careers to understand how careers unfold over time. However, acknowledging that migration is a major disruptor to skilled migrant women's careers, and that women migrate at different stages in their careers, the TPM is not applicable in its current configuration. Irrespective of which stage the participants migrated, most regressed in their careers with negative career experiences in the initial years post-migration. It then took them several years to rebuild their home country career or establish a new career in the host country. The contrasting mapping of skilled migrant women's careers against the TPM is an important contribution to understanding how migrant women's careers unfold over time in the host country. The contributions and findings from this study, relating to the TPM, are predominantly based on the findings from the 33 early career stage participants,

so there is more research to be done over the later stages, with opportunities for further longitudinal studies evident.

This study made two contributions to the theoretical basis of the TPM. The most significant findings were for early career stage skilled migrant women who, at the time of the interviews, had transitioned to mid-career stage. Unlike the TPM, these were found to have negative career experiences in their career phase one (early career) in the host country but positive career experiences their career phase two (mid-career). Participants who migrated in their career phase two, had negative career experiences in that career phase but then increasingly positive career experiences as they moved to career phase three (advanced career).

The second significant contribution from this study was the time period that participants stayed in any one career phase. While the TPM model has career phase one participants aged 24-35 years old, this study found that due to regression in their careers, most early career participants remained in career phase one until they were 40 years old. These participants, however, were able to make good headway in their career during their mid-career stage, leading to career phase two participants who were 40-50 years old instead of 36-45 years for the TPM. The age range for career phase three started at 50 years old and was left open-ended (compared to the TPM 46-60 years). The reason for leaving career phase three open was that more women are working into the late 60s, and worldwide, governments are increasing the age of retirement. In New Zealand, for example, there is no compulsory retirement age.

7.3 Methodological Contributions

This study utilised an exploratory career life history approach, so that participants could reconstruct events subjectively and meaningfully in their social and cultural context in their own words. This aligned with the researcher's interpretivist philosophy, with the researcher

and participant jointly involved in creating collaborative meaning. There were two components to the data collection for this study, a timeline, and a semi-structured interview.

The use of a timeline to anchor the semi-structured interview and its use in this study was a key methodological contribution as it has not previously been used on studies of skilled migrant women. It provides a good way of breaking the ice between researcher and participant. The participant also has a foundation to base the semi-structured interview on and is able to navigate and recall events, experiences, and emotions more accurately. Co-constructing the timeline provides the researcher a boundary to work with and sets the expectations for what is required from participants. Visual methods of data collection have rarely been used in career or organisational research, despite the integral relationship between life stories and careers. Skilled migrant women's life and career experiences are emotive, complex, multifaceted, and dynamic and the use of a visual aid such as the timeline elicits the collection of sensitive data more effectively and guides seamless storytelling. Skilled migrant women experience an immense amount of personal disruption due to migration, impacting their career identity as well as their personal relationships. The timeline showed clearly how far the participants' career had progressed in their home country, the impact of transitioning to the host country, the career regression in the host country and the length of time taken to re-establish their lives and careers in the host country. Several participants were awed when they visually saw how far they had regressed in their careers. Cleo, who believed she had a great career in New Zealand, was astonished to find that it had taken her eight years to rebuild her career to the point where she had left it when migrating. The visual graphic of career peaks and troughs was very powerful.

7.4 Practical Contributions

The results of this study demonstrate that skilled migrant women can restart or rebuild their careers in their host country, but it may take several years and there are numerous

difficulties to be overcome. Also, their host country career may not necessarily reflect their home country career. This study adds to the body of knowledge on skilled immigrant women, both as a group and as individuals, which may be of strategic benefit to organisations. Using migration and career theories to explore the career experiences of skilled migrant women can result in a deeper understanding of the meaning of their career experiences, or the interplay of factors which may influence their career direction (Zikic, 2015).

Skilled migrant women have been found to have a more disjointed career trajectory compared to skilled migrant men (Riaño, 2021) and having a better understanding of their career experiences allows for better interventions and policies to be put into place to ensure skills are not wasted or under-utilised. For skilled migrant women, higher wages are not always the predominant factor determining job satisfaction - the social and personal facets of working in an organisation are critical too. While not all participants were able to rebuild their home country careers, many found a more holistic definition of career.

