



How can immigrant capabilities be improved to increase their employment opportunities at small and medium businesses in Helsinki?

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Finland's unemployment rate is increasing, and more foreign workers in Finland are claiming unemployment benefits. Finnish SMEs encounter more challenges in regard to workforce diversity than other businesses in Finland.

This thesis project aimed to further understand a divers workforce's contribution to small and medium businesses (SMEs) in the Uusima region. The research question was: How can immigrant capabilities be improved to increase their employment opportunities at small and medium-sized businesses in Helsinki? To answer this question, this thesis focused on three sub-questions: How willing are SMEs to hire immigrant workers? What are the needs of SMEs? Which SMEs are willing to hire immigrant workers?

Research was conducted remotely. Qualitative research was conducted via online literature reviews and online video interviews. Quantitative research was conducted in the form of a questionnaire via online social media platforms. Questionnaire respondents were SME business owners operating in the Helsinki region. Questionnaire respondents were asked questions to further understand their willingness to hire foreign workers, their demographics, and needs. Interview attendees were asked questions to further identify the needs of Finnish SMEs, and ways to help foreign workers increase their hire-ability.

The majority of the 29 questionnaire respondents expressed a willingness to hire foreign employees but did not express willingness to sponsor work visas for foreign workers. Interview attendees in Interview Group 1 were questionnaire respondents who agreed to follow-up interviews. Interview attendees in Interview Group 2 were individuals who provided support for immigrants looking for work in Finland, or for immigrants moving to Finland after finding work. Interview respondents provided reasons for firms to be hesitant of hiring employees including the fact that: many perceived the residence permit process to be expensive, time consuming, and cause too much paperwork.

Keywords: SME, Helsinki, Foreign Workers, Likelihood, Improve, Workforce

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1 Introduction

Finland's unemployment rate increased over the last year. It was at 8.1% in February of 2021, while the unemployment rate in February 2020 was at 6.9%. The number of unemployed people increased from 35,000-220,000. The jobless rate for men went up from 1.5% to 9.2%, while that for women rose from 1% to 7%. The activity rate was up to 65.5% in February, from 64.7% a year earlier. The employment rate fell to 70% from 70.3%.” (Statistics Finland, 2019) This statistic highlights the importance of improving the unemployment rate in Finland.

In May 2020, KELA revealed that its internal study has discovered that out of the 10.7 billion euros it disbursed in the benefits in 2018, 1.36 billion euros was disbursed to immigrants and 9.32 billion euros to native-born Finns. Furthermore, Immigrants were over-represented in a number of benefit categories (accounting for 27% of unemployment security benefits). (Teivainen, 2020) With a high demand for unemployment benefits amongst immigrant workers in Finland, the need for an improvement in the immigrant workforce grows ever more pressing.

This study is important because Finland's need for foreigners is growing. Finland's birth rate went down for the ninth year in a row, as of 2019. (Official Statistics of Finland, 2020) With the birth rate declining, Prime Minister, Saana Marin launched a project to examine the current demographic situation and to present guidelines for securing sustainable demographic development. Since 2010, Finland saw the slowest rate of population growth in the Nordic countries, and the total fertility rate decreased to less than 1.4 children per woman on average. The report concluded that, "Finland's population would shrink without immigration...more net immigration will also be necessary to maintain a stable population in the future. The net immigration rate in Finland is currently 16,000 people. A potential target could be to raise net immigration to 25,000 persons by 2030," the report concludes.” (Foreigner.fi, 2021)

Earlier this year, Finnish politician, Arto Satonen, further shared the sentiment of the study, stating that, “it is of utmost importance that Finland has a migration policy which makes Finland an attractive place to study, work and live. This is a common issue, where everyone comes out as a winner if done correctly.” (Helsinki Times, 2020) With the studies, and the Finnish government, emphasizing the need for foreigners in Finland, it is necessary to improve the immigrant workforce in Finland both to boost Finland's economy, as well as to make Finland more attractive to foreigners, to increase the Finnish birth rates and population. Immigration is necessary for the survival of Finland's population in the future, and as a result, immigrant workers are necessary, too.

A 2016 thesis, aimed at understanding Finnish, SME perspectives on workforce diversity explained that SMEs might encounter more challenges and even suffer from workforce diversity in comparison to large companies. According to Doan (2016), “with such small company sizes, micro businesses definitely have troubles in diversifying the workforce, some even employ just family members...A lack of available resources also creates troubles for SMEs in their attempt to build a diverse workforce. As they do not possess ample budgets, SMEs usually have problems in satisfying essential needs of culturally different staff such as religious meals or holidays.”

The thesis concluded that, “companies that do not have a diverse workforce claim that a lack of language and necessary skills are the biggest obstacles that restrain them from hiring foreigners. However, they still hold positive outlooks towards international jobseekers. For both kinds of companies, they all perceive a diverse workforce as being beneficial in delivering new ideas and creating relations with foreign markets. They also agree that communication is the biggest challenge when people from different cultural backgrounds work together.” (Doan, 2016) The thesis acknowledged that the research urges a need for some further studies which points out a diverse workforce’s contribution to a business and to the national economy on a larger scale in the context of Finland.

With the rising concern around diversity within SMEs in Finland, and the findings and suggestions from this thesis, it is clear that more research needs to be conducted. This thesis aims to further understand a diverse workforce’s contribution to a SMEs in the Uusimaa region by answering the question: How can immigrant capabilities be improved to increase their employment opportunities at small and medium businesses in Helsinki?

To further answer this question, this thesis focuses on three sub questions: How willing are SMEs to hire immigrant workers? What are the needs of SMEs? Which SMEs are willing to hire immigrant workers?

Research was conducted remotely. Qualitative research was conducted via online literature reviews and online video interviews. Quantitative research was conducted in the form of a questionnaire via online social media platforms.

The researcher is an immigrant, who has struggled to find work in Finland. Improving immigrant capabilities to increase their employment opportunities is important to them. Although there has been research conducted focusing on SMEs in Finland and focusing on improving the immigrant workforce, there has not been research conducted, focusing specifically on SMEs within Helsinki. Furthermore, existing theses that do focus on SMEs have not focused on improving immigrant capabilities for employment purposes, but rather focused on diversity as a whole. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research on this topic.

2 Review of Literature

2.1 What is the willingness of SMEs to hire immigrant workers?

Hiring foreign employees in Finland is very important for entrepreneurial success in Finland. Möttönen (2020), discusses founder entrepreneurs in Finland. Listing the promotion of globalization as a characteristic of successful businesses, he stated that, “business expansion is an aspect of globalization, which facilitates trade in an increasingly broad geographical area. Exporting SMEs has a major impact on job and wealth creation.” (Möttönen, 2020)

There is evidence that suggests that hiring foreign employees in Finland is common. When comparing the most common occupational groups of employed persons with foreign backgrounds in 2016 and 2011, work replaced family as the most common basis for applying for the first residence permit. In 2019, work replaced family as the most common basis for applying for the first residence permit. A total of 12,687 residence permit applications were submitted on the basis of work in 2019. (Official Statistics of Finland, 2018) Although this is true, the unemployment rate of foreign workers in Finland is on the raise. "At the end of 2018, the unemployment rate of residents with foreign backgrounds in Helsinki was 18.6 percent and their employment rate among 20-64-year-olds 56.4 per cent." There is a disproportionate amount of unemployed foreign workers, when compared to the unemployment rate of Finnish workers. “The unemployment rate of residents with Finnish background was 7.4 percent and the employment rate 78.4 percent”. (Statistics Finland, 2020)

There is evidence to suggest that foreign workers are receiving work visas. “Including employees coming to Finland to work with a certificate for seasonal work, a total of 20,117 permits were granted on the basis of work.” (Finnish Immigration Service, 2021) a

2.2 Which SMEs are willing to hire immigrant workers?

This figure shows the number of businesses by trade register in Finland. As seen in the figure, the largest majority of Finnish businesses are registered as Limited liability companies (making up roughly 41% of all Finnish businesses), and the second largest majority are private traders (making up roughly 36% of all Finnish businesses). The amount of the five, smallest minorities of businesses were factored in to be 0.0000016% of all Finnish businesses each, or 0.000008% combined. The smallest minorities were registered as: European economic interest group, the Finnish branch of European economic interest group, European Company (SE), mortgage society, and public insurance company. (Finnish Patent and Registration Office, 2021) This thesis aims to discover if certain SME business types are more likely to hire

foreigners than others.

Number of businesses in the Trade Register

Type of business	4 Jan 21	2 Jan 20	2 Jan 19
Limited liability company	261,316	266,134	272,084
Private trader	227,712	218,656	208,599
Housing company	89,679	89,008	88,014
Limited partnership	25,411	26,207	26,820
General partnership	8,903	9,265	9,537
Limited liability joint-stock property company	4,832	1,082	0
Co-operative	3,541	3,873	4,276
Branch of a foreign trader	1,237	1,224	1,212
Non-profit association	552	529	484
Public limited company	266	264	260
Co-operative bank	158	172	181
Foundation	46	44	43
Mutual insurance company	32	32	32
Tenant-owners' society	17	17	17
Savings bank	13	16	19
Insurance company	12	13	16
Insurance association	7	7	7
Public business	4	3	3
European economic interest group	1	1	1
Finnish branch of European economic interest group	1	1	1
European company (SE)	1	1	1
Mortgage society	1	1	1
Public insurance company	1	1	0
Total	623,743	616,551	611,608

Non-profit associations and foundations

The figure contains foundations and non-profit associations entered in the Trade Register. Only foundations and non-profit associations with a permanent place of business or at least one employee for carrying on business must be notified for entry in the Trade Register.

