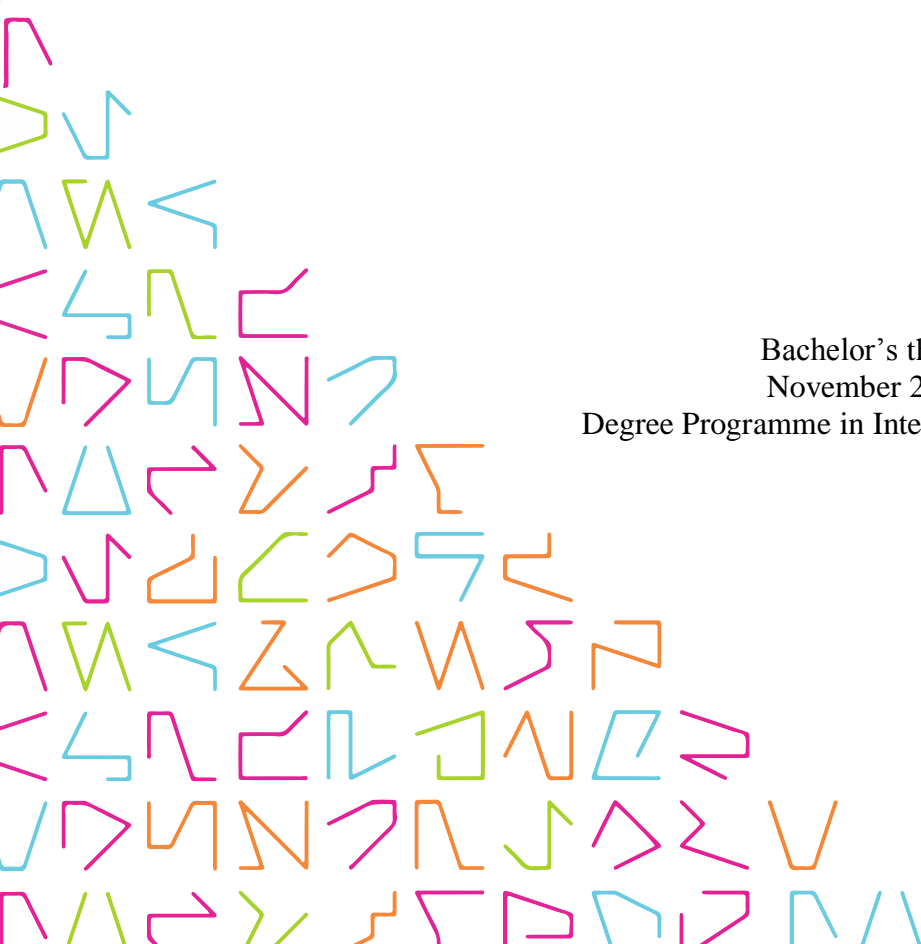


FINNISH EXPATRIATES' EXPIENCES IN HONG KONG

Challenges in relocation

Ella Laakso

Bachelor's thesis
November 2018
Degree Programme in International Business



ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
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Finnish expatriates' experiences in Hong Kong – Challenges in relocation

Bachelor's thesis 49 pages, appendices 5 pages
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The purpose of this thesis was to conduct a survey to study Finnish expatriates for the thesis commissioner, Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong (FinnCham). The main research question, which the thesis aims to answer, is about challenges Finns face in their relocation process to Hong Kong. The results and insight gained from this research will assist FinnCham to target, design and plan their future services better for their members.

The research was conducted primarily among the target group of Finns having lived in Hong Kong for work, study or other purposes less than 12 months, using online questionnaire form. Secondary data collection method was completed with additional questions via e-mail to gain deeper insight on the results. The collected data was then reflected against global survey results of the subject and analysed based on the theoretical back-ground of the thesis.

The results of this thesis show that majority of the respondents had experienced practical matters concerning housing and bureaucracy the most challenging in their relocation. However, Hong Kong and its culture were easy to adapt due to city's Western appeal and vibrant atmosphere. This made it easy to make friends and build professional networks.

The findings show that even though cultural matters did not cause many challenges, the level of cultural knowledge and preparedness for the destination culture beforehand had a beneficial impact in the relocation process itself.

Key words: expatriation, cultural differences, relocation

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Thesis topic

It is a generally accepted and established fact, that in today's world businesses and organizations need to be willing and able to adapt to rapidly changing environments in order to make it due to intense competition, retain their competitive edges, improve, succeed and meet customer needs (Verma 2018).

The topic of this thesis is how Finnish expatriates experience Hong Kong and process of relocating there. Factors in question are the city and its customs and more importantly, its culture. What makes this topic interesting to study are the cultural differences between Finnish and Hong Kongese cultures, which may seem self-evident but are, however, a much more complex matter. This will be proved in the theoretical framework. Nishimura, Nevgi and Tella (2008, 783) explain that it is generally acknowledged that people from different countries tend to communicate in slightly different ways.

For example, Nishimura et al. (2008, 783) argue that these differences are more related to different communication cultures than other differences. Understanding how different these cultures are, misunderstandings in intercultural discourse are to be expected.

This thesis aims to show some reasons what makes cultures different though theories of cultural differences and surveying people who have experienced the cultural adaption with its differences first-hand.

The results and insights gathered from this thesis are very important knowledge for Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, as service design and continuous improvement is a vital part of any company's or organization's operations and this is especially true in the service sector business, where the services itself are the products. It is crucial to keep the services up to date and relevant so they serve the existing customers the best as possible and would attract new customers. Organisations which are able to renew their products, services and processes, have distinctive and defensible competitive advantages (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994; Kay, 1993 as cited in Bessant & Caffyn, 1997, 5) As Bessant and Caffyn note, most innovation is not of the 'breakthrough' variety where

something completely new is created, but more often it is much more a process of systematic elaboration and developing of ideas, which is exactly what is done in this thesis and through its research.

1.2. Thesis objective and purpose

Purpose of this thesis is to conduct a research in behalf of the commissioner of this thesis, Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong (introduced in more detail in chapter 1.3) studying Finns, who have recently relocated to Hong Kong for work, internship, studies or business. Finns new to Hong Kong are potential new members for FinnCham, and therefore, the purpose is to gather information about their experiences of moving and settling in to a new country and its customs and culture.

The main research question is what kind of challenges Finns have faced in their relocation process to Hong Kong. This information is extremely important, not just for this single case, but in general when people interact with member of different cultures, let alone immerse in the culture all at once. As Nishimura et al. (2008, 783) aptly put it, “being aware of communication culture differences usually leads to better comprehension, fewer misunderstandings and to mutual respect”. Then, based on the positivity or negativity of the relocation process, it can be evaluated how much the respondents have experienced misunderstandings in communication culture with Hong Kongese, which indicates the level of cultural understanding Finns have, and that information is needed for designing the services and their content for this group as FinnCham’s potential new clientele.

In addition to the research, this thesis has a developing objective. The objective of this thesis is to provide FinnCham an insight of Finns experiences of relocating to Hong Kong, based on which they can use the information for development purposes, such as improving or tailoring their services better for new members. In practice, this means what they could add, change or improve in their services, so that they are able to better answer the needs that their new clients have.

1.3. The commissioner

The commissioner for this thesis is Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong (later FinnCham), which was established in 1986. It is an independent non-profit organization with the aim to connect Finnish companies and companies closely linked to Finland through their extensive business network, sharing knowledge to their members and helping new companies to establish their business in Hong Kong and South-China market.

They work on a membership basis, and they offer memberships in four different categories, which are corporate member, individual member, corporate overseas member and young professionals member. The advantages which members receive once joining are networking among other members as well as with FinnCham's business contacts, various events organized multiple times a year, visibility for corporate member companies, as can be seen from picture below. Other benefits include lobbying, world-wide cooperation and staying up to date of the current events in business scene in Hong Kong (FinnCham 2018a).

FinnCham actively hosts both business and social events, the purpose of which is to add the member's mutual interaction within the Finnish community and within other international communities and governmental institutions.

They also offer first-hand help and knowledge to its member who are setting up a business or searching for a job in Hong Kong and China.



PICTURE 1. FinnCham members listed on their website (FinnCham)

Corporate members of FinnCham are Finnish companies, or companies with close ties to Finland, ranging in industry and size from small start-ups to larger established companies (FinnCham 2018a). They have 58 corporate members, such as Finnair, Handelsbanken, Polar, Finlayson, Kone and many more.

2 EXPATRIATION AS A PHENOMENON

The origin of the word 'expatriate' comes from Latin words 'ex' (out of) and 'patria' (native country) and its most simple definition is still very literal, expatriate is someone living outside of their home country. As a phenomenon, it is nothing new, expatriation and migration of people have occurred since ancient human history, in forms such as merchants, missionaries and diplomats. The term came into public knowledge due to the 'lost generation' - a group of American authors and artists, who stayed in Paris, France after World War I until the Great Depression in 1930's.

Probably the most common form of expatriation is traditionally considered to be assignments. Meaning of assignment is that an employee is sent to work abroad for fixed period of time and then return back to original job. These type of expatriates are called organizational expatriates they often are sponsored and assigned by their parent organizations to a foreign location (Cerdin & Selmer, 2013, 1281)

During their assignment, their tasks can include such as facilitating the operation of foreign subsidiaries, establishing new international markets, spreading and sustaining corporate culture, and transferring technology, knowledge and skills (Brown, 1994; Klaus, 1995; Solomon, 1994 as cited in Huang, Chi & Lawler, 2005, 1).

Due to the mobile nature of expatriation, it is a difficult subject to study, but some studies and statistics exist. Most recent and comprehensive one was conducted by Finaccord in 2013, and according to it, the total number of expatriates worldwide was 50,5 million in 2013 (Finaccord 2014). This figure has grown at a compound annual rate of 2,4 % since 2009, given that there were around 46 million expatriates in that year. By 2017, Finaccord forecast that the number will reach around 56,8 million, but no new studies have been made in order to confirm the estimation.

According to the study, majority of expatriates in 2013 were classifiable as individual workers (73,6 %) followed by students (8,8 %), retired expatriates (3,7 %) and corporate transferees (1,0 %), with the balance of other expatriates (defined as non-employed spouses and children) making up the residual 12,8 %.

Across 30 important inbound destination countries for expatriates investigated, top 3 number of expatriates in 2013 were located in Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the US. The

top 3 smallest expatriate population was found in Poland, Portugal and Sweden. Saudi Arabia also had the largest expatriate population out of the percentage of its total immigrant population (98,4 %). Expatriates made up the largest percentage of the total population in Qatar, with 70,9 %. Lastly, the top 3 countries where expatriates emigrated from were India, followed by China and the UK (Finaccord 2014).

