

International academics in Finland – in the shadow of uncertainty

The Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers

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<p>The academic job market has become increasingly global. Many academics choose to pursue an international career in order to explore new experiences and advance their future career prospects. An international career can be a great opportunity, but international academics may also face several social and professional difficulties when working in another culture.</p> <p>The Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers (FUURT) is a trade union with 7200 members. It is a union for researchers, teachers, library personnel and other academic experts in Finland. As a growing number of both current and potential members are international, the union decided to conduct a survey for its international members. Learning about the challenges that international academics face in working life in Finland enables the union to better respond to the needs of its international members, and raise awareness about this important topic.</p> <p>The survey was conducted as an online questionnaire, which was sent to all 529 members of FUURT, who are not Finnish by nationality. The questionnaire consisted of both quantitative closed-ended questions, which provide generalizable results, and open-ended questions, which allow searching for pattern and developing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. The study is a mixed method research combining qualitative and quantitative methods, which improves the validity and reliability of the results.</p> <p>As the study is examining a highly social phenomenon, it is not possible for the researcher to be totally external to the processes of data collection and data analysis. Aiming towards objectivity but acknowledging the social aspects influencing the process, the research philosophy of the study is pragmatism.</p> <p>Based on the results and findings of the research, the challenges that international academics face in working life in Finland seem to fall under two themes: <i>uncertainty</i>, because of extremely short fixed-term employment contracts and poor job opportunities in Finland, and <i>incommunication</i> because of language barriers, resulting in being excluded from important information and the work community.</p> <p>As the questionnaire was sent to each member of the research population, and the response rate was fairly good at 39 %, the results of the survey are well generalizable to the international members of the union. However, the results might not be directly transferable to other contexts, for example all international academics working in Finland. Thus conducting a similar kind of research with a wider population would be highly recommendable.</p> <p>Based on the feedback received from higher education stakeholders when presenting the results of this study, there is an imminent need for research concentrating on the experiences of international academic personnel. There is much research concerning international students, but the experiences and perceptions of the personnel remain dismissed. That needs to be changed, because international academics are the best source of knowledge when evaluating and developing the internationalization strategies for Finnish higher education.</p>	
Keywords Academic mobility, International academics, Finnish higher education, Internationalization, Self-initiated expatriates	

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1 Introduction

The academic job market has become increasingly global. The expansion of education throughout Asia, the Middle East and South America has increased the demand for academic personnel, and at the same time, internationalization has become a prerequisite for a high quality academic institution. So, in order to get qualified and experienced faculty, and to enhance their status in the academic world, higher education (HE) institutions need to recruit internationally.

The prominent demand for international scholars has accelerated academic mobility. Many academics choose to pursue an international career in order to explore new experiences and advance their future career. In some countries also deteriorating working conditions, such as short-term contracts and lack of opportunities for tenure and promotion, trigger the academics to seek for job opportunities abroad. (Richardson & Zikic 2007)

An international career can be a great opportunity, but it is not always a smooth ride. International academics may face several social and cultural difficulties, and experience loss of stability in their lives. Adapting to a foreign country, new culture and different working methods may be challenging, especially if combined with increasing job insecurity because of short-term contracts and fierce competition for vacancies. That is the darker side of international career – which is often dismissed in public discussion.

The amount of international academics is increasing significantly also in Finland. This demographic change will inevitably transform Finnish higher education policy and the university sector as an employer, and therefore, it is in the interest of The Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers (FUURT) to have thorough understanding of the phenomenon. The union needs to learn about the challenges that international academics experience in Finland in order to raise awareness of the possible defects and help its members to encounter any arising difficulties.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers (FUURT) is a trade union with 7200 members. It is a union for teachers, researchers, library personnel and other academic experts at Finnish universities and research institutions. The amount of international members in FUURT has been multiplied during the recent years. During years 2013-2015, 36 % of new members that joined the union were international. As a growing number of both current and potential members are international researchers, the union needs to address their special needs in order to add value for them. Only by

adapting to the expanded market, it is possible for FUURT to continuously recruit new members and thereby remain its status as an influential and well-known trade union for the academic experts in Finland.

The union aims to make it easier for the international academics to work in Finnish universities and research institutions by ensuring that they get enough information about their employment, and watching that they are treated equally and according to laws and collective agreements. Hopefully, union membership can make the international academics feeling supported and more secure.

In order to enhance the working situation of international academics in Finland, the union needs to have information about their current situation in the universities. This study aims to find out the challenges that international academics face in working life in Finland. Learning about the experiences and possible difficulties enables the union to better respond to the needs of its international members, and to raise public awareness about the topic.

This study is beneficial to the union in particular, but also to Finnish higher education policy-makers in general. The respondents are long-term international expatriates, which makes them the best source of knowledge when it comes to attracting highly skilled migrant academics to Finland. So, the results of this research could be quite useful when developing internationalization strategies for Finnish HE.

1.2 Research question

The strong social aspect of the research topic makes it extremely complex, and therefore, the research question of the thesis is complemented with two sub-questions, which aim to deepen the analysis of the phenomenon. The research question and the sub-questions of the thesis are the following:

What kind of challenges do international academics face in working life in Finland?

- Where do these challenges derive from?
- Are they interrelated?

The main research question has remained constant throughout the thesis work, but the sub-questions evolved during the process. The analysis of the open-ended questions confirmed that the experienced challenges should not be examined separately: a true understanding of the phenomenon requires establishing causalities and connections.

The research process was initiated by determining a few areas, in which international academics might have challenges in. This was done by looking into academic articles about the topic and having a discussion with the union's coordination group for international researchers. Both sources provided valuable background information about the phenomenon.

Based on this preliminary reflection, three propositions were formulated. These propositions were guiding the research work, especially when planning the questionnaire, and therefore, it is important to bring them forth. The aim throughout the thesis is to articulate the process of interpretation and reflection that is done during the research work.

P1: International academics experience uncertainty relating to the risk of losing the job

P2: International academics are not provided with enough administrative information and communications in English.

P3: International academics experience feeling of outsidersness

P2 derived mainly from the discussion with the union's coordination group for international researchers. P1 and P3 are based on the theory of Richardson and Zikic (2007), who have examined the difficulties of international career exploration. They suggest that the greatest challenges for international academics are transience and personal risk. The transient nature of an international career might make it difficult or unattractive to form social relationships, and the absence of a social network may result in feeling of outsidersness.

Losing the current employment position is a significant risk for international academics, because they may need to leave the country unless they are able to find a new employer. That increases the perception of personal risk involving job security and stability. In order to increase job security, many academics have contingency plans, including constantly looking for other job opportunities. (Richardson and Zikic 2007)

1.3 Scope of the research

The survey questionnaire that was sent to the respondents consisted of two separate parts: one part aiming to find out the challenges that the respondents face in working life in Finland, and a second part to examine their views about union membership. The second part was for the union's inner purposes, and was thus delimited outside the scope of this thesis.

The part that is excluded from this thesis had questions about union membership: How the respondents learned about the union, why they decided to join, what membership benefits do they value, and how satisfied are they with the union's services? There were also open-ended questions allowing the respondents to give feedback about the service and membership benefits, and tell about their expectations regarding the union.

Covering both sections would have made the thesis topic too wide, so the research area needed to be delimited. The choice was logical and easy to make, as the views concerning membership are only to the interest of the union, whereas developing an understanding on the experienced challenges can benefit many higher education stakeholders.

It needs to be underlined, that even though the part concerning membership is excluded from the scope of this thesis, it is of utmost importance to the union in developing its services. Whereas the first part creates an understanding about the current needs of the international members, the second part reveals how well the union is currently answering to those needs. The feedback and suggestions give an idea of what kind of support members need from the union. And that information is vital when creating a strategy for the union to better respond to the needs of its international members.

1.4 International aspect

The predominant international aspect of this study makes it necessary to discuss and reason the terminology used in the survey. The terminology needed to be carefully considered, because finding an appropriate term to describe the target group turned out to be quite controversial.

The title of the thesis and the research question both use the term *international academics*. That refers to academics who are not Finnish by their nationality. Referring to these academics as *foreign* is not commonly considered acceptable. Hoffman (2005) is one of the critiques of the term, arguing that people who intend to stay permanently in Finland or perhaps have Finnish citizenship should not be referred to as *foreign*.

By definition, according to various dictionaries, a foreigner is someone who comes from, or is born in, another country. The focus is on the origin, and thus the critique proposed by Hoffman seems irrelevant. In the context of this thesis, the term *foreign* would have been particularly pertinent, because the non-Finnish origin of the participants is the very essence of the research.

FUURT has made an official decision to use the term *international members* to describe the members who are not Finnish by their nationality. Also, the union's coordination group for international researchers recommended to use the term *international*. As the thesis is a case study for FUURT, it was a justifiable and fair decision to use the term *international academics* throughout the survey.

However, *international* is not an incisive term in this context for a couple of reasons. Firstly, the term is too wide, covering not only the non-Finnish academics working in Finland, but also all the Finnish academics who have professional activities outside Finland. Secondly, academic mobility could be considered to be more *transnational* than international. That is because transnational refers to interconnectivity between people regardless of country boundaries, whereas international refers to relationships between countries.

Most participants of the target group of this research are expatriates or migrants. However, there might also be people who have lived practically their whole life in Finland. Still, the thesis talks about *self-initiated expatriates* and *expatriate adjustment*, because that terminology fits the majority. It is a compromise, because in this context, there is no accurate conceptual framework, which could define all the participants.

1.5 The structure of the thesis

This first chapter of the thesis was an introduction to the topic, reasoning the purpose of the study, stating the research question, and explaining key terminology. It introduced the Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers and shortly described the current situation when it comes to internationalization of Finnish higher education.

The next chapter presents the existing theoretical framework about academic mobility. It discusses the motives and challenges of internationalization of higher education and introduces theory concerning the adjustment of self-initiated expatriates. This background theory is then reflected and transformed into a conceptual framework, presented in chapter 3. The conceptual framework aims to describe how the researcher interprets expatriate adjustment, thus increasing the transparency of the research process.

Chapter 4 introduces the research methodology and methods. It gives a detailed description of the data collection methods and discusses the validity and reliability of the survey. The questionnaire and the cover letter are shown in the appendices.

The results of the quantitative data analysis are presented in chapter 5, and the findings of the qualitative data analysis are introduced in chapter 6. The quantitative results are presented mostly in tables and figures, which makes it easier to read and understand the results. The qualitative questions are analyzed by categorizing the responses, and the report describes the most important findings and their interconnectedness. The responses to the qualitative questions are all shown in the appendices.

Chapter 7 aims to combine the quantitative and qualitative survey results with the theory from the literature review, and evaluates the propositions made in the beginning of the research process. It discusses the importance of organizational support, and the potential role of the union, and assesses the internationalization strategy of Finnish higher education in the light of the survey results. This is followed by a conclusion, chapter 8, which reviews the importance and success of this research, and sums up the very essential of the findings: What needs to be improved?

2 Literature review

This theory part introduces existing theoretical framework about academic mobility. The literature review was carried out throughout the thesis process, in order to get a comprehensive view of the current background theory about the topic. Research findings can then be discussed against the existing theories thereby confirming, contrasting or complementing previous information.

Chapter 2.1 introduces the driving forces behind internationalization of higher education. It is vital to realise the contradicting motives and pressures that universities struggle with, because it helps to develop an understanding of the challenging environment in which expatriate academics are working. Chapter 2.2 identifies different types of academic expatriation, and discusses their current significance in Finnish context. Chapter 2.3 poses some criticism of Finland's current HE internationalization strategy, suggesting an obvious need for further research in this field. Chapter 2.4 concentrates on the factors facilitating cross-cultural adjustment of self-initiated expatriates. This theory has been in a major role when formulating the research question and planning the survey questionnaire.

2.1 Internationalization of higher education: effectiveness vs. intellectuality

Internationalization of higher education is fluctuating between two quite opposite objectives: economic prosperity and intercultural understanding. Is it a means to generate income through providing research and teaching services to as many 'clients' as possible? Or is it aiming to truly advance human knowledge and intercultural understanding? (Lasagabaster, Cots & Mancho-Barés 2013)

Terri Kim (2009) argues that internationalization of higher education is often led by economic interests: gaining global market share of the student and research markets in order to gain a better position within the world knowledge economy. In this neo-liberal view, the universities are evaluated by their socio-economic usefulness. Education is seen as an investment in human capital, which will enhance competitiveness and bring rewards to corporations and the national economy (Lasagabaster et al. 2013).

The neo-liberal education policies promote both internal and external competition in order to improve institutional efficiency (Lasagabaster et al. 2013). As a result, the universities have adopted corporatist governance and management models, which have multiplied the amount of short-term contracts and changed the nature of the academic profession altogether (Kim 2009).

University academics are increasingly evaluated through a quantitative business-driven scale, where they are measured in terms of productivity in their own research, and good learning outcomes and degree of satisfaction of the students (Kim 2009). The amount of publications seems to be more important than the quality of them. Effectiveness is everything, and the intellectual mission of higher education is fading away.

At its best, internationalization of higher education could bring interculturality: mutual understanding and interaction between people from various cultural groups, which then leads to innovation processes and new forms of expression. A transnational academic can be seen as a 'stranger', who can approach matters with objectivity, because there are no binds by the established tendencies of the group. This combination of distance and nearness creates intellectual advantage. (Kim 2009)

But in order for interculturality to flourish, the universities need to embrace it. They need to plan and organize their operations with interculturality in mind. Therefore, Hoffman (2003) suggests that internationalization efforts of the university should be assessed through a rarely cited, yet very practical source of information: non-native faculty members – the ones who do not share the majority cultural perspective.

2.2 Different types of academic expatriation

Finland is experiencing significant demographic changes because of ageing population and massive retirements. The policy-makers have explicitly expressed a need to attract highly skilled migrant labour to Finland in general, and the universities in particular.

There are two types of expatriate academics: lateral entrants with qualifications for an open position, who enter HE directly by crossing an international boarder; and vertical entrants without qualifications to directly enter the HE system, who make the transition from student to faculty (Hoffman 2007, 21).

The policy-makers have already focused their attention to vertical entrants: International degree students are viewed as potential academic labour force. In order to ensure that the universities delve into attracting international students, the government has linked the university financing partly to the amount of international graduates. (Hoffman 2007, 37)

However, in this era of fierce global competition for highly skilled academics, both lateral and vertical entrants are needed in order to maintain the quality of Finnish HE and research. Having merely vertical entrants is not sufficient to offset the shortage of faculty:

Finland needs academic experts who are competent now. There needs to be lateral entrance of highly skilled migrant academic personnel. (Hoffman 2007, 37)

According to Hoffman (2007, 37), research and policy efforts concerning academic mobility mainly concentrate on transient exchange, degree students and early stage researcher mobility. Long-term academic mobility seems to be forgotten, even though it has the strongest implication to Finnish HE. That is because the ones who are staying in Finland permanently or for a long time are the ones who actually have an impact in the campus.

2.3 The voice of the internationals

Hoffman (2008) argues that the discussions about the migration of academic personnel is very limited. The policy speeches and reports praise the benefits of academic mobility, but the challenges are often left unmentioned. It seems that the desire for highly skilled migrant academics has outpaced the capacity of universities to create a functioning international campus and tackle the issues, which arise when the amount of migrant personnel increases.

One major problem in planning the internationalization strategy of Finnish higher education (HE) is that the views of non-native faculty is not taken into consideration. The discussion about attracting foreign academic personnel seems to be a monocultural dialogue amongst stakeholders, and unfortunately many policy-makers are not even aware of this missing perspective (Hoffman 2007, 18).

HE institutions need to realize that managing expatriate academics becomes more complex and needs to be more strategic (Richardson & Zikic 2007). The success or failure of any university policy cannot be fully explained without taking into account the attitudes of the members of the academic community (Lasagabaster et al. 2013).

Hoffman (2007, 18) underlines that the experiences of non-native faculty could provide a valuable glimpse into the social dynamics in the campus. He suggests that migrant and expatriate academics should be involved in policymaking processes, development projects and working groups, as they possess a lot of information which is useful, but yet unknown to many higher education policy makers. They can communicate the push and pull factors of working in the campus, and give enlightened ideas on how to attract more international faculty. (Hoffman 2004)

Kim (2009) calls for studies that concentrate on the experiences of international academic personnel. According to her, the research on the internationalization of higher education

currently concentrates mainly on international students. Also Hoffman (2008) sees an imminent need for studies, which introduce the experiences and perceptions of migrant academics, and embrace critical views from the participants who really are the most qualified to articulate the challenges of academic mobility.

2.4 Adjustment of self-initiated expatriates

When looking into the cross-cultural adjustment of international academics, it is important to recognize the solitary nature of their expatriation. International academics have independently decided to leave to work abroad. There is no home organization to which to lean on. Richardson and McKenna (2002) use the term self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) to describe those who independently, without organizational support, seek for overseas career.

Most of the current literature on expatriation focuses on organizational expatriates, who have been assigned to a foreign location by their parent companies. There is much less research on self-initiated expatriates (SIEs). That is unfortunate, as their experiences of expatriation might be totally different. This is because whereas assigned expatriates are supported by their home organizations, SIEs lack this kind of safety harness altogether. That puts them in a more vulnerable position and is likely to cause insecurity and make adjustment more difficult. (Richardson & McKenna 2002)

Academic mobility is self-initiated, so when it comes to cross-cultural adjustment, the literature and studies about traditional organizational expatriates is not directly applicable. Therefore, the literature review for this study has concentrated on finding theory particularly concerning academic expatriates. That way it can be ensured that the background theory is relevant concerning the target group of this study.

Bhatti, Battour and Ismail (2013) have studied scholars in Malaysian universities in order to determine factors that influence expatriates' adjustment and job performance. As their research targets foreign scholars working in universities, the results provide valuable insights about cross-cultural adjustment of SIEs.

According to the research, expatriate adjustment is influenced by individual, organizational, and social level factors. The researchers name five factors that they found to have a positive influence on expatriate adjustment: 1) self-efficacy, 2) cultural sensitivity, 3) previous international experience, 4) social network, and 5) direct and indirect organizational support. The following section introduces these factors in more detail, linking them with theories from other academic sources.

Self-efficacy

According to Bhatti et al. (2013) expatriate interaction and adjustment is positively influenced by self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to confidence in one's own ability to complete tasks and achieve goals, which leads to better performance. Individuals with high self-efficacy take more initiative and make an effort to accomplish their goals and solve problems. This enthusiasm and persistence is likely to help expatriates to better adjust in the host country and extend their social network. (Bhatti et al. 2013)

Cao, Hirschi and Deller (2013) describe a very similar characteristic as a facilitator for cross-cultural adjustment, but instead of self-efficacy, they use the term protean career attitude. Individuals with protean career attitudes are self-directed and values-driven, which means that they have an independent role in managing their own development and they are targeting subjective career success.

Self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) with a protean career attitude have more self-directed activities in the host country. They interact with the cultural environment, update their social behavior and thinking patterns, and consequently, adjust better to the host country culture. Being well adjusted allows them to deallocate their emotional, cognitive and interpersonal resources to pursue other personal goals, such as career advancement or general wellbeing, which increases perceived satisfaction. (Cao et al. 2013)

Cultural sensitivity and previous international experience

Cultural sensitivity is a personal characteristic for understanding and appreciating cultural differences. Individuals with cultural sensitivity can deal with the complexity of cultural challenges and develop a global mind-set. This will help them to adjust to their host country and build social relationships. (Bhatti et al. 2013)

Also previous international experience can help expatriates to adjust to a new country. Individuals with previous international experience can use their past knowledge to handle different critical situations, and they are also more likely to develop better interaction with host country nationals. (Bhatti et al. 2013)

On the other hand, Richardson and Zikic (2007) suggest that individuals who have lots of previous international experience can find it emotionally exhausting to create relationships. This might be the case for expatriates who have had many short employments in different countries. A decision to not even try to form relationships helps to avoid the disappointment of losing the friends later when it is time to leave again.