Latest update 11.01.2021

A study published in, *Organizational Cultures: An International Journal*, investigated the relationship between organizational culture and organizational effectiveness in small and medium size organisations in Iran, the extent of the influence of organisational culture on organisational effectiveness for a given national culture, and the impact of organisational culture on, and by organisational size. The study was conducted via a designed model, displaying the impact of size on the organisational culture and organisational effectiveness relationship. The model was tested on 1000 respondents, from different management levels, from 40 Iranian private sector organisations. The results of this study confirm the moderating impact of organisational size on the culture-effectiveness relationship. Motivated by these findings, this thesis aims to examine whether the relationship between between the size of a business and their willingness to hire foreign employees. (Nazarian, Atkinson and Greaves, 2015)

According to Möttönen, "Today, there are over 286,000 companies in Finland, excluding the agriculture, forestry and fishing industries. They employ people in a country with a population of 5.5 million. Most companies are SMEs, and 93% of companies employ 10 people," (Möttönen, 2020). This thesis aims to discover if certain SME business industries are more likely to hire foreigners than others.

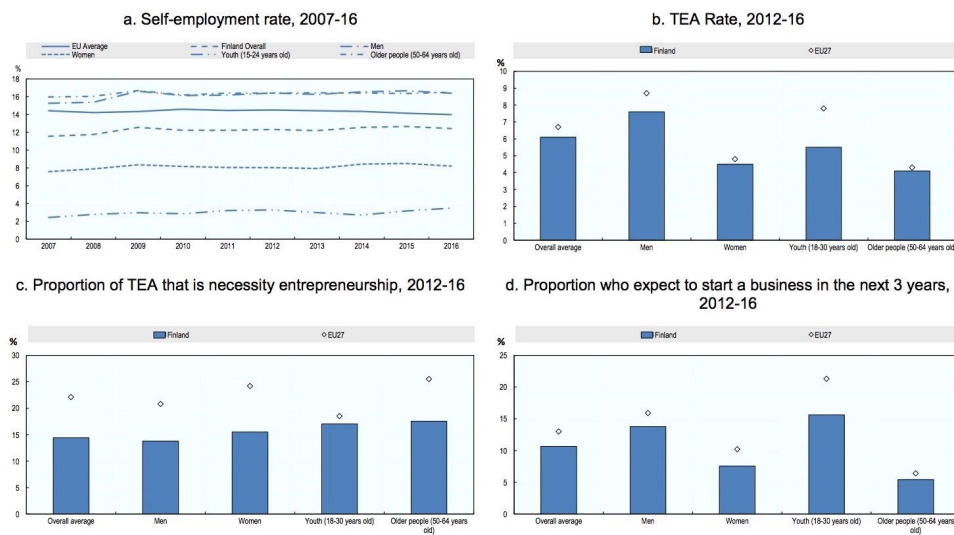
This table displays data on entrepreneurs aged 18 to 74 in segregation classes in 2016. Of the total number of entrepreneurs in Finland (236,580), 33.5% were women, and 66.5% were men. This thesis seeks to further investigate the relationship between the gender of SME entrepreneurs and their likelihood to hire foreigners. (Official Statistics of Finland, 2018a)

Table 2. Wage and salary earners aged 18 to 74 in segregation classes in 2016 ¹⁾

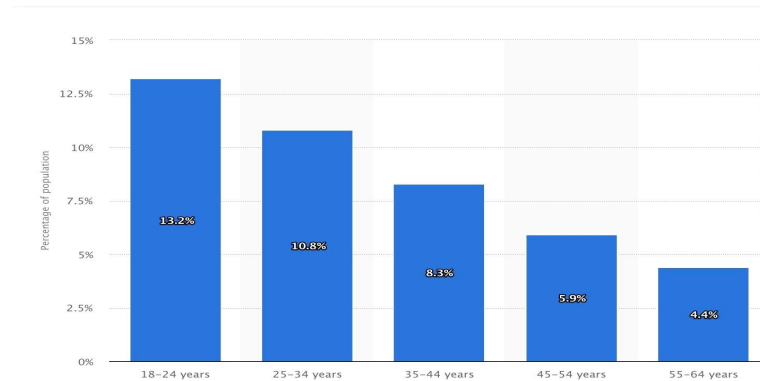
Segregation class	Wage and salary earners	Share of wage and salary earners, %	Women	Share of women, %	Men	Share of men, %
Female occupations	299,039	15.2	280,696	27.4	18,343	1.9
Female-dominated occupations	686,524	34.9	520,465	50.8	166,059	17.6
Equal occupations	182,931	9.3	93,776	9.1	89,155	9.5
Male-dominated occupations	482,559	24.5	114,419	11.2	368,140	39.1
Male occupations	315,161	16.0	15,637	1.5	299,524	31.8
Total	1,966,214	100.0	1,024,993	100.0	941,221	100.0

These figures show the self-employment and entrepreneurship rates by target group in Finland. As seen in these figures, females and youth (age 18-30) made up a larger majority of entrepreneurs. Youth (age 18-30) made up the greatest proportion of people who were planning to start a business in the next 3 years. (OECD, 2017)

Figure 2. Self-employment and entrepreneurship rates by target group



This more recent figure shows the percentage of population involved in business start-ups in Sweden in 2019, by age group, as seen in the figure, the largest majority (13.2%) involved in business start-ups were in the 18-24 age group. Based on the data from the previous figures mentioned, this thesis would like to examine the relationship between the age of entrepreneurs and their likelihood to hire foreigners. (Statista, 2021)

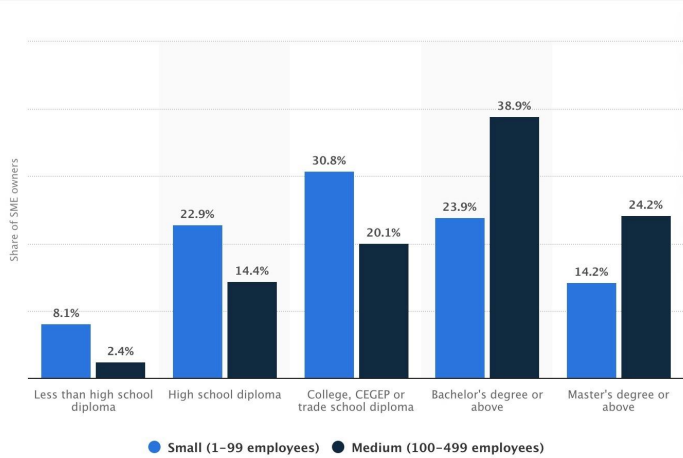


As described by Möttönen (2020), “the number of entrepreneurs [in Finland] with foreign backgrounds increased by 92% between 2006 and 2014.” With the number of foreign entrepreneurs increasing, this thesis seeks to discover the relationship between the ethnicity of entrepreneurs and their likelihood to hire foreign employees.

Möttönen (2020), discusses the relationship between entrepreneurship and gender, as well as the relationship between entrepreneurship and occupation. He mentions that, “women entrepreneurship is characterised by self-entrepreneurship. In 2011, one in four female entrepreneurs were employers, while more than 40% of male entrepreneurs were employers.”; “Women often act as part-time entrepreneurs, which is not the case for male entrepreneurs...women are more likely to find part-time or temporary employment than men, which enables ancillary entrepreneurship.” (Möttönen, 2020). Based on Möttönen’s findings, this thesis aims to understand if there is a relationship between the entrepreneurs, gender, and profession, and their willingness to hire foreign employees.

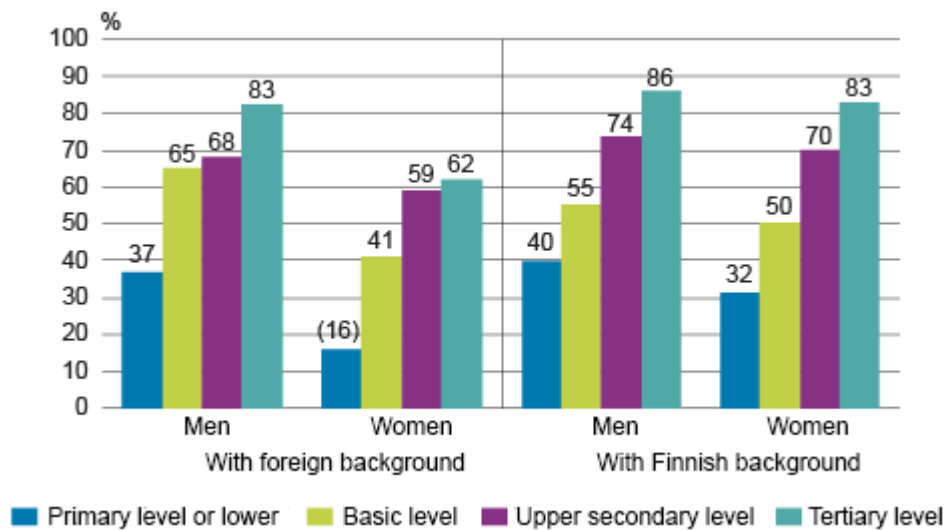
This figure shows the distribution of small and medium-sized business' owners in Canada in 2014, by education and business size. As seen in this figure, the largest majority of small business owners completed a secondary education or graduated from a vocational school. However, the largest majority of the medium business owners completed at least a bachelor’s degree. This thesis seeks to examine the relationship between the level of education of SME

business owners in Finland and their willingness to hire foreigners. (Statista, 2016)



2.3 What are the needs of SMEs?

This figure shows the employment rate by level of education, gender and origin, population aged 20 to 64 in 2014. (UTH survey, Statistics Finland, 2014) Based on this table, there is evidence to suggest that foreign workers are less likely to get employed based on their educational background and gender, than their Finnish counterparts



Saukkonen (2017) emphasizes the relevance of education level when factoring the employability of foreign employees, stating that, “the education level of immigrants also had importance. In many countries, immigrants with low qualifications found employment more often than native-born people with a similar level of education. Nevertheless, education obtained in the country of origin seems to facilitate finding employment, albeit those educated immigrants are often forced to settle with low-skilled jobs [in Finland].” (Saukkonen, 2017)