Globalization opened the need for expatriate work and organizational assignments have been the main type of expatriation, but due to ever increasing internationalization, the nature and purpose of international assignments have a trend of becoming increasingly complex (Mayerhofer, Hartmann, Michelitsch-Riedl & Kollinger, 2004 as cited in Cerdin & Selmer, 2013, 1281).

One of the largest current trends among expatriates are self-initiated expatriates (SIE). According to Cerdin and Selmer (2013, 1281), a SIE is someone who fills the following four criteria simultaneously: self-initiated international relocation, regular employment (intentions), intentions of a temporary stay, and skilled/professional qualifications.

Other foreseeable trends among expatriation are short-term assignments, employee's reluctance to accept assignments due to spouse also having a career and local companies in emerging market hiring Western managers directly.

2.1. Expatriate vs immigrant

Defining who is an expatriate and who is an immigrant is anything but simple. Both terms have their own definition, but their usage is complicated as, besides their technical definitions, their meanings have become loaded over time (BBC 2017).

Technically, an expatriate is an individual living in a country that is not his/her country of citizenship, often temporarily and for work reasons. An expatriate can also be a person who has relinquished citizenship in their home country to become a citizen of another (Investopedia 2018). And, technically, immigrant is a person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country (Oxford Dictionary 2018).

Over time, both of these terms have become coloured, which makes their usage tricky. According to the definitions, expatriate can also be an immigrant but not vice versa because immigrant contains the thought of permanent residency in a new country. Also,

expatriate is often used to describe educated, rich professionals working abroad, while those in less privileged positions or from poorer countries, for example, a Latin American maid in the United States or a construction worker in Asia are referred as foreign workers, immigrants or migrant workers (BBC 2017). This classification matters, because such language can in some cases be used as a political tool or to dehumanise.

From the point of the study of this thesis it does not matter which Finns are expatriates and which are immigrants, meaning whether they have come to Hong Kong temporarily or permanently. Therefore, there is no need to decide and or segment which ones to study, as FinnCham welcomes both as their members. Due to this, in this thesis, all interviewed Finns leading their lives currently in Hong Kong are referred equally as expatriates as there is no way of knowing beforehand, whether the subjects are moving temporarily or permanently to Hong Kong, but it is studied in the conducted questionnaire.

2.2. Finnish expatriation

A total of 18 082 people moved abroad from Finland in 2016, which was 11 per cent more than in the previous year 2015 (Official Statistics Finland 2017) and also an all-time record for emigration from Finland. Most of Finnish expatriates move to other Western countries, and in 2015 the top 3 countries for Finnish citizens were Sweden, the UK and USA (Ojala 2016). The statistics do not show any significant increase in Finns' relocation to Asia, but the number of Finns moving to Asia has been keeping at a steady level. This fact could imply that Finns are not yet aware or intrigued of Asia's rapidly improving economic situation and that it could offer high quality of life and many opportunities for educated people, who are the majority groups of Finns emigrating from their home country.

Out of the total number of emigrants, 1,7 % or 315 of them moved to China, as can be seen from figure 1. The statistic from past 10 years show a significant peak in movement in 2012, but other than that, there seems to be a steady flow of approximately 300 Finns migrating to China annually. According to the Finnish vice consul of Hong Kong, the number of Finnish expatriate population is approximately 250.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
China											
WHOLE COUNTRY											
Total											
Total											
Emigration from Finland	212	249	281	241	291	376	327	281	286	315	304

FIGURE 1. Number of Finns who have migrated to China (including Hong Kong) 2007-2017 (Official Statistics Finland)

Typically, Finnish expatriate population is highly educated. In fact, emigration of Finnish citizens with at least upper secondary qualifications has been bigger than immigration during the past decade (Official Statistics Finland 2017). This has led to discussions about ‘brain drain’, emigration of well-educated workforce to more economically appealing countries.

People who leave Finland are often young adults and they do not leave just for economic reasons, but also to develop their careers, seek new experiences, improve their language qualifications or they find a spouse and move to live in their home country (Ojala 2016). According to Official Statistics Finland, 59 % of emigrants were aged 15 to 39 in 2016. Women formed a majority of those aged 15 to 39 in emigration, 55 per cent. Women had a slim majority of all emigrants, 51 per cent (Official Statistics Finland 2017).

2.3. Expatriates in Hong Kong

The number of expatriate population in Hong Kong in 2016 was 35 997, according to The Hong Kong Council of Social Services, who have collected this information from the Immigration department since 1991, as can be seen in the table below. Expatriates form 4,6 % of Hong Kong’s total population (Go Globe 2015). The total population of Hong Kong is estimated to be 7 451 492 people currently, making it one of the most densely populated areas in the world (World Population Review 2018).

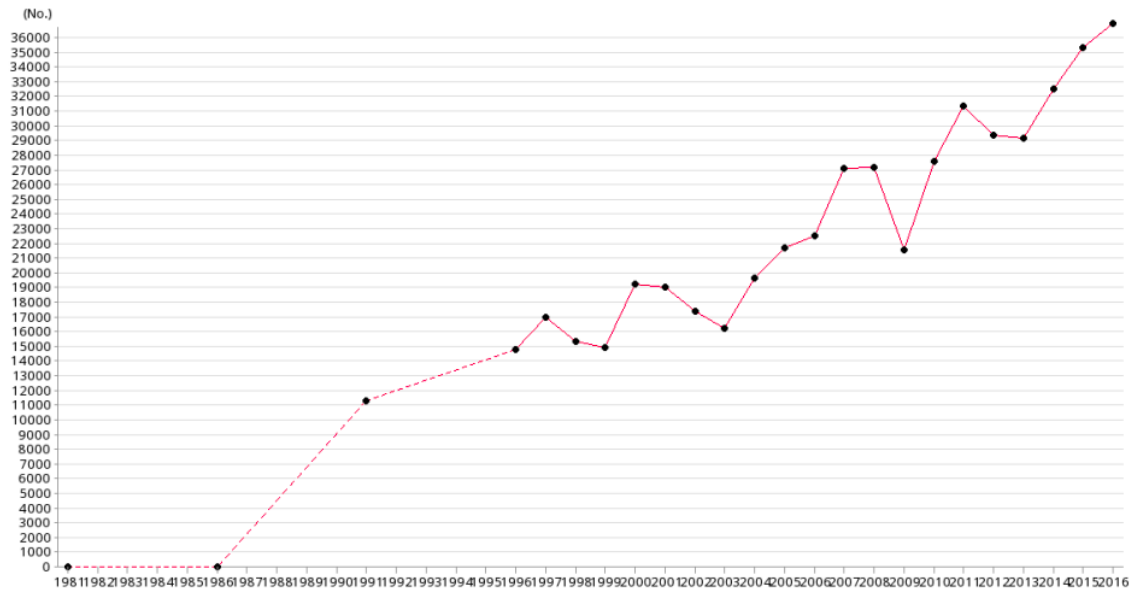


FIGURE 2. Number of expatriate population in Hong Kong 1991-2016 (Social indicators of Hong Kong 2017)

Hong Kong is widely known as one of the main commercial and economic centres of the world. Beneficially to this topic, there are quite many statistics and surveys done regarding international expatriate population in Hong Kong, which help to provide some great insight to the topic. In global comparison, Hong Kong ranks 17th as a top destination for expatriates out of 31 destinations studied in HSBC's Expat Explorer Survey 2018.

According to the survey, almost 70% of expatriates are in full-time employment, which is a high number compared globally. Expatriates seem to be drawn to Hong Kong for the chance to progress their careers (40 % of respondents) and to improve their earnings (28 %).

Expatriates in Hong Kong also make the most amount of money out of all destinations in Asia-Pacific region and ranks third worldwide. They earn an average salary of US\$ 178,706 a year, which is US\$ 72,000 more than the average expatriate globally (South China Morning Star 2018).

With the highly improving economic situation in Asia-Pacific region, more markets are able to provide more and more appealing opportunities for expatriates. But still, expatriate destinations like Hong Kong, Singapore and mainland China have been able to keep their status as main hubs for global talent. They have enforced their position as leading international commercial and financial centres with not only high income rate, but also providing long-term career growth (South China Morning Star 2018).

However, wealth and high income do not come without a personal cost. Work life in Hong Kong has caused added stress for more than half of its expatriates (57 %). Over half (52 %) of expatriates say they work in evenings and at weekends more now than they did back at home and 48 % say their work is now in worse balance with their lives than before Hong Kong (HSBC 2018a).

Living costs and quality of life are issues that expatriates recognize in Hong Kong. Also, 2018 counts as the fourth year in a row when Singapore has had a top ranking in terms of living conditions for expatriates far surpassing Hong Kong (South China Morning Star 2018). This can evidently be seen from figure 3 below, where number one expatriate destination Singapore outranks Hong Kong on all criteria besides culture and making friends.

Experience					
	Hong Kong		Singapore		
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	
Overall	0.50	18	0.59	6	
Quality of life	0.42	28	0.63	10	
Culture	0.64	11	0.60	20	
Health	0.32	28	0.47	12	
Making friends	0.53	15	0.46	24	
Integration	0.54	26	0.58	23	
Safety	0.68	9	0.79	2	
Finance	0.50	6	0.62	2	
Healthcare	0.50	16	0.58	4	
Property	0.38	27	0.57	9	

FIGURE 3. Comparison between Singapore and Hong Kong according to experience ranked 1-31 (HSBC 2018b)

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions

Dutch professor Geert Hofstede has conducted one of the most comprehensive studies on how values in workplaces are influenced by culture. Hofstede's defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others" (Hofstede Insights 2018).

The Hofstede model of national culture consists of six dimensions. The cultural dimensions represent independent preferences for one state of affairs over another that distinguish countries (rather than individuals) from each other (Hofstede Insights 2018). The dimensional models consist of averages and does not take it into consideration individual variation, therefore the model cannot be interpreted literally but more as general guidelines into understanding each national culture.

The dimensions are introduced and analysed by comparing the two countries in question, Finland and Hong Kong.

Overall, it can be said that the two countries are very different from each other, which means that there are large cultural differences and when Finns move to live in Hong Kong.

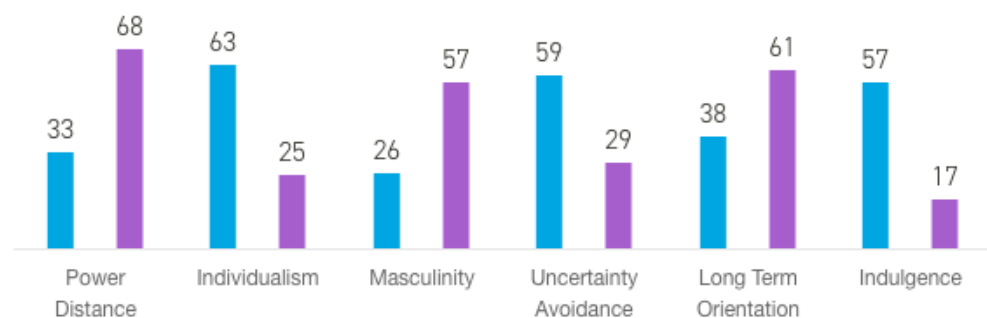


FIGURE 4. Cultural dimensions models' comparison between Finland and Hong Kong (Hofstede Insights 2018)

3.1.1 Power distance

All individuals in societies are not equal, and power distance dimensions measures how the members of society accept this as truth or not and accept the fact that power is sometimes distributed unequally (Hofstede Insights 2018).