Many participants in this study had moved to New Zealand with no social networks, and for them the workplace relationship was very important. To feel isolated, inferior, or a sense of 'otherness' often led to them leaving the organisation. Likewise, to have their skills, qualifications, and experiences discounted means that they are no longer an asset for the organisation and the host country. While diversity and inclusion policies are increasingly becoming a core part of organisations, the implementation of these is open for interpretation. A critical finding of this study was identifying the gap between organisations saying they wanted diversity, and participants being told they were not a good 'fit' for the role and the organisation.

The in-depth exploration of skilled migrant women's career experiences in this study also provides a framework for understanding skilled migrant outcomes that the host country government can utilise to develop migration policies. This is especially important for skilled

migrant women coming from NESB countries with a vastly different culture and language to their host country. Their lived experiences and challenges are more complex and multi-layered than their peers from ESB countries. Understanding cultural fit is important for government organisations when developing migration policies, particularly those attracting skilled migrants from NESB countries. The economic benefits of fully harnessing the skills and career experiences of skilled migrant women are critical for host country governments, especially those similar to New Zealand where there is a significant brain drain of the highly educated native population. Additionally, most migration policies are developed to fill skill shortages and contribute to the host country economy. It is important that skilled migrants who come into the host country on these selection criteria to be able to then work in these sectors and contribute to the country's economic growth. Skilled migrant women are a source of competitive talent, skills and experience and it is imperative that they be able to work in roles commensurate with their potential to contribute to their host country economy and society.

7.5 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study does have some limitations, and further research could mitigate some of these. First, the study was undertaken in New Zealand, a small country with a small employment market, poor public transport, and isolated from much of the world. The impact these factors had on the career outcomes of the skilled migrant women would be informative. This suggests a need for similar research to be undertaken in other countries, or more usefully, a comparative study to be developed.

Second, although ethnicity nor race were sampling criteria, the sample did not include many people of Chinese origin. This is perhaps important, as Chinese migrants (those born in China) currently represent 5.3% of New Zealand's population (New Zealand Census, 2018). The differences noted between participants from ESB and those from NESB countries found in this study, suggest that there is significant scope for comparative studies.

Third, the majority of the participants in this study are either married or in heterosexual relationships. With increasing awareness of the LGBT+ community, and the additional challenges many of these people confront, future research could consider the migration pathways of a more diverse group. This would be particularly relevant for LGBT+ people from less inclusive cultures.

The cross-sectional nature of this research is the fourth limitation. While the timeline created a chronological visualisation of the unfolding of the skilled migrant women's careers, it does stop at the time of the interview. A longitudinal study, following the migrants from before their migration to well after adjustment to the host country would provide further insights.

Finally, although a qualitative study was appropriate to address the research question and to obtain in-depth information, quantitative methods could be applied to approach a broader research scenario. Two immediate examples would include the testing of the pathway model proposed in this study, and the comparative study suggested above.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview schedule

Interview schedule

Part A: Demographic Information

Participant details

Age:

Ethnicity:

Marital status:

Children: Ages:

Qualifications:

Date of coming to New Zealand: -

Location:

Current employment:

Would you like a report on the findings of this study?

If yes, please provide the best form of contact:

Part B: Pre-Migration Life Career Experiences

Q: Starting with when you left school, can you please detail your career in your home country?

Probe for time away from career to accommodate family or personal needs; time out of the workplace for other reasons (e.g., caring for family members), details about children – number, ages etc (refer to timeline) reasons for any career transitions. Tharmaseelan et al., 2010 human capital van den Bergh & du Plessis 2012 human capital, embedded career identity, structural constraints. KCM balance

Q: What was motivated you in your career?

Q: Did you ever have a situation in which your career progress was ‘blocked’ either by a career plateau or by your own choice in your home country?

KCM - challenge

Q: Were you able to actively balance your family’s needs around your job?