Social networks

Social networks can play a major role in helping expatriates to face the new environment. There are two main functions how social networks affect expatriate adjustment: information and social support. (Li & Rothstein 2009)

Social networks can help expatriates to get information not only about the host country culture and the way of life, but also about the job and the organization (Bhatti et al. 2013). Host country nationals are familiar with local circumstances, and can therefore give useful advice relating to regulations and the legal system, and provide valuable information about the culture, values, customs and communication style. On an organizational level, social networks can allow access to strategic information and task advice, and help the expatriate to conform to the organization's corporate culture. (Li & Rothstein 2009)

Social support can prevent stress and uncertainty in unfamiliar situations. It gives a sense of belonging and being cared for, thus reducing feelings of loneliness and strangeness. Social support may thus help expatriates to establish self-esteem and self-identification. (Li & Rothstein 2009)

According to the study of Li and Rothstein (2009) social networks were found to have positive effects on expatriates' job satisfaction and job performance. Therefore, they recommend that organizations should create opportunities for expatriates to socialize with host country nationals. They also present an idea that organizations could design programs to encourage their host country employees to mentor and interact with the expatriates in order to support their adjustment.

Organizational support

It is important that organizations recognize their role in supporting their non-native employees. Expatriates need informational support to understand the local culture, cooperation to facilitate work adjustment, and emotional support to facilitate interaction and reduce the level of stress (Bhatti et al. 2013). Organizational support can be e.g. cross-cultural training, language courses, opportunities to interact with host country nationals or assistance with housing or schooling for children. (Kraimer, Wayne & Jaworski 2001)

The provided resources and support measures allow the expatriate to fully concentrate on the work, and create a feeling of being appreciated. Kraimer et al. (2001) use the term *perceived* organizational support, in order to pay attention to the subjective side of it.

Perceived organizational support refers to the employees' beliefs about how much the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being.

Kraimer et al. (2001) concluded that organizational support has direct effects on expatriate adjustment. In particular, the authors underline the importance of organizations providing language training and social opportunities for the expatriates to interact with host country nationals. Their findings reveal that expatriates who are comfortable interacting with the nationals are more adjusted to the country in general.

3 Conceptual framework

This conceptual framework represents the researcher's synthesis of the literature concerning adjustment of self-initiated expatriates. It describes the researcher's understanding of how the particular variables connect with each other. This is done by creating a model, which visualizes the factors facilitating the adjustment of self-initiated expatriates (figure 1).

The model helps to perceive how adjustment depends on a variety of individual factors, organizational factors and social factors, which are all somehow interconnected. The figure demonstrates how improvement in one factor may have an impact on many other areas, which all facilitate adjustment. For example, organizational support is likely to improve social networks, career satisfaction, motivation and feeling of security.



Figure 1. Factors affecting expatriate adjustment

The model is the end product of a sense-making process, aiming to connect the information and theories from the literature review into a coherent and understandable package. It reveals how the researcher interprets expatriate adjustment, so presenting it is important in order to increase the transparency of the research process.

This figure is the key element in the planning process of the survey questionnaire. The questions of the survey were designed to cover all the themes visualized in the model. This way the questionnaire aims to not only answer the research question about what the challenges are, but it also contributes to the sub-questions: Where do the challenges derive from and are they interrelated?

4 Research methodology and methods

This chapter presents the research methodology and methods of the thesis. The aim is to explain and assess the data collection process of the survey.

Chapter 4.1 introduces the research philosophy and approach. Chapter 4.2 provides a detailed description on what the respondents were asked and how the data was collected, and chapter 4.3 discusses the validity and reliability of the survey.

4.1 Research methodology

The study aims to develop generalizable results, which requires structured methodology. It is important to minimize researcher bias to increase objectivity. However, as the study is examining a highly social phenomenon, it is not possible for the researcher to be totally external to the processes of data collection and data analysis. The subjective meanings and values of the researcher will have an effect on the question setting and interpretation. In addition, there are a few open-ended questions, the analysis of which is even more vulnerable to the subjectivity of the researcher.

Aiming towards objectivity but acknowledging the social aspects influencing the process, the research philosophy of this study is pragmatism. The researcher adopts both objective and subjective points of view and integrates different perspectives when interpreting the data (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill 2009, 119). That reduces the weaknesses linked to mono methods, improves the validity and reliability of the results, and enriches the comprehension of the studied phenomenon. (Bentahar & Cameron 2015).

The research strategy is a survey research based on mixed methodological approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods. In a mixed method research the status of each method depends on the weight that the researcher gives to them during the research process. (Bentahar & Cameron 2015) As the epistemological positioning of this research is pragmatism, both quantitative and qualitative methods are equally weighted in the data analysis and the diffusion of results.

In this mixed-method study the research approach is both deductive and inductive. In the quantitative part of the survey the research approach is deductive: Propositions were created based on existing theory and previous knowledge, and the survey questions were created in order to test the propositions. The qualitative part of the survey on the other hand brings an inductive approach to create theory. The open-ended questions allow the researcher to search for pattern and develop empirical generalizations.

4.2 Data collection methods

The population of the survey is the international members of FUURT, i.e. the members who are not Finnish by nationality. The questionnaire was sent to all 529 international members of the union and the response rate was 39 %.

The data collection method was an on-line survey, which is a fast and cost-efficient way to reach large amount of respondents. The survey was conducted using electronic survey tool Webropol, and the invitation to participate the survey (appendix 1) was send by e-mail. In order to increase the response rate, there was a lottery price, an *iPad Air*, as an incentive.

The e-mail addresses were generated from the membership register of the union. There is a possibility, that some non-Finnish members were excluded from the extraction, if their nationality was not recorded to the register. In order to reach the missing members of the population, there was an announcement about the survey in the union magazine *Acatiimi*, asking international members to contact the researcher in case they have not yet received an invitation to participate the survey.

The questionnaire was open from 8th of December 2014 until 8th of January 2015, and a reminder was sent for the ones that had not yet answered by 5th of January. It was important, that the questionnaire was open for a whole month, because many of the international researchers might be visiting home for the Christmas holidays. A longer time frame to answer the questionnaire made it possible to get a good response rate, thereby increasing the reliability of the results.

The questionnaire (appendix 2) was carefully planned and pretested in order to ensure that the questions are understandable and the on-line form easy to fill in. As the research topic is about perceptions and experiences, Likert-scales were used a lot. That is because they provide measurable and easily understandable information about opinions.

The questions of the survey can be categorized into three sections. The first section consisted on background questions about the respondent's demographics, education, prior international experience and motives to come to and stay in Finland.

The second section of the questionnaire related to the respondent's situation in working life in Finland. There were questions about current employer, work position, type of employment, working hours, work satisfaction and employer support.

The third section concentrated on the challenges that the respondents have experienced in working life in Finland. There is an open-ended question about the topic, allowing the respondents to express themselves freely, and a set of quantitative questions regarding social adjustment, perceived risks and possible difficulties with bureaucracy.

The majority of the questions are closed-ended, which allows getting generalizable results. However, closed-ended questions can be restricting, as they are formulated based on the researcher's previous knowledge and hypotheses. Thus they were complemented with a few open-ended questions, which allow the respondents to express their thoughts and feelings freely. That enables the researcher to discover new insights and to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

4.3 Validity and reliability of the survey

The research process is described in detail in order to improve the validity of the study. There is a description of the data collection and the data processing, as well as the interpretation and reflection done during the research process. The researcher is aware of possible personal assumptions and biases, so the impact of social context and personality in the research are taken into consideration and reflected throughout the report.

A questionnaire ensures anonymity among the respondents, and also, compared to interviews, eliminates bias due to phrasing questions differently with different respondents. The questionnaire was carefully planned and pretested to ensure that the questions are understandable, unambiguous and unbiased.

Quantitative research method increases the generalizability of the results. The target population of the survey is the international members of FUURT, and the questionnaire was sent to each member of the research population. As the response rate was fairly good at 39 %, the results are well generalizable to the whole population. However, the results might not be directly transferable to other contexts, for example all international academics working in Finland.

5 The results of the quantitative data analysis

This chapter presents the results of the quantitative data analysis. The data were analysed using SPSS analytics software and Excel spreadsheet application. Correlations were tested using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient and Kruskal-Wallis test.

The percentages are presented without decimals in order to maintain readability. For that reason, the percentages in tables or figures do not always add up to exactly 100 %.

5.1 Background information

In the first section of the questionnaire, there were background questions about the respondent's age, gender, nationality, family situation, education and prior international experience. There were also questions regarding the time lived in Finland, and the intention to stay in Finland.

This background information gives a good picture of the demographics of the international members, and the permanence of their stay in Finland. The analysis also provides valuable information relating to the ongoing debate of attracting international students to Finland and estimating their contribution to the Finnish society.

Demographics

Table 1 shows the respondents' marital status and the number of children. The majority of the respondents (68 %) are married or in a domestic partnership, and 44 % of the ones who are in a partnership have a Finnish spouse.

Table 1. Marital status and number of under 18-year-old children in the household

	Frequency	Nr of children
Married or domestic partnership	138	0,9
Single, never married	56	0,0
Divorced	9	0,1

60 % of the respondents are male and 40 % female. That corresponds well with the statistics of the research population, i.e. all international members of the union, which is 56 % male and 44 % female (FUURT 2015).

The gender distribution of the international members is just the opposite to the gender distribution of all union members, which is 40 % men and 60 % women. (FUURT 2015) This difference can be explained partly by examining the statistics of the Finnish

universities provided by the Finnish educational administration. According to the statistics, out of all teaching and research personnel the proportion of men is 57 %, but out of the international personnel the percentage is 68 %, which is clearly higher (Vipunen 2015).

Table 2 compares the age distribution of the respondents, all international members and all union members. The age distribution of the survey respondents corresponds extremely well with the age distribution of all international members. So, all in all the sample of respondents represents the whole population demographically well.

Table 2. Age distribution

	Respondents N=204	International members N=524 (Dec 2014)	All union members N=6945 (Oct 2015)
Under 30	19 %	18 %	5 %
30-39	61 %	57 %	32 %
40-49	15 %	18 %	28 %
50-59	5 %	5 %	21 %
60 or older	0 %	1 %	14 %

Figure 2 illustrates the differences in the age distribution of the international members compared to all union members. The comparison shows that the age distribution of the international members is skewed to the right, with a strong peak at the age category of 30–39, whereas the age distribution of all union members is flatter with a larger spread. Only 24 % of the international members are over 40 years old, which is significantly low compared to all union members, of which as much as 63 % are over 40 years old.

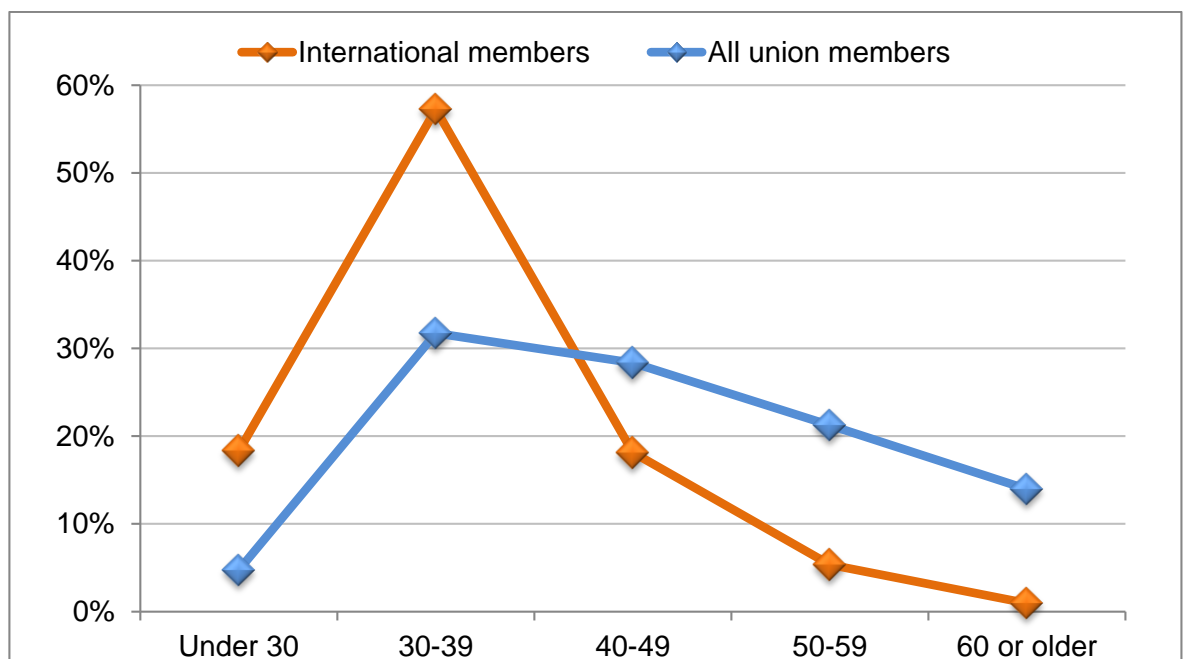


Figure 2. Age distribution of international members (N=524, Dec 2014) compared to all union members (N=6945, Oct 2015)

56 % of the respondents have Doctoral Degree and 40 % have Master's Degree. The degrees of the remaining respondents are Licensiate (2 %), Bachelor (1 %) and other education (1 %).

The respondents' background and plans to stay in Finland

The respondents have lived in Finland on average 5,2 years (=median), as seen in Table 3. The mean is 6,4 years, but in this case the mean is not the most accurate way to describe the average, as the distribution is skewed to the right, and has outliers that apparently increase the mean.

Table 3. The time lived in Finland in years (N=200)

Mean		6,4
Percentiles	25	3,3
	50	5,2
	75	8,0

The respondents were asked to estimate how long they plan to stay in Finland. The results, which are illustrated in Figure 3, show unambiguously that most of the respondents have long-term plans in Finland. Only 4 % of the respondents plan to stay less than a year, and a remarkable 56 % of the respondents do not have plans to move out of Finland at all.

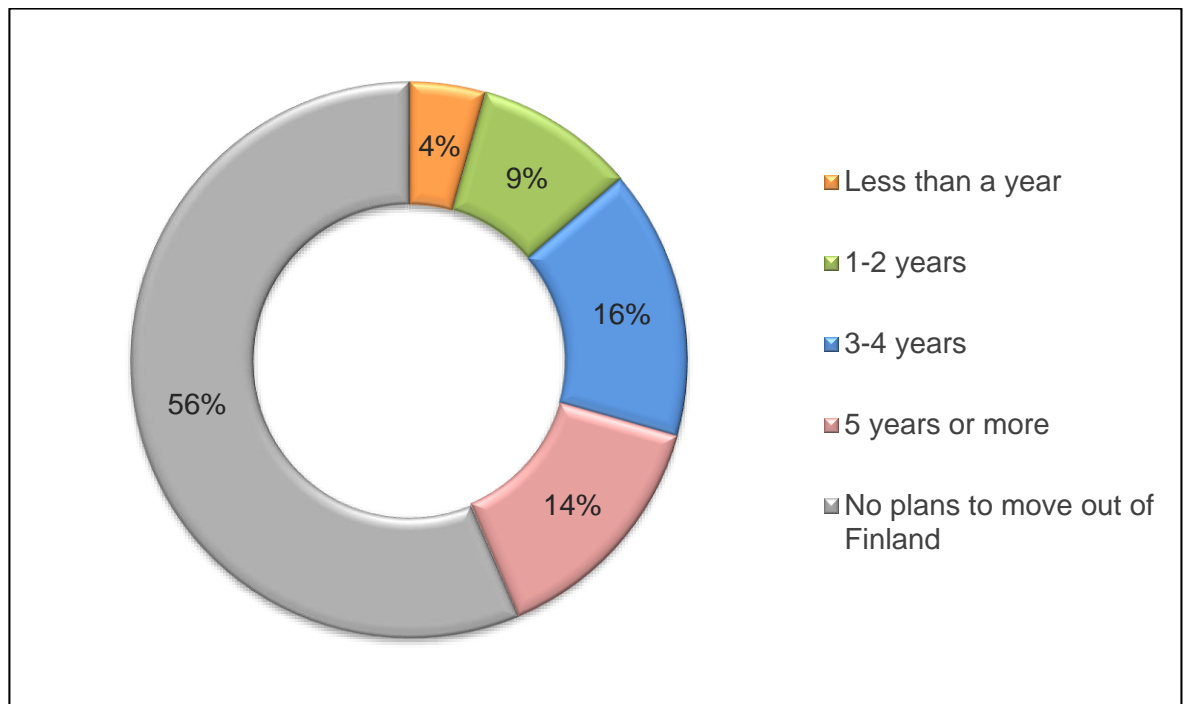


Figure 3. The time planned to stay in Finland (N=204)

It is important to notice that this result concerns specifically the international members of the union, and it cannot be directly generalized into all international academics in Finland. This is because the ones who have an intention to stay longer or permanently in Finland might be more likely to join the union. Therefore, for all the international academics in Finland, the intended time to stay in the country is likely to be shorter.

Nationality and Finnish Citizenship

Figure 4 presents the origin of the respondents by continents. Most of the respondents (61 %) are from Europe and almost a quarter (24 %) from Asia. The rest of the respondents are from Africa (6 %), North America (6 %), South America (3 %) and Australia (1 %).

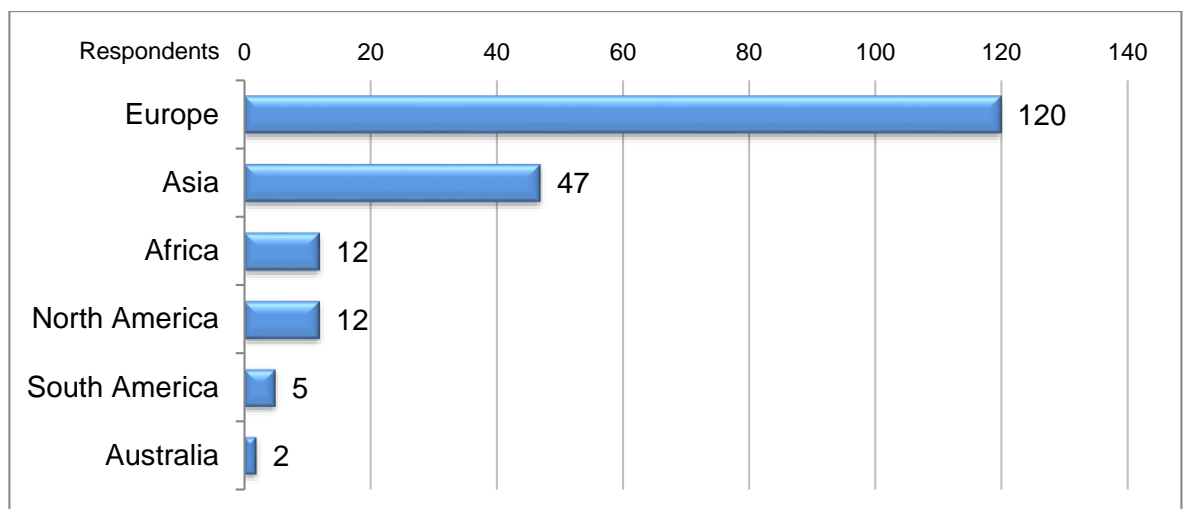


Figure 4. The origin of the respondents by continents (N=198)

Only 27 respondents (13 %) have Finnish citizenship. That is rather surprising, when taking into consideration that so many respondents intend to stay in Finland permanently. Out of the 115 respondents who replied that they do not have plans to move out of Finland, 92 respondents (80 %) do not have Finnish citizenship. Even having a Finnish spouse does not encourage applying for citizenship, as out of the 61 respondents who have a Finnish spouse, 49 respondents (80 %) do not have Finnish citizenship.

Primary reason to move to Finland

The respondents were asked to name what was the primary reason for them to move to Finland. 43 % of the respondents came to work on a specific post and 36 % came to study. 17 % came for family reasons, 2 % to look for a job and 2 % for some other reason.