Finland scores 33 in power distance, which means they only accept inequality to some extent and is a country of low hierarchy, independency and control are disliked and attitude towards superiors is informal and usually on first name basis. Communication is also direct and participative (Hofstede Insights 2018).

Hong Kong, however, scores high, 68, in power distance. It is a society that believes inequalities amongst people are acceptable. The subordinate-superior relationship tends to be polarized and there is no defence against power abuse by superiors. Individuals are influenced by formal authority and sanctions, but are generally optimistic about people's capacity for leadership and initiative (Hofstede Insights 2018). More of "do what you're told" mentality is in place and superiors are not to be questioned.

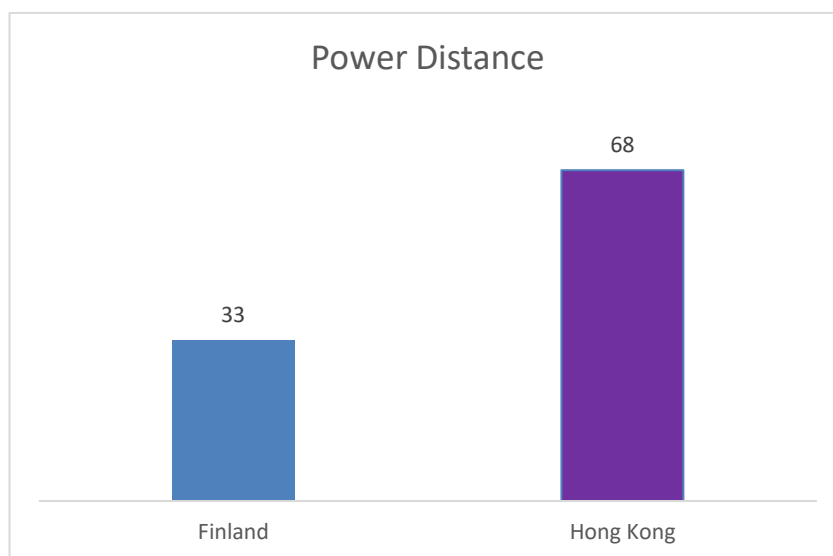


FIGURE 5. Power distance scores

3.1.2 Individualism

Individualism is a dimension which is compared against collectivism and it aims to measure the amount of interdependence between society members. It has also to do with whether a society member refers to oneself as 'I' or 'we'. In individualistic countries, people are meant to take care of themselves and only the most direct family whereas in collectivist societies people belong in bigger groups which take of all group member in exchange to loyalty (Hofstede Insights 2018).

With a score of 63, Finland is clearly an individualist society, where peoples' social framework is loose and people are meant to take care of the closest ones only. Offenses do cause guilt and loss of self-esteem, and individualism can be seen, for example, in the employer/employee relationship, which is a contract based on mutual advantage. Hiring and promotion decisions are supposed to be based on merit only without other strings attached or preferential treatment, and management is considered to be the management of individuals (Hofstede Insights 2018).

Hong Kong is a collectivist society with score of 25 in individualism. In this society, people prioritize the good of the group higher rather than their own good. In-group considerations affect hiring and promotions with closer in-groups (such as family) are getting preferential treatment.

Colleague relationships with are cooperative by nature for in-groups, but they might be cold or even hostile to out-groups. Personal relationships prevail over task and company. Communication is indirect and the harmony of the group has to be maintained as a priority and open conflicts are to be avoided (Hofstede Insights 2018).

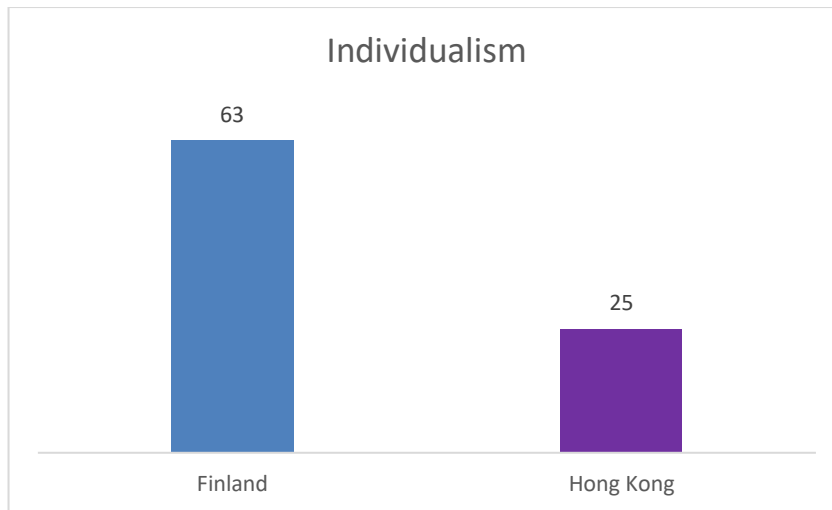


FIGURE 6. Individualism scores

3.1.3 Masculinity

A high score in this dimension reads a society to be a masculine one, symptoms of which are driven by competition, success and achievements. Success in these societies is defined by who is the winner or best. This value system starts all the way from school and takes place in working and organizational life throughout the years (Hofstede Insights 2018).

However, if the score is low, it reads the society to be a feminine one, where the defining values in society are caring for others and maintaining a good quality of life, which is a defining measurement for success in feminine societies where standing out from the crowd is not ideal as people are wanted to be treated equal (Hofstede Insights 2018).

In short, the main issue is which motivates people more, either wanting to be the best (masculine) or making sure all society members are doing well (feminine).

Finland scores 26 on this dimension, which makes it a feminine society. In this type of societies, people's mind-set is to "work in order to live", they value equality, solidarity and quality in their working lives. Conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation. Incentives such as free time and flexibility are favoured, as the focus is on well-being. Decision making in work communities is achieved through involvement (Hofstede Insights 2018).

At 57, Hong Kong is a society leaning towards the masculine side, and masculine societies are known to be success oriented and driven. For example, in order to ensure success, many employees do and are prepared to spend many hours at work, which can make the work days very long. This can also be seen in the service sector – service providers, such as shops or hairdressers, provide services until late at night. Another portrayal of success orientation in student life is that the students care very much about their exam scores and ranking as this is the main criteria to achieve success or not (Hofstede Insights 2018).

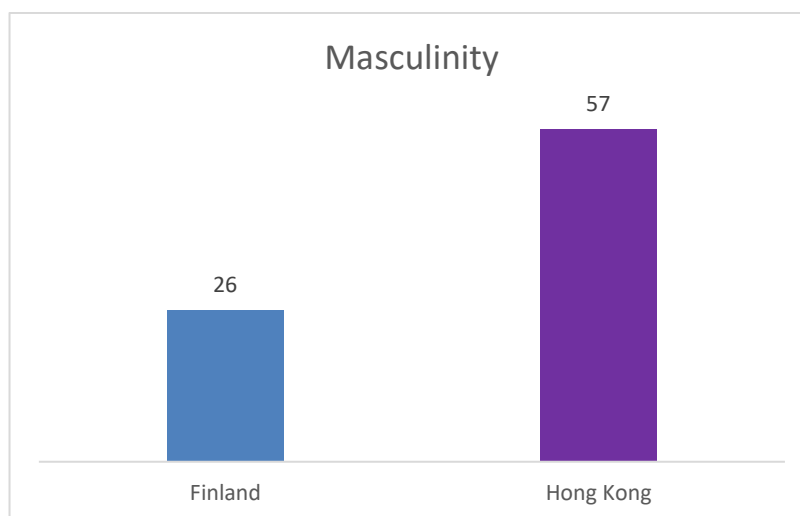


FIGURE 7. Masculinity scores

3.1.4 Uncertainty avoidance

This dimension shows how a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should the future be tried to control or let be happened and taken as it comes?

This ambiguity also causes anxiety and different cultures have created their own solutions to deal with this stress. The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these, is reflected in the score on uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede Insights 2018).

Finland scores 59 on this dimension and thus try highly to avoid uncertainty. Countries with high uncertainty avoidance maintain old customs and norms, and "outside the box" thinking is not encouraged. In general, rules are depended on highly, even if they would not seem to make sense (Hofstede Insights 2018).

People have an inner impulse to make themselves busy and work hard (as those features are valued, busy people seem important), precision and punctuality are high values, innovation may be resisted for the sake of equality.

At 29, Hong Kong has a very low score on uncertainty avoidance and is again very opposite to Finnish culture. Adherence to laws and rules may be flexible to suit the actual situation and pragmatism is a fact of life (Hofstede Insights 2018). The people in Hong Kong are comfortable with ambiguity, even the Chinese language has numerous ambiguous meanings that can be difficult for Western people to follow or understand. Hong Kongese are adaptable and entrepreneurial.

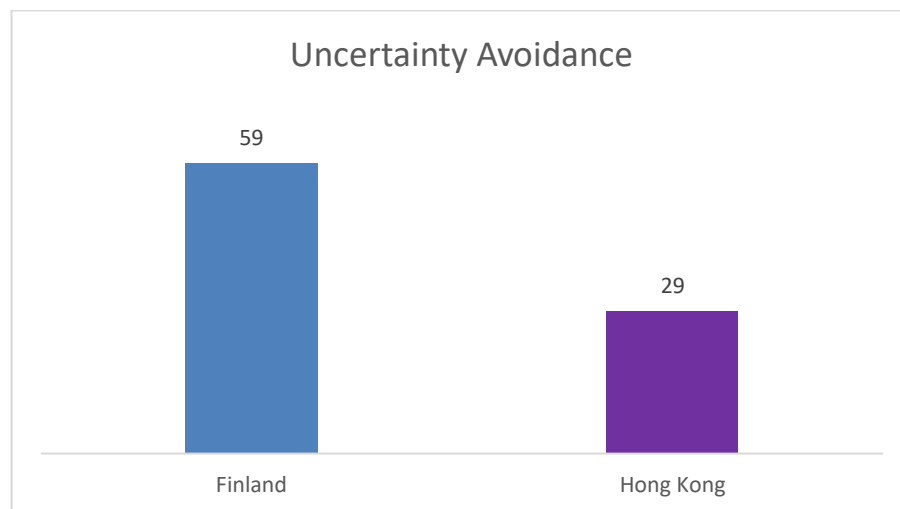


FIGURE 8. Uncertainty avoidance scores

3.1.5 Long term orientation

This dimension describes how societies have to maintain links with its past while facing challenges of the present and future, and how each society prioritises these two existing goals, past and present, differently. Societies, which score low on this dimension, are normative and prefer to maintain time-honoured and existing traditions and norms while viewing change critically.

