



Turun yliopisto
University of Turku

IDENTIFYING AND DEVELOPING ONE'S EXPERT IDENTITY DURING THE STUDIES

PedaForum, Turku, 15 August 2018

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BACKGROUND

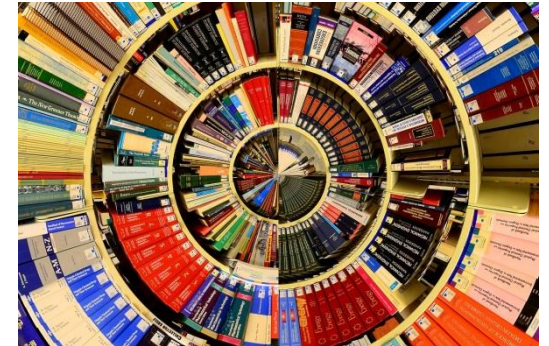
- **Completing an academic degree based only on extrinsic **motivation** is unreasonably laborious.** (Lindblom-Ylänne et al. 2009)
- **It is essential to build a personal interest to the study contents in order to build one's **expertise**.** (Lindblom-Ylänne ym. 2009)
- **Thesis writing** can also be considered as an **identity process** and finding the right kind of a topic has relevance from many perspectives. (Vehviläinen ym. 2009)





PURPOSE AND GOALS

- **THE PURPOSE** was to support students in identifying their intrinsic interests, competences and motivations, and assist in identifying their future expertise (in the bachelor's thesis phase).
- Identifying one's intrinsic interests and a genuinely interesting topic is expected to increase **enthusiastic learning** and **intrinsic motivation for writing**, making it more fluent.
- The benefits of identifying and developing the expert identity are expected to reflect on the students' **motivation, course choices** across the studying trajectory and ultimately, on their **employment**.





THE PHASES OF THE PROJECT

Phase 1: Scrutinising one's expert identity

Phase 2: Choosing the (right) thesis topic





PHASE 1: SCRUTINISING ONE'S EXPERT IDENTITY

(on the basis of own values, self-image, professional interests, goals and dreams)

EXPERT IDENTITY

VALUES

- What issues are important in your life?
- The main principles that you follow in your actions?
- Value-related goals or restrictions related to your future work?

Strengths, development needs, interest:

- 3 strengths
- 3 weaknesses / areas to develop
- 3 special targets of interest

SELF
IMAGE

- Which course has been especially interesting?
- What kind of assignments have you been enthusiastic about in (summer) work / studying?
- What profession-related topic has gained your interest recently?
- List 3-5 news/articles on the following pages that you would like to read through:
 - www.talouselama.fi
 - www.kauppalehti.fi
 - www.hs.fi

DREAMS

- Regarding life in general
- Regarding work
- "Where would you like to see yourself and doing what in 10 years?"

GOALS FOR
FUTURE WORK

- What would you like to accomplish or influence on in your work?
- Interesting industries or operational environments?
- What kind of work is out of question?