Figure 5 illustrates the years lived in Finland and the years being either employed or on a grant for subgroups of respondents categorized by the primary reason to come to Finland. The size of each bubble describes the relative size of the subgroup in question.

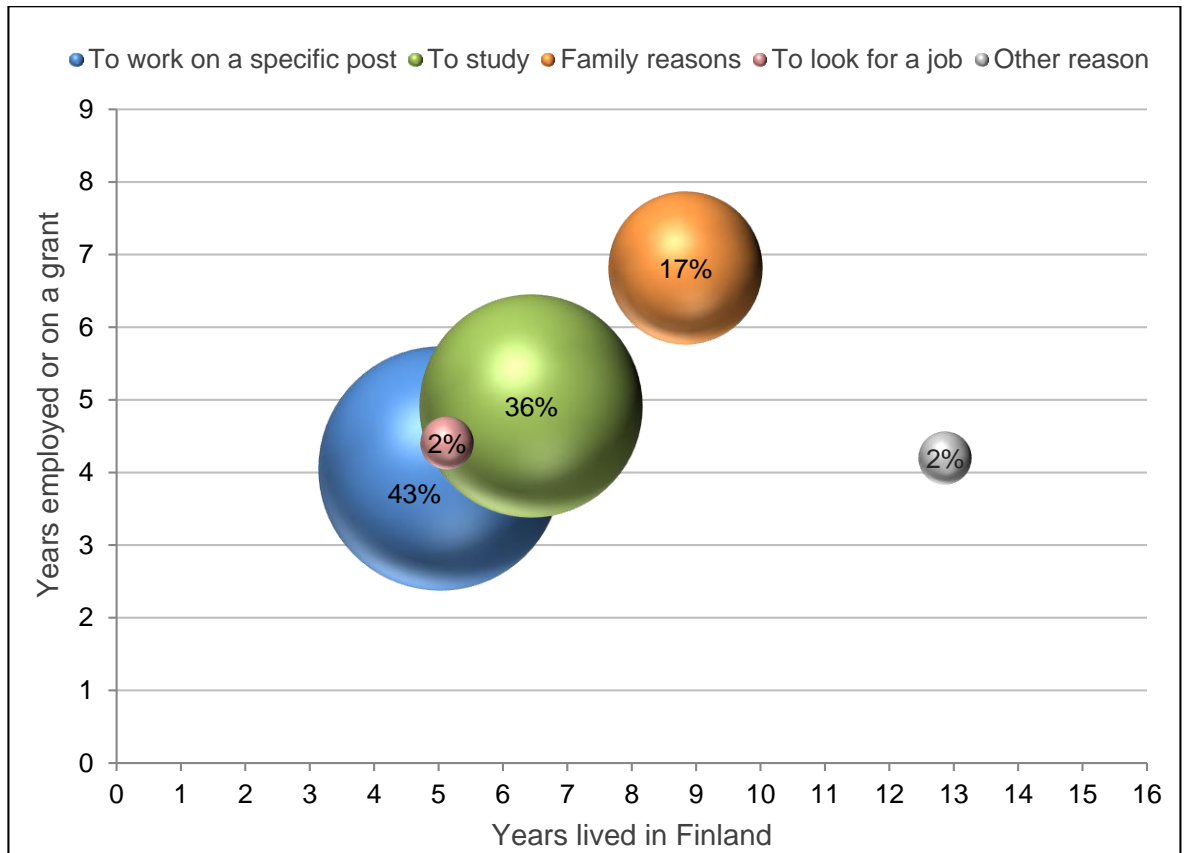


Figure 5. Years lived in Finland and years being employed or on a grant in Finland for subgroups categorized by the primary reason to move to Finland (N=200)

The bubble chart illustrates that the amount of respondents who originally came to Finland to study almost corresponds to the amount of respondents who came to work on a specific post. Interestingly, the chart also demonstrates that the respondents, who came to study, have actually lived in Finland slightly longer than the ones who came to work, and they also have spent more time employed or on a grant.

Noticing that so many respondents originally came to Finland to study is meaningful, because the Finnish government is setting a tuition fee for students coming from outside the EU/EEA area. 64 % of the respondents who originally came to Finland to study are from countries outside the EU/EEA area, representing 23 % of all the respondents. They have lived in Finland on average 5,7 years (=mean) and been employed or on a grant for 3,9 years (=mean).

Prior international experience

56 % of the respondents have lived or worked in other countries outside their home country before they came to Finland. Most of the respondents who have prior international experience (62 %) have only been in one country before coming to Finland. 20 % have been in two countries, 15 % in three countries, and a couple of respondents have international experience from four or five countries before they came to Finland.

In 49 % of the previous international experience, the length of the stay was under a year. 22 % were for 1-2 years and 11 % for 3-4 years. In 19 % of the previous international experience the duration of the stay was 5 years or more.

When looking at the countries in which the respondents have lived before they came to Finland, 74 % are European countries. The most common individual countries are United Kingdom (14 %), Germany (12 %) and United States (9 %). 4 % of the previous international experience was in Finland.

5.2 Working life

The second set of questions aimed to map international academics' situation in working life in Finland. The respondents were asked about their current employer, work position, type of employment, working hours and overtime work. There were also Likert scale questions about work satisfaction and a set of questions about employer support to international employees.

In the analysis, the results are compared to figures from a membership survey, that was conducted in 2013 to all the members of the union in Finnish. The baseline makes it possible to find out whether the working conditions of the international academics are somehow different compared to Finnish nationals.

Background in the Finnish labour market

The respondents were asked to estimate the combined length of the periods during which they have been employed, on a grant, unemployed, student and on a family leave while in Finland. 180 respondents (88 %) have been employed while in Finland, and the mean for the time being employed is 4,1 years. 99 respondents (48 %) have been on a grant, with a mean of 2,6 years. 84 respondents (41 %) have been a student (mean 3,2 years), 52 respondents (25 %) have been unemployed (mean 1,2 years), and 21 respondents (10 %) have been on a family leave (mean 1,1 years). The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The statuses that the respondents have had while in Finland and the mean of the combined length of the periods for each status

	N	Years
Employed	180	4,1
On a grant	99	2,6
Student	84	3,2
Unemployed	52	1,2
On a family leave	21	1,1

The respondents were also asked to estimate the amount of separate working contracts or separate grants they have had during their time in Finland. Alarming, the research results reveal that the respondents, who have been employed, have had on average 1,0 separate working contracts a year, and the respondents who have been on a grant have had 1,4 separate grants a year. Figure 6 shows a scatter diagram for the amount of working contracts and grants on a timeline, which represents either the time being employed or the time being on a grant.

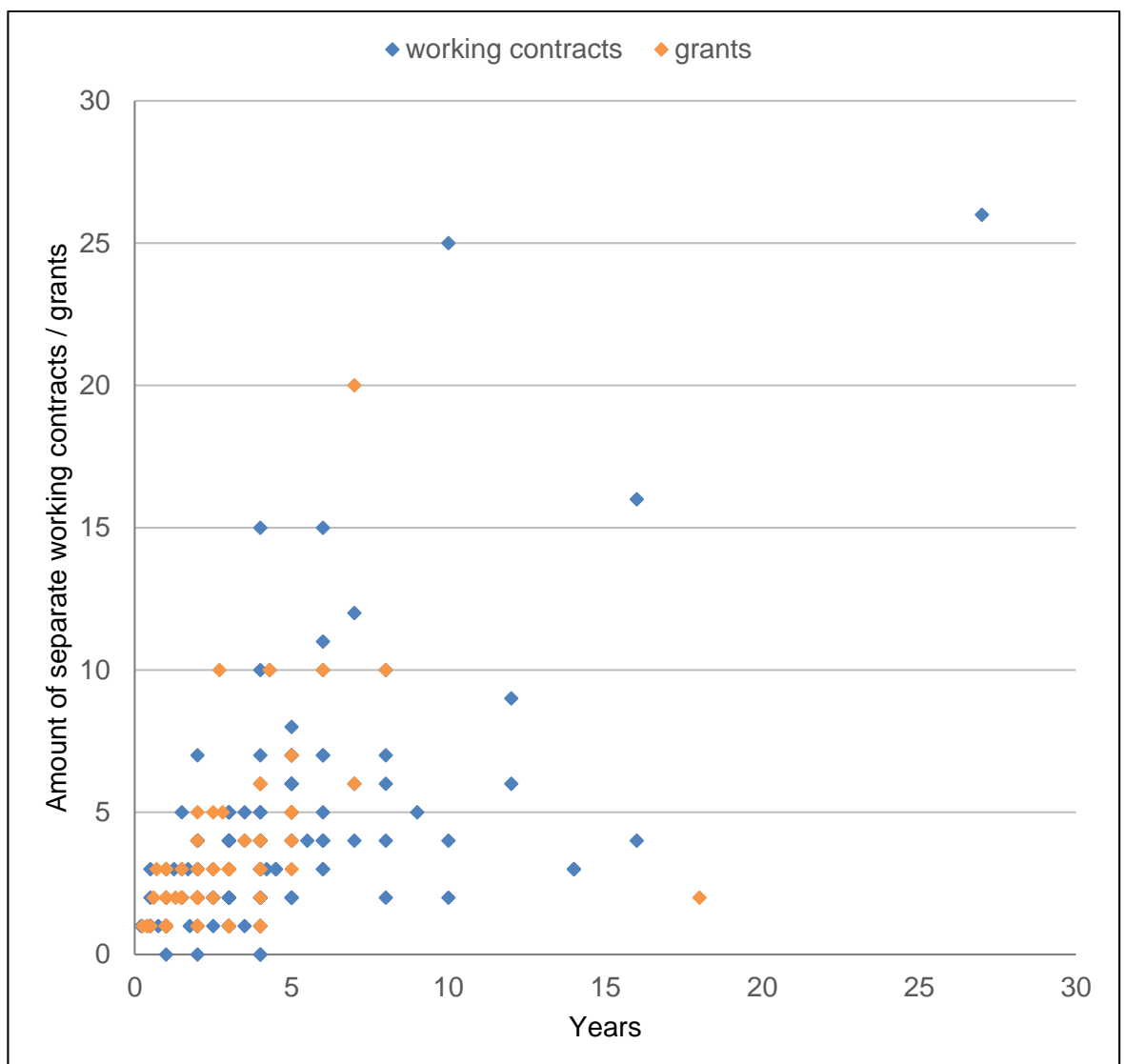


Figure 6. Scatter diagram of the amount of working contracts and grants on a timeline

In others words, for the international members, the average length of a working contract is 12 months. That is extremely short compared to all union members, as according to the 2013 membership survey, the average length of a fixed-term employment contract was 25 months (Puhakka & Rautopuro 2014, 26). That is more than twice the length of the average contract of the international members. So unfortunately, international academics are suffering from clearly shorter employment contracts than the average.

25 % of the respondents have been unemployed at some point of their career in Finland. When taking into consideration that the international academics have had a shorter career in Finland than the Finnish nationals, the percentage seems to be in line with the results of the 2013 membership survey, in which 54 % of the respondents had been unemployed at some point of their career, and 19 % had been unemployed during a recent two years' period (Puhakka & Rautopuro 2014, 21).

Current status in working life

68 % of the respondents are currently employed and 16 % are on a grant. For 8 % the current status is unemployed, 4 % other, 2 % student and 1 % family leave.

40 % of the respondents who are currently employed work on a title Trainee researcher, Junior Researcher, Doctoral student, Early stage researcher or PhD researcher. 32 % are post-doctoral researchers. The remaining work positions are University researcher or Senior researcher (6 %), Researcher (5 %), University lecturer (4 %), Coordinator (3 %), Full-time teacher or University teacher (2 %), and other (8 %).

The current workplace of the employed and grant-holders are presented in appendix 3. The universities mostly represented by the respondents are the University of Helsinki (23 %), the University of Eastern Finland (19 %) and the University of Turku (12 %). There are nine (9) universities with less than 10 respondents working in them, so therefore, it is not reasonable to make any comparisons of the survey results between the universities.

Employment contracts

The respondents have worked for their current employer on average 3,6 years. Nevertheless, an alarming 91 % of the respondents who are employed work on a fixed-term employment contract.

Fixed-term employment contracts are already known to be a huge problem in the university sector, but it seems that the international academics are even more unlikely to get a permanent job than Finnish personnel. According to the membership survey 2013, 54 % of union members have a fixed term employment contract (Puhakka & Rautopuro 2014, 21). The relation of fixed-term and permanent employment is illustrated in figure 7.

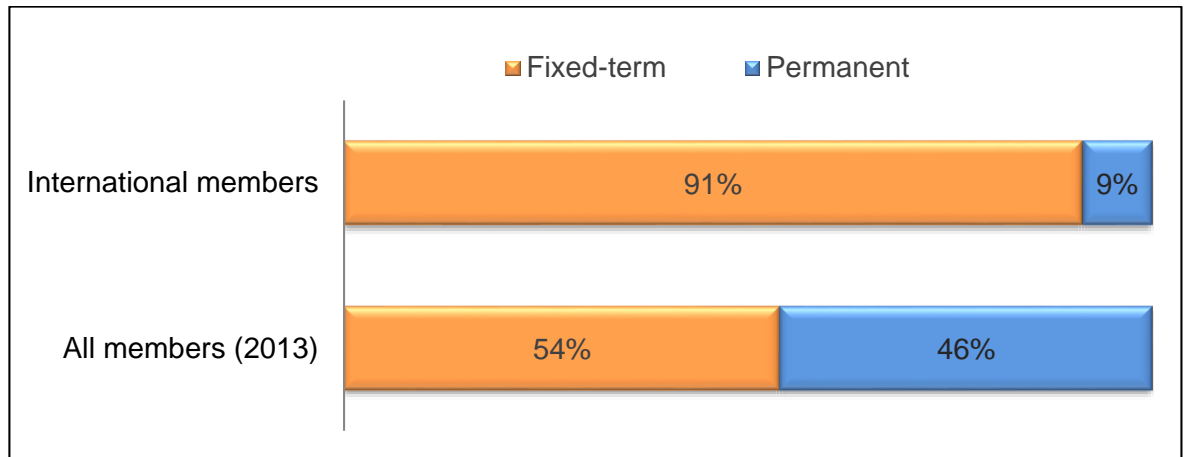


Figure 7. The relation of fixed-term and permanent employment comparing international members (N=139) and all members of the union (N=1354, Puhakka & Rautopuro 2014, 23)

However, as a vast majority of international members are researchers, partly the difference derives from the work position rather than the origin of the employee. When the respondents are categorised into 1) researchers, 2) teachers and 3) other academic experts, in the 2013 membership survey the proportion of researchers is only 44 % (Puhakka & Rautopuro 2014, 18), whereas in this survey for the international members the proportion is 83 %. As teachers and other academic experts are more likely to have a permanent employment contract than researchers, it is important to make the comparison also according to work positions.

In this survey the amount of respondents in the categories teachers and other academic experts is less than 10, so therefore, the comparison is made only for the category of researchers. In the category of researchers, the proportion of fixed-term contracts is 97 % for the international members and 81 % for all members of the union (Figure 8).

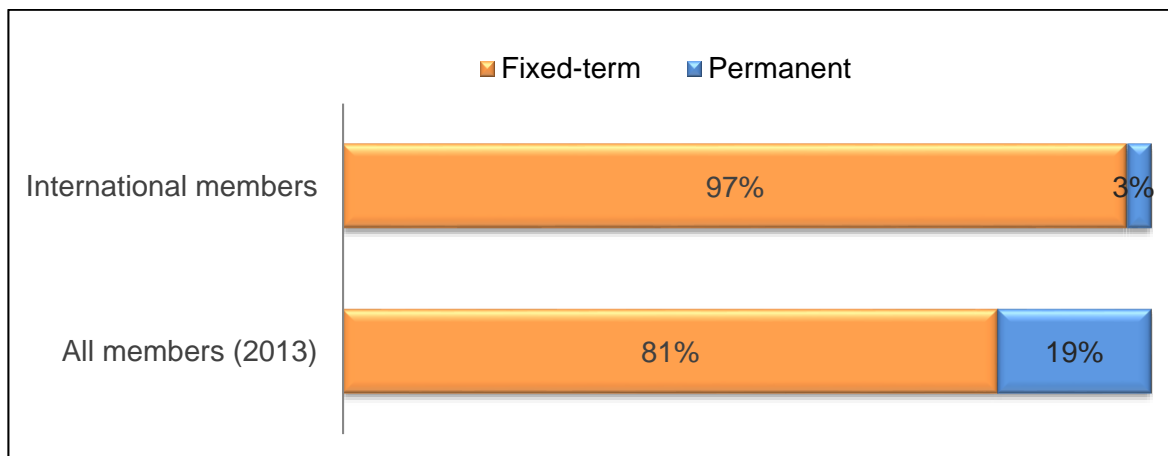


Figure 8. The relation of fixed-term and permanent employment in the work position category researchers, comparing international members (N=107) and all members of the union (N=591, Puhakka & Rautopuro 2014, 18)

Working hours

The mean of weekly working hours estimated by the respondents is 40,9 hours/week for the employees and 40,7 hours/week for the grant-holders. The median for both subgroups is 40,0 hours/week. The average weekly working hours are presented in table 5.

Table 5. Average weekly working hours for employees (N=139) and grant-holders (N=30)

	employees	grant-holders
Mean	40,9	40,7
Median	40,0	40,0
Percentiles		
25	37,0	40,0
50	40,0	40,0
75	45,0	44,3

When comparing the means by gender, men have slightly higher weekly working hours than women. Out of the respondents who are employed, men estimate their weekly working hours to be 42,3 and women 38,7 hours. For the grant-holders the difference in weekly working hours between genders is smaller: the mean for men is 41,1 hours and for women 40,2 hours.

73 % of the respondents do overtime work without overtime compensation. The percentage is significantly high compared to all union members, as in the 2013 membership survey, 51 % responded that they do overtime work without overtime compensation (Puhakka & Rautopuro 2014, 37). The amount of unpaid overtime work among all members of the union was already alarming, and yet, the international academics are doing even worse. Figure 9 shows a comparison of overtime work and compensation between international members and all members of the union.

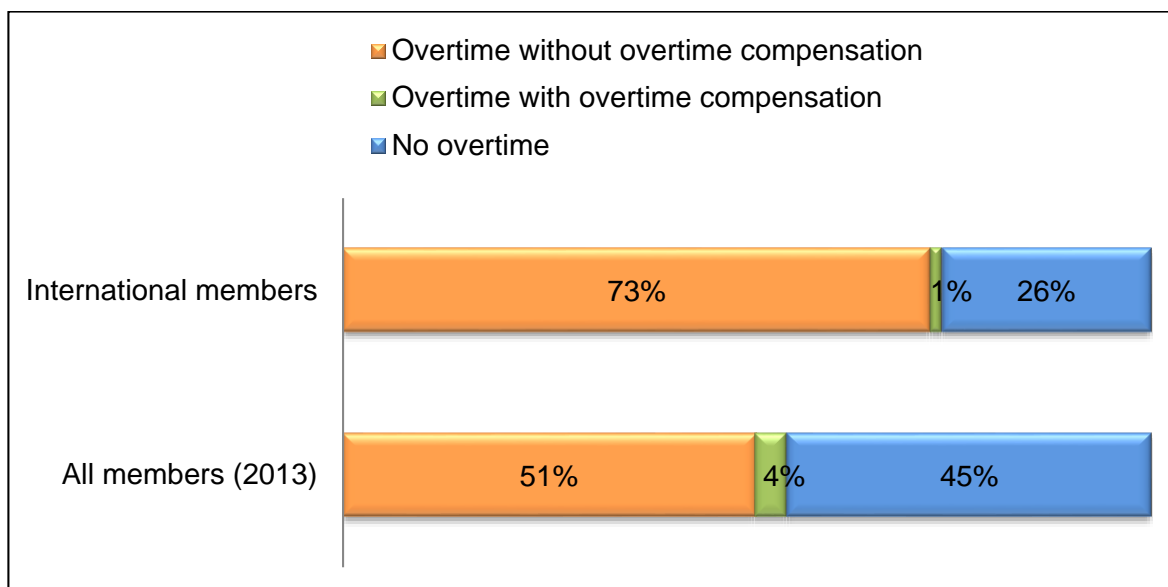


Figure 9. Overtime work and compensation, comparison between international members (N=139) and all members of the union (N = 1354, Puhakka & Rautopuro 2014, 37)

The majority of the respondents (61 %) work at home in the evenings or weekends at least once a week (table 6). That result is exactly in line with the results of the 2013 membership survey, in which also 61 % responded that the work at home in the evening at least once a week (Puhakka & Rautopuro 2014, 38). So, it seems that bringing the workload home is an equally common problem for both international members and all members of the union.