Societies with high score culture, however, have a more pragmatic mentality as they encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future (Hofstede Insights 2018).

With a score of only 38, Finnish culture is classified as normative. People in such societies have a strong concern with establishing the absolute truth and are normative in their thinking. They practise great respect for traditions and possess a relatively small propensity to save for the future. They also have a focus on achieving quick results.

The high score of 61 shows that Hong Kongese culture is pragmatic. In these type of societies, people believe that truth is highly dependent on situation, context and time. Hong Kongese have the ability to adapt traditions easily to changed conditions, and they have a strong propensity to save and invest, thriftiness, and perseverance in achieving results (Hofstede Insights 2018).

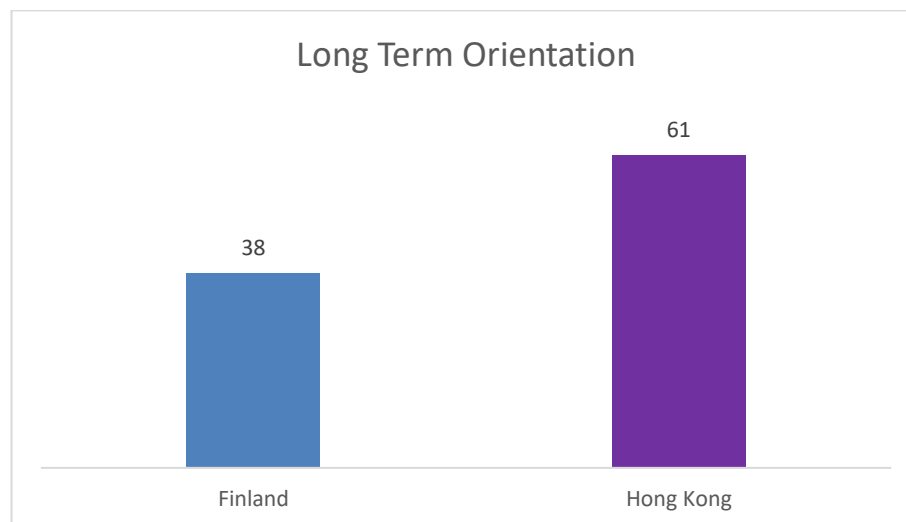


FIGURE 9. Long term orientation scores

3.1.6 Indulgence

This dimension is defined as the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses, based on the way they were raised. Relatively weak control is called Indulgence and relatively strong control is called Restraint. Cultures can, therefore, be described as Indulgent or Restrained (Hofstede Insights 2018).

The relatively high score of 57 indicates Finland as an indulgent country. People in these type of societies usually act on their impulses and desires which is justified with reasons like enjoying life and having fun. They have a positive attitude and a tendency towards optimism. In addition, they place a higher degree of importance on leisure time, act as they want and spend money as they choose (Hofstede Insights 2018).

Hong Kong's score on this dimension is very low at 17, this indicates their society as more restrained and they have a tendency to cynicism and pessimism. Also, unlike indulgent societies, restrained societies do not put much value on leisure time and control the gratification of their wants and desires. People with this orientation have the perception that their actions are controlled by social norms and feel that indulging themselves is somewhat wrong and could make them feel guilty (Hofstede Insights 2018).

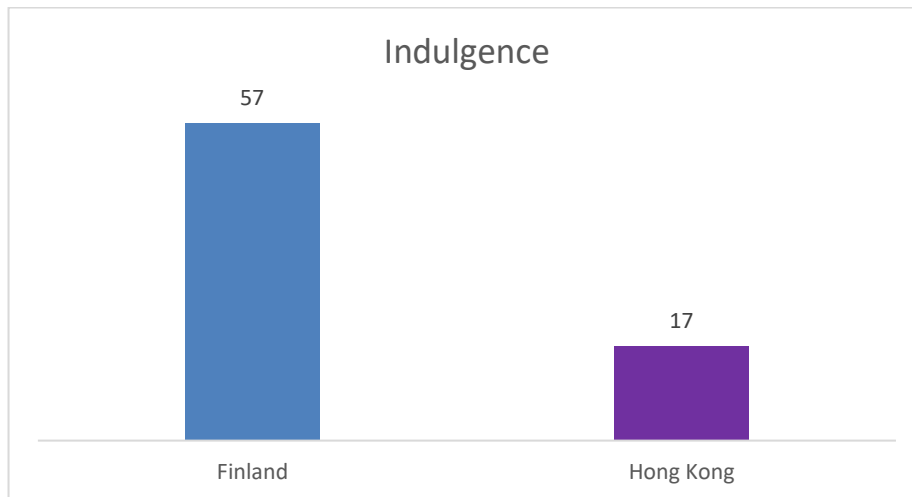


FIGURE 10. Indulgence scores

3.2. High and low context culture theory

American anthropologist Edward T. Hall first introduced his theory of high and low context cultures in his book, *Beyond Culture*, in 1976. Based on the theory, cultures can be defined either low context or high context, in order to understand their basic differences in communication style and cultural matters. Communication style refers to ways of expressing oneself and to communication patterns that are understood to be typical or normal for each culture. Cultural matters mean certain societal factors, such as the country's status, history, religion and traditions. According to Nishimura et al. (2008, 784) cultural issues also include Hofstede's individualism vs. collectivism dimension (see 3.1.2).

In a high context (HC) culture, internal meaning is often buried deep in the information, so not everything is explicitly stated in writing or when spoken. In HC culture, how well the message is understood depends on the receiver. The receiver is expected to be able to

read “between the lines” and understand the unsaid, thanks to the listener’s background knowledge (Nishimura et al. 2008, 785). Hall (1976, 91) emphasised that “a high-context communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalised in the person.

In HC culture, words can have many different meaning or the meaning of the message can be in what is left unsaid instead. Also, according to Hall (1976,79) greater confidence is placed in the nonverbal aspects of communication than the verbal aspects.

In a low context (LC) culture, meanings are explicitly stated through language. People communicating usually expect explanations when something remains unclear. As Hall explains, most information is expected to be in the transmitted message in order to make up for what is missing in the context, both internal and external (Nishimura et al. 2008, 785).

Low-context cultures are societies that are explicit and direct in their communication. They are generally more comfortable relying on themselves as individuals, and working out solutions to problems. Like high-context cultures, relationships are important to low-context societies, however, the difference is in the longevity of the relationships. Generally, low-context societies have many relationships that are less intimate and close than those of high-context cultures (Livermore 2009).

It is said that Hong Kong is ‘where East meets West’, and that is true. Hong Kong’s culture is heavily influenced by Cantonese China and other neighbouring provinces on the mainland, as well as British influence deriving from the colonial period. It is simple to connect the similarities between mainland Chinese/British and Hong Kongese cultures, yet equally important to acknowledge their own Hong Kongese identity, as many of its residents do not identify with either Britain or China.

The characteristics of high-context culture are also visible in Hong Kong’s business culture. Firstly, problems must be approached and handled delicately without causing embarrassment for any parties due to the unwillingness of handling confrontation (IOR 2018). This has also to do with the fact that losing face is avoided at all costs.

It is also advised to proceed slowly, cautiously and not show emotions and when needed, seek compromise. It is worth knowing that there is no formal end to negotiations and results and responses can occur later than expected (IOR 2018). This correlates to slow creation of relationships, which is highly typical for high context cultures. Decision-making process is long and all aspects are wanted to evaluate before giving answer. This also applies to the fact that developing of strong personal relationships with customers is crucial in Hons Kongese business culture. It may seem to take a considerably long time in the eyes of Western people but understanding that this culture considers everything and cannot make decisions lightly, helps understand and adopt to it.

Meetings are formal and behaviour is reserved, partly due to attention to hierarchy in the room (IOR 2018). For a Westerner, the behaviour of Hong Kongese might seem reserved and quiet, but what needs to be realized is that the communication style bears high context and not only the words communicated carry the meaning of the message, but also non-verbal communication (e.g. hand-shaking and touching, distance, facial expressions, eye contact) is important and requires attention from the responder, who has a responsibility to interpret the message accordingly.

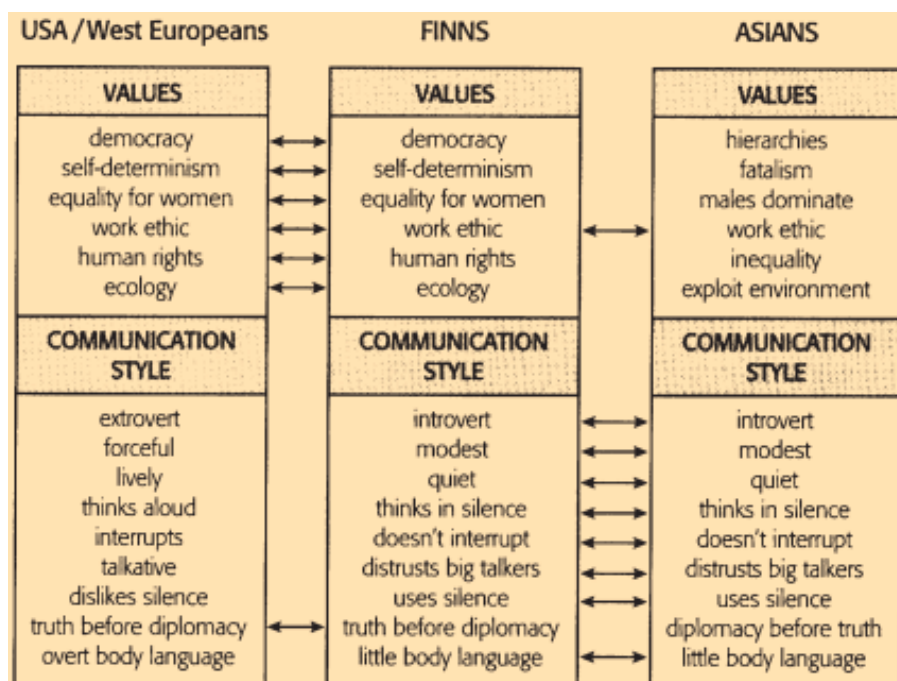


FIGURE 11. Comparison of values and communication styles (Lewis 2005, 68 as cited in Nishimura et al. 2008, 788)

3.3. The Lewis Model of cultural types

The Lewis Model is based on Edward T. Hall's concepts of monochronic (attending to one thing at a time) and polychronic (attending to multiple things at the same time) cultures. Richard Lewis expanded and evolved these concepts to broader meanings. These evolved concepts are linear-active, multi-active and reactive.