KCM - balance

Q: Did you see any gender issues complicating career progression in the organisations you worked in?

KCM - challenge

Q: What skills and knowledge did you develop in your home country?

Probe for career experience and development, and skills that allowed participant to progress in their career potentially

Q: Can you tell me any local, both work and non-work networks you were part of in your home country?

Probe for their ability to network and build contacts.

Part C: Motivations to Migrate

Q: When did you decide to migrate? What was influencing this decision?

Probe for what the main deciding factor to migrate was. also, wide ranging migration patterns (ghosh,2009; Tharmaseelan, Inkson & Carr, 2010, Beoku-Betts, 2008); Cerdin et al, 2014 civic stratification important, Tharmaseelan et al, 2010 argue not.

Q: What motivated you to migrate to New Zealand specifically?

Probe if New Zealand was participant's first choice to migrate to.

Q: Did you think about your career before deciding to migrate?

KCM balance or challenge?

Probe for how important career was, if the participant believed that they could carry on with their career after migration, any consideration with regards to re-training in the host country.

Part D: Post-Migration Life Career Experiences

Q: Tell me how you found settling into New Zealand when you first came here

Probe for location choice, for family and friends here, migrating alone or with family, settling children (if any).

Syed 2008 – political context, lifestyle host country, organisational practices, societal factors, support networks, identity/agency in host country, resources, economic and human capital in host country; van den Bergh 2012 – structural constraints, social integration, social network and career; Tharmaseelan et al 2010 – social integration, career self-management; Shirmohammadi et al 2018 – host country national level factors, international level factors, organisational level factors, individual level factors, language, education, networks etc

Q: After moving to New Zealand what was your priority?

Probe for whether finding work was important, ensuring children (if any) were enrolled in a good school, or balancing work and life a priority.

KCM – balance

Q: Tell me about your job-hunting process

Probe for understanding of application processes, number of applications before being successful.

Probe to gain more detail about the interview processes they experienced and what they were like.

Shirmohammadi 2018 – individual agency

Q: How well do you think the skills and knowledge you had gained in your home country were adaptable in New Zealand?

Probe for whether these skills were transferable to the New Zealand job market.

Syed 2008 – human capital

Q: Can you tell me about your career experiences in New Zealand, starting from the first role you had after moving here?

Probe for job satisfaction, skill utilisation, challenge and future. Probe for how far expectation met reality – do they think they had a realistic assessment of NZ in terms of career opportunities?

Career experiences in NZ; KCM authenticity or challenge

Q: Have you ever had a situation in which your career progress has been ‘blocked’ either by a career plateau or by your own choice?

KCM - challenge

Q: Do you see any issues which stop you from progressing in your career in New Zealand?

Q: Are you in a workplace that allows you to actively balance your family's needs around your job?

KCM - balance

Probe for whether their current organisation offers wellness programs, flexible working.

Part E: Developing Local Networks

Q: Can you tell me about any local, both work and non-work networks that you have been able to acquire in New Zealand?

Probe for support groups, volunteer activities, hobbies and business associations

Q: Have you been able to utilise any of your contacts or networks from your home country to assist you in your career in New Zealand?

Home country support networks

Information sheet for participants

Skilled migrant women: evolving or devolving careers

A study exploring the unfolding career experiences of skilled migrant women through the lens of career theories.

Researcher introduction

I am Nimeesha Odedra, a PhD candidate from Massey university, New Zealand. I am conducting a research project for my PhD dissertation exploring the career experiences of skilled migrant women in New Zealand under the supervision of Dr. Kaye Thorn and Dr. Kate Blackwood, School of Management, Massey university, New Zealand.

Project description and invitation

My study aims to explore how skilled migrant women's career experiences unfold after they move to their host country using contemporary career theories to guide me. The objectives of the study are:

- ❖ To provide more in-depth understanding and meaning to the career experiences of skilled migrant women.
- ❖ To contribute to existing career theory by exploring the applicability of career theories to the career experiences of skilled migrant women.

The over-arching research question that this study aims to address is:

- ❖ How do the career experiences of skilled migrant women unfold in their host country?