Men are working at home in the evenings or weekends slightly more than women, as seen in table 6. 42 % of men work at home in the evenings or weekends more than 3 times a week, whereas the equivalent percentage for women is 22 %. Only 2 % of all the respondents never work at home in the evenings or weekends.

Table 6. Working at home in the evenings or weekends

	Male (N=85)		Female (N=55)		Total (N=140)	
Never	2	2 %	1	2 %	3	2 %
Couple of times a year	7	8 %	4	7 %	11	8 %
Every other month	5	6 %	6	11 %	11	8 %
1-3 times a month	17	20 %	12	22 %	29	21 %
1-3 times a week	18	21 %	20	36 %	38	27 %
More than 3 times a week	36	42 %	12	22 %	48	34 %

When it comes to grant-holders, 22 % of the grant-holders do administrative or teaching work without compensation. 66 % do not do administrative or teaching work at all, and 12 % get a monetary compensation for it.

Work satisfaction

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction to several work related topics on a Likert scale, where 1 = *very dissatisfied*, 2 = *somewhat dissatisfied*, 3 = *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*, 4 = *somewhat satisfied*, and 5 = *very satisfied*. Figure 10 shows the mean of the responses for each topic.

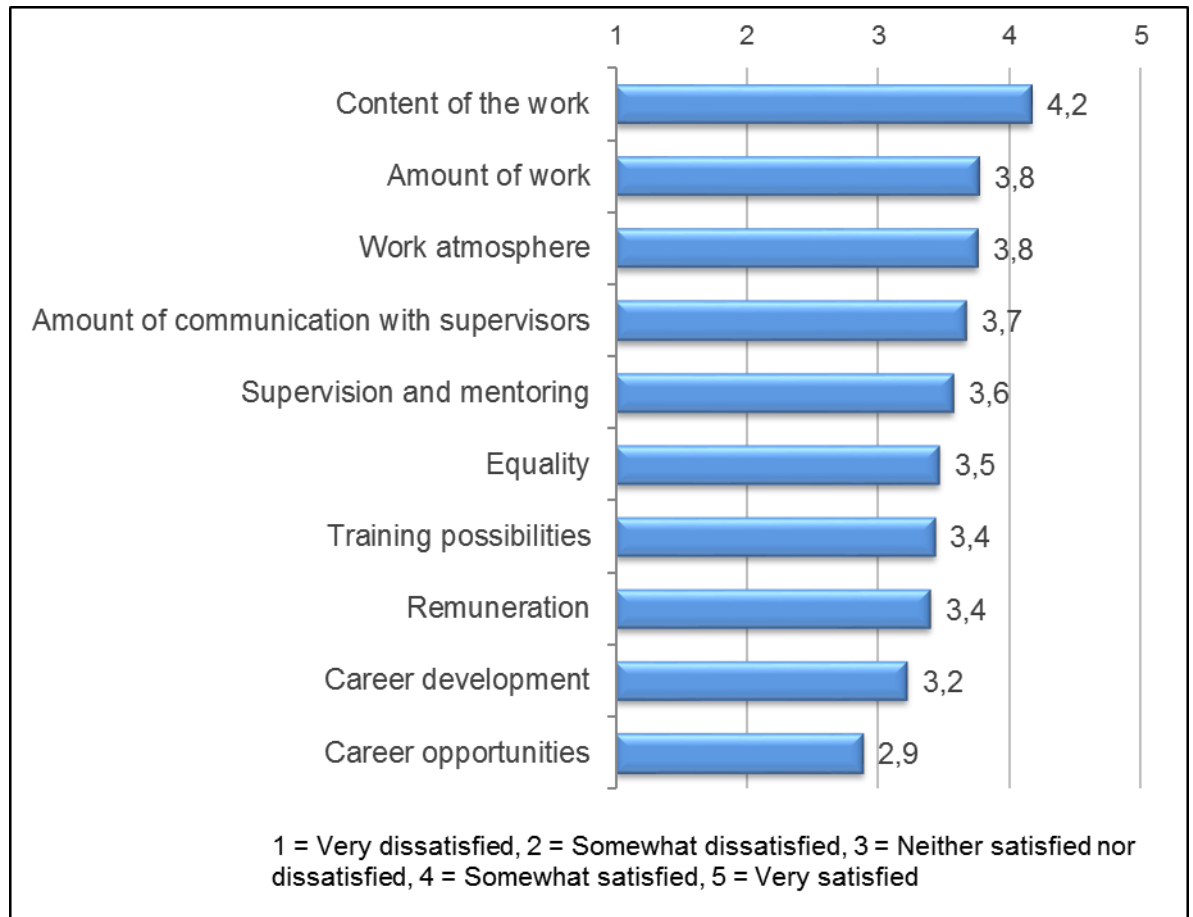


Figure 10. Satisfaction to work related topics

The respondents are most pleased with the content of the work: the mean is 4,2 which is between *somewhat satisfied* and *very satisfied*. For most of the variables the level of satisfaction is between *neither satisfied or dissatisfied* and *somewhat satisfied*: amount of work (3,8); work atmosphere (3,8); amount of communication with supervisors (3,7); supervision and mentoring (3,6); equality (3,5); training possibilities (3,4); remuneration (3,4); and career development (3,2). Career opportunities is the factor in which the respondents are least satisfied with (2,9).

When it comes to work satisfaction, there is no significant difference between employees and grant-holders. Also, there is no significant correlation between the employees with permanent or fixed-term employment contract, but this is arguably because there are only 13 respondents who have a permanent employment relationship.

Employer support for international academics

The respondents who were employed or on a grant were asked a set of questions about the support that they get from their workplace. The amount of support was estimated on a three-point scale, where 1 = *No*, 2 = *Yes, but not enough*, and 3 = *Yes, sufficiently*. The results are presented in figure 11.

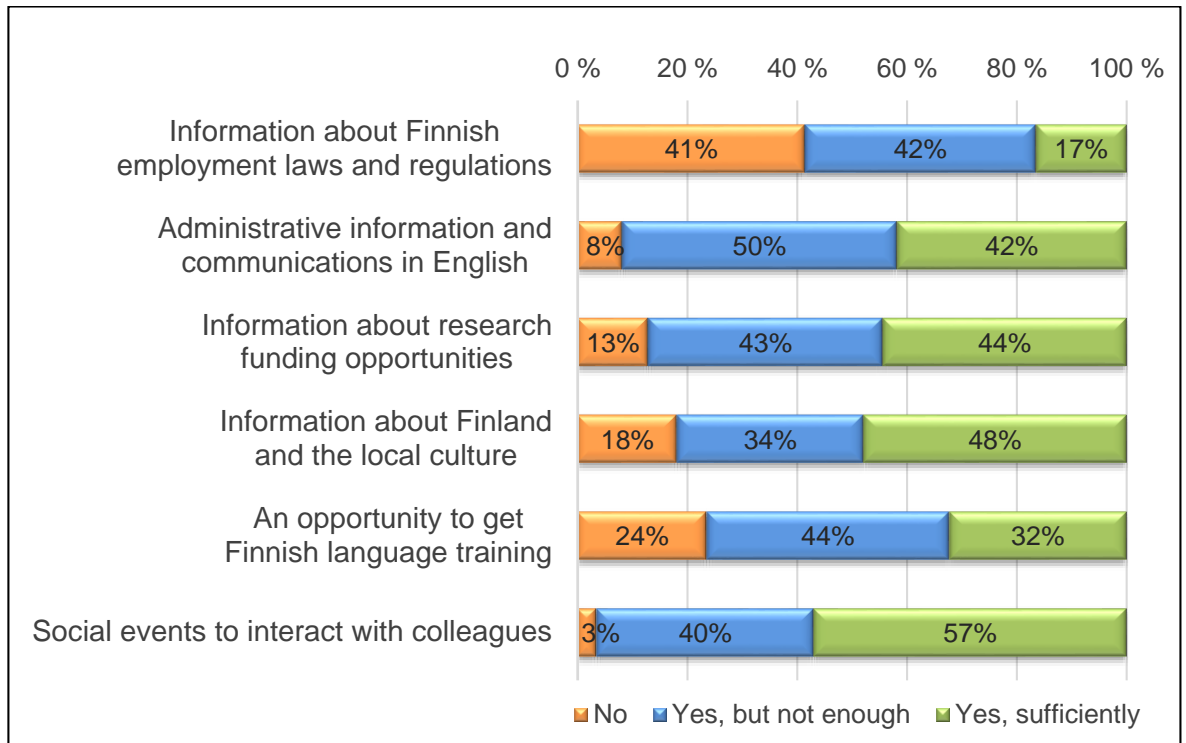


Figure 11. The support provided for the international academics at their workplace

Only 17 % of the respondents have received enough information about Finnish employment laws and regulations at their workplace, and an alarming 41 % responded that they have not received that information at all.

48 % have been provided with sufficient information about Finland and the local culture, 42 % with sufficient administrative information and communications in English, and 44 % with enough information about research funding opportunities. So, there is a lot to improve, as still the majority of the respondents feel that they have not been provided with enough information on these areas.

57 % of the respondents have had sufficiently social events to interact with colleagues, and only 3 % have not had these opportunities at all. This result is quite satisfying, as there is an evident demand for social events to interact with colleagues: A prominent 82 % of the respondents, who were provided with these events, did participate.

Also, according to a Kruskal-Wallis test run across the response categories 1-3, providing social events to interact with colleagues seems to raise the level of satisfaction on the content of the work ($p = 0,002$) and work atmosphere ($p = 0,002$). Among the respondents who have not been provided with social events, the mean for the content of the work is 3,0 and the mean for the work atmosphere 2,5. In comparison, among the respondents who have had sufficiently social events, the mean for the content of the work is 4,3 and the mean for the work atmosphere 4,0.

Only 32 % of the respondents have been provided enough opportunities to get Finnish language training by their workplace. 44 % have been provided with some opportunities to learn Finnish, but not sufficiently. And unfortunately, 24 % of the respondents have not been provided with an opportunity to learn the language at all. There should be no excuse for the universities not to provide Finnish language training for the international academics, as 73 % of the respondents who have been provided with the opportunity, did participate the training.

A Kruskal-Wallis Test was conducted in order to find out whether or not there is a correlation between different areas of workplace support and overall work satisfaction. In order to run the correlations, all the variables in the work satisfaction Likert scale were combined into one overall work satisfaction variable by calculating a mean.

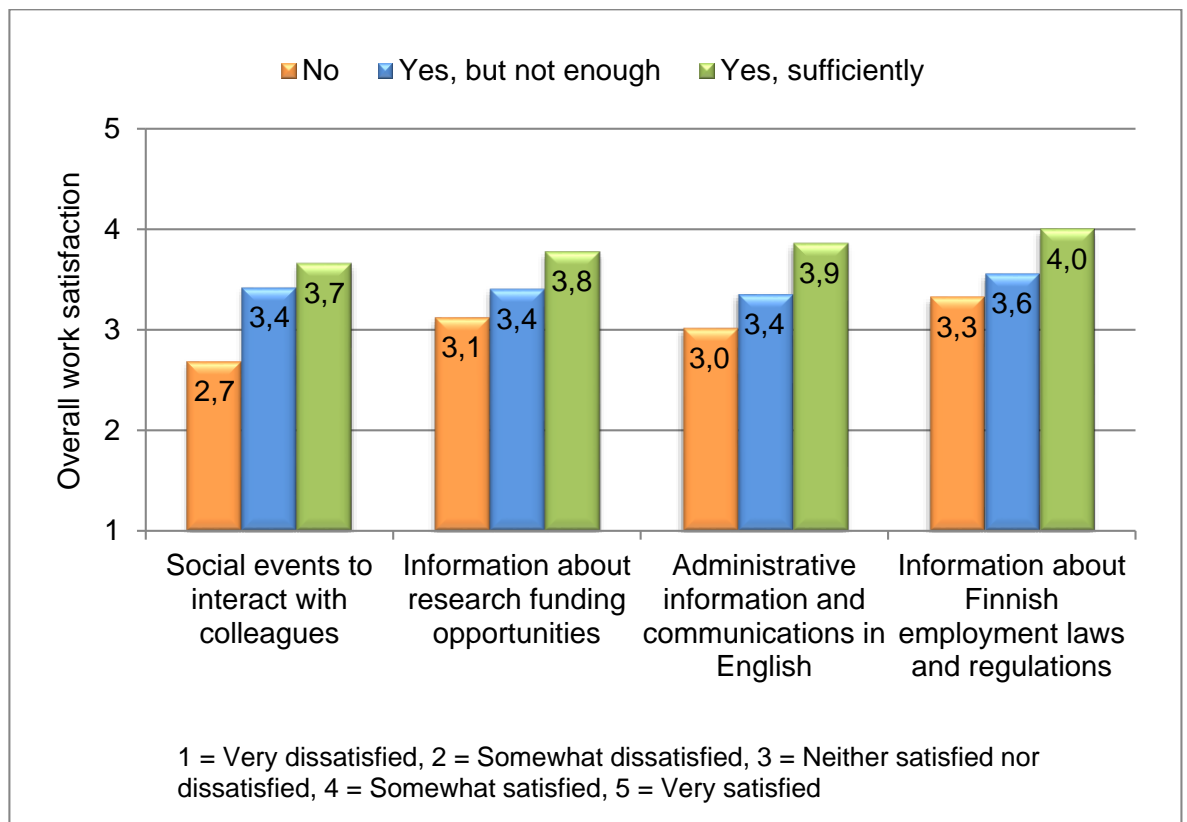


Figure 12. Workplace support affecting overall mean of work satisfaction

The test indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in the overall work satisfaction across the response categories (1 = No, 2 = Yes, but not enough and 3 = Yes, sufficiently) in four areas of workplace support: information about Finnish employment laws ($p = 0,001$); administrative information and communications in English ($p = 0,000$); information about research funding opportunities ($p = 0,001$) and social events to interact with colleagues ($p = 0,007$). Figure 12 illustrates how these four areas of workplace support affect the overall mean of work satisfaction.

5.3 The challenges in working life in Finland

The third section of the questionnaire concentrated on the difficulties that international researchers have faced in working life in Finland. There was a set of quantitative questions regarding social adjustment, perceived risks and possible difficulties with bureaucracy.

There was also an open-ended question about the challenges faced in working life in Finland. The analysis of that open-ended question is described in chapter 6.2.

Social adjustment

In order to determine the level of adjustment in Finland and the factors that might have an effect on the adjustment, the respondents were asked to indicate their opinion about a set of statements on a Likert scale, in which 1 = *completely false*, 2 = *somewhat false*, 3 = *neither true or false*, 4 = *somewhat true* and, 5 = *completely true*. The results are illustrated in Figure 13. The mean for each statement is presented in parentheses in the text.

The results indicate that the respondents are well adjusted to Finland. 84 % responded *somewhat true* or *completely true* to the statement *I am well adjusted to Finland* (4,0) and 88 % responded *somewhat true* or *completely true* to the statement *I am familiar with Finnish culture* (4,1).

There is a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0,551$; $p = 0,000$) between being familiar with Finnish culture and adjustment to Finland. The correlation was tested using Spearman's rank correlation coefficient. This correlation cannot be explained simply by the length of the respondent living in Finland, as the time in Finland does not correlate with either one of these statements.

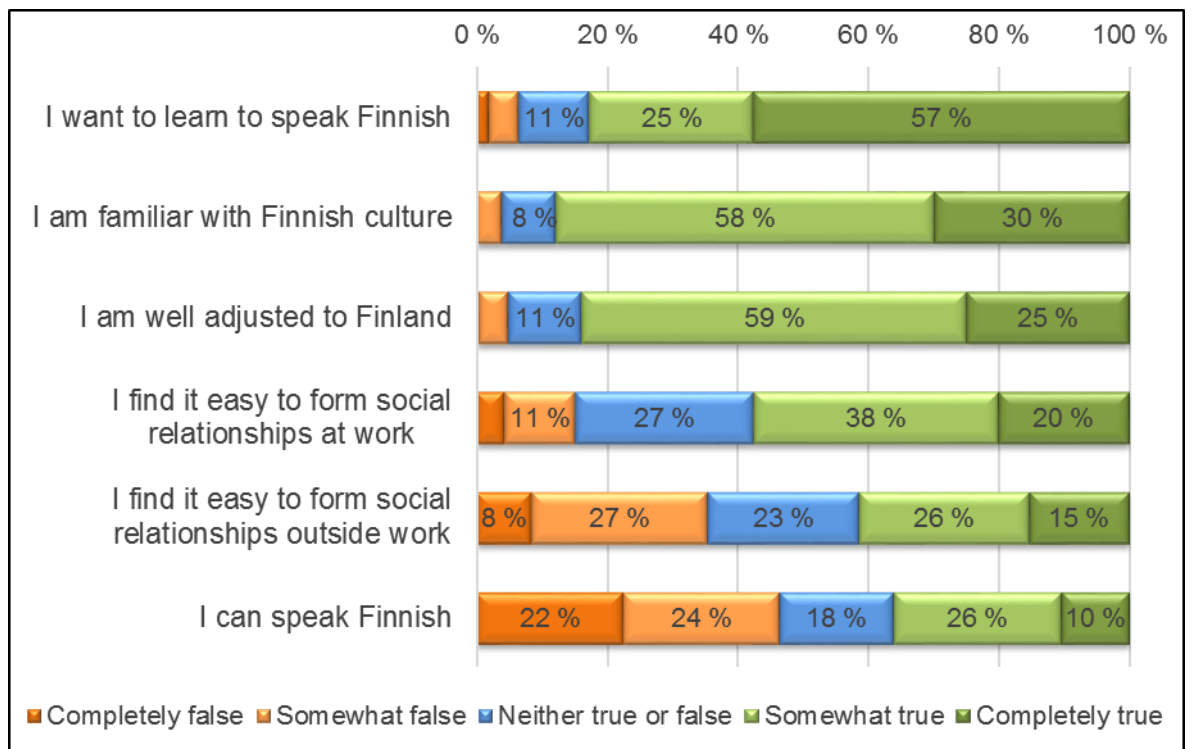


Figure 13. Adjustment to Finland (N=202)

A vast majority (83 %) of the respondents want to learn Finnish (4,3). Actually, more than a third of the respondents already can speak Finnish, but still, 89 % of those who can, do want to learn more.

58 % of the respondents find it easy to form social relationships at work (3,6) and only 41 % outside work (3,1). As much as 59 % of the respondents find it easier to interact with expatriates than with Finnish nationals (3,7).

Perceived risks and difficulties

Using a list of pre-determined potential challenges, the respondents were asked to estimate to which extent they have faced these challenges in Finland on a scale of *Not at all – Only a little – Somewhat – Quite much – Very much*. The results are presented in Figure 14.

Evidently the greatest challenge for the international academics is uncertainty about the future. Two thirds of the respondents have experienced very much or quite much uncertainty about the future, and only 3 % answered that they have not experienced uncertainty about the future at all.

44 % of the respondents have experienced quite much or very much language barriers and risk of losing the current position or employment. More than 30 % of the respondents have experienced quite or very much challenges relating to cultural differences, feeling of

outsiderness and financial insecurity. And 17 % of the respondents have experienced quite or very much inequality.

The areas which are considered least challenging are problems with taxation, problems relating to residence or work permits, difficulties to find accommodation and problems relating to the social security system. Roughly half of the respondents have not encountered any problems in these areas, and only about 10% of the respondents have faced quite or very much these challenges.