Knowledge of the cultural types helps people to understand their own cultures better and using the model, help them to apply it for better global business in practise (CrossCulture).

Linear-active cultures are task-oriented, highly organised and task-completion is done by one thing at a time. Discussion is preferred direct with sticking to facts and figures, speech is for information exchange and talking and listening equally. Linear-active cultures prefer truth over diplomacy, do not fear confrontation and choose logic over emotions. They are also result-oriented and like to move quickly forward willing to compromise to achieve goals (CrossCulture 2018).

Multi-active cultures, however, are talkative and impulsive, emphasizing the importance of feelings, relationships and people-orientation. They like to multitask and feel restrained by agendas. Conversation is animated and speaking and listening happen simultaneously. Interruptions occur frequently, pauses in conversation rarely. Multi-active cultures are uncomfortable with silence and attempt to avoid it (CrossCulture 2018).

Reactive cultures, however, rarely initiate discussion, they prefer to first listen and establish communicators' position, then react to it and formulate their opinion and that momentum takes much longer to build than in linear-active cultures. Confrontation is avoided at all costs. These cultures tend to be introverted and they distrust an overflow of words and consequently, excel in non-verbal communication, which is in active use. Small talk does not come naturally to reactive cultures (CrossCulture 2018).

As can be seen from figure 12 below, Hong Kong and Finland are not that far apart from each other on the map, but still some cultural differences can seem massive. Both

countries are very reactive with relatively similar communication styles, even though the values behind them differ from each other, as can be seen from figure 11. Different scores in Hofstede's cultural dimensions help to map and understand the differences between the cultures, which are, for example, level of hierarchy, masculinity and inequality (power distance).

As already established, Hong Kong has a higher level of hierarchy which defines the work culture relationships, as well as appreciation, which is based on success, i.e. one's personal achievements and status in work. That is caused by the masculinity present in the culture, where values are built on success and it is the motivation. In more feminine cultures (such as Finland), more emphasis is put on equality and whole society's wellbeing and collective success. This factor also causes appreciation on democracy and equality of society members. As Lewis (2005, 67 cited in Nishimura et al. 2008, 788) has aptly put it, "the dilemma of the Finns is that they have Western European values cloaked in an Asian communication style" that is often incompatible with those values.

Due to lack of feminism in masculine cultures with high level of hierarchy, power distance also tends to be higher. It means high power distance cultures (Hong Kong) accept more inequality among its members due to the frustration and experience of helplessness, not being able to impact one's culture in a meaningful way because the power is in hands of few individuals or higher instances, which is worst cases are corrupt.

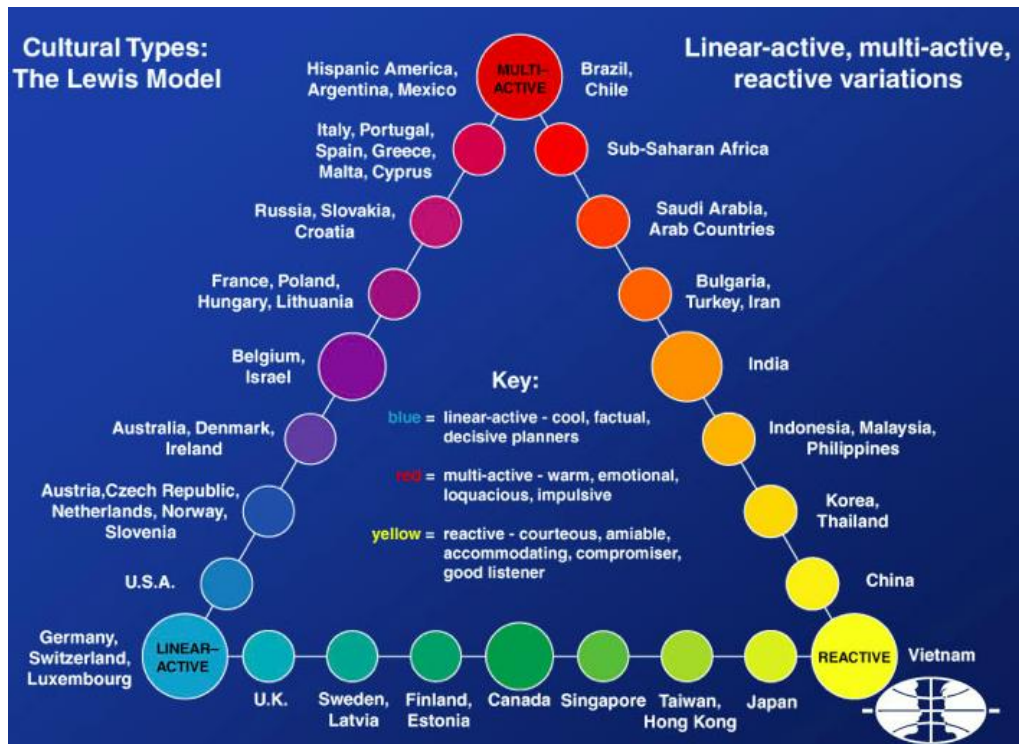


FIGURE 12. Cultural types according to the Lewis Model (CrossCulture 2018)

4 RESEARCH

4.1. Research question

As the purpose of this thesis is to help FinnCham gather deeper and more precise knowledge about their present and potential clientele in order to give them information they need for improving and developing their services to better serve their customers, the research question has been developed based on that. This thesis focuses on studying Finns, who have recently relocated to Hong Kong, so the main research question, which this thesis tries to answer, is *what kind of challenges Finns have faced in their relocation process to Hong Kong*. Being able to provide answers and insight to this by identifying the main causes for problems, inconvenience and frustration will help to achieve the objective of this thesis.

4.2. Research methodology

Sachdeva (2009, 7), defines methodology as “the underlying theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed, often influenced by discipline”. The methodology of this thesis was a result of many features, which needed to be weighed against each other in order to execute the best possible outcome.

A certain frame was given by the commissioner, FinnCham – the topic itself and wished outcome of this study, which was data and insight about relocation experiences for them to use in improving and tailoring their services in future. This means there is need for both quantitative and qualitative data, which both have been executed in this research and explained in more detail in the next chapter.

This research follows the deduction model or top-down model (Sachdeva 2008, 24), where theory is the first source of knowledge, and research proceeds from theory, to empirical analysis. Theories used in this thesis are closely linked to the topic with handling cultural differences and used in data analysis.

4.3. Research methods

Research strategy in this thesis is based on the methodology, quantitative research approach, and the primary data collection is conducted with a standard questionnaire form and is analysed in statistic manner.

This method of research was chosen for the reason that the author is physically located in another country with a significant time difference than the respondents of the questionnaire, so an online questionnaire form was chosen as the most effective and convenient way of gathering data for the research. The goal is to create a questionnaire which is easy and effortless to answer to so it will attract as many respondents as possible in order to gather maximum amount of good quality data.

As a secondary data collection method, an e-mail survey with standard questions was sent to respondents who were willing to leave their contact information for possible additional questions regarding the original questionnaire. An e-mail with the questions (appendix 2) was sent on 17.11.2018 and a reminder on 19.11.2018 to 11 respondents of the questionnaire. Even though the questions were standardized, the answers provided qualitative data for this research as the responses could not be anticipated beforehand.

This method was chosen in addition to the primary quantitative survey in order to gain more in-depth knowledge and insight of the respondents' certain experiences which did not become clear enough for objective analysis.

Secondary data is also utilized in this thesis in form of a multiple surveys conducted about global expatriation, expatriation in Hong Kong and Finnish expatriates. This comprehensive amount of research is then compared and reflected with the responses to this questionnaire to see, which possible differences or similarities in results there are between the studies.

4.4. Questionnaire

The main task of the questionnaire was to determine the main difficulties and/or challenges which respondents have faced in their relocation process. This was taken into consideration when designing the questionnaire questions. According to Phillips, Aaron

and Phillips (2013, 90), the difficulty in closed-ended questions is that they often leave only a few options for responses that go beyond the predetermined categories, and as these factors (what each respondent has experienced as easy or difficult in their relocation process) can vary very much depending on each person. Therefore, responses were very difficult to predict, hence open questions “what did you find easy in the relocation process” and “what did you find challenging in the relocation process” were used. Open-ended questions can provide insight into specific issues and in these cases, data can be analysed and categorized as themes and they can be developed and reported (Phillips et al. 2013, 90).

Responses to other questions were more predictable and could not have provided much more value if they were open-ended, so they were conducted as closed questions. This was justified also with the fact that a questionnaire with only open-ended questions can be perceived as too burdensome and that could have potentially decreased the response rate. That was not worth the risk since the target group itself is already narrow and somewhat hard to reach.

Target group for this questionnaire was chosen to be Finns who are currently residing in Hong Kong and have moved there within past 12 months. The target destination, Hong Kong, was naturally chosen because the commissioner of this thesis, Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong, operates actively there. Being a member of FinnCham was not a prerequisite, as it would have skewed the results of the survey and could have caused unreliability.

The time limit, 12 months, was chosen in the hope that the respondents have the relocation experience fresh in their memory and can therefore provide more detailed and honest answers. As time passes, people tend to forget and memories tend to grow sweeter. This statement is confirmed by Phillips et al. (2013, 66), according to who “if we are trying to recall specific behaviour given a certain event, it is often challenging if the timing of that event is not readily available in our memory”. Thus, narrowing the time spent in Hong Kong helps to create more accurate and truthful data.

The questionnaire was formed on online platform Google Forms. It is a simple tool for creating online questionnaires and gathers the data automatically in statistic form, which

is very useful when the data is analysed. As stated before, online survey tool was chosen because of its convenience and easy reachability, which was vital in this research.

The finalized questionnaire was open for respondents during 01.11.-11.11.2018 and was shared on multiple outlets:

- FinnCham's weekly newsletter with 3200 recipients on 01.11.2018 and 08.11.2018
- FinnCham's website during 01.11.2018 and 11.11.2018
- Closed Facebook group "Suomalaiset Hongkongissa" (Finns in Hong Kong) with 805 members on 05.11.2018
- WhatsApp group chat for Finns in Hong Kong with 61 members on 05.11.2018

4.5. Data analysis

The questionnaire had 21 respondents in total. Data analysis in this context equals the analysis of the questionnaire answers. Quantitative questions (1-5, 8-9, 11) were analysed with statistical form to present the responses as clearly as possible. Open-ended questions (6-7, 10, 12) were analysed as qualitative data due to their nature. They were read and categorized based on the popularity of each answer. That allowed to create figures of the most important and complex questions (6-7) explaining the results of qualitative questions.