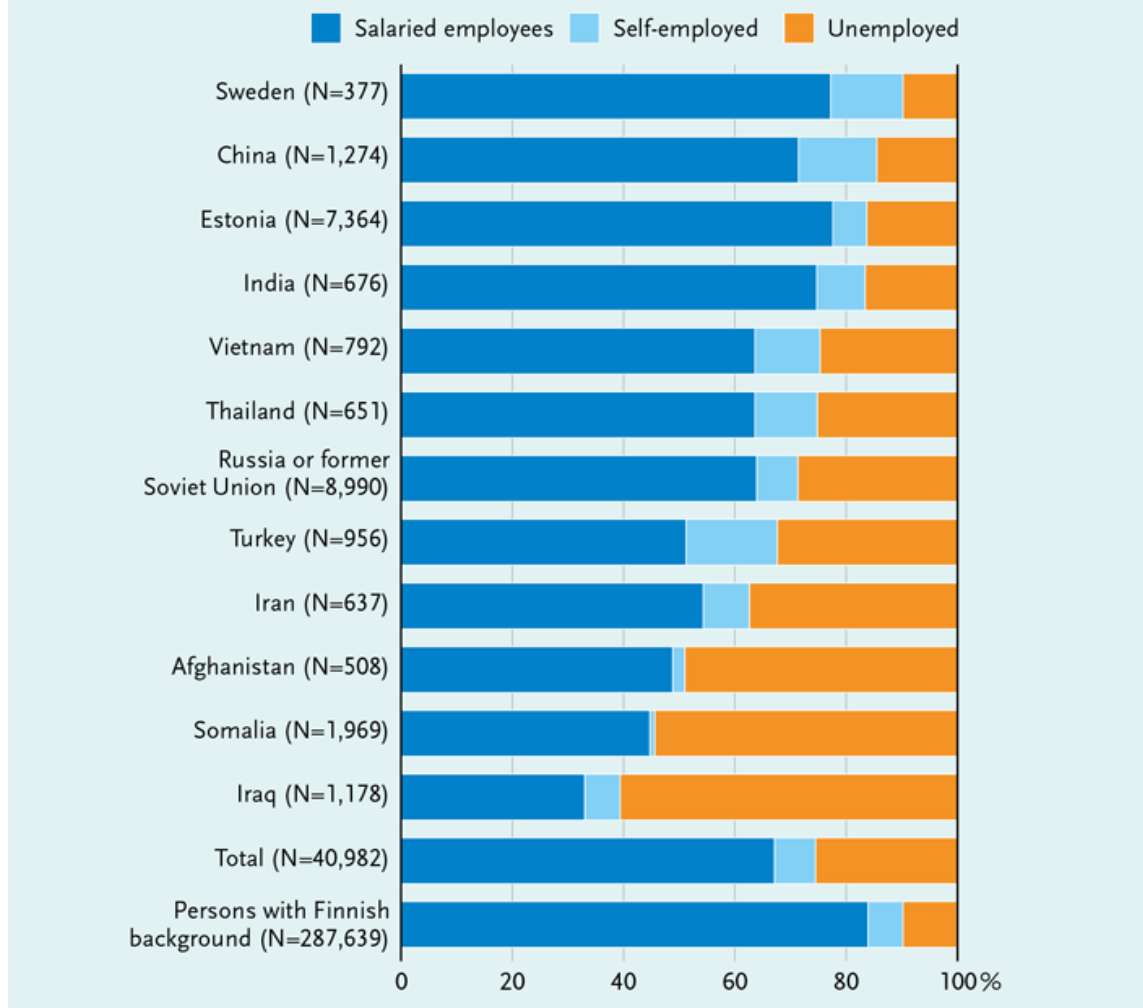
There is evidence to suggest that foreign worker's Finnish language skills may be a significant factor in determining their employability within Finnish companies.

A recent study, based on phone interviews with 1,009 people that recruit candidates in the construction, trade, services and military sectors in Finland, conducted in January-March 2020, found that a foreign-worker's country of origin affected their hire-ability. "Half of the companies believe that an immigrant's country of origin has an effect on their ability to work effectively. Over a quarter of the recruiters interviewed named states or regions where they would not be happy to hire workers, notably countries in the Middle East and Africa."

(EUROPEAN WEB SITE ON INTEGRATION, Migrant Integration Information and good practices, 2020)

This figure shows the unemployment rate of foreigners in Helsinki, in 2014, based on their country of origin. It is clear from this figure that the employment rate of foreigners varied based on their country of origin. The employment rate of people with a Swedish background was close to the native Finnish population. People with a Chinese, Estonian and Indian background had a higher unemployment rate than the native population, but the difference is not substantial. However, approximately half or more of the 15-64-year-old Afghan, Somali and Iraqi immigrants in Helsinki were unemployed in the last week of 2014, with Iraqi immigrants having the highest level of unemployment. The situation was worst for those with an Iraqi background, as only slightly more than one-third (39.4 per cent) was either a salaried employee or entrepreneur at the time. However, the fact that there were only 1,178 people with an Iraqi background in the workforce in Helsinki in 2014, may have been a contributing factor to the results. (Saukkonen, 2017)

FIGURE 1. Main type of activity of economically active immigrants aged 15–64 years in Helsinki in 2014, by country of origin. Source: Statistics Finland

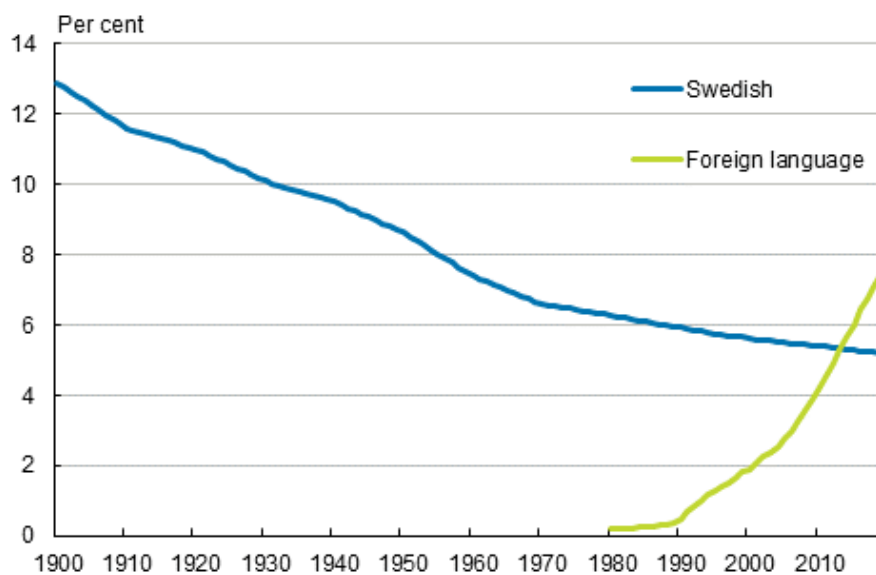


The previously mentioned study, intervening with 1,009 people that recruit candidates, found that, “almost half of the people responsible for recruitment considered that an immigrant's proficiency in Finnish should be almost at fluency-level in order to succeed at work. For companies that had experience with immigrants as employees, the language proficiency requirement was lower.” (EUROPEAN WEB SITE ON INTEGRATION, Migrant Integration Information and good practices, 2020)

English language skills may also contribute to the employability of immigrants in Finland. An existing bachelor's thesis, focused on discovering Finnish company's need and use of the English language at work. The study was conducted by interviewing two Finnish company CEOs. The results showed how in both companies English is needed in daily work, however employees were not required to have a particularly high level of language skills. Therefore, it

is highly possible that English is a desired skill for both foreign and Finnish employees to have. (Mäkiö, 2016)

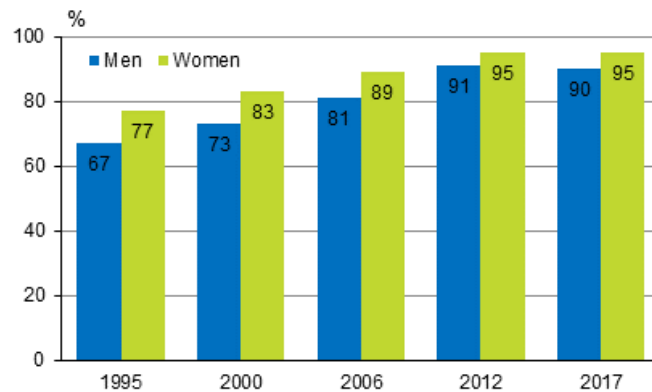
This figure shows the Swedish-speakers' and foreign-language speakers' proportion of the population living in Finland 1900-2019 (Statistics Finland, 2020b). It is clear that foreign language speakers do outnumber the Swedish speakers in Finland. Based on this figure, it is possible that employers may desire their employees to speak Swedish (since nearly 6% of Finns speak Swedish) or another foreign language (with the foreign language speaking population rising).



This figure displays the people in Finland with knowledge of at least one foreign language by level of education in 1995, 2000, 2006, 2012 and 2017 (population aged 18 to 64). With at least one foreign language spoken by 93 per cent of the population aged 18 to 64, one could infer that speaking other foreign languages (besides Finnish, English, and Swedish), could be a relevant skill for both foreign and native-Finn employees in Finland. (Statistics Finland, 2018)

With this in mind, the aforementioned interview study revealed that many Finnish companies are willing to provide language training services to their employees “two out of three companies consider in-service language training to be feasible. One third of the companies were also willing to contribute or pay for the full-training costs. Thus, there is a desire among employers to tackle recruitment barriers by employing job seekers who do not yet meet all the requirements in terms of language skills.” (EUROPEAN WEB SITE ON INTEGRATION, Migrant

Integration Information and good practices, 2020)



A scholarly article, published in the Journal of Communication conducted interviews The article forced on a study conducted via a series of in-depth interviews with 32 senior HR managers in organisations with over 100 staff. The purpose of the interviews was to: investigate the interpersonal communication skills that human resource (HR) managers expect managers in supervisory positions possess; to identify which of these skills HR managers expect managers use to engender subordinate commitment to the organisation; and to investigate what interpersonal communication skills that enhance employee commitment to the organisation are most lacking in managers in supervisory positions. The study found that workers in the medium range of educational qualification perform better compared to those in the extremes and the same holds good in the case of work experience. This study provides evidence that work experience and education are relevant factors in the hiring process. (Bambacas and Patrickson, 2008)