Out of the respondents who are married or in a domestic partnership with a non-Finnish spouse, 33 % answered that there has been no difficulty of their spouse or family to adjust to Finland, and only 5 % answered that they have experienced very much challenges on that area. However, when it comes to the question of lack of spouse's job opportunities, 34 % have experienced quite or very much challenges on that area. On the positive side, almost a quarter have experienced no challenges at all relating to lack of spouse's job opportunities.

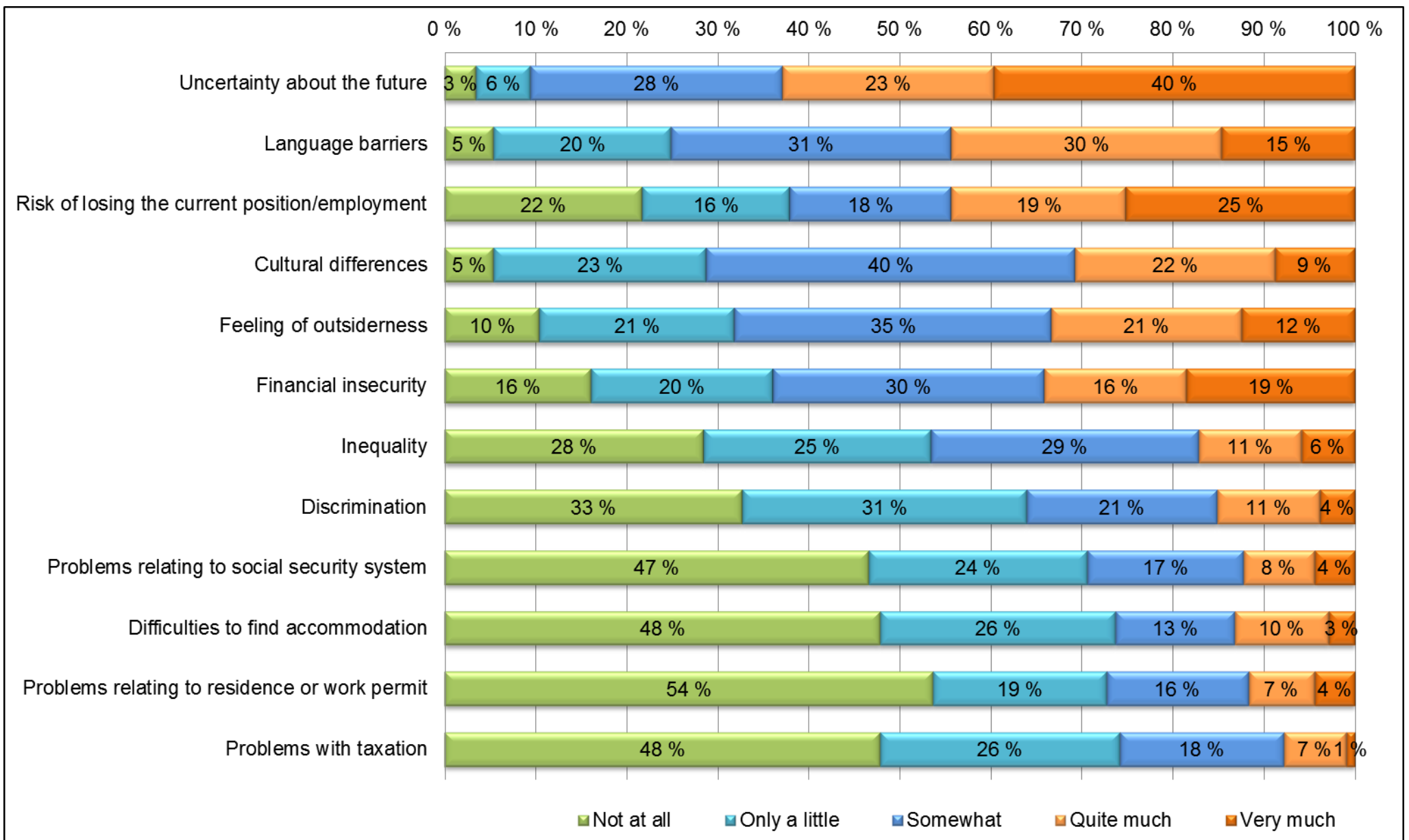


Figure 14. Challenges faced in Finland

6 The findings of the qualitative data analysis

There were two open-ended questions in the survey: one concerning the attractiveness of Finland as a place to work or study, and one about the challenges that the respondents have faced in working life in Finland.

The analysis of the open-ended questions is presented in the following sub-chapters. Both chapters start with a description about how the data was categorized. The description is aimed to clarify the underlying sense-making process, thereby improving the validity of the survey. This is necessary, because the analysis of qualitative data is affected by social context and personality.

6.1 The attractiveness of Finland as a place to work or study

The respondents were asked why did they find Finland an attractive place to work or study. This question was open-ended, because options would have guided and limited the answers received.

The responses were categorized into distinct themes, and these themes were further divided under professional reasons and other reasons. If one respondent mentioned factors from various themes, the response was split into smaller fractions and recorded under each theme. That made it possible to calculate the frequency of each theme mentioned.

When comparing the respondents based on the primary reason they moved to Finland, there is a notable difference in the motives between the ones who came to work and the ones who came to study. Therefore, the responses are categorized and presented separately for both groups.

The motives of the respondents who came to work

Out of the 88 respondents whose primary reason to move to Finland was to work on a specific post, 80 gave an answer to this open-ended question about the attractiveness of Finland. Their categorized responses are shown in appendix 4.

The primary attraction in Finland was research resources and reputation, which was mentioned by 28 respondents. High quality of research, stimulating intellectual

environment and international reputation of the research group were mentioned several times. The respondents also valued good research infrastructure and lab facilities.

14 respondents were attracted by the working environment in either Finland in general or the Finnish universities in particular. The respondents mention good working conditions and a healthy balance between working and personal life. The Finnish universities are appreciated for their relaxed working atmosphere and lack of unnecessary bureaucracy and hierarchy.

An interesting job offer attracted many of the respondents to Finland. 23 respondents mentioned that they simply got an interesting job offer on a field of their own interest. Other professional reasons mentioned were career opportunities (8) and salary level (7).

Most respondents found Finland to be an attractive place for also other than professional reasons. The respondents mentioned Finnish nature (10), high living standards (9), good social security and services (9) and the reputation of Finnish education system (7). Also high level of equality was brought up by a couple of respondents.

The motives of the respondents who came to study

Out of the 73 respondents who came to Finland to study, 66 gave an answer to this open-ended question. Their categorized responses are shown in appendix 5.

Not surprisingly, the respondents who came to Finland to study, appreciated the high quality (free) education, which was mentioned by half of this respondent group (33). As the lack of tuition-fee is mostly mentioned together with the quality of the education, they are categorized under the same theme. The title of the theme has the word *free* in parentheses, because it is not mentioned in all the responses of this theme, only in 39 % of them.

Other factors that the respondents who came to Finland to study found attractive are the same themes that attracted the ones who came to work, including research resources and reputation (10), interesting study program (9) working environment (6) and salary (4). And outside the professional reasons, the country and people in general (10), social security (4) and a few mentioning family reasons and equality.

6.2 The challenges that international academics face in working life in Finland

The respondents were asked what kind of challenges they have experienced in working life in Finland. This question was the very core of the study, and the analysis gave a lot of new insight about the perceptions of the international academics in Finland. It was of utmost importance to have this open-ended question about the challenges, because it allowed the respondents to express their thoughts freely, and not be limited by the question-setting.

When interpreting the responses, it needs to be noted, that a likert-scale question concerning challenges in working life in Finland preceded this open-ended question. So, the written answers do not necessarily repeat the challenges already mentioned in the likert-scale question. Instead, the respondents are expected to describe their situation in more detail, to bring up other challenges outside the list, and to further explain the reasons behind the challenges they have experienced.

The responses were categorized under themes, but as the themes are heavily overlapping, most of the responses could not be split into smaller fractions under each theme. Instead, one response is categorized under two themes whenever necessary. The responses are shown in appendix 6.

There were 12 responses that indicated that the respondent had not faced any challenges in working life in Finland. A few mentioned lack of funding, low salary, discrimination, and problems relating to residence permits or social security. Only four respondents mentioned feeling of outsidersness, but yet many responses point to that indirectly.

The main challenges are language barriers, job insecurity and lack of communication. These are strongly interrelated, reinforcing one another. The following sub-chapters introduce the results relating to these three main themes and discuss their interrelatedness.

Language barriers

Language barriers was frequently mentioned in the open-ended responses: As much as 50 respondents brought it up in their answer. With language barriers the respondents refer to both their own inability to communicate in Finnish and the Finnish natives' inability or unwillingness to communicate in English.

Some mentioned, that it is hard to find time for Finnish language courses. The courses provided by the employer are designed for exchange students, and therefore take place during working hours, making it difficult to attend.

Language barriers is a significant challenge, because it is also one component behind both job insecurity and lack of communication. This link is explained in more detail in the following sub-chapters.

Job insecurity

The lack of job opportunities is considered a major challenge. The respondents experience uncertainty about employment and limited growth prospects or possibilities for career development. The competition is hard, so it is difficult to find a job – especially outside the university sector.

Language barriers are considered to deteriorate career prospects. Many respondents do not see good job opportunities for English speakers. Instead, they feel that most positions require a high level of Finnish language skills. Especially if the position involves teaching, Finnish language is a prerequisite, because there are not too many courses in English.

Some respondents also see inequality when competing for a job with a Finnish national. They feel that Finnish nationals are favoured when filling employment positions. The responses reveal a glass-ceiling for professional development: the higher you climb the career ladder, the less foreigners you meet.

“I am spending much of my time applying for grants instead of doing my work.”

Relating to job opportunities, there is also a challenge of short fixed-term working contracts. The major problem with short contracts is that they make it impossible to do any long-term planning in both research and in private life. Professionally, it is pointless for researchers to invest in future projects, as they might lose their job before the project begins. This insecurity makes it difficult to concentrate on the job.

The short fixed-term contracts create uncertainty about the future. Many respondents worry about their financial situation and the possibility of unemployment. Yearly contracts are seen as a barrier to major life events, such as purchasing a house or having children. For some, losing a job might also mean losing the residence permit in Finland.

Incommunication

Another dominant challenge is lack of communication or *incommunication*. This is a challenge both with the administration and with colleagues, and it exists in both professional and informal situations.

There is insufficient communication from the administration to the employees, resulting in information gaps and time consuming difficulties. The respondents do not receive enough information about their rights and responsibilities, work practices, available resources or opportunities. If you do not ask, you do not get any information. So, unless you know to ask the right questions, you can be kept in the dark.

“Whenever available, information in English is much shorter and reduced compared to the Finnish one.”

The information break is largely due to language barriers. A lot of important information is circulated only in Finnish. Many websites are either only in Finnish, or the content is only partial on the English side. Also, many administrative meetings and minutes of the meetings are in Finnish, so non-Finnish speakers cannot be involved. This prevents them from actively participating in their work community.

This lack of communication makes it hard to integrate into the department. The respondents also feel that the scarce communication with the administration causes time-consuming difficulties, and might lead to missed opportunities or access to resources.

“Language barriers, especially when spending time informally with colleagues; they seldom switch to English if they have already started a conversation.”

Some respondents find it hard to communicate with their Finnish colleagues both formally but especially informally. Partly this is because Finnish people are not considered to be very social, but it is also because of language barriers. The natives tend to speak Finnish with each other, which makes the non-Finnish-speakers to feel excluded and unable to fully participate in daily social life. The lack of social interaction with colleagues also makes it difficult to build up collaborations and enter academic networks.

“That’s nice, but THIS is how we do it in Finland.”

One form of incommunication with colleagues is a credibility deficit. Some respondents feel that they are not taken seriously by their Finnish colleagues. They are not being heard

professionally and their opinions are ignored by their colleagues. They constantly need to convince their colleagues about their expertise and capacity to do the work.

The credibility deficit is a serious problem in an academic community. The main idea of academic mobility, as discussed in chapter 2.1, is to share information across borders and academic institutions. If the expertise and experiences of expatriate academics are ignored, a significant part of the benefits of internationalization are lost. Cultivating intellectuality requires communication.

Interconnectedness of the main themes

Figure 16 visualises the main challenges that international academics face in working life in Finland, and illustrates their interconnectedness. The previous chapters indicated how language barriers increment job insecurity and incommunication. But these three main themes are interrelated in other ways too.



Figure 16. The main challenges of international academics in working life in Finland

Incommunication increases job insecurity, as there is not enough information about opportunities, funding and employee rights. A better level of communication would create stability to working conditions also through better integration to the department and academic networking.

On the other hand, job insecurity may also increase incommunication. Short working contracts combined with the difficulty of finding a new position has provoked many international academics to leave the country. That has created an illusion that all international academics are here only temporarily – which is certainly not the case for many, as proven earlier in this thesis. However, because of the assumed transience of the stay, the colleagues might think that the international academics are not committed to the department – causing a credibility deficit. As a result, the colleagues might be more

unwilling to build up collaborations, and the amount of communication diminishes. Extremely short working contracts may also reduce the amount of social interaction, because there is no time to get to know each other.

In some cases, job insecurity accelerates the challenge of language barriers. Some respondents feel unmotivated to learn Finnish, because they strongly doubt to find another position in Finland after their current contract ends. However, some responses indicate the opposite: when the respondents feel that they need to learn Finnish in order to become employed, it seems that job insecurity actually reduces language barriers.

The next chapter combines the quantitative and qualitative survey results with the theory from the literature review. It evaluates the propositions made in the beginning of the research process and aims to develop a thorough understanding of the challenges that international academics face in working life in Finland.

7 Discussion

In the beginning of the thesis, there were three propositions, which guided the research work and the question-setting of the survey. This discussion part shortly reviews those propositions, combining the survey results with the theory from the literature review.

The chapter also discusses the importance of organizational support, and the potential role of the union, and finally, assesses the internationalization strategy of Finnish higher education in the light of the survey results. Can the benefits of internationalization truly be reached?

7.1 Confirming the propositions

Proposition 1 was based on the work of Richardson and Zikic (2007) suggesting that one dominant challenge for self-initiated expatriates is losing the current employment position, which increases the perception of personal risk involving job security and stability.

P1: International academics experience uncertainty relating to the risk of losing the job.

The results of the survey revealed that an alarming 91 % of the respondents work on a fixed-term employment contract, and the average length of a working contract is only 12 months. Fixed-term contracts were mentioned numerous times also in the open-ended question about the challenges that the respondents have faced in working life in Finland. Short employment contracts result in financial insecurity and make it hard to make long-term plans both in personal and professional life.

Job insecurity is further increased because of poor career opportunities. The respondents' satisfaction concerning career opportunities on a 1-5 Likert scale was only 2,9; and poor career prospects was mentioned numerous times also in the open-ended question. The respondents feel that there is intensive competition for grants and job positions, and very few job opportunities for non-Finnish speakers.

Two thirds of the respondents have experienced quite much or very much uncertainty about the future, and only 3 % answered that they have not experienced uncertainty about the future at all. According to the quantitative data analysis, the greatest challenge for the international academics is uncertainty about the future.

Proposition 1 is supported by the survey results; international academics do experience uncertainty relating to the risk of losing the job.

P2: International academics are not provided with enough administrative information and communications in English.

Less than half of the respondents have received enough administrative information and communications in English. Especially they are missing information concerning Finnish employment laws and regulations, as 41 % of the respondents did not receive that information at all.

Lack of sufficient communication and information from the employer was mentioned several times also in the open-ended question. It seems to be a common problem that important information is circulated only in Finnish, or the information in English is much shorter and reduced compared to the Finnish one.

The respondents feel that there are unclear guidelines and instructions, lack of information about available resources and opportunities, and insufficient information about employee rights. This language barrier within the organization results not only in time-consuming difficulties, but it also prevents the international academics from actively participating in their work community.

Proposition 2 is supported by the survey results; international academics are not provided with enough administrative information and communications in English.

P3: International academics experience feeling of outsidersness

Richardson and Zikic (2007) suggested that SIEs experience feeling of outsidersness. According to them, the transience nature of the employment might make it difficult or unattractive to form social relationships, and the absence of a social network may result in feeling of outsidersness.

The results of the survey confirmed that the respondents do experience feeling of outsidersness, but it is not due to the short-term stay in Finland. The respondents have lived in Finland on average 5,2 years, and most of them have long-term plans in Finland. Instead, the feeling of outsidersness results from language barriers and incommunication.

Partly the feeling of outsidersness is due to the previous proposition: lack of administrative information and communications in English. Partly it is because of social interaction: As much as 59 % find it easier to interact with expatriates than with Finnish nationals. Many respondents find it hard to communicate with Finnish colleagues, because they always

speak Finnish with each other. This language barrier makes it difficult for the international academics to fully participate in daily social life and makes them feel excluded from the work community.

Proposition 3 is supported by the survey results, but it is important to acknowledge, that only a third of the respondents have experienced quite or very much feeling of outsidersness.

The initial propositions that were formulated in the beginning of the research process were all supported by the research results. But the final conclusions go far beyond the original propositions. The qualitative open-ended responses created a more in-depth understanding of the challenges and the causalities between them, thereby allowing an inductive approach to search for pattern, as established in chapter 5.2.

7.2 The importance of organizational support

The findings of this survey revealed that language barriers are a major challenge among international academics, causing job insecurity and incommunication. And, lack of social interaction creates a feeling of outsidersness, and makes it difficult to enter networks and build collaborations that are crucial for career development.

Thus, it is quite evident that organizations should provide language training and social opportunities for the expatriates to interact with host country nationals, as proposed in the theory section (Kraimer et al. 2001, Li & Rothstein 2009) and supported by the results of this survey.

A vast majority (83 %) of the respondents do want to learn Finnish. Still, only 32 % of the respondents have been provided enough opportunities to get Finnish language training, and 24 % have not been provided with that opportunity at all. Language barriers was one of the most frequently mentioned challenges in the open-ended responses.

The results of this survey indicate that providing social events to interact with colleagues increases the level of satisfaction to the content of the work and work atmosphere. Social networks can prevent stress and uncertainty in unfamiliar situations, and give a sense of belonging (Li & Rothstein 2009). Social networks can also help expatriates to get information about the country culture and the job and the organization (Bhatti et al. 2013). So actually, social networks can reduce all the factors from the initial propositions: uncertainty, lack of information and feeling of outsidersness.

Also communication is an important part of organizational support. Giving information about Finnish employment laws, having administrative information and communications in English and providing information about funding opportunities all had a positive effect on overall work satisfaction.

7.3 The role of the union

Union membership in the Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers could help expatriate academics to cope with some of the challenges that international academics face in working life in Finland.

Union membership brings security and stability, because you can be a part of the Finnish unemployment fund system. Also, you have the union to guarantee your rights in case the employer tries to terminate the employment falsely, cut the employee's rightful benefits or treat the employees unequally. Therefore, union membership could improve job stability, and thereby decrease uncertainty about the future.

Union membership can also help in making social contacts, as members can network in common events organized by the union's local associations within the universities. That could increase the level of communication and social interaction, reducing the feeling of outsidership.

7.4 Communication for interculturality

When looking into the findings of this survey, it seems that Finnish HE institutions internationalize in order to become international – as if there would be value in internationalization itself. The focus is on the quantity: how many non-Finnish scholars do we have? But staring at the numbers is pointless, if we fail to see and benefit from the value that internationalization brings.

As discussed in chapter 2.1, internationalization should result in synergy and higher intellectual advantage. A person from another country or background can approach matters with objectivity, and thus the interaction between people from various cultural groups may lead to innovations and new ways of thinking. This symbiosis of distance and nearness should be cherished. (Kim 2009)

However, according to the findings of this survey, there is incommunication between international academics and their work community. Many international academics find it hard to create networks and collaborations, and they feel professionally unheard. The result is quite alarming, because in this kind of setting, the benefits of internationalization cannot be reached.