All the information gathered from this research is also reflected to the theories and results of previous surveys represented earlier in this thesis to see, how well the theories apply to received results and how global survey results compare with this research.

4.5.1 Background questions

Certain questions were formulated to the beginning of the questionnaire in order to gain some basic information about the respondents for background knowledge, which is also important for the commissioner, as these type of research has not been conducted in their organization before. Gaining this type of information helps to characterize the

respondents and form clarity of who the respondents are and from what basis they have encountered Hong Kong.

First question aimed to find out, how new the respondents were to the city. Majority had moved 10-12 months ago. Having moved to Hong Kong within past 12 months was a prerequisite, as narrowing the time spent in Hong Kong helped to create more accurate and truthful data because the respondents did not have to remember too far to their past.

When did you move to Hong Kong?

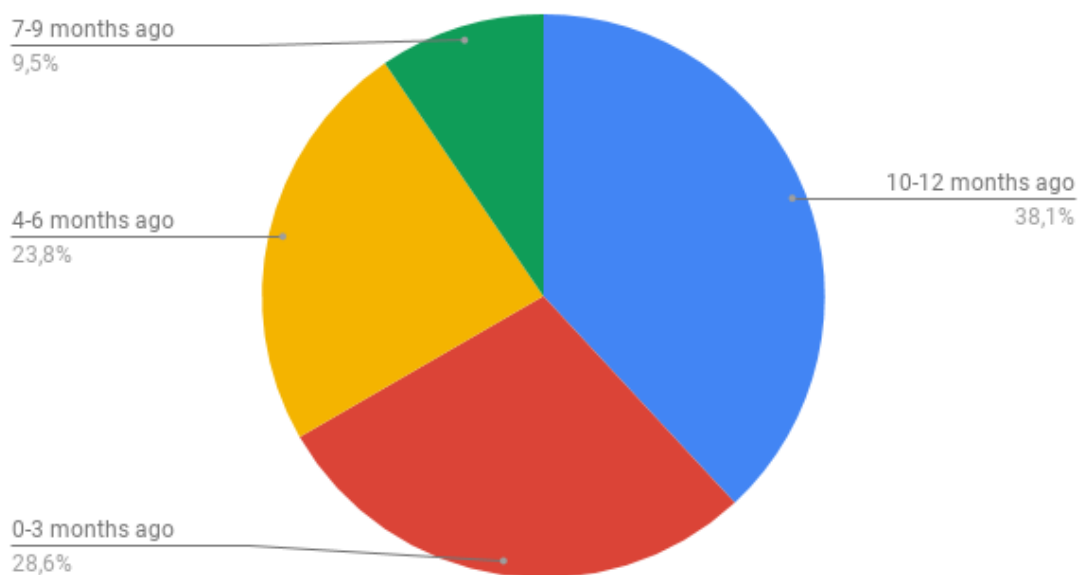


FIGURE 13. When did you move to Hong Kong? (appendix 1, question 1)

One of the most important founding matters to discover was the reason the respondents had decided to move to Hong Kong in the first place.

Almost half of respondents (47,6 %) moved to Hong Kong to find or start a new job or went on an assignment (23,8 %), which means that employment-related reasons cover over 70 % of all reasons. The second popular reasons were to either to study or perform an internship somewhere in Hong Kong. These responses correlate well with the global reasons why expatriates move there, which were to advance their career or going for studies, as discussed in chapter 2.3.

The respondents are a perfect target group for FinnCham. The results go well together with FinnCham's membership categories. They offer Individual membership for any individual who is engaged or interested in commerce between Finland and Hong Kong (FinnCham 2018b). This option suits all respondents with an employee status. And the respondents with study or internship background are eligible for Young Professional membership, which is aimed at any student, entrepreneur, or young professional, who is no older than 35 years old at the time of signing up and who is currently living in or interested in moving to Hong Kong (FinnCham 2018b).

Why did you move to Hong Kong?

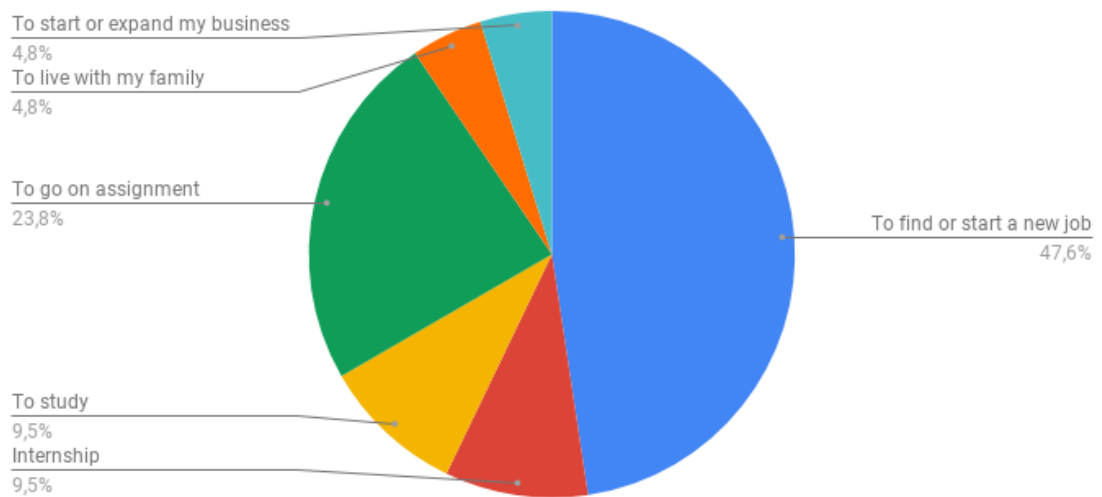


FIGURE 14. Why did you move to Hong Kong? (appendix 1, question 2)

Most of the respondents, over 60 % moved to Hong Kong alone. That clearly indicates that the major target group for FinnCham's services should be aimed at the expatriates exclusively or for the expatriate and their spouses. Only 14,3 % of all respondents moved with children.

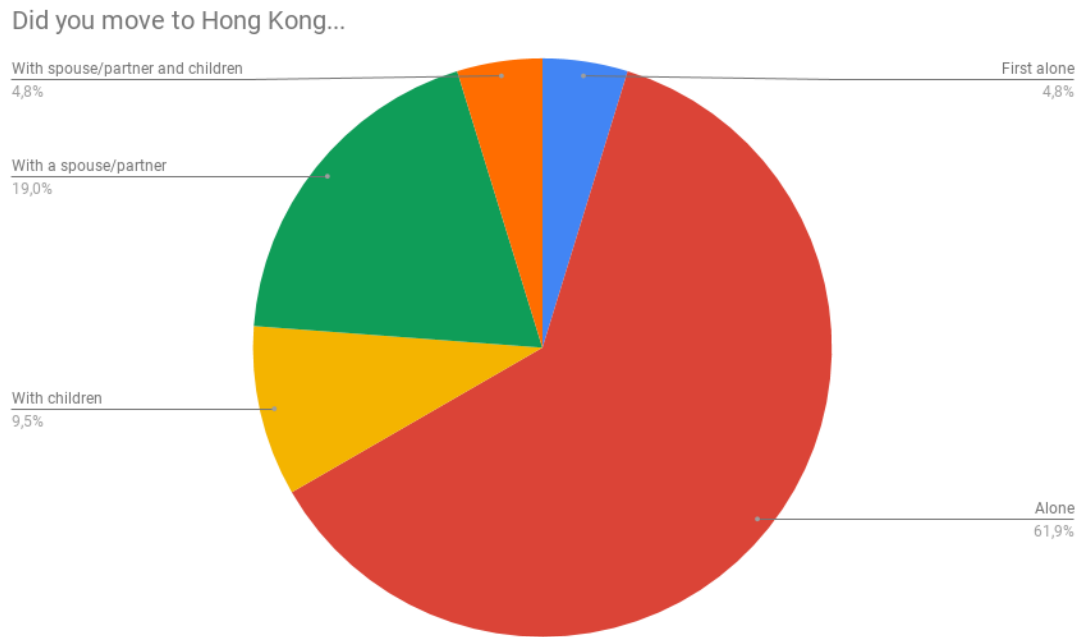


FIGURE 15. Did you move to Hong Kong... (appendix 1, question 3)

Respondents were also asked whether they were in Hong Kong temporarily or permanently in order to determine, who of the respondents were immigrants and who expatriates based on the definitions in chapter 2.1. Criteria for response options were defined as: *“Temporarily meaning an assignment or a fixed contract, after which you most probably will relocate again. Permanently meaning you intend to stay for now and have no intention of moving at the moment.”*

As can be seen from the figure below, majority of respondents (61,9 %) were in Hong Kong temporarily with the knowledge that they will most probably relocate either back to Finland or elsewhere after a certain period of time. Based on this answer, they are considered as expatriates, as they are individuals living in a country that is not his/her country of citizenship, often temporarily and for work reasons.

However, an immigrant is a person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country (Oxford Dictionary 2018). 38,1 % of the respondents agreed with this statement, which would make them immigrants. This result follows the global trend, as more than 40 % of expatriates in Hong Kong are in the territory long-term (HSBC 2018a).

Even though it is important to be able to categorize groups of people in quantitative research, it is worth remembering that the immigrant/expatriate definition leads to a much more complex discussion, as both terms have become loaded over time due to incorrect use and wrongful branding of people.

This information is useful in the sense of it helps FinnCham to know their new (potential) clientele and they can take this into consideration in their service design, as permanent and temporary expatriates can have very different needs.

Are you in Hong Kong temporarily or permanently?

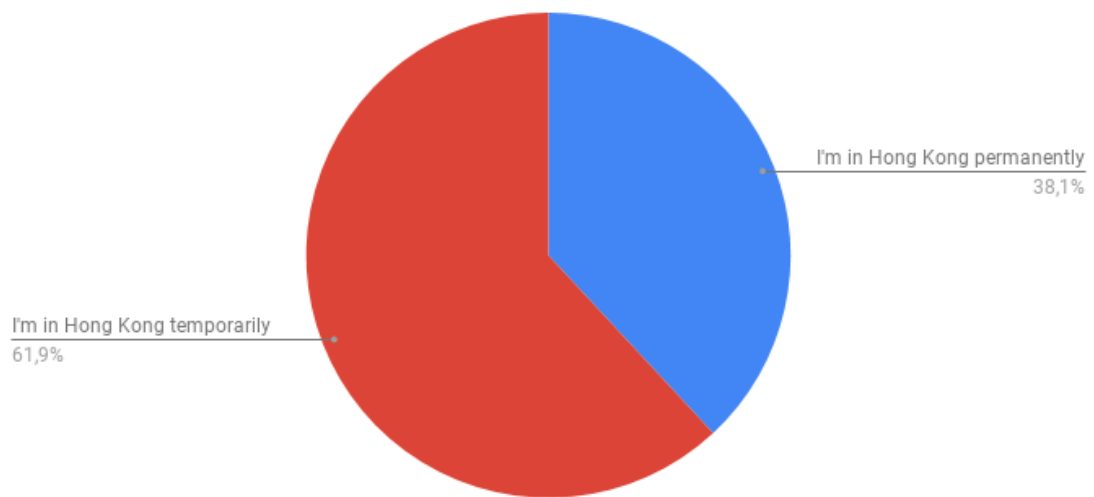


FIGURE 16. Are you in Hong temporarily or permanently? (appendix 1, question 4)

It is also useful background information for the company to know the channels which the respondents use in their information search process regarding relocation.