The research will involve interviews with skilled migrant women, focusing on their life careers pre-migration, and post-migration.

Participant identification and recruitment

In order to understand the career experiences of skilled migrant women following migration to New Zealand, I aim to recruit approximately 35 participants for this study. If you meet the following criteria, I would like to speak with you:

- You identify as a woman
- You received a tertiary or professional qualification and /or professional experience prior to migrating to New Zealand

- You have moved to New Zealand with the intention to stay permanently
- You have lived in New Zealand for a minimum of 2 years, and a maximum of 10 years
- You are proficient in English

Project procedures

If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in a face to face semi structured interview to discuss your career experience pre- and post- migration to New Zealand. The interview will be arranged for a time and a place that suits you. The interview will last between 30-45 minutes and will be voice recorded with your permission.

Data management

All data obtained in this study will only be used for this project and not given to anyone else for any other uses. All interview transcripts will be kept confidential. The project findings will be compiled for a PhD dissertation which will be submitted for the final examination. Your real name will not be used in the dissertation and thus your identity will not be compromised. The data will be stored on a password protected drive by the supervisor for five years and then will be permanently destroyed.

Participant's rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- Decline to answer any question.
- Withdraw from the study at any stage during the interview, or up to 2 weeks after the interview.
- Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation.
- Provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used in this study and your identity will be protected through the use of a pseudonym in the dissertation.
- Be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.
- Ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.

Support services available

Samaritans: 0800 726 666 (free service)

Lifeline: 0800 54 33 54 (free service)

Employee assistance programme: 0800 327 669 (this may be free to you through your employer, so you may want to verify this with them. Alternatively, both Samaritans and lifeline are free services).

Project contacts

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This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application NOR 17/52. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Ralph Bathurst, Acting Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, email humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz

Appendix 3: Participant consent form

Participant consent form – individual

Skilled Migrant Women: Evolving or Devolving Careers

A study exploring the unfolding career experiences of skilled migrant women through
the lens of career theories

I have read the information sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the information sheet.

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full name - printed

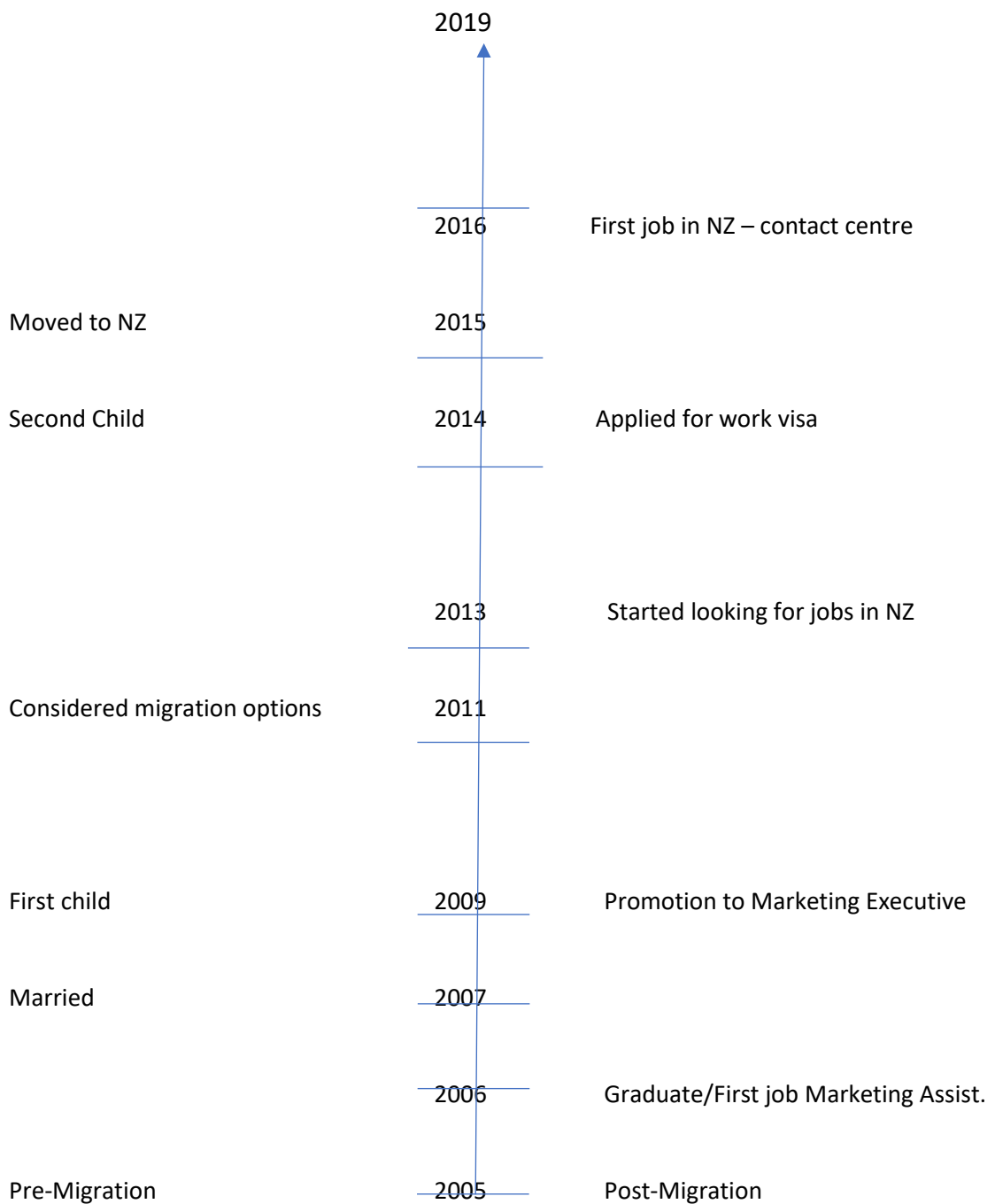
.....