A Master's thesis, published by Åbo Akademi University, aimed to investigate how employees perceive information literacy, and whether organizations are supporting the development of information literacy skills in the digital workplace. Data was collected via an online questionnaire. The results of the study indicated that: the employees perceive information literacy as an important set of skills to have in the digital workplace; some organizations support the development of the employee's information literacy skills, but information technology receives the most attention in the digital workplace; not enough effort was spent in facilitating the discoverability and access of digital information and facilitating the development of critical thinking and communications skills among the employees; and that some of the employees have not fully developed the skills required to manage information effectively. With these results in mind, one could infer those digital skills in the workplace is a relevant issue and may be a deciding factor in the hiring process of employees. (Almeida Rocha, 2018)

A publication in the *Journal of Communication Management*, conducted research, via in-depth interviews, with 32 senior HR managers in organisations with over 100 staff. The authors of the publication wanted to: investigate the interpersonal communication skills that human resource (HR) managers expect managers in supervisory positions possess; identify which of these skills HR managers expect managers use to engender subordinate commitment to the organisation; and investigate what interpersonal communication skills that enhance employee commitment to the organisation are most lacking in managers in supervisory positions. They found that, “senior HR managers expected managers to be effective in interpersonal communication focusing mainly on the clarity and frequency of the messages, their ability to actively listen and the ability to lead in a collaborative way...however, these skills were also the ones found most lacking.” These findings highlight the importance of interpersonal skills in the workplace. (Bambacas and Patrickson, 2008)

The *Journal of Managerial Issues* published a study that examines the relationships between structural variables, level of team self-management, and judgments of team effectiveness. “The results indicate that two aspects of organizational structure (micro-level centralization and formalization) moderated the influence of self-management on team effectiveness. Self-management was more likely to influence judgments of team effectiveness under low levels of micro-level centralization and under low levels of formalization. These findings suggest that teams with high levels of self-management may be more effective in organizations where the authority to make decisions about task performance is distributed, and in organizations with fewer explicit rules, policies, and procedures.” This study demonstrates the importance of self-management in the workplace. (Tata and Prasad, 2004)

Beyond Diversity is a project, conducted in 2011. The project’s aim was to provide managers of small and medium-sized businesses an effective tool for positive management of conflicts on the ground of cultural differences. “Beyond Diversity Project was based on the results of the previous project Minerva - POCODIMA, conducted in 2003-2005. The main objective of the project was to equip the transferred beneficiaries in effective tools for constructive conflict management and technological differences and planning curriculum.” The questionnaire was conducted to diagnose the current situation in Small to Medium Enterprises (SME) in terms of conflicts based on cultural differences amongst the workforces.

Employers were asked to provide information concerning reasons behind employing representatives of other nationalities in their company. The major reasons for hiring employees of other nationalities related to qualification (27%), motivation (20%), and remuneration (22%). 2% admitted that they hire foreign workers to pay lower salaries, and 1% admitted that nationals do not want to do the type of work the company needs. 12% of the companies hire foreign workers to improve relations with clients and suppliers, 9% for general international business reasons, and 1% for client attention.

Employers were asked to provide information on benefits that their company gained from employing those with different national backgrounds. The results of the questionnaire question showed that: 19% SMEs which recruit foreign employees express that diverse teams come up with a variety with options for problem solving which evidently contribute to company efficiency; 23% manifest that diverse employment of other nationalities improve the motivation of present company workers; 9% of entrepreneurs state that employees learn new skills, abilities and values which contribute to the development of a lifelong learning organisation. While only 2% state that they recruit foreign workers because they get a lower salary.

Finally, employers were asked about the kind of problems that appeared in their company due to employing representatives of different nationalities. 14% identified that employees from other nationalities are discriminated by their present workforce; 11% attributed the deterioration of work climate to the presence of foreign employees; 19% of companies which find that there is a considerable difference in attitude toward work between other nationalities as the local work culture; 11% of companies find that foreign employees are responsible for deteriorating the work climate; 12% definitely state that there is a major challenge in cross-cultural management to integrate immigrants in the core employee community of the organisation. Other reasons included: 1% relation with clients, 1% differences in perspective in the workplace, 1% creating problems with trade unions and another 1% present learning problems.

Based on the data from these questionnaires, this thesis aims to understand if SME entrepreneurs in Finland share the same sentiment. Some questions asked in this questionnaire are asked on the questionnaire of this thesis. (Beyond Diversity Project and European Institute for Managing Diversity, n.d.)

3 Methodology

Data were gathered via questionnaire both and interview. “The questionnaire data collection method is useful because as the popularity of the Internet increases, more segments of society are using the Internet for communication and information. This is especially useful, since virtual communities have flourished online, and hundreds of thousands of people regularly participate in discussions about almost every conceivable issue and interest. Areas as diverse as interpersonal, group, organizational, health, and mass communication have been studied using online surveys/questionnaires.” (Wright, 2006)

The questionnaire data was gathered in a semi structured format. Semi-structured interviews were selected because they are useful when collecting attitudinal information on a large scale, or when the research is exploratory, and it is not possible to draw up a list of possible pre-codes. “Well planned and conducted semi-structured interviews are the result of rigorous preparation. The development of the interview schedule, conducting the interview and analysing the interview data all require careful consideration and preparation.” (Mathers, Fox and Hunn, 2000)

3.1 Questionnaire Sample

The questionnaire sample included 29 participants. Participants were contacted via Finnish entrepreneurial social media groups on Facebook and LinkedIn. Participants were asked to participate if they were SME business owners in the Helsinki-area. Those participants were selected because the social media platforms were easy to access for both the participants and the researcher. Many participants were active on social media. Participants were asked to fill out a quick, 10-minute questionnaire. The questionnaire was tested on the researcher’s associates before the questionnaire was administered to determine the time, length, and necessities of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was created online, via Google Forms. The questionnaire was submitted on February 15th, 2021. Participants responded to the questionnaire between 15.2.2021-26.2.2021. Participants were able to fill out the questionnaire at any time between those dates.

3.2 Interviews

At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked to participate in a follow-up interview. Of the 29 participants, 9 originally agreed to follow-up interviews. The 9 participants were contacted via email. Of the 9 who originally agreed, 5 responded and attended a semi-structured, follow-up interview. The group of questionnaire respondents who attended the follow-up interviews will be referred to as Group 1.

Individuals involved in organisations focused on improving immigrant employment in Finland were contacted (via email) to participate in a semi-structured interview. Of the individuals contacted, 3 agreed to and participated in the interview. These 3 interview attendees will be referred to as Group 2.

Due to social distancing restrictions, interviews were conducted via various video-calling platforms including Google Duo, Skype, Teams, and Zoom. The time of the interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 2 hours (depending on the time availability of participants). Interviews conducted with questionnaire participants and organisation members were conducted between March 16th, 2021, and March 31st, 2021. The interviews were pre-tested on the researcher’s associates before the interviews were administered to determine the time, length, and necessity of the interviews.

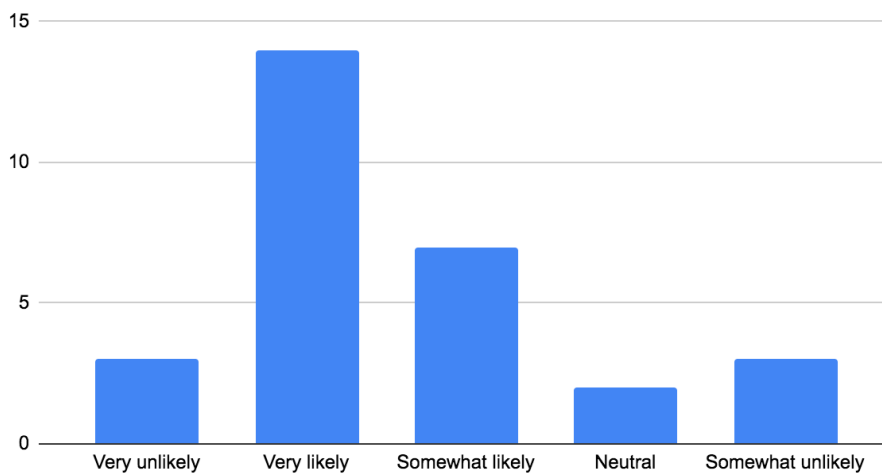
4 Findings

4.1 Questionnaire

4.1.1 What is the willingness of SMEs to hire immigrant workers?

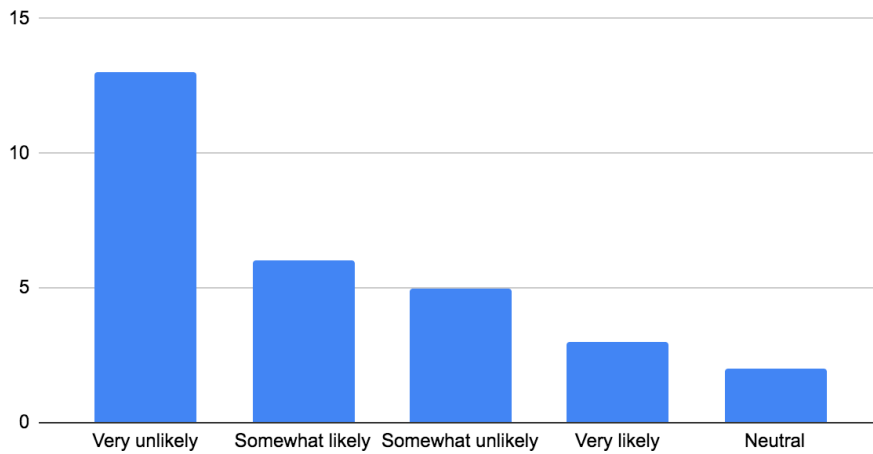
If you divide a chapter into sections, the minimum number of sections is two. The headings on An overwhelming majority (14 respondents, roughly 48%) of participants said that they were very likely to hire foreigners or international employees. The second most common response was somewhat likely (7 respondents, roughly 25%). The remaining three responses were somewhat unlikely (3 respondents, roughly 10%), very unlikely (3 respondents, roughly 10%), and neutral (2 respondents, roughly 7%).