The top three most used channels for information search were online (61,9 %), employer (52,4 %) and friends & family and social media (both 33,3 %). Only three of the respondents had looked and found information from FinnCham, which indicates that Finns do not find FinnCham as a major channel for information about relocation. One of the reasons could be that people tend to look for information online, and if they do that in Finnish, they will not find FinnCham because they do not have their website in Finnish and with English search words in Google you cannot find FinnCham due to high amount of content. It is necessary to know their organization from somewhere else and purposefully go to their website.

Of the most used sources, respondents found information online from using search engines and online forums (e.g. expat forums, Reddit). Social medias, which were used by the respondents in information search, were LinkedIn and especially Facebook groups (for parents, expats, for people in Hong Kong and people in certain neighbourhoods in Hong Kong).

Where did you get information and answers to your questions regarding the move?

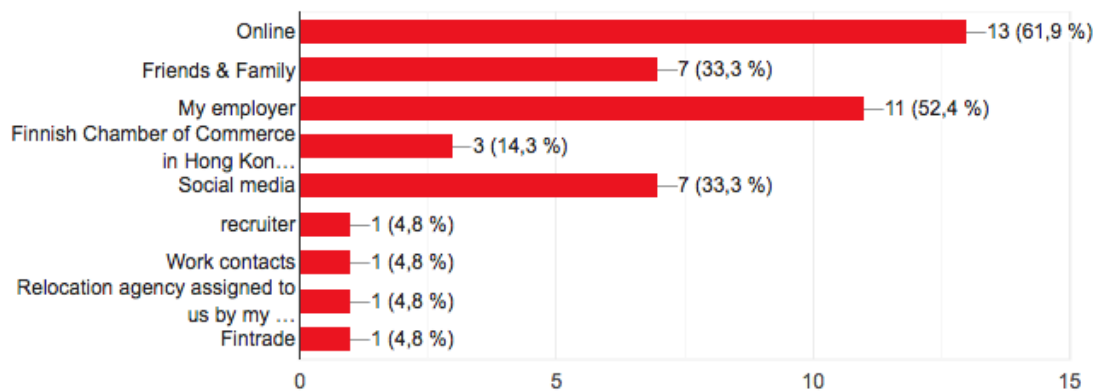


FIGURE 17. Where did you get information and answers to your questions regarding the move? (appendix 1, question 8)

4.5.2 Assessment questions

Questions, where respondent could personally evaluate their opinions on a topic were important in order to gain an overall estimation on certain topics.

Generally, respondents had a fairly or very smooth relocation process, as on average, respondents evaluated their experience as 7. These responses give a clear indication that people find it quite easy adaptable, which is mostly thanks to the British influence in the culture among other reasons, which are analysed in more detail in next chapter.

How smooth was your relocation process to HK on a scale of 1-10?

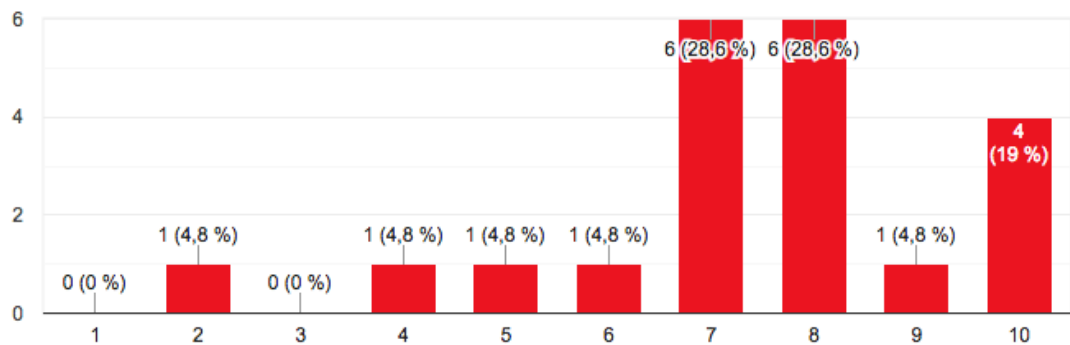


FIGURE 18. How smooth was your relocation process to HK on a scale of 1-10 (appendix 1, question 5)

Question 'How familiar were you with the Hong Kongese culture beforehand?' was set to get the respondents to evaluate their personal preparedness and level of knowledge of the destination culture. This can very much affect what kind of first impressions they get from the city and its culture and whether they experience culture shocks and how different they experience it from their home culture and also affect how well they adapt to the new culture.

This question seemed to split the answers the most, but most evaluated to having been fairly familiar with the culture. Average level of familiarity with culture was rated 3.

How familiar were you with the Hong Kongese culture beforehand?

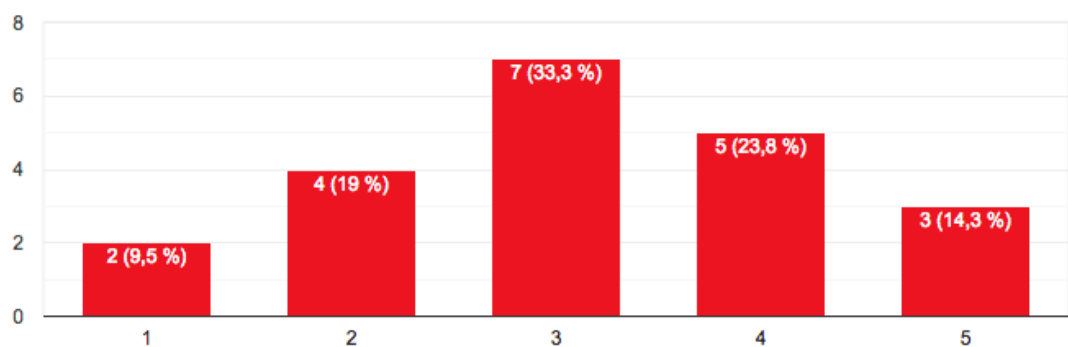


FIGURE 19. How familiar were you with the Hong Kongese culture beforehand (appendix 1, question 9)

Respondents, who answered estimated themselves 4 or 5 in familiarity with the culture beforehand, had adapted very well (9 or 10) to the culture and found the relocation process very smooth. However, respondents who were only a little familiar (1 or 2) with the culture beforehand, found their relocation process less smooth than other respondents but were still able to reach good level of adaption to new culture (8).

How well would you say you have adapted to living in Hong Kong and in its culture?

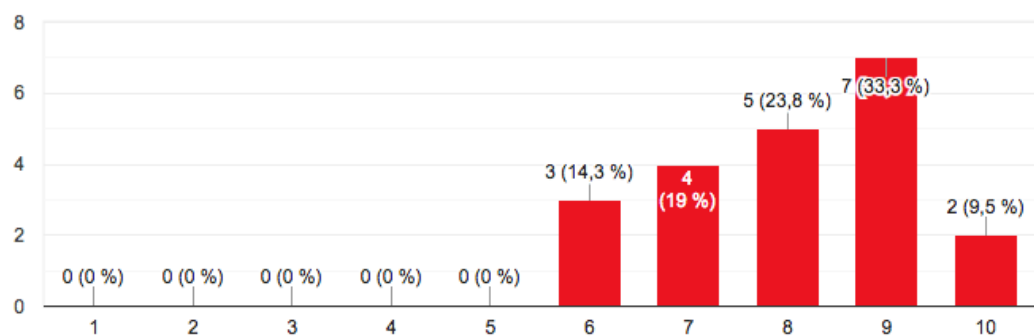


FIGURE 20. How well would you say you have adapted to living in Hong Kong and in its culture (appendix, question 11)

4.5.3 Open questions

Questions ‘What did you find easy in the location process’ and ‘What did you find challenging in the location process’ were chosen to be conducted as open questions, since it would have not been possible to anticipate the possible responses as each individual experiences those differently. Also, honest responses were wanted and open questions allowed any type of response. These two questions were the most important ones in this survey because the answers provide significant insight and information. That helps to answer the original research question what challenges and difficulties Finns face when becoming expatriates in Hong Kong.

All responses to question ‘What did you find easy in the location process’ were analysed and categorized, as can be seen from figure 20 below. Most popular answer to this was employer support from practical category. Respondents felt that the support in the

relocation process from either their employers or consulting agency was very helpful and made moving to Hong Kong much easier for them. In this same category, traveling to Hong Kong from their previous locations was easy as there were many connections and flight operators on these routes. Also, public transport in Hong Kong was perceived as easy, getting around the city and purchasing Octopus card were felt simple procedures.

Second most popular items which made relocation for Finns easier, were English language and Western culture, which were seen easy to adapt to. This is logical, as cultures which are closer to home culture, seem alike and do not require as much effort to adapt to. This was also confirmed by a respondent, who stated that Hong Kong “is culturally so close to Europe/British/American so cultural matters did not cause any real issues” (appendix 2, question 2). Therefore, it is also plausible that practical matters, such as how to operate with bureaucracy or local authorities, are unknown beforehand and therefore seem more difficult to face than a familiar culture. This response is also perfectly in unison with the Expat Explorer Survey (HSBC 2018a), where 80 % of the expats had settled to Hong Kong easily.

Thirdly, respondents felt like creating networks in professional lives, as well as creating friendships were easy. This might be due to the fact that the city is vibrant with plenty to offer. It is easy to adapt to and when energy is not needed for other aspects that much, it leaves capacity to get to know like-minded people. Hong Kong has a high expatriate population, and the number of Finnish expatriates is estimated to be approximately 250 according to the Finnish vice consul in Hong Kong. Expatriates come to Hong Kong for similar reasons and that explains why it is easy to find like-minded people in free time and in professional networking.