In order to embrace interculturality, HE institutions should ensure that there is communication – lots of communication. They should facilitate collaborations, encourage social interaction and make sure that the potential for creating intellectual advantage is not hindered by language barriers or any form of incommunication. Providing language courses, improving administrative communication in English and arranging social events to interact with colleagues are all recommendable measures to take in order to improve the situation.

The policy-makers have explicitly expressed a need to attract highly skilled migrant labour to Finland in general and the universities in particular. As mentioned in chapter 2.2, in its internationalization policy, Finnish HE is currently concentrating on transient exchange: degree students and early stage researcher mobility. Long-term academic mobility seems to be totally forgotten.

The outcomes of this survey indicate, that there is a significant amount of international academics, who intend to stay permanently in Finland. Still, many of them find it hard to fully participate in the work community – feeling both socially and professionally excluded. Language barriers prevent them from receiving important information and attending administrative meetings, which causes inequality within the work community.

Ignoring the long-term academic mobility seems quite irrational, because it has the strongest implication to the Finnish HE, as discussed in chapter 2.3. The ones who are staying in Finland are the ones who actually have an impact in the campus. They are here to maintain the quality of Finnish HE and research. And their voice should be heard.

As Hoffman (2007, 18) points out, the internationalization of Finnish HE cannot be just a monocultural dialogue amongst stakeholders. International academics have a lot of information which is useful, but yet unknown to many higher education policy makers. Hopefully, this thesis can be one piece of a puzzle in filling the void in research about international academic expatriates, and also inspire more research about this important and current phenomenon.

8 Conclusions

The Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers (FUURT) wants to enhance the working situation of international academics in Finland. That requires lobbying, spreading information and evoking public discussion.

Initiating a need for improvement starts by creating an understanding of the current situation and pointing out the areas of development. So, the aim of this survey was not only to find out the challenges that international academics face in working life in Finland, but also – more importantly – to raise awareness about the topic. And luckily, that objective was met quite successfully.

The results of the survey were published in an article in the union magazine *Acatiimi* 7/2015 (appendix 7) and presented in FUURT's seminar *Communicate, Influence and Internationalize* in October 2015. A press release about the topic (appendix 8) was well noticed, as there were more than a dozen articles in regional newspapers about the survey results. And in May 2016, the survey results were presented in the Spring Forum for International Affairs organized by Finnish HE institutions and the Center of international mobility CIMO.

Many international academics praised the union for raising awareness of this important topic. Also, stakeholders and policy-makers in Finnish HE institutions as well as the Ministry of Education and Culture have shown interest in the survey results. That is great news both for the international academics in Finland in particular, and for the internationalization of Finnish higher education in general. The high level of interest indicates, that there is a good change for improvement.

The Finnish HE needs to review its internationalization strategy, and make a decision between effectiveness and interculturality. Currently it seems, that the intellectual mission of the universities is fading away. Pursuing effectiveness has resulted in short fixed-term employment contracts and reduced job opportunities, and unfortunately, the international academics are having even shorter contracts than the average. Job insecurity makes it hard to concentrate on the work and to plan ahead – both professionally and in personal life.

Internationalization should not be about numbers and figures. It should be about sharing information across borders and academic institutions – increasing intellectuality. And that requires communication. However, currently there is insufficient information and lack of

social interaction and networking between the international academics and their work community. If the expertise and experiences of expatriate academics are ignored, a significant part of the benefits of internationalization will be lost.

All in all, the challenges that international academics face in working life in Finland seem to fall under two themes: *uncertainty* because of extremely short fixed-term employment contracts and poor career opportunities in Finland, and *incommunication* because of language barriers resulting in being excluded from important information and the work community. These are the areas in which we most need to improve in order to enhance the working situation of international academics in Finland, and to take a step forward in making the Finnish universities truly international.

The results of the survey are well generalizable to the survey population, i.e. the international members of the Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers. However, the results are not directly generalizable to all international academics in Finland, and therefore, it would be highly recommendable to do a similar survey for a wider population. Based on the feedback from the HE stakeholders, there is an imminent need for this kind of research. Also, this research only examines the situation in Finland, but it would be interesting to conduct a similar research in e.g. other EU countries to see if the findings are different.

The research process allowed the researcher to realize how the social context and personality affect the whole research process from the selection of the research topic to the analysis and reporting of the outcome. That insight really helped to understand the importance of giving full attention to own perspectives and assumptions, and constantly clarifying the research process to the readers.

It was surprising to realize how articulating own sense-making process makes you feel quite vulnerable. Providing own thoughts and ideas for evaluation and questioning is scary, but at the same time, it is the only way to convince the readers that the claims to knowing are well founded. Only openness about the researcher's perceptions and limitations gives the reader an opportunity to estimate the quality of the research.

It was hard to accept that it is not possible to provide any absolute truth: incompleteness must be accepted. It is a matter of presenting a convincing theory, but at the same time bring up the conditional and potentially provisional nature of it, and leaving it open for further development.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. The cover letter



Survey for International Members

The Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers (FUURT) is conducting a survey for its international members. The aim of the survey is to develop an understanding of the challenges that international researchers face in working life in Finland, and to receive feedback and suggestions for the Union to further develop its services.

Click the link below

Enter the survey by clicking the link below. Completing the questionnaire should take about 10-15 minutes. The survey will provide valuable information for the Union, so participation is highly appreciated.

The questionnaire is open until 8th January 2015. If you have any questions concerning the survey, please contact sanna.hoikka@tieteentekijoidenliitto.fi.

Win iPad Air

After completing the survey, you can give your contact information for a drawing to win the iPad Air.

The winner will be personally contacted by the end of January 2015. [Good luck for the lottery!](#)

Confidentiality

In order to ensure confidentiality, the survey is conducted as an anonymous online questionnaire.

The contact information for the lottery is collected on a separate form and is not connected to the survey responses at any point.

Appendix 2. The questionnaire

1. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

2. What is your age?

- Under 30
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or older

3. What is your nationality?

4. Do you have Finnish citizenship?

- No
- Yes

5. What is your current marital status?

- Single, never married
- Married or domestic partnership
- Widowed
- Divorced

Q6 only for the respondents who are married or in a domestic partnership

6. Is you spouse / partner Finnish?

- No
- Yes

7. What is the number of under 18-year-old children in your household?

If you do not have under 18-year-old children in your household, please mark 0.

child(ren)

8. What is your education level?

Please mark only the highest level.

- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Licentiate
- Doctoral degree
- Other, please specify:

9. How long have you lived in Finland?

year(s) month(s)

10. How long do you plan to stay in Finland?

Please indicate the time counting from this day on.

- Less than a year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5 years or more
- I do not have plans to move out of Finland

11. What was the primary reason for you to move to Finland?

- To work on a specific post
- To look for a job
- To study
- Family reasons
- Other reason, please specify:

12. Why did you find Finland to be an attractive place to work or study?

13. Have you lived or worked outside your home country before you came to Finland?

		less than a year				1-2 years	3-4 years	5 years or more
<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Yes	Country: <input type="text"/>	Lenght of stay:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
		Country: <input type="text"/>	Lenght of stay:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
		Country: <input type="text"/>	Lenght of stay:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
		Country: <input type="text"/>	Lenght of stay:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
		Country: <input type="text"/>	Lenght of stay:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

14. While in Finland, have you been and how long have you been...?

	No	Yes		
Employed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/> year(s)	How many separate working contracts have you had? <input type="text"/>
On a grant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/> year(s)	How many separate grants have you had? <input type="text"/>
Student	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/> year(s)	
Unemployed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/> year(s)	
On a family leave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="text"/> year(s)	

15. What is your current status?

- Employed
- On a grant
- Student
- Unemployed
- On a family leave
- Other, please specify:

Q16-Q22 only for the respondents who are currently working

16. What is your current work position or title?

- Trainee researcher / Junior researcher / Doctoral student / Early stage researcher / PhD researcher
- Post-doctoral researcher
- Researcher
- University researcher / Senior researcher
- Academy research fellow
- Lecturer
- University lecturer
- Full-time teacher / University teacher
- Clinical instructor
- Other, please specify:

17. Who is your current employer?

- Aalto University
- Hanken School of Economics
- Lappeenranta University of Technology
- Tampere University of Technology
- University of Eastern Finland
- University of Helsinki
- University of Jyväskylä
- University of Lapland
- University of Oulu
- University of Tampere
- University of the Arts
- University of Turku
- University of Vaasa
- Åbo Akademi
- Other, please specify:

18. How long have you worked for this same employer?

year(s) month(s)

19. What is the type of your employment?

- Permanent
- Fixed-term

20. How many hours per week do you work on average?

Please estimate the time spent on your main occupation only.

hours/week

21. Do you work overtime?

- No
- Yes, without overtime compensation
- Yes, I get overtime compensation

22. How often do you work at home in the evening and/or on weekends?

- Never
- Couple of times a year
- Every other month
- 1-3 times a month
- 1-3 times a week
- More than 3 times a week

Q23-Q25 only for the respondents who are currently on a grant

23. Where are you currently stationed in?

- Aalto University
- Hanken School of Economics
- Lappeenranta University of Technology
- Tampere University of Technology
- University of Eastern Finland
- University of Helsinki
- University of Jyväskylä
- University of Lapland
- University of Oulu
- University of Tampere
- University of the Arts
- University of Turku
- University of Vaasa
- Åbo Akademi
- Other, please specify:

24. Do you do administrative or teaching work?

- No
- Yes, without compensation
- Yes, I get a monetary compensation for it

25. How many hours per week do you work on average?

hours/week

Q26-Q27 only for the respondents who are currently working or on a grant

26. Please indicate your level of satisfaction concerning the following issues:

	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
Amount of work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content of the work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Remuneration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work atmosphere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Equality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervision and mentoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Training possibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Amount of communication with supervisors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. In your workplace, have you been provided with...?

	No	Yes, but not enough	Yes, sufficiently	
An opportunity to get Finnish language training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Have you participated the training?
Social events to interact with colleagues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Have you participated these events?
Information about research funding opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Administrative information and communications in English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Information about Finland and the local culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Information about Finnish employment laws and regulations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

28. To what extent are the following statements true?

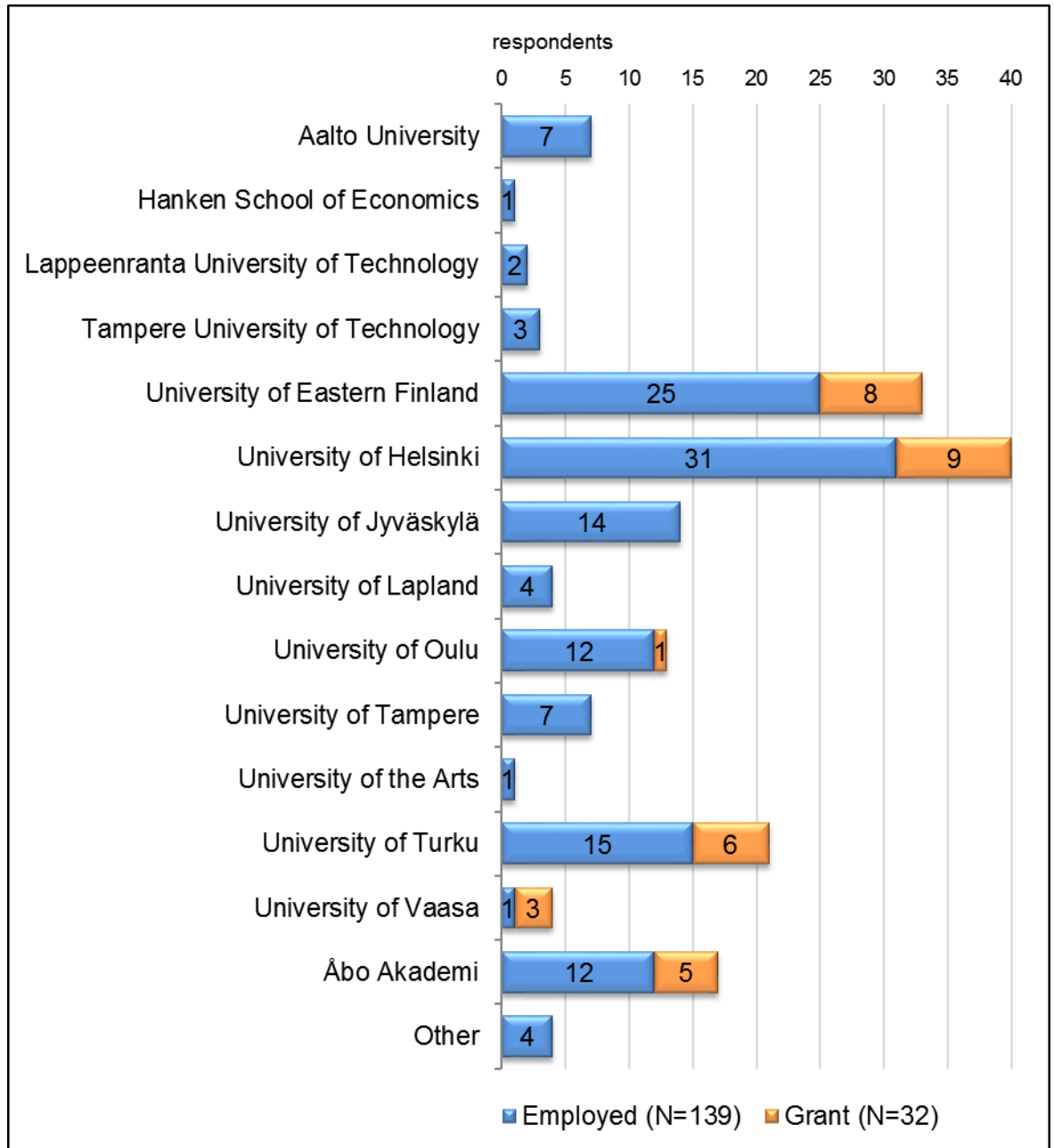
	Completely false	Somewhat false	Neither true or false	Somewhat true	Completely true
I am well adjusted to Finland	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am familiar with Finnish culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can speak Finnish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to learn to speak Finnish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it easy to form social relationships at work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it easy to form social relationships outside work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find it easier to socially interact with expatriates than with Finnish nationals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel reluctant to make friends because my stay in Finland is or might be temporary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe I have good job opportunities in Finland	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe my job experience is recognized worldwide	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

29. While in Finland, have you experienced any of the following challenges?

	Not at all	Only a little	Somewhat	Quite much	Very much
Problems relating to residence or work permit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficulties to find accommodation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problems with taxation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problems relating to social security system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of spouse's job opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficulty of spouse/family to adjust to Finland	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Risk of losing the current position/employment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial insecurity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uncertainty about the future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural differences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Language barriers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inequality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling of outsidersness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discrimination	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

30. What kind of challenges have you experienced in working life in Finland?

Appendix 3. Workplace of the respondents who are employed and on a grant



Appendix 4. Attractiveness of Finland as a place to work

PROFESSIONAL REASONS	
RESEARCH RESOURCES AND REPUTATION (28)	The intellectual environment is stimulating and there are many resources.
	The research group attracted me, especially their experience.
	There is very high level of scientific research in Helsinki and my major is biosciences.
	Finland enjoys a high reputation in my research area.
	Good standard of research.
	Due to the excellent international reputation of the research group at the university.
	Excellent reputation of the research done in Finland.
	Strong research group in my field, interesting projects.
	Lab facilities seemed good.
	Because of the international reputation of my current boss.
	A research group with a good track record.
	High quality of education and research.
	It's reknown for very good quality research.
	Heard good things about the research group, both people- and infrastructure-wise.
	Expertise within my field of research.
	The funding situation was excellent and the research group was/is of excellent reputation.
	The internationally renowned research laboratory I work in.
	The professional background is up-to-date, innovative and follows international trends
	Research infrastructure.
	Because has adequate investment in my research field
	My workplace is a stimulating place with internationally-minded colleagues
	Excellence and efficiency of academic institutions.
	Due to the higher quality of research.
	The high level of expertise in my field.
	It has high research and education standards.
	My dissertation supervisors are renown specialists in my field.
	There are great scientist, great academic level.
	Finland seemed like a good place to do the type of research that I was interested in.
INTERESTING JOB OFFER (24)	I like the university and the project.
	The job position offered to me in Finland appeared very attractive and interesting to me.
	The topic I was working is very interesting and fits my major.
	I find the work attractive.
	The work is suitable for my interest.
	I had an appropriate job offer from Finland.
	The job position or the research theme was attractive to me.
	Just got a work offer.
	Attractive and well-funded PhD project.
	Because I got a job offer.
	There was in interesting postdoctoral position in my field.
	I got a great opportunity to start my PhD.
	I received a job offer.
	PhD position at university for 3 1/2 years.
	I found a job in the field I wanted to work in.
	Good offer for PhD position.
	There was a job position.
	The job i was offered was competitive at the European level.
	Because of the features of the research to be done, which were precisely the ones I was looking for.
	I was offered a post-doctoral position before the end of my PhD and the project sounded exciting.
	The possibility to work in IT related topics as well as scientific computing.
	I was interested in continuing the research I pursued as a doctoral student.
	Excellent job.
	It was the first vacancy I found, i applied and got the job.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT (14)	I like the working atmosphere at the University.
	Very good working conditions.
	The way of working at Finnish university: less hierarchy, the system was more flexible and less competitive.
	Good working conditions, good protection of employees by workers unions.
	I can work more independently, I am much more appreciated and much better paid.
	Working is almost stress free.
	Bureaucracy is easy, working atmosphere is relaxed.
	Good working life: expected number of working hours per week, holiday time.
	Healthy work-life balance
	It has a good balance between working and personal life.
	I thought that the university system in Finland would be a democratic and calm working environment.
	Decent working conditions.
	Comfortable working conditions.
	Very pleasant working environment, no troublesome bureaucracy.
CAREER OPPORT. (8)	Various opportunities to conduct research in my areas of interest attracted me.
	Job opportunities
	Good job opportunities
	My career prospects are good
	Available opportunities to develop my career as researcher
	Plenty of opportunities to develop my career
	Advantageous for my career development.
	There were objective and concrete possibilities.
SALARY (7)	Reasonable conditions for phd s working on salary.
	I thought the level of salary was good.
	I am much better paid.
	The job is well paid.
	Salaries are ok.
	Decent salary .
Salary.	
OTHER REASONS	
THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE IN GENERAL (21)	I like the country and the people in general.
	It is a good country overall.
	The society is very safe and peaceful.
	The people here is very nice.
	My perception that it is 'family-friendly'.
	Peaceful place.
	Nice people, friendly society.
	Peaceful environment.
	The lifestyle in Finland in general, I felt very welcome here.
	Comfortable and safe country.
	The political atmosphere is much better here.
	I had a special admiration for the culture of the country.
	It is an international country, one can communicate in English. And the living environment is great.
	People are kind, nice.
	People are nice, life is kind of laid back here.
	Generally less stress
	In general honest people, safe country.
Nice people, comfortable place to live.	
I like the country, the life style.	
Because of it being a Nordic country.	
It is a part of the European Union.	

NATURE (10)	Beautiful nature and landscape.
	Beautiful country, a lot of space.
	Closeness of nature, outdoors sports.
	Nature is very important for me.
	Quiet, pleasant atmosphere in the environment.
	I had a special admiration for the nature of the country.
	Nature.
	Contact with the nature.
	Clean nature.
	I like the nature.
LIVING STANDARDS (9)	High standard living conditions.
	Quality of life.
	My teachers taught a lot about it back at elementary school, so I became hooked up.
	It's a healthy society, and is part of the European Union.
	Welfare.
	There is high level of living standards.
	Good economy
	Quality of life.
	Good economy, high level of life.
SOCIAL SECURITY (9)	People living here have lots of benefits.
	Good social security.
	It's reknown for it's wellbeing scandinavian system
	Social services are very good.
	Reliability of services is very important for me.
	Social services.
	Inexpensive health care, pension.
	After living outside of Europe, i wanted to be back in the european social safety-net.
	Social security is at very high level, especially concerning children.
EDUCATION (7)	The quality of the education is higher compared to other european countries.
	The educational system in Finland is considered to be best in the world.
	The children enjoy the best education system in the world.
	The reputation of the Finnish School system.
	School education is very good.
	There are very good schools.
	Good education system, so the university was attractive.
FAMILY (5)	Boyfriend is also working in Finland.
	My mother's family are Finnish.
	It was close to my partner who was already working here.
	My husband working in Finland.
EQUALITY (4)	I had personal (family) reasons to come back to Finland to be closer to relatives.
	Equality between people
	Focus on equality
	Female emancipation.
	There is high level of equality.