What is the likelihood that your organisation would hire foreigners/international employees (including people from other countries living in Finland)?



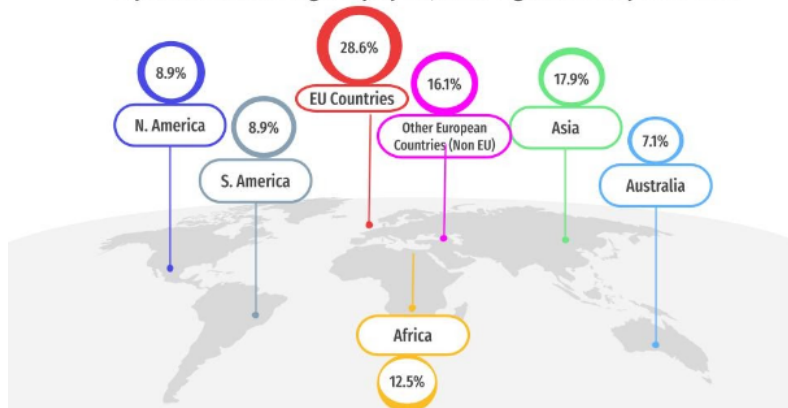
However, the responses regarding the likeliness of SME business owners to sponsor a work visa provided far different results. The most common responses were very unlikely (13 respondents, 45%), somewhat likely (6 respondents, 21%), and somewhat unlikely (5 respondents, 17%). Very likely (3 respondents, 10%) and neutral had the least common responses (2 respondents, 7%).

What is the likelihood that your organisation would sponsor a work visa?



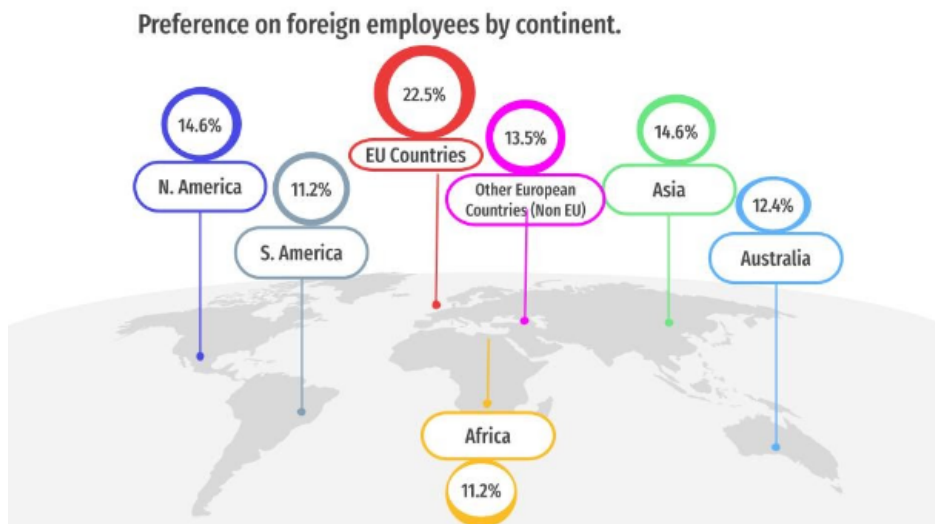
Respondents were asked to mention the regions which their foreign employees came from (if they had hired foreign employees before). 6 of the 29 respondents (roughly 21%) had not hired foreign employees before. Of the respondents who had hired foreign employees, a majority of those employees were from EU countries (16 respondents, 28.6%), Asia (12 respondents 17.9%), other European countries outside of the EU (9 respondents, 16.1%), and Africa (7 respondents, 12.5%). The least common regions were North America (5 respondents, 8.9%), South America (5 respondents, 8.9%), and Australia (4 respondents, 7.1%).

If you have hired foreign employees, which regions did they come from?



Respondents were then requested to select their preference on the cultural backgrounds of their potential employees. 5 of the 29 respondents (roughly 17%) were neutral or had no

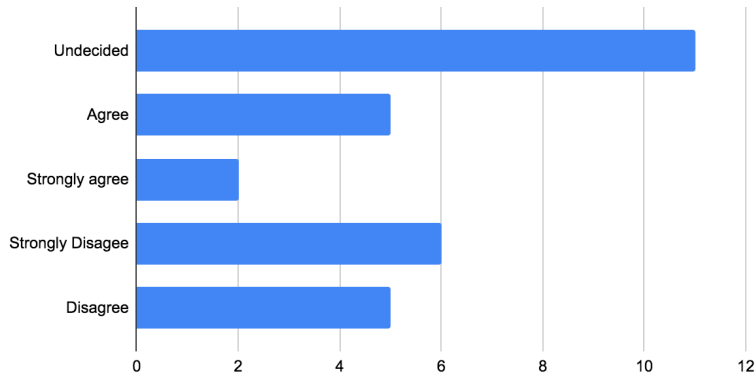
preference. Of the respondents who had preferences, the most common preferred locations were EU countries (25 respondents, 22.5%), Asia (16 respondents, 14.6%), North America (14 respondents, 14.6%), and other European countries outside of the EU (13 respondents, 13.5%). The least common responses were Australia (12 respondents, 12.4%), Africa (11 respondents, 11.2%), and South America (11 respondents, 11.2%).



Regarding the upcoming 5 questions, respondents were asked 5 questions (inspired by responses from the, 2011, Beyond Diversity, Employer Questionnaire, to further understand the respondent's willingness, their perceptions of and willingness to hire foreign workers.

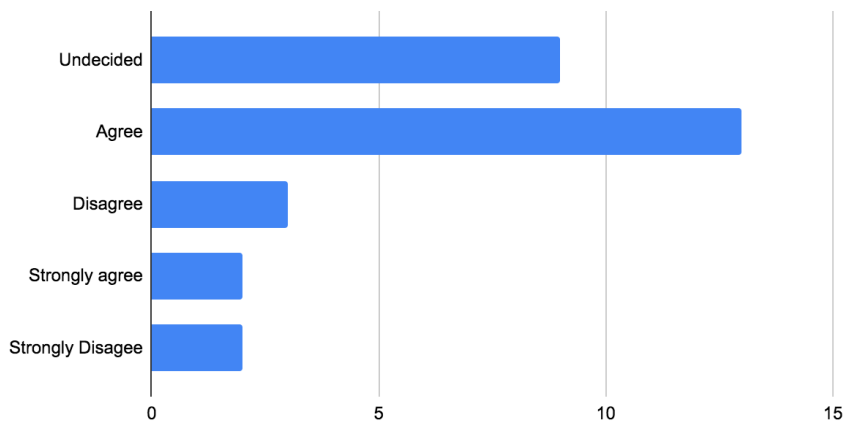
First, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to three questions. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to the statement: It is difficult to find a foreign worker with the proper set of qualifications. The most common responses were undecided (11 respondents, 38%) and strongly disagree (6 respondents, 21%). The least common responses were disagree, (5 respondents, 17%), agree (5 respondents, 17%) and strongly agree (2 respondents, 7%).

It is difficult to find a foreign worker with the proper set of qualifications . [Please indicate your level of agreement:]



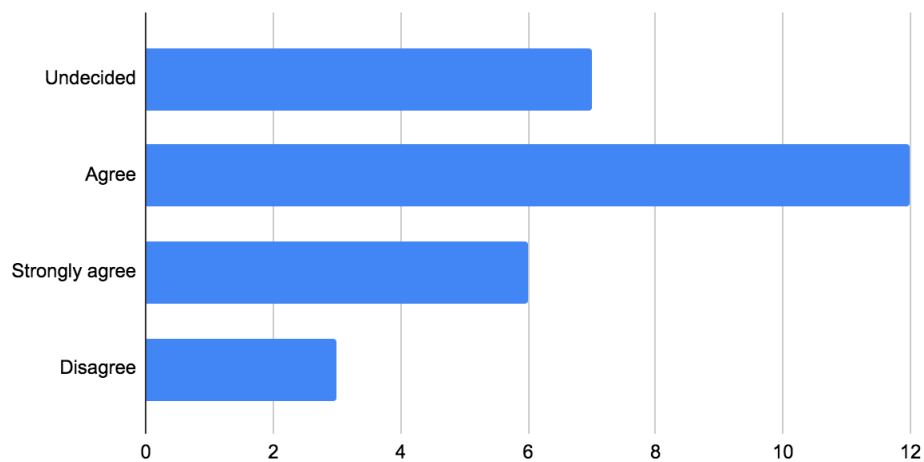
Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to the statement: Foreign workers have lower financial requirements than other, non-foreign workers. The majority of respondents agreed (13 respondents, 45%). Other common responses were: undecided (9 respondents, 31%) and disagree (3 respondents, 10%). The least common responses were: strongly agree (2 respondents, 7%) and strongly disagree (2 respondents, 7%).

Foreign workers have lower financial requirements than other, non-foreign workers. [Please indicate your level of agreement:]



Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to the statement: Foreign workers usually possess a high level of work motivation. No respondents strongly disagreed. The most common responses were agree (12 respondents, 41%) and undecided (7 respondents, 24%). The least common responses were strongly agree (6 respondents, 21%) and disagree (3 respondents, 10%).