Appendix 4: Timeline Example

Name:

Personal

Career



Appendix 5: Authority for the release of transcripts

Authority for the release of transcripts

Skilled migrant women: evolving or devolving careers

A study exploring the unfolding career experiences of skilled migrant women through the lens of career theories

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

Signature:

Date:

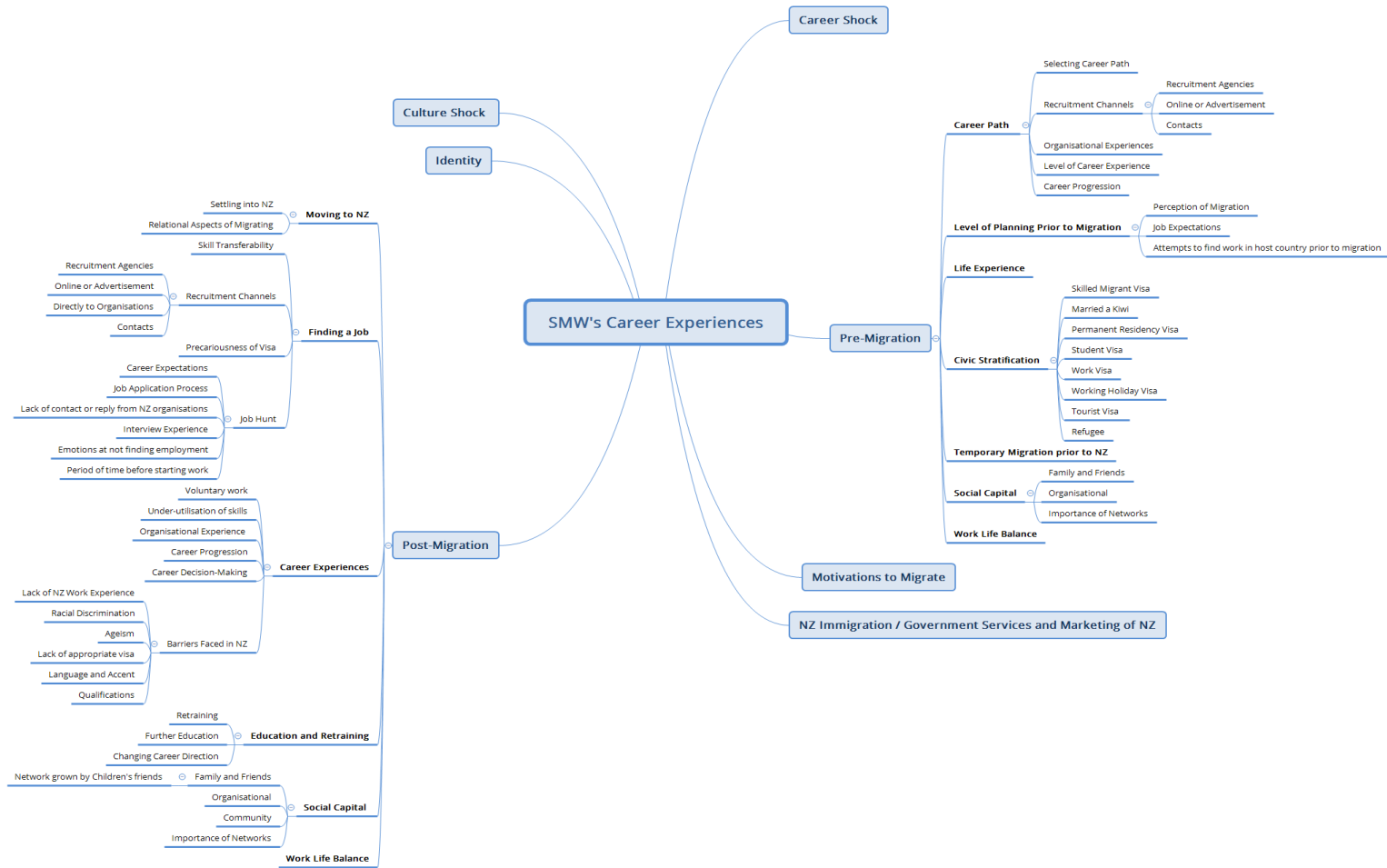
.....

.....

Full name – printed

.....

Appendix 6: NVivo coding framework mind map



| | Motivatin to Migrate | | | | | | Level of Planning | | | | | Perceptions and Expectations | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----------------------|------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--|
| | NZ Lifestyle | | Escape from | | Career Opportunity | | Marriage /Family | | Second hand | Moderate planning | In-depth research | Career Expectations | | | Lifestyle Perception | | | | | | | | |
| | Stress-free Life | Safe environment | Economical constraints | Social / Cultural constraints | Own career | Partners career | Married a Kiwi | Close family | Friends/ Family | Fortuitous job offer | Websites/ Blogs | Planned job/ study | Proactive planning migration journey | Gained residency | Already secured job | No expectations | Expect difficulties but positive | Easy to find a job | No pre perceptions | From movies / websites | From ease of migrating | From previous visit | |
| Alexas | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ariana | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Biyu | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bina | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cyra | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cari | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sara | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Aebha | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hina | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Inna | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Jaya | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mahati | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Valentina | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Man | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Camila | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Helena | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Inis | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Isla | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ona | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tia | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Adriana | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Anna | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dina | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Phoebe | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hadas | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Katharina | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Olivia | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tracey | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Regan | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ursula | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Valena | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Silvia | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Emily | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hazel | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Imogen | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Juno | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Leah | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cleo | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Diana | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Donna | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Appendix 9: Ethics approval



15/11/2017

Dear: Nimeesha Odedra

Re: Ethics Application - NOR 17/52 - Skilled Migrant Women: Evolving or Devolving Careers. A Study Exploring the Unfolding Career experiences of Skilled Migrant Women through the Lens of Career Theories.

Thank you for the above application that was considered by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee:

Ohu Matatika 2 at their meeting held on **Thursday, 26 October 2017**

On behalf of the Committee I am pleased to advise you that the ethics of your application are approved.

Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely



Dr Brian Finch Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and Director (Research Ethics)