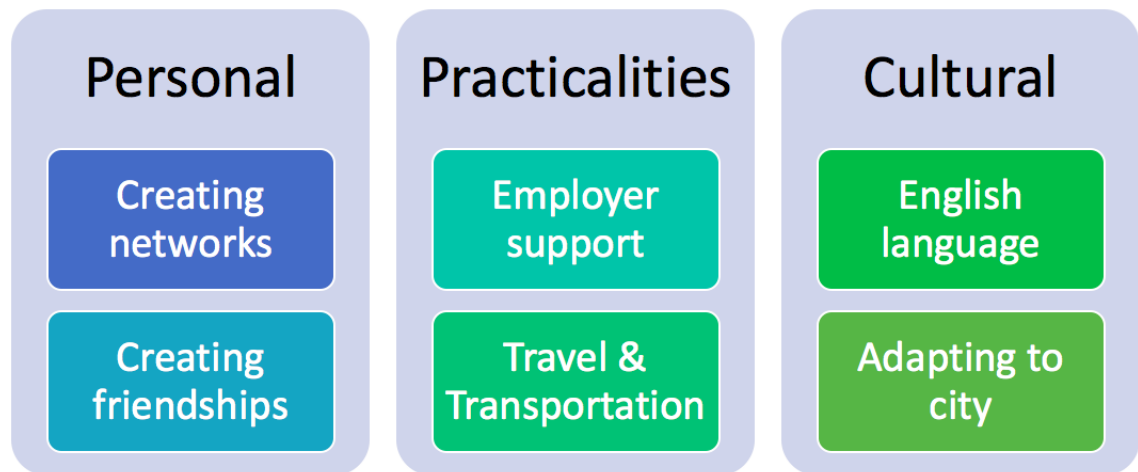


FIGURE 21. Main responses to question ‘What did you find easy in the location process’ (appendix 1, question 6)

Responses to question ‘What did you find challenging in the location process’ (appendix 1, question 7) were analysed and categorised. The main categories were practicalities, work and employment and city and culture.

The most popular responses in practical category were housing and dealing with third parties. The process of finding accommodation and its expensiveness was the single most hard aspect for the respondents. Also, dealing with third parties such as visa agent and different government bodies was causing challenges.

The second most popular category in the biggest challenges Finnish expatriates faced was work and employment. This entailed employment opportunities in general, finding a job where Chinese language knowledge was not elementary or finding an entry-level job. Also, long working days were mentioned as the biggest cause of difficulty.

Third category, city and culture, consisted of responses such as Hong Kong being a hectic, crowded city with dirtiness. Some respondents also felt that locals were rude or unwilling to help foreigners and customer service was bad.

However, some respondents felt that they had not faced any challenges in their relocation process, thanks to help from their employers or consulting agency who had made all or most arrangements for them prior to their arrival and the respondents had to “just show up”.

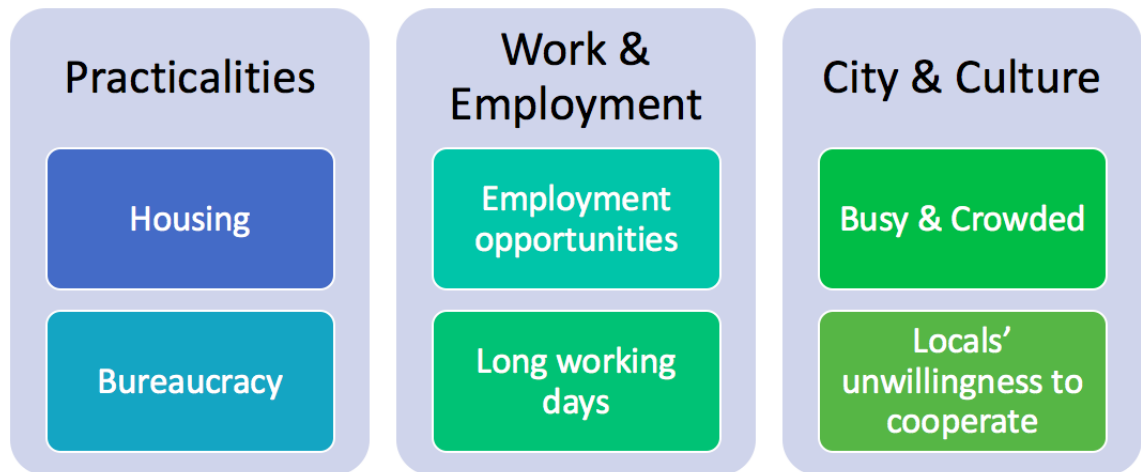


FIGURE 22. The main responses to question what did you find challenging in the relocation process (appendix 1, question 7)

Respondents were also asked to mention the biggest difference between the two cultures. This question was chosen in order to test the theories of cultural dimensions and high and low context cultures and see, if the respondents had noticed the differences, which the theories suggest to cause cultural differences.

Most popular answers and important findings to this question were:

- People
- Lifestyle
- Working culture

Respondents described the Hong Kongese people as rude, more social, loud, not caring about others opinions and having smaller personal space. The latter is a clear indication of a high context culture, where people are comfortable standing close to each other (Williams 2018).

Differences in lifestyle were described as Hong Kong being more fast-paced, busy, in a hurry and hectic. This is in unison with cultural dimension long-term orientation, where Hong Kong with its high score has a strong perseverance in achieving results which motivates or forces them to the fast pace lifestyle. Another cultural dimension, masculinity, is also at play in this scenario. Masculine societies are more success driven, which means that remarkable effort is invested in working life in order to achieve results, which determine one's value and appreciation in the society.

Working culture was described as biggest difference on the basis of longer working hours, the speed of doing work and higher hierarchy. Again, these results support the masculinity of Hong Kongese culture where results are expected and on practical level that means more work in faster pace and in longer periods of time when compared to Finland.

High level of hierarchy is also something very typical for Hong Kong's culture, and it reflects the power distance between higher and lower ranking members in work in this instance.

Respondents feeling the working hours longer is no exception to the global comparison, as the respondents of the Expat Explorer Survey (2018) also felt that their work life is in worse balance with their free time after relocating to Hong Kong.

Some respondents also mentioned indirectness and inequality as the most significant differences between the two cultures in question. Indirectness in communication is one of the most remarkable characteristics of a high context culture. In high context cultures, non-verbal elements are as or sometimes even more meaningful than the actual words that are communicated, also the something not being said or left out of communication can have an important meaning.

Inequality in income and how people lead very different lives in Hong Kong was also mentioned as major difference between cultures. This is a clear practical realisation of power distance in action. With Hong Kong's high score on this, the society has become accustomed to inequality within society members and it is so deeply rooted that people feel like they cannot make an impact to it with their own actions and therefore, have grown to accept it.

Lastly, respondents were asked an optional question whether there was anything they wished they would have known beforehand or something that would have made their relocation process easier in retrospect. Majority of responses were related to practical matters and a small minority to cultural matters. For example, the practicalities respondents would have wanted to know prior to their arrival were:

- Administrative: taxes, Hong Kong ID and health care
- Personal: accommodation, Ikea home delivery, opening a bank account and useful apps needed in Hong Kong

In addition to practicalities, few respondents would have wanted to know more about the local people and their ways, rudeness mentioned as an example.

These results are valuable information for FinnCham and give an insight to what new Finns in Hong Kong are looking for when settling in and can use that information when planning future events or other services.

5 CONCLUSION

The results gained from this research supported all the theories used in the thesis and many correlations and similarities were found to global surveys regarding expatriation in Hong Kong. The results showed that Hong Kong is quite effortless destination to adapt to due to its Western-like culture and English language. Most difficulties were experienced in practical matters, such as housing, bureaucracy and employment opportunities.

However, the results clearly show that the level of cultural knowledge and preparedness for the destination culture beforehand can have a seriously beneficial impact in the relocation process itself. Based on the theory and results, being more aware of other culture helps to gain understanding of reasons behind certain behaviour and that improves tolerance, making adaptation easier.

With the available resources and in given timeline, I was able to conduct quite comprehensive research about the subject. Used theories were, to some extent, accidentally culture-oriented due to author's personal interests towards understanding cultural differences and cross-cultural communication, but they supported the research well and the survey was able to prove the theories to be applicable.

Critically evaluated, the sample size in the questionnaire is small, which can cause unreliability to results. However, the theoretical maximum number of respondents is also very small, as approximately 300 Finns move to China annually, and even smaller percentage of that to Hong Kong. 10 % of all new Finns in China is 30 people, and this survey had 21 respondents, which in that sense was great result, thanks to FinnCham's active cooperation in attracting responses to the questionnaire.

In retrospect, the questionnaire questions could have been formed better in order to gain more accurate results. Luckily, it was possible to ask additional questions from some of the respondents in the form of open-ended questions, which provided valuable insight to the survey.

All in all, I am happy with the conducted work in this thesis. The research question was answered and Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong will benefit from the results in their future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

1. When did you move to Hong Kong?

- 0-3 months ago
- 4-6 months ago
- 7-9 months ago
- 10-12 months ago

2. Why did you move to Hong Kong?

- To study
- To start or expand my business
- To find or start a new job
- To go on assignment
- To live with my family
- Other, what?

3. Did you move to Hong Kong...

- Alone
- With spouse/partner
- With children
- With spouse/partner and children
- Other, what?

4. Are you in Hong Kong temporarily or permanently? (Temporarily meaning an assignment or a fixed contract, after which you most probably will relocate again. Permanently meaning you intend to stay for now and have no intention of moving at the moment)

- I'm in Hong Kong temporarily
- I'm in Hong Kong permanently

5. How smooth was your relocation process to HK on a scale of 1-10?
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5
 - 6
 - 7
 - 8
 - 9
 - 10

6. What did you find easy in the relocation process?

7. What did you find challenging the relocation process?

8. Where did you get information and answers to your questions regarding the move?
 - Online
 - Friends & Family
 - My employer
 - Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong (FinnCham)
 - Social media
 - Other, what?

9. How familiar were you with the Hong Kongese culture beforehand?
 - 1, not familiar at all
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5, very familiar

10. What do you find the biggest difference between Finnish and Hong Kongese culture?

11. How well would you say you have adapted to living in Hong Kong and in its culture?

- 1, not well at all
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10, very well

12. Is there something in the relocation process that you wish you would have known about beforehand and would have made it easier?

Appendix 2. Additional email questions

1. Was Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong familiar to you prior to the online survey you answered? If yes, how?
2. Which did you feel more challenging in your relocation process: practical matters or cultural matters? Why?
3. If you used online and/or social media for information search in your relocation process: which websites and/or social media you used? (For example, Facebook groups etc.)
4. If you are working, do you feel that work life and free time are in balance? If not, what do you feel is causing the imbalance?
5. If you are working, what are the biggest differences in Finland's and HK's work cultures?
6. How easy or difficult job searching was for you? What made it easy or difficult?
7. If you had difficulties in job search, what kind of help or support you would have wanted or needed?

Appendix 3. Infographic of research results