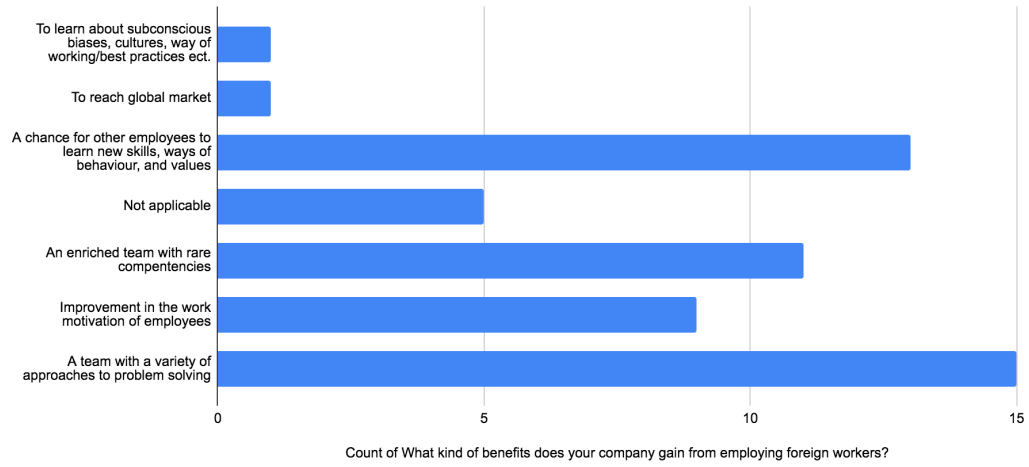
Foreign workers usually possess a high level of work motivation. [Please indicate your level of agreement:]



Respondents were then asked to select from 6 options, or to provide their own response to the question: What benefits does your company gain from employing foreign workers? The answers provided were: a team with a variety of approaches to problem solving; an enriched team with rare competencies; a chance for other employees to learn new skills, ways of behaviour, and values; improvement in the work motivation of employees; and not applicable.

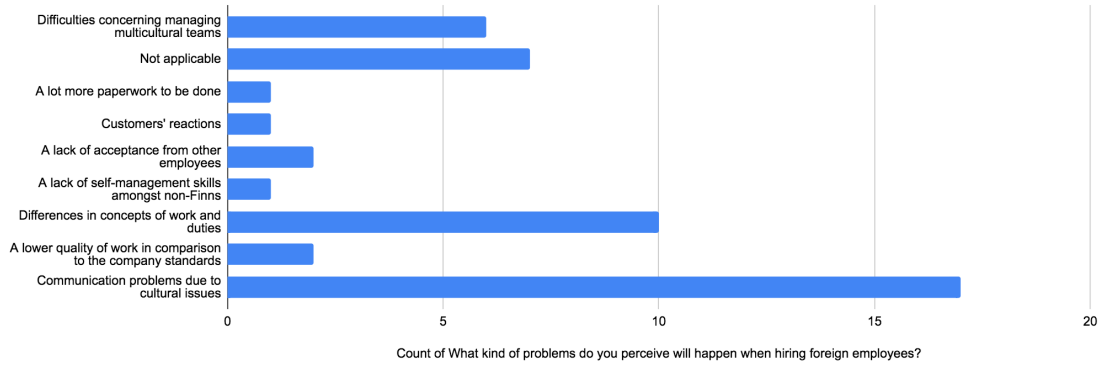
Based on the options provided in the questionnaire, a majority of the respondents (15 respondents, 27%) stated that their company gains a team with a variety of approaches to problem solving, when hiring foreign workers; or a chance for other employees to learn new skills, ways of behaviour, and values (13 respondents, 24%). Other common selections included: an enriched team with rare competencies (11 respondents, 20%); improvement in the work motivation of employees (9 respondents, 16%); and not applicable (5 respondents, 9%). The least common responses were: to learn about subconscious biases, cultures, way of working/best practices, etc. (1 respondent, 2%); and to reach the global market (1 respondent, 2%).

Count of What kind of benefits does your company gain from employing foreign workers?



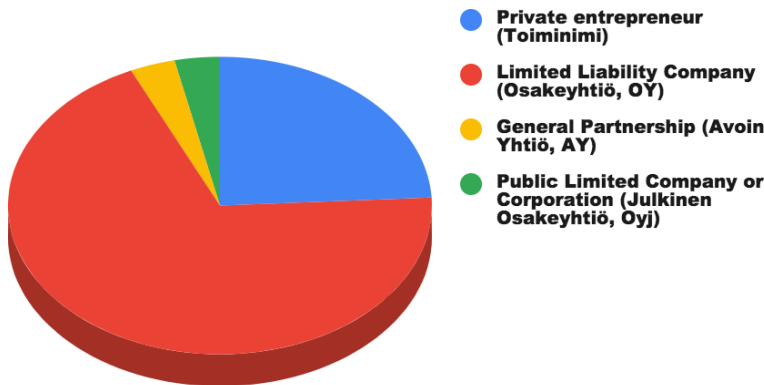
The highest level of education necessary to be employed by SMEs provided varying results. 44.8% (13 respondents) of respondents required their employees to complete secondary or vocational school, 20.7% (6 respondents) required employees to complete a master’s degree, and 17.2% (5 respondents) required employees to complete a bachelor’s degree, and 13.8% (4 respondents) did not require formal education.

Count of What kind of problems do you perceive will happen when hiring foreign employees?



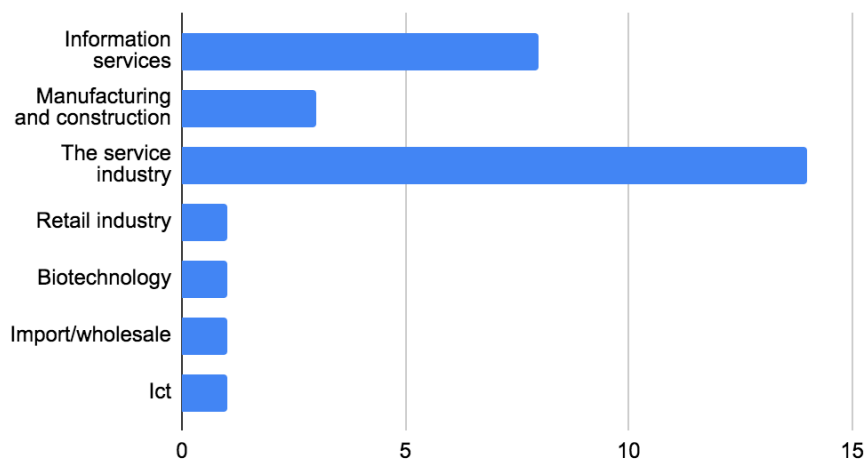
4.1.2 Which SMEs are willing to hire foreign workers?

Of the participants, the majority, 20 respondents (69%), were Limited Liability Company owners. The second largest group of 7 respondents (24.1%) were Private Entrepreneurs. The remaining respondents were 1 Public Limited Company or Corporation (3.4%) respondent and 1 General Partnership (3.4%) respondent.

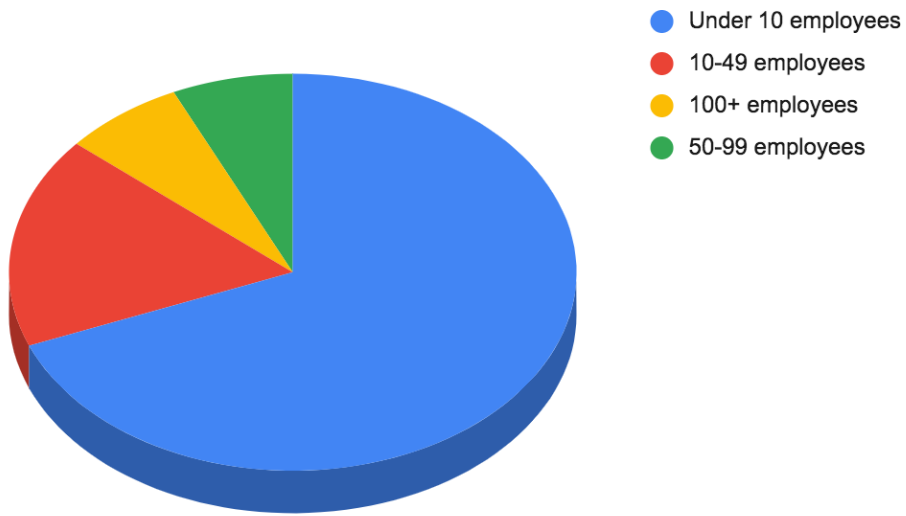


The three largest groups of respondents were owners in the 14 respondents in the service industry (48.3%), 8 respondents in the information services industry (27.6%), and 3 respondents in the manufacturing/construction industry (10.3%). The remaining 4 smallest respondent groups were: 1 respondent in retail (3.4%), 1 respondent in biotechnology (3.4%), 1 respondent in import/wholesale (3.4%), and 1 respondent in ITC (3.4%) industries.

What is your organization's industry sector?

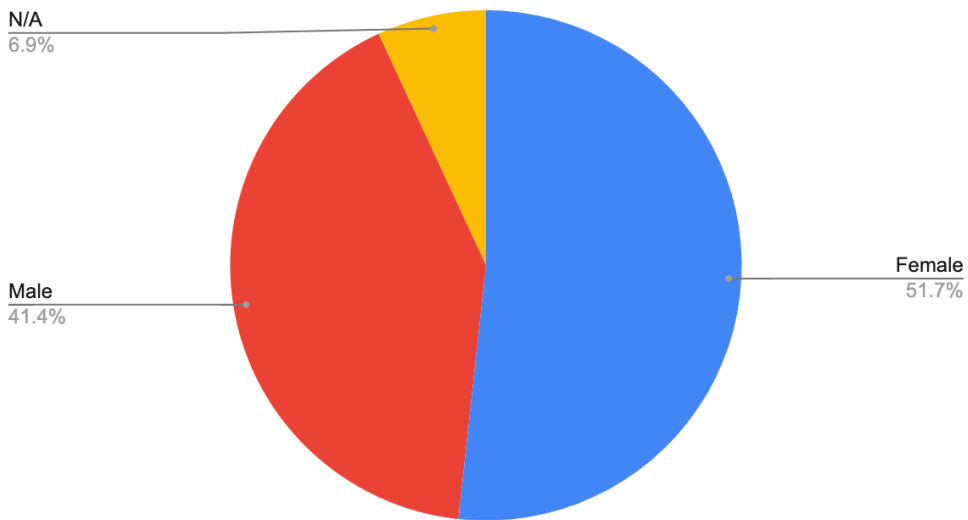


It was overwhelmingly most common for the respondents to have an organisation size of under 10 employees in their organization. Over 20 respondents (69%) were members of organisations of under 10 employees. The second most common organisation size was 10-49 employees (5 respondents, 17.2%).