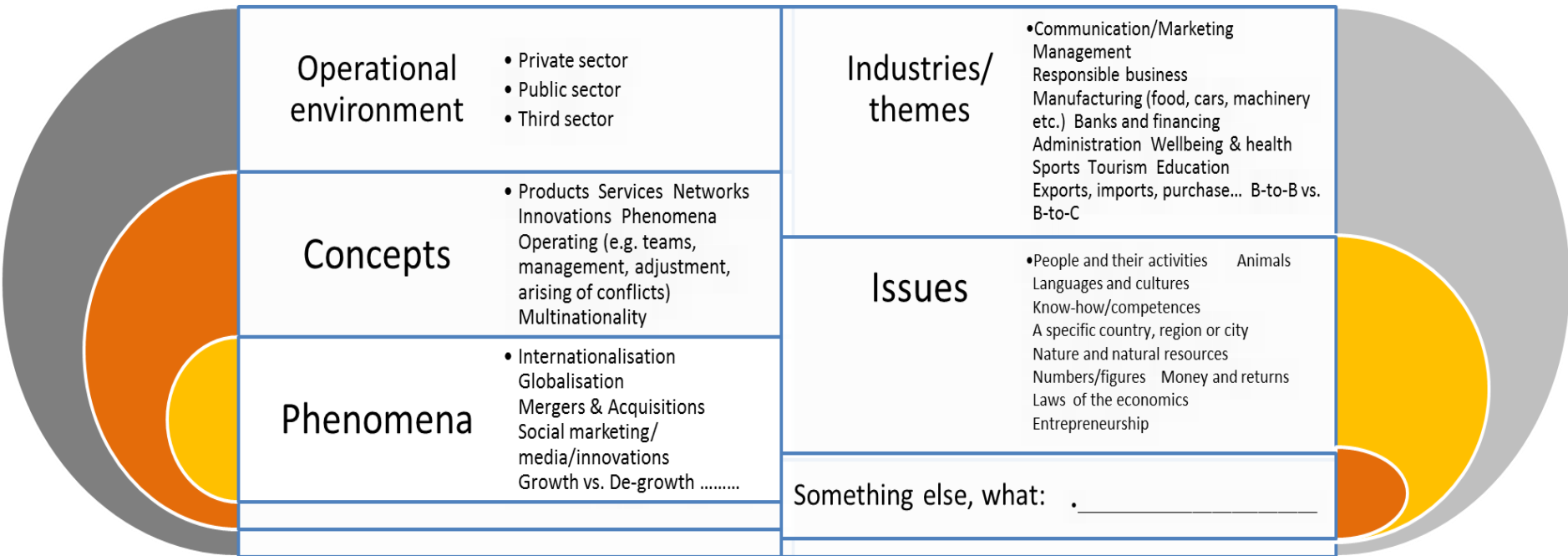
PROFESSIONAL
INTERESTS





PHASE 2: CHOOSING THE (RIGHT) THESIS TOPIC

(with the help of a structured theme map)



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RESULTS AND EVALUATION

- **Usefulness** of the project assignments (students' evaluation on a scale 1-5): **avg: 4,14**
- **Students** found the assignment useful with regards to:
 - the choice and focusing of the thesis topic
 - to developing one's expert identity.
- **Benefits for the supervisor:**
 - Learning to know the students and their thoughts more profoundly
 - Being able to better help the students with the topic choice and with focusing the topic
- **Indirect benefit:**
 - students sense that the supervisor is genuinely interested in their topics and them as individuals → trust development and successful, individual supervision.





RESULTS AND EVALUATION

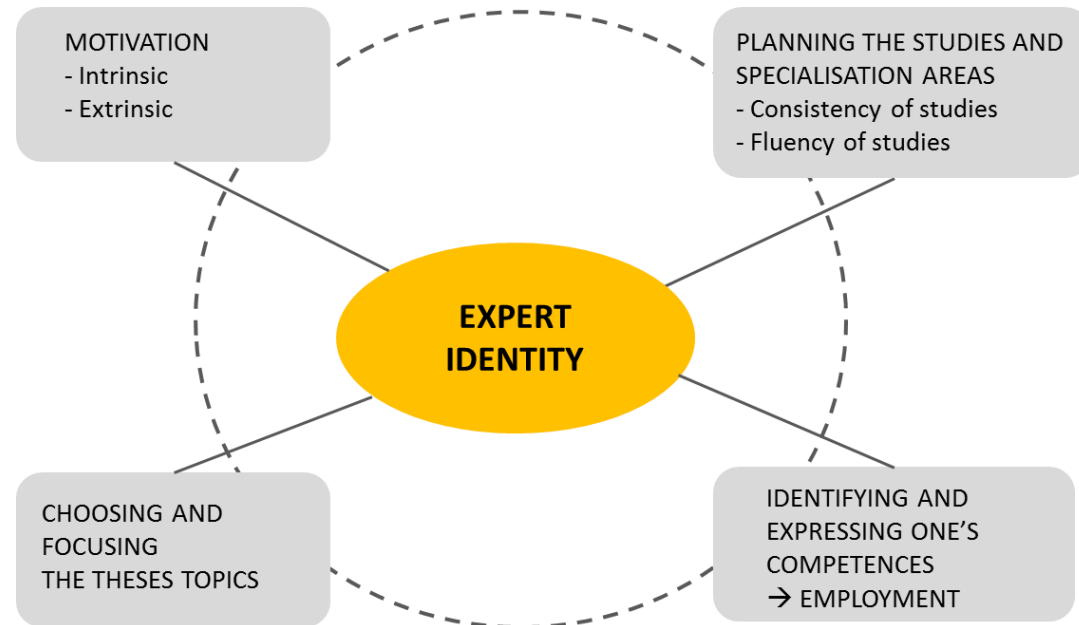
- **Further development** of the structured theme map still needed:
 - wider range of key words (?)
 - special attention on how to instruct students to use the theme map.
- The supervisor must be **”careful”** in how much he/she guides the student on the basis of the identity assignment.
- The expert identity and the students’ future plans could be initially discussed already in the 1st/2nd year **MyTeacher meetings**.



IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Gaining sense of one's expert identity is connected to:

- Motivation
- Successful choice and focusing of the thesis topic
- Structuring one's studies and choosing specialisation areas
- Identifying and expressing one's competences
→ important for future employment



'Expert identity' or 'professional identity'?





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THANK YOU!

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