Appendix 5. Attractiveness of Finland as a place to study

PROFESSIONAL REASONS	
HIGH QUALITY (FREE) EDUCATION (33)	Good education system.
	The quality of the education system.
	The quality of courses given in Finland attracted me.
	No tuition fee.
	Quality higher education system, free from tuition fee.
	Free and quality education.
	World class education system.
	It is free.
	Good education especially in my study field.
	The study modules were quite flexible which allowed me to study multiple fields.
	Education is good.
	For its education.
	There is no tuition fee for study.
	Attractive free and quality education.
	No tuition fee at Masters level, good educational institutes.
	The best thing is the education.
	Best primary and secondary education in the world, free education.
	No tuition fee, high level of education.
	Finland is famous of its good education system.
	Good level of education
	Good structure in studies.
	I like the freedom you have in the length of study and the choose of courses.
	Good quality of provided courses.
	Much flexibility in the choice of courses.
	Lack of tuition fee, high level of education, high level of autonomy provided for students.
	The freedom, openness and easyness to choose courses across disciplines.
	No tuition was also a factor in my decision to come study in Finland.
	Tuition-free.
	Because of the quality of the education.
	Free high quality education.
	The quality of education is higher than in many other countries.
	Good education, international collaboration.
	Great possibilities for studies.
RESEARCH RESOURCES AND REPUTATION (12)	Because of the expertise in Finland in my field of study.
	Good infrastructures.
	Because of the level of scientific research in the field of social sciences.
	My husband chose this country because of his supervisor.
	There are great facilities and technology to do research. There is also a lot of funding opportunities.
	Strong research group at Åbo Akademi University.
	High level of research and science.
	Level of science on a high level.
	I'm Forest Engineer and Finland is a perfect place to study/work in this area.
	World class technological environment.
	Because of its reputation.
	Very nice research facilities.
INTERESTING STUDY PROGRAM (9)	The different research projects with the industries were attractive.
	I was looking for a PhD position and I found one in Finland.
	I was interested in the master programme which I was going to apply.
	The specific MA program I have completed.
	I found it a convenient place to study as I my major was Scandinavian history.
	Interesting perspective on the issue I studied.
	An interesting project I was hired to work with.
I'm Forest Engineer and Finland is a perfect place to study/work in this area.	
The research focus of my unit is very much related with my interest.	

WORKING ENVIRONMENT (6)	The working conditions were flexible.
	Short working days. No hierarchical "wall".
	Academic freedom.
	Generally good work-life balance, good atmosphere at the workplace.
	I enjoyed to study in an international environment.
	Finland encourages and welcomes international students and workers.
SALARY (4)	Then I got the opportunity to apply for fully funded doctoral program.
	The PhD study is paid with salary.
	An opportunity to earn a living wage.
	Relatively higher salary than in my home country.
	There are work and study opportunities
OTHER REASONS	
THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE IN GENERAL (10)	People, environment, and peace of this country.
	It used to be neutral ground when I first came here. Neither West nor East.
	Life in Helsinki is less hectic.
	Living in Finland is safe and comfortable.
	The quality of life is good and the social atmosphere makes it a good place to live, work and study.
	Not far from my home country. Good country and people. Comfortable to live with a family.
	Finland is very peaceful country and highly educated. Finnish people are very nice and friendly.
	Finland is famous of its honest citizen.
	A peaceful place to live.
	Peaceful environment.
SOCIAL SECURITY	Good student services such as housing, sports, healthcare; lunch and travel discounts.
	Smooth social security,
	Social system.
	Good social services and security, women have good opportunities and support after having children.
FAMILY	I met my husband before I came to Finland. He was also a reason for me to come here.
	I came here as a spouse.
	I met my future spouse.
EQUALITY	Almost equal treatment between foreigners and citizens in almost everything.
	Better and equal standard of living for everyone.

Appendix 6. The challenges faced in working life in Finland

Incommunication (56)

- Barely information from colleagues about funding opportunities in Finland or elsewhere.
- Getting the correct information about resources, duties, opportunities, rights, etc.
- Rules of employment and social security not self evident, should be easier available for foreigners.
- Sometimes lack of information (e.g. about Unions). I was on a contract for 2 years and no one told me about the benefits of joining a Union or työttömyyskassa.
- Limited access to the written and unwritten rules of behavior, networking, work practices, information about work organisation, own rights and responsibilities; If you do not ask you do not get information, but if you are from different cultural background you sometimes do not know what to ask about or you do not necessarily feel secure/legitimate to ask.
- Communication and integration.
- I was not familiar with local laws and university regulations (rights of PhD students, how to get tax back in the annual tax refund, etc.). If at all they were only explained if I asked. And I can be very demanding when I ask, so I normally get what I want. People less forward might never get that information.
- The lack of communication is the main challenge I face. Even the things that should be somehow well communicated, such as for example that you need to send your studies for study register, are not communicated clearly. It seems that you need to know these things from somewhere before. It goes same way with the employment contract extensions, funding and resources. You sometimes even hardly know what you should be asking for and you miss some opportunities or access to resources.
- Overall, a lack of integration within the department. My own research group is highly international, however we are not well integrated into the department/faculty as a whole. Navigating the bureaucracy, for example the salary system, has been relatively difficult. This may have an impact on the ability for me to be integrated into the department and feels to be a potential difficulty in further career opportunities.
- Little support from administration to help. Poor information sharing about my rights from the university.
- Difficult to follow "what's going on". You must always to ask in order to be informed.
- Understanding the administrative system.
- Dealing with administration, access to services.
- Being left out of strategic groups and thus unable to influence or create change.
- I feel that my colleagues do not always take me seriously because I'm female and a foreigner.
- Being a foreigner project leader, lack of trust, fight some prejudices such as low capacity to achieve the work.
- Convinced other researchers with different research field of my research results.
- Difficult to wake the interest of Finnish colleagues in my expertise.
- There is also the problem of having my opinion taken seriously due to being a foreigner - hearing too often "That's nice, but THIS is how we do it in Finland" as though the rest of the world/ my experience doesn't exist.
- Being heard professionally, not being invited, e.g. have received far more invitations to Sweden.
- Getting trust from others as they don't believe easily.
- Being ignored by coworkers (mostly Finnish).
- There is a great assumption that I am temporary and leaving the country at some point. Co-workers do not feel I can truly infiltrate the department to be permanent and have discouraged me from learning Finnish.
- Socializing with colleagues and supervisor which are quite challenging at the beginning but finally doable.
- Mostly, communicating with colleagues.
- Lack of relationship with most of colleagues.
- Communication and social interaction with colleagues, having opportunities for trainings and support for organising academic events (e.g. seminars), lack of academic networking.
- Differences in communication patterns.
- Sometimes it is difficult to enter in the right networks which would allow more stability in working conditions.
- I can't call it a challenge, but I strongly feel a lack of interpersonal communication on the working place - the one not connected with job itself.
- Difficult to build up collaborations.
- The Finnish culture in the workplace has been hard for me, as I am used to a more social environment.
- Incapability of most male Finns to communicate, even more difficult for many: to communicate with a male foreigner.
- Probably establishing social relationships that extend outside of work is somewhat impossible in the Finnish culture, which is not the case in my home culture.
- Language barriers, especially when spending the time informally with the colleagues (they seldom switch to English if they have already started a conversation).

- Sometimes I find it hard to communicate with my Finnish colleagues because I didn't understand Finnish at all and they always speak Finnish with each other.
- Difficulty to participate fully in daily social life at the workplace due to insufficient knowledge in Finnish language
- Feeling of exclusion due to language.
- Lack of information, lack of response from supervisor, unclear guidelines, contrast language differences in English and Finnish.
- Language barriers when communicating important information from the university to employees.
- Some information among employees is distributed only in Finnish.
- Many of websites are in Finnish. When I started to work, anybody did not explain about advantages or benefits that I can use.
- Lack of circulation of important information, most important information circulated only in Finnish.
- Lack of instruction and information of basic working life issues in English.
- Not being informed, because information was given only in Finnish or information was not given, because I am a foreigner and they did not want me to be included.
- Access to direct information from employer especially in the language you understand (English) is the most challenging part for me. All important information is in Finnish.
- Web content is richer in Finnish than in English on the same website.
- It could be good to be more informed about Finnish courses. Most of the information is...in Finnish and when it's in English, the courses take place during working hours.
- Relatively speaking the biggest challenge is related to updating myself with current information. Things change very fast here. I think this has partly to do with the lack of information written in English.
- Lack of communication with people on supportive or administrative functions resulting in time-consuming difficulties. Whenever available, information in English is much shorter and reduce compared to the Finnish one.
- I thought that in my working environment, it wouldn't be difficult to get admin help and information in English, but the opposite has turned out to be true. There is a large and thick divide between Finns and non-Finnish speaking employees in my department.
- Not knowing Finnish can be quite a challenging, in particular related to administrative issues (meetings, writing internal applications).
- Even though I do have working level of Finnish, there are still a lot of things I feel not capable of as a foreigner. E.g. get more involved in teaching or administrative meetings.
- Central communication (meetings of the faculty, minutes of the meetings) is available in Finnish only. This prevents me from actively participating in my work community. The teaching is also in Finnish only. Therefore, my chances to ever get a permanent position are very limited.
- It is difficult to assume that international staff will be able to hold meetings in Finnish immediately upon arrival. This would be easier to follow if there was any staff-focused Finnish courses. We can, of course, join exchange students in the courses, but it is very awkward to sit in the same lecture with students you supervise. Additionally, these student courses are designed with an attendance requirement that doesn't match with the long days of staff.
- Hired to be English speaker, at hiring told English was not a problem at meetings, but many Finnish colleagues struggle with English in work context. Also, database systems I am required to use are not yet in English, so I cannot fulfil all the requirements of my job. Also, Finnish courses are during the work day, and that interferes with my actual job.
- Language.
- Language.
- Language.
- Language.
- Language barrier.
- Language barrier.
- Language barrier.
- Mostly the language barrier and the pronunciation creating communication difficulties.
- Except of the language barrier nothing else.
- Not speaking Finnish well enough, as well as Swedish.
- The most important was the language barrier.
- Barrier language issues.
- The lack of Finnish language is very limiting.
- Language has been by far the most dominating.
- Language is large one.
- Missing language skills.

Job insecurity (60)	The language is supposed to be english for everything in the university, but is practive it is not.
	Also language is often a barrier, as there is no time to go for a language course (as the employer does not support it).
	The difficulty to communicate professionally in Finnish. Many career opportunities require a higher level of the language skills.
	It was really hard to find a qualified job with my knowledge of the Finnish language.
	Difficult to find courses in English. Since I am 90% sure that I will not find a job in Finland after getting a PhD, I do not want to waste my time learning Finnish.
	The language is the major obstacle. Being Danish studying and researching at Åbo Akademi, you get by with Swedish/Danish. But if I have to enter working life that won't do and my Finnish skills are not adequate. This seems to exclude me from about 90% of all jobs. I've also experienced that this excludes me from some recruitment agencies, which completely dismisses you inquiries if you don't speak Finnish.
	Lack of career prospects for non-Finnish speakers.
	Not so many opportunities for English speaking specialists, if it is not IT field.
	Competition for teacher position is high and requires very good knowledge of Finnish since almost all regular courses at least in my area are in Finnish.
	Though I have passed the language test for citizenship, lack of opportunities in Finnish speaking groups.
	I am working full time on my courses and research so no time to learn finnish enough. But I know I need to speak finnish to get a permanent contract.
Uncertainty about the future (11)	Finding a new job, since English-speaking jobs in my area are not easy to find.
	To find the professional job and always need to be active to secure job which some time make frustrated.
	No work contract, unemployed.
	Sometimes it is hard to find a job in Finland.
	Finding a job after i completed my first two assignments as a researcher has proved impossible over the past almost three years. Grant applications and job applications have proved unsuccessful so far and this is a challenge which is hard to deal with.
	Finding a career after finishing my PhD. I am still working on my PhD but the next steps after that is bit unclear.
	Constant job security or less breathing space. It's always fight to get grant or projects.
	I have very little certainty about employment after my current contract ends.
	Growth prospects - taking steps in professional life.
	Limited opportunity after Post-doc period (but very good support by supervisor!)
	Suitable job.
	Finding job, where my skills and education are appreciated and used ("I feel underutilised").
	The fact that my work have been mainly academic work it makes my possibilities for finding a job outside the university (industry, etc) a bit difficult.
	All the job and funding opportunies I received through my current position. I would be anxious to find a new job in Finland in another field.
	The market is too small in Finland.
	No support for the needed professional development
	No facilitation on future work situation.
	Lack of mentoring and/or investment of superiors in my career.
	Career developmental problems.
Uncertainty in the future (employment etc.) also adds quite a lot of stress.	
The biggest challenge for me has been insecurity. Since I have not worked in other countries than Finland, I do not know from own experience, whether academics there struggle with the same issue.	
Fixed term yearly contracts make it hard to plan for the future, creates insecurities.	
Short-term contracts are a big barrier to big life events (e.g. buying own house, children).	
Being always on fixed term position makes it feel insecure.	
The longer term of employment. It will be nice to have certainty over the work but I am realized that even Finnish citizens also found difficulties.	
I can't see future of job opportunities. My research work was all based on short-term contacts or grants. 6 month, 8 month, maximum 1 year. That gives me unstable feeling. I always worry about my finance situation to survive. I can't fully concentrate on my work. Moreover, many foundations set up grants are only for Finnish citizens.	
I only get temporary contract every year after year and I feel it is not very safe, and I can loose my job at any time. And it is also a bit hard to find the new place to work within the same research field.	
I have only limited time contracts, and I'm always afraid I would loose my job and then expelled from Finland. I fully depend on my supervisor and I don't know what I would do if he decides not to prolong my contract.	

	<p>The university system has changed a few years ago (new reforms) and as a consequence, the situation for grand receivers has changed too, bringing intensive competition, uncertainty about the future, getting grants & job positions, demands from university (system more demanding). It is unfortunately becoming like in the UK here too it seems... And mostly, not only for foreigners but also for Finns, the job positions last only for 1,2 or 3 years at a time. There's not guarantee for the future at all, and it is impossible to invest in future projects as one doesn't know whether and/or where s/he will find a job position in the coming years! It's impossible to plan in the long term not only in terms of personal life but in terms of professional life too!</p> <p>It's difficult to find a job opportunity in academic field. The contracts are usually for short time, and one have to give up a long term plan in researching work.</p> <p>It is difficult to get a long-term contract.</p> <p>Short term contracts.</p> <p>Short term job contract.</p> <p>Getting a permanent contract offer.</p> <p>Lots of fixed-term working contracts.</p> <p>It is impossible to get a permanent (or, at least, a long term) work agreement while working at a university (until you reach a professor level).</p> <p>Gaining permanent employment.</p> <p>Main challenge is how to get a permanent position.</p> <p>Short term contract, no long term or permanent opportunities: thus I am spending much of my time applying for grants instead of doing my work and thus improving my skills and CV.</p> <p>Lack of long term positions</p> <p>The "normal" and widely-spread practise to be given a fixed-term contract at an University. Yes, clearly this is because of limited project funding, but it seems it is quite uncommon in general and difficult to explain to people unrelated to academia - you feel like a human "tool" to be used and discarded when spent.</p> <p>Challenges related to non-permanent work status, which have also affected work permit issues.</p> <p>Finnish nationals have a better chance or higher possibility to get employment positions than foreign nationals at the university.</p> <p>Inequality in a competition for a job position with a Finnish citizen.</p> <p>Glass ceiling for professional development.</p> <p>Less working opportunity for high-educated foreigners, priority lay-off opportunity for foreigners.</p> <p>I have observed over the years, Finnish students have better oppourtunity to get in places such as graduate school board as student representatives, organising local meetings and so on. This also applies to teaching positions were Finns are favoured.</p> <p>Fact is that the higher you climb the career ladder, the less foreigners you meet. The key positions are firmly held by a small group of indigenou clans and even outsider Finns have little chances to penetrate into these circles, let alone foreigners... Many of the documents that I have to read/edit now as a PI have never been translated into English reflecting the attitude towards foreigners in higher positions.</p> <p>Lack of career perspectives for me as a foreign women, although my amount of results that I produce, and the publication record is better that of many Finns. This inequality is supported by my own supervisor, and I fail to get any job, in Finland or abroad, where his recommendation letter was required.</p> <p>Also, seeing that foreign professors are close to 0 does not help.</p> <p>Lack of opportunities for foreigners while there are much more to Finns, with similar work performances.</p>
Inequality or discrimination (15)	<p>Discrimination/inaccurate information & evaluation.</p> <p>A little bit of racial discrimination by a few work colleagues in one of my previous employments.</p> <p>Lies, discrimination, preferential treatment.</p> <p>Getting people to understand where I come from, my own culture without being judgemental.</p> <p>Finland does not seem like a very foreigner-friendly country to me, despite it being considered like a Scandinavian country. I have felt discriminated against on many levels and sometimes directly. Colleagues who are Finnish tend to not blend or mix well with foreigners and stay in their little groups.</p> <p>Unclear (and highly subjective) evaluation criteria for some positions</p>
Lack of funding (7)	<p>Funding problems.</p> <p>Lack of funding.</p> <p>Funding.</p> <p>Insecurity about the financing, for example, whether will continue to receive grants or whether being able to receive a contract.</p> <p>Difficult to find financial support for my reserch work.</p> <p>High competition to get research funding.</p>

	<p>Many doctoral and post-doctoral researchers are funded by external, i.e. private foundations. Most of these private foundations, even if they emphasize the opposite on their homepage, do not take into account the quality of research plan and the list of publications of the applicant when they make decisions. They make ad hoc decisions.</p>
Residence permits or social security (7)	<p>Residence/work permits</p> <p>The decision of residence permit is the most painful, unpleasant experience to go through annually.</p> <p>Long processing time for residence permit extension applications.</p> <p>Health insurance and social security problems as working on a European and not Finnish grant.</p> <p>Mistrust by Kela leading to long gaps in support.</p> <p>The most stressful was not having access to Kela when beginning work. Immediate access to affordable public health care, whether on grant or on salary, would be a huge relief to everyone who is employed.</p> <p>Major problems with qualifying for social security and banking rights. Available information about applying and qualifying for Kela, Mela, banking, internet, etc., has been unreliable, inconsistent and almost entirely anecdotal.</p>
Salary (6)	<p>Low salary, too long working hours, too big work load compared to Sweden, Norway, Denmark.</p> <p>Expenses are high and salary low.</p> <p>With two kids and PhD salary the main challenge has always been the finance.</p> <p>High cost of living vis-a-vis salary.</p> <p>I had to finish my phd thesis without being paid, just with unemployment money. At some point, I was paid 25% of PhD salary and I had to take a part-time job on the side. Some other PhD students / postdocs (Finnish) were also without grants, but they were fully paid.</p> <p>Money insecurity.</p>
Outsider-ness (4)	<p>Feeling of outsidership.</p> <p>Somehow outsider in different situations.</p> <p>Feeling of outsidership.</p> <p>I still feel like something of an outsider.</p>
No challenges (12)	<p>None.</p> <p>Nothing much.</p> <p>I do not have any challenges yet.</p> <p>None.</p> <p>Cannot remember any major challenges.</p> <p>Not at all.</p> <p>I can't remember now.</p> <p>Nothing spherical.</p> <p>Cannot think.</p> <p>Honestly, none.</p> <p>Nothing out of the ordinary.</p> <p>There is much work for my profession and to find a job is not a problem. Even I have the Dutch nationality, I'm practically Finnish. I have attended a Finnish school as a child and even my major subject at the university is Finnish. My profession outside the university is L2-Finnish teacher, so I don't feel like a "foreigner" at all.</p>
Miscellaneous	<p>Finding work for my spouse (Even though she became Finnish) has been a problem (name discrimination/not being born in Finland).</p> <p>Difficult to adjust life with a partner who is not working at University (moving to another city, abroad, etc).</p> <p>Lack of criticism, people are allowed to make mistakes and it's not OK to point it out.</p> <p>Sometimes I feel that people are not straightforward enough when it comes to job requirements.</p> <p>Working in a team in Finland it is quite challenging.</p> <p>To get used to the "lunch time", when nobody works and one cannot use somebody's expertise</p> <p>Working independently is something we are not used to in developing countries; also, the greatest challenge is managing time as efficient as Finnish counterparts.</p> <p>Hard weather and multiple international culture</p> <p>Experiences from a private business: "Suullinen contract" as basic offer and surprises when I was reluctant to have a real work contract...so I was the first got fired.</p> <p>No travel money for a postdoc hired by the department and not by a particular project</p> <p>Lab-specific problems include bullying, theft of intellectual property and illegal contracts.</p> <p>No employment contract during holiday period.</p> <p>When I retire I will write a book entitled 'Failures of internationalisation: Memoirs of an unemployed scientist', with z endings in US English with all titles in lower case as we do in Finland.</p> <p>Securing an office space to work as my colleagues.</p> <p>Challenging in the research and University courses but I feel it's good.</p>

I worked for a short time for a company that was hiring thesis students (all spaniards) because they received some kind of aid, but they did not have any intention of letting me write a MSc thesis on my work so I left.