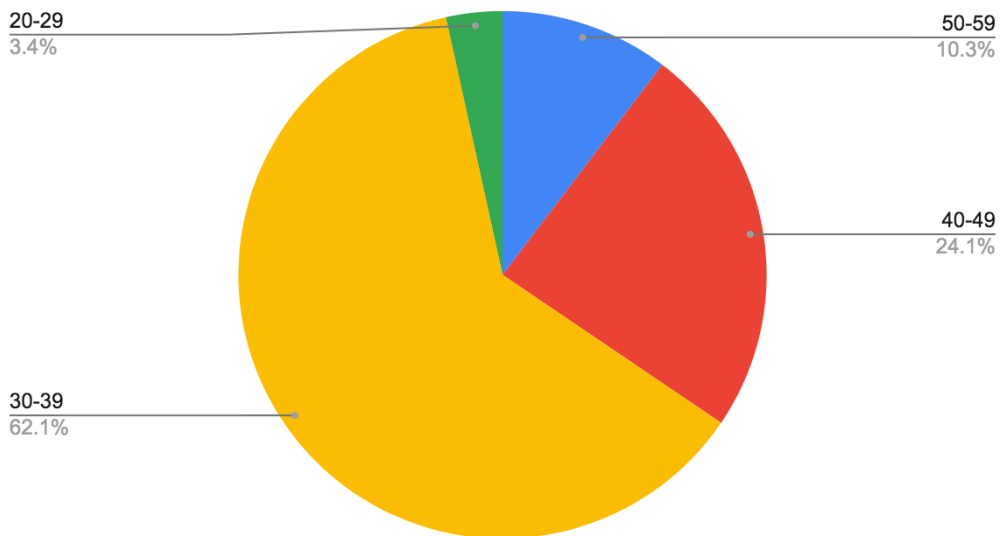
Respondents were asked to select their gender from three options: male, female, or other. They were also given the option to provide their own response. The largest majority of respondents were female (15 respondents, 51.7%), with the second largest majority being male (12 respondents, 41.1%). The least common responses were other or N/A (2 respondents, 6.9%).

Which gender do you most identify with?

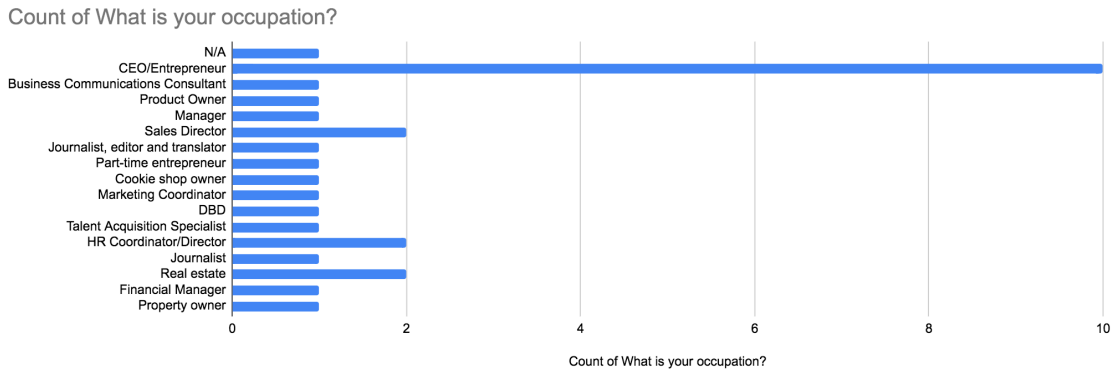


Respondents were then asked to select their age group from the following options: under 20, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, and over 70. No respondents identified as the under 20 age group, the 60-69 age group, or the over 70 age group. Based on this data, all respondents were between the ages of 20-59. The vast majority of respondents were between the ages of 20-29 (18 respondents, 62.1%). Smaller proportions of the respondents were between the age of 40-49 (7 respondents, 24.1%), and 50-59 (3 respondents, 10.3%). The smallest minority of respondents were between the age of 20-29 (1 respondent, 3.4%).

Count of Which of the following best describes your age?

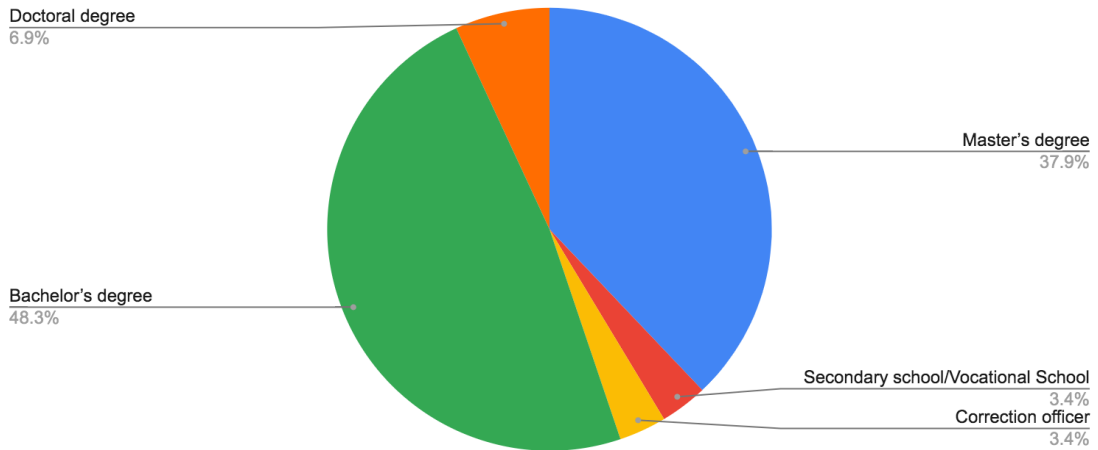


Respondents were asked to provide their own response to the question: What is your occupation? A majority of the respondents were CEOs/Entrepreneurs (10 respondents, 35%). Other common occupations were sales director (2 respondents, 7%), HR Coordinator/Director (2 respondents, 7%), and Real Estate (2 respondents, 7%). The rest of the respondents occupation responses (13 respondents, 45%) were: N/A (1 respondent, 3%); Business Communication Consultant (1 respondent, 3%); Product Owner (1 respondent, 3%); Manager (1 respondent, 3%); Journalist, editor, and translator (1 respondent, 3%); Part-time entrepreneur (1 respondent, 3%); Cookie Shop Owner (1 respondent, 3%); Marketing Director (1 respondent, 3%); DBD (1 respondent, 3%); Talent Acquisition Specialist (1 respondent, 3%); Journalist (1 respondent, 3%); Financial Manager (1 respondent, 3%); Property Owner (1 respondent, 3%).



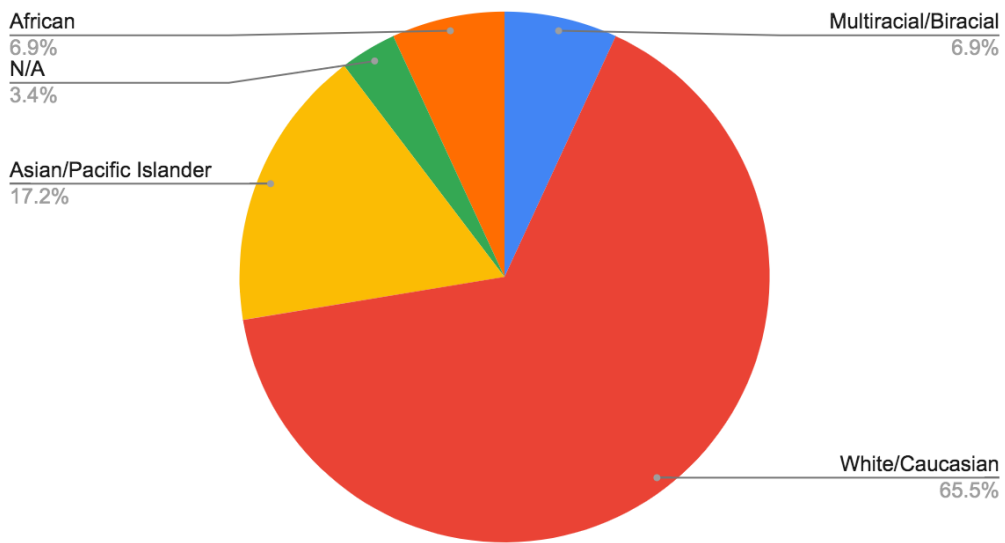
Respondents were asked to state the highest level of education that they completed. Respondents asked to either provide their own responses or to select from the following options: Secondary School/Vocational School; Bachelor’s degree; Master’s degree; or Doctoral degree. The majority of respondents had completed a bachelor’s degree (14 respondents, 48.3%) or a master’s degree (11 respondents, 37.9%). The minority of respondents completed a doctoral degree (2 respondents, 6.9%), secondary, school/vocational school (1 respondent, 3.4%), or correction officer school (1 respondent, 3.4%).

What is the highest level of education have you completed?



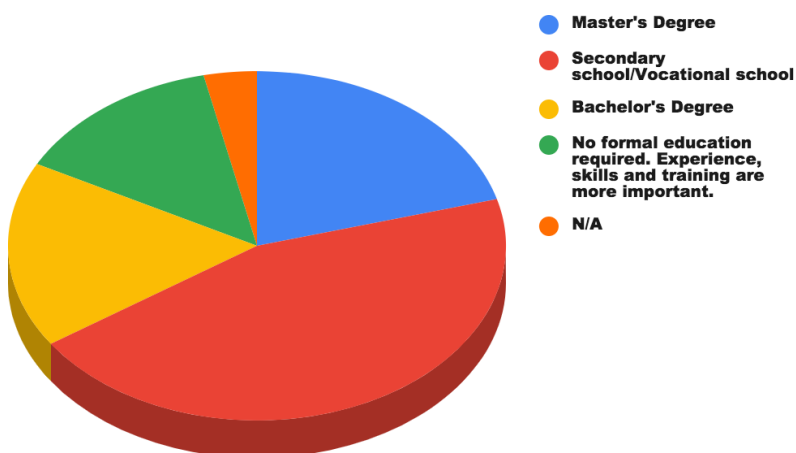
Respondents were then asked to select the ethnic group which they identify with best from the following options: African, Asian/Pacific Islander, Indigenous, Hispanic/Latino, White/Caucasian, Multiracial/Biracial. They were also given the option to provide their own response. A majority of respondents identified as white/Caucasian (19 respondents, 65.5%) or Asian/Pacific islander (5 respondents, 17.2%). Other common ethnic groups, which respondents identified with included: African (2 respondents, 6.9%) and Multiracial/Biracial (2 respondents, 6.9%). The least common response was N/A (1 respondent, 3.4%).