There seems to be a lack of understanding the situation of international students/researchers within the university

Pay inequality while a grant funded researcher. Unemployment before my PhD studies are finished.

Lack of recognition for my work outside of Finland.

The lack of mobility between research groups and universities-- people stay in the same place.

Experiences from a private business: Boss makes racist, homophobic, xenophobic statements and expects that I agree...

Minor sexual harassment and bullying.

I am quite happy working in Finland, but there is a disturbing element of sexism at the work place.

International academics in Finland – in the shadow of uncertainty

Results from the survey for the international members of the union

TEXT SANNA HOIKKA

The challenges that international academics face in working life in Finland seem to fall under two themes: *uncertainty* because of extremely short fixed-term employment contracts and poor career opportunities in Finland, and *lack of communication* because of language barriers resulting in being excluded from important information and the work community.

The Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers FUURT conducted a survey for its international members in December 2014. The aim of the survey was to develop an understanding of the challenges that international researchers face in working life in Finland, and to receive feedback and suggestions for the Union to further develop its services.

The survey was conducted as an anonymous online questionnaire, and it was sent to all 529 members who are not Finnish by nationality. The response rate of the survey was 39 %.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The respondents have lived in Finland on average 5,2 years (=median). Only 4 % plan to stay less than a year, and a remarkable 56 % do not have plans to move out of Finland at all.

For 43 % the primary reason to move to Finland was to come to work on a specific post. 36 % came to study, 17 % for family reasons and 4 % for other reason. The respondents found Finland to be an attractive place to work or study mostly because of its

research resources and reputation, interesting job offer or high quality free education.

Interestingly, 64 % of the respondents who originally came to Finland to study are from countries outside the EU/ETA area. They represent 23 % of all the respondents, and they have lived in Finland on average 5,7 years and been employed or on a grant for 3,9 years. These results are quite interesting in terms of the discussion about the tuition fee for students outside the EU/ETA area and attracting international talent to Finland.

WORKING CONTRACTS

The respondents have worked for their current employer on average 3,6 years. Nevertheless, an alarming 91 % work on a fixed-term employment contract. Fixed-term contracts are known to be a huge problem in the university sector, but it seems that the international personnel are even more unlikely to get a permanent job. According to a FUURT membership survey conducted in 2013 in Finnish, 54 % of the union members have a fixed-term employment contract.

However, as 83 % of international members are researchers, partly the difference derives from the work position rather than the origin of the employee, so therefore, it is more rationale to make the comparison according to work positions. In the category of researchers, the proportion of fixed-term contracts is 97 % for the international members and 81 % for all members of the union.

For the international members, the average length of a working contract is 12 months. It is extremely

FIGURE 1 WORK SATISFACTION

1 = Very dissatisfied, 2 = Somewhat dissatisfied, 3 = Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4 = Somewhat satisfied, 5 = Very satisfied

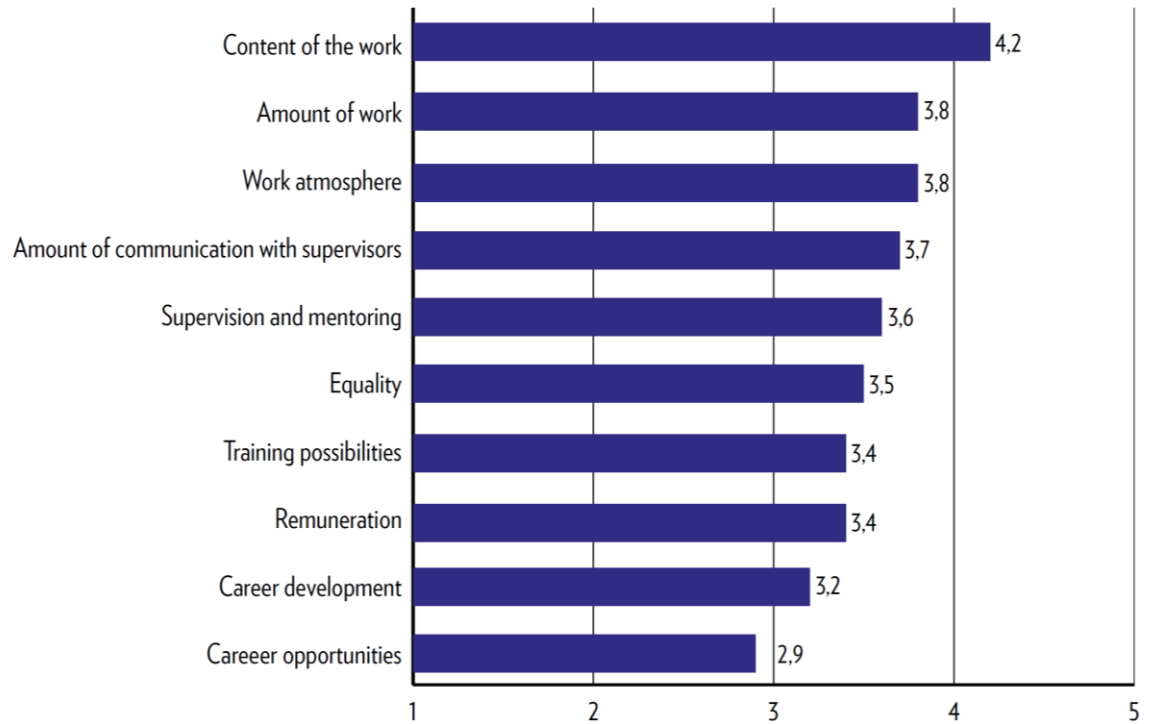


FIGURE 2 SUPPORT PROVIDED IN THE WORKPLACE

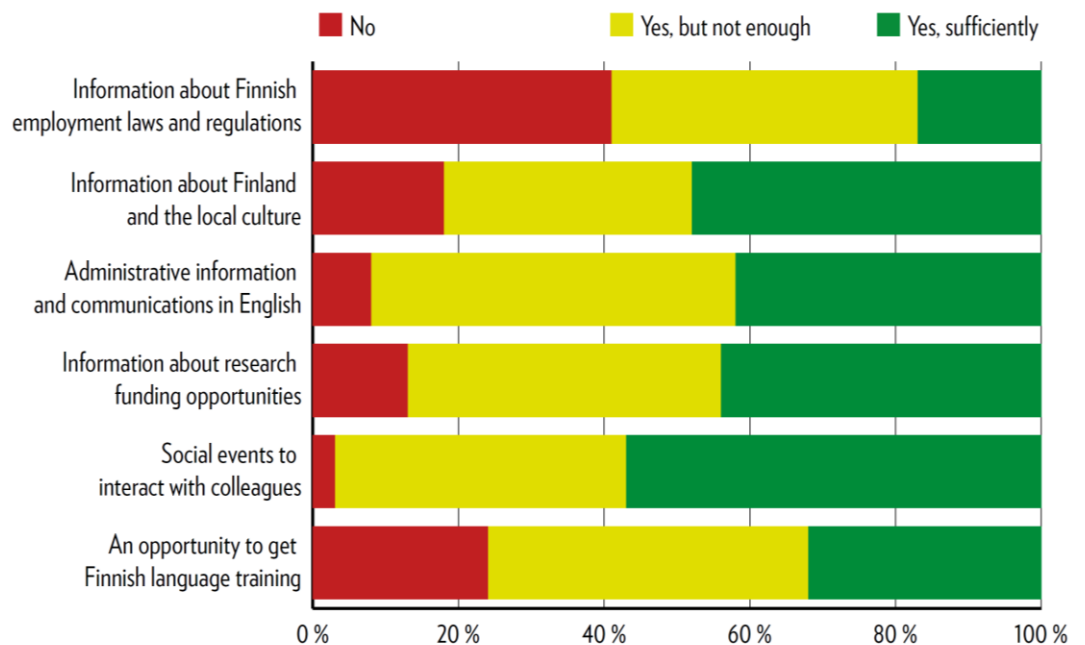
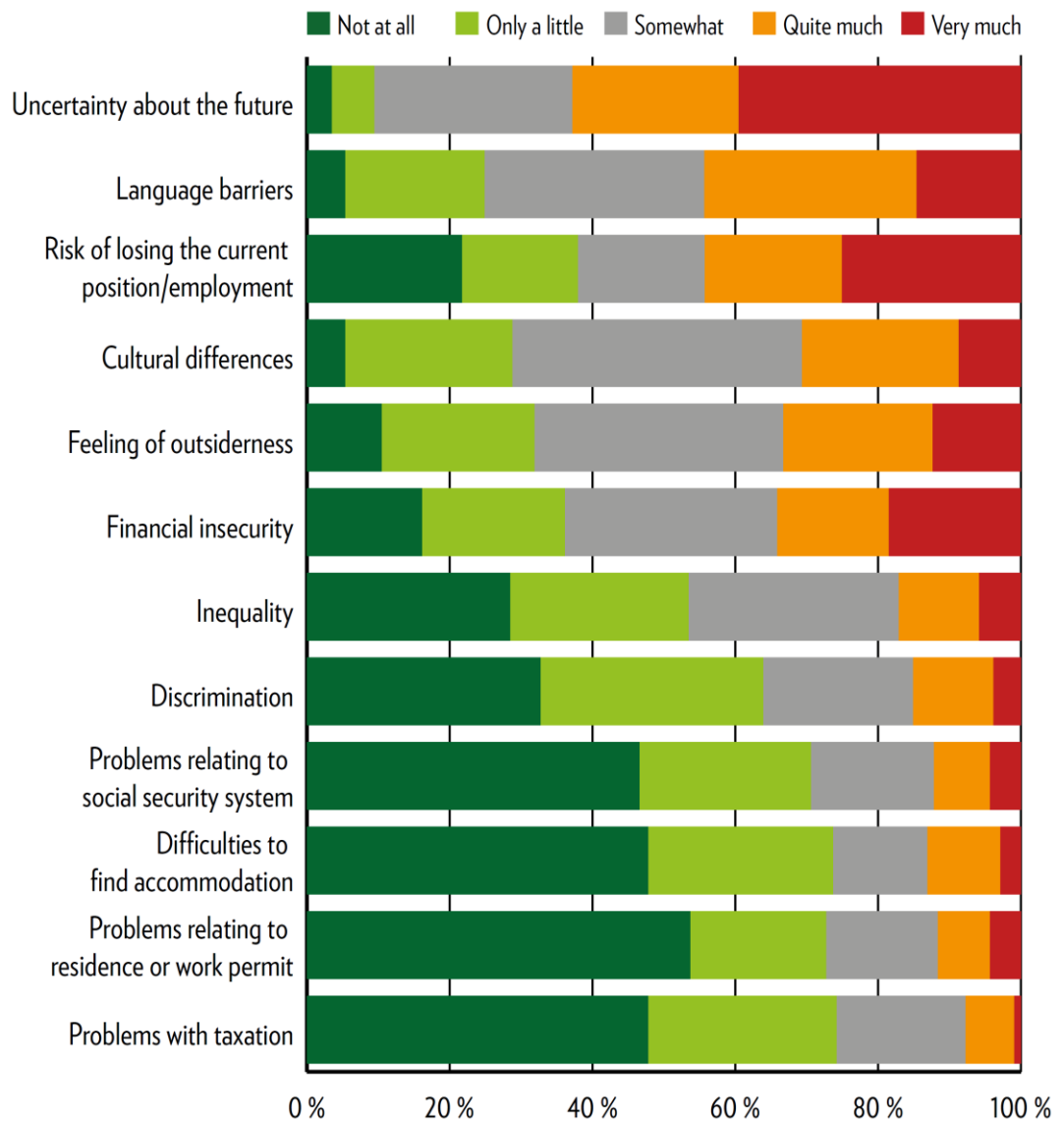


FIGURE 3 EXPERIENCED CHALLENGES IN FINLAND



short compared to all union members, as according to the 2013 membership survey, the average length of a fixed-term employment contract was 25 months. Hence, it seems that the international academics are suffering from even shorter employment contracts than the average.

WORKING HOURS AND WORK SATISFACTION

The mean of weekly working hours estimated by the respondents is 40,9 hours/week for the employees and 40,7 hours/week for the grant-holders. The majority (73 %) of the employed respondents do over-

time work without overtime compensation, and 61 % work at home in the evenings and/or weekends at least once a week.

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction to several work related issues on a Likert scale, where 1 = very dissatisfied and 5 = very satisfied. The results are presented in figure 1.

The respondents are most satisfied with the content of the work (mean 4,2) and least satisfied with career opportunities (mean 2,9). The lack of career opportunities and glass ceiling for professional development were mentioned numerous times also in

the open-ended question about the challenges in working life in Finland.

EMPLOYER SUPPORT

The respondents who were either employed or on a grant were asked a set of questions about the support provided by their workplace. The results are presented in figure 2.

Only 17 % of the respondents have received enough information about Finnish employment laws and regulations at their workplace, and an alarming 41 % have not received that information at all.

48 % have been provided with sufficient information about Finland and the local culture, 42 % with sufficient administrative information and communications in English, and 44 % with enough information about research funding opportunities. So, there is a lot to improve.

“Lack of communication with people on supportive or administrative functions results in time-consuming difficulties. Whenever available, information in English is much shorter and reduced compared to the Finnish one.”

57 % of the respondents have had sufficiently social events to interact with colleagues, and only 3 % have not had these opportunities at all. This result is very satisfying, as there is an evident demand for events to interact with colleagues. 82 % of the respondents, who were provided with these events, did participate.

Only 32 % of the respondents have been provided enough opportunities to get Finnish language training, and unfortunately, 24 % have not been provided with an opportunity to learn Finnish at all. There should be no excuse not to provide language training for the international academics, as 73 % of the respondents, who have been provided with the opportunity, did participate the training.

SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

A vast majority of the respondents are well or quite well adjusted to Finland (84 %) and familiar with Finnish culture (88 %). Out of the 130 respondents who feel that they cannot speak much Finnish, 79 % want to learn it. And, out of the 72 respondents who already feel that they can speak Finnish, 89 % still want to learn more.

58 % of the respondents find it easy or quite easy to form social relationships at work and only 41 % outside work. As much as 59 % of the respondents find it easier to interact with expatriates than with Finnish nationals.

CHALLENGES IN FINLAND

Using a list of pre-determined potential challenges, the respondents were asked to estimate to which extent they have faced these challenges in Finland on a scale, where 1 = not at all and 5 = very much. The results are presented in Figure 3.

By far the greatest challenge for the international academics is uncertainty about the future. 40 % of the respondents have experienced very much uncertainty about the future and 23 % quite much. Only 3 % answered that they have not experienced uncertainty about the future at all.

“It’s impossible to plan in the long term not only in terms of personal life but in terms of professional life too.”

Language barriers and risk of losing the current position or employment are experienced quite or very much challenging by 44 % of the respondents. More than 30 % of the respondents have experienced quite or very much challenges relating to cultural differences, feeling of outsidersness and financial insecurity. And unfortunately, 17 % have experienced quite or very much inequality.

“Language barriers, especially when spending time informally with colleagues, as they seldom switch to English if they have already started a conversation.”

The areas which are considered least challenging are problems with taxation and residence or work permits, difficulties to find accommodation and problems relating to social security system. Roughly half of the respondents have not encountered any problems in these areas, and only about 10 % have faced quite much or very much these challenges. •

“Whenever available, information in English is much shorter and reduced compared to the Finnish one.”

THE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY FOR INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS ARE PRESENTED IN A SEMINAR COMMUNICATE, INFLUENCE AND INTERNATIONALIZE ON 19TH OCTOBER. THE RESULTS WILL ALSO BE PUBLISHED AS A PART OF A MASTER’S THESIS NEXT SPRING.

Appendix 8. FUURT's press release of the survey results

Lack of information and short employment contracts are the biggest problems of international academics

MAY BE PUBLISHED ON MONDAY 19 OCT 2015

International academics in Finland suffer from uncertainty of short-term contracts and lack of information provided in English.

The careers of international academics consist of short fixed-term employment contracts. As much as 91 % of the international members of The Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers (FUURT) work on a fixed-term employment contract. For all the members of the union, the proportion of fixed-term contracts is 56 %.

FUURT conducted a survey for its international members last December. The survey was sent to all 529 members who are not Finnish by nationality. The response rate was 39 %. The results of the survey were presented in a seminar Communicate, Influence and Internationalize in Helsinki on Monday.

The union criticizes the shortage of fixed-term employment contracts in the university sector in general, but it seems that international personnel have even shorter contracts than the average. For the international members, the average length of a working contract is 12 months, whereas according to the latest membership survey, for all members of the union the average length of a fixed-term employment contract was 25 months.

The results of the survey indicate that international academics do not get enough information about Finnish employment laws and regulations at their workplace: an alarming 41 % of the respondents have not received this information at all. 48 % have been provided with sufficient information about Finland and the local culture, 42 % with sufficient administrative information and communications in English, and 44 % with enough information about research funding opportunities.

Only a third of the respondents have been provided enough opportunities to get Finnish language training, and 24 % have not been provided with an opportunity to learn Finnish at all.

- These shortcomings are in conflict with the universities' internationalization goals. If Finland would be able to truly attract international researchers to Finland, it would not suffer so much from the increasing trend of Finnish researchers leaving abroad. Now it seems that Finland is losing at both ends, says Petri Koikkalainen, the president of the Finnish Union of University Researchers.

The respondents were also asked about the challenges that they have faced in Finland. Clearly the greatest challenge for the international academics is uncertainty about the future. Two thirds of the respondents have experienced quite much or very much uncertainty about the future. Language barriers and risk of losing the current position or employment are experienced quite or very much challenging by 44 %.

The respondents have lived in Finland on average 5,2 years. 56 % of the respondents do not have plans to move out of Finland at all. For 43 % the primary reason to move to Finland was to come to work on a specific post. 36 % came to study and 17 % for family reasons.

Two thirds of the respondents who originally came to Finland to study were from countries outside the EU/EEA area, mostly from China and India. That is quite interesting in terms of the discussion about the tuition fee for students outside the EU/EEA area and attracting international talent to Finland.

The survey was conducted as a part of a Master's Thesis.

The press release can be found at:

http://tieteentekijoidenliitto.fi/en/material/press_releases/lack_of_information_and_short_employment_contracts_are_the_biggest_problems_of_international_academics.1286.news