What ethnic group do you identify with?



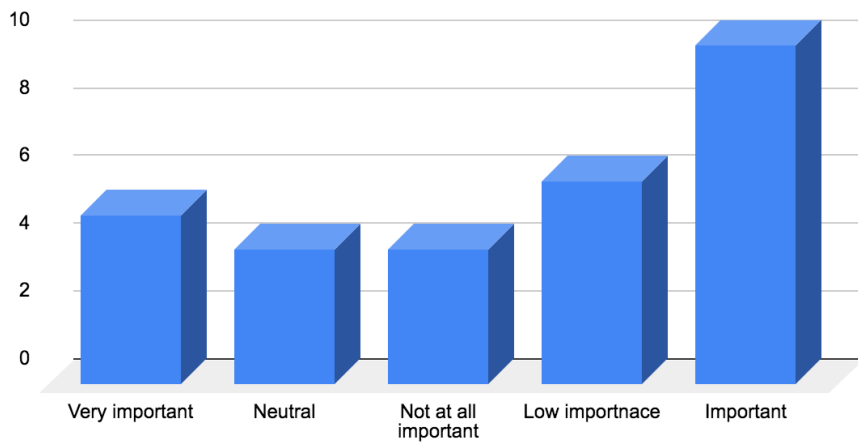
4.1.3 What are their needs?

The highest level of education necessary to be employed by SMEs provided varying results. 44.8% (13 respondents) of respondents required their employees to complete secondary or vocational school, 20.7% (6 respondents) required employees to complete a master’s degree, and 17.2% (5 respondents) required employees to complete a bachelor’s degree, and 13.8% (4 respondents) did not require formal education.



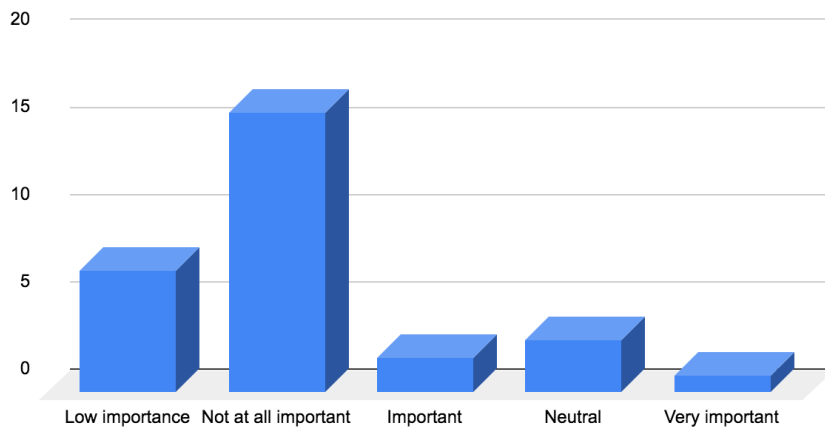
When SME owners were asked about Finnish language skills at the workplace, the responses were quite varied. The largest majority of respondents stated that Finnish language skills were important (10 respondents, 34.5%), of low importance (6 respondents, 20.7%), or very important (5 respondents, 17.2%). With the least common responses being neutral (4 respondents, 13.8%) or not at all important (4 respondents, 13.8%).

How important are Finnish language skills at your workplace? [Please indicate the level of importance.]



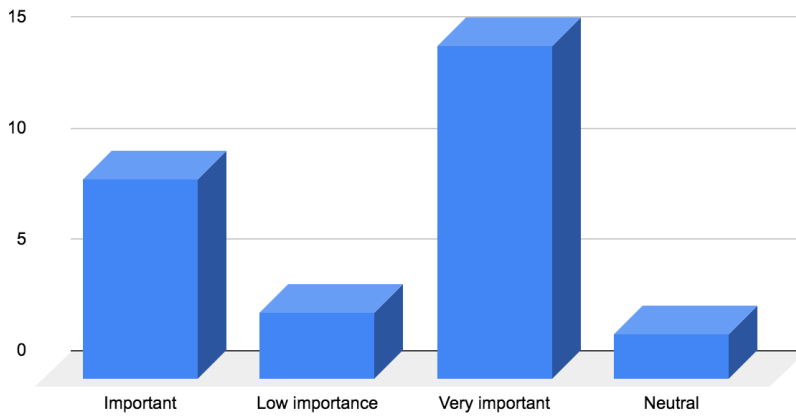
There was a striking difference in the way respondents approach Swedish language. The vast majority of respondents (16 respondents, 55%) felt that Swedish language skills were not at all important. Other popular responses included: low importance (7 respondents, 24%) and neutral (3 respondents, 10%). The least common responses were important (2 respondents, 7%) and very important (1 respondent, 4%).

How important are Swedish language skills at your workplace? [Please indicate the level of importance.]



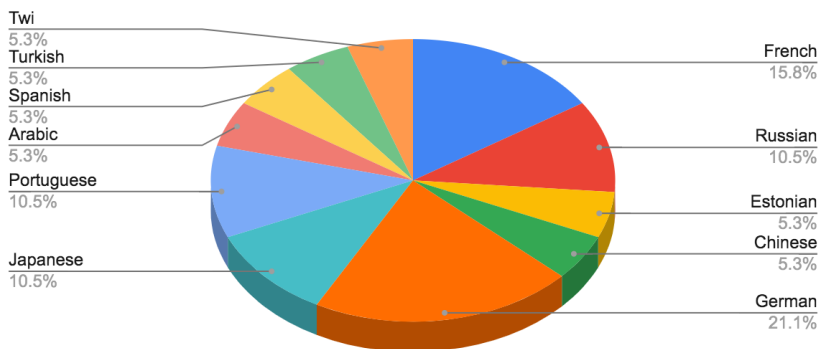
An interesting finding was observed in the results from the question related to the importance of English language at work. No respondents selected the ‘not at all important’, option when asked about the English language’s level of importance at their work. The most common responses were very important (15 respondents, 52%) and important (9 respondents, 31%). The least common responses were low importance (3 respondents, 10%) and neutral (2 respondents, 7%).

Count of How important are English language skills at your workplace? [Please indicate the level of importance.]



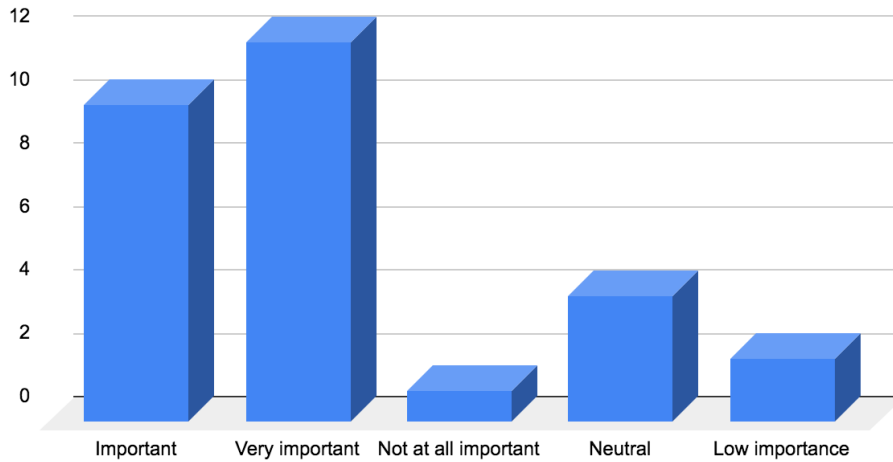
When respondents were asked if there were other languages that they desired their employees to speak, there was a wide variety of different languages mentioned. The most common was German (3 respondents, 21.1%), followed by French (3 respondents, 15.8%). Other common languages desired included Japanese (2 respondents, 10.5%), Portuguese (2 respondents, 10.5%), and Russian (2 respondents, 10.5%). The least common language skills desired were Arabic (1 respondent, 5.3%), Chinese (1 respondent, 5.3%), Spanish (1 respondent, 5.3%), Turkish (1 respondent, 5.3%), and Twi (1 respondent, 5.3%).

If there are other language skills that you want your employees to have that were not already mentioned, please list them here:



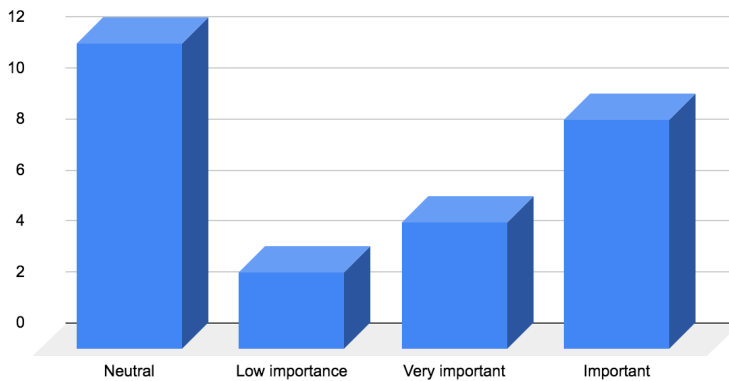
When respondents were asked about the importance for their employees to have work experience, the majority of respondents found previous work experience to be very important (12 respondents, 41%). The other most common responses were: important (10 respondents, 35%) and neutral (4 respondents, 14%). The least common responses were low importance (2 respondents, 7%), and not at all important (1 respondent, 3%).

How important is it for your employees to have relevant work experience? [Please indicate the level of importance.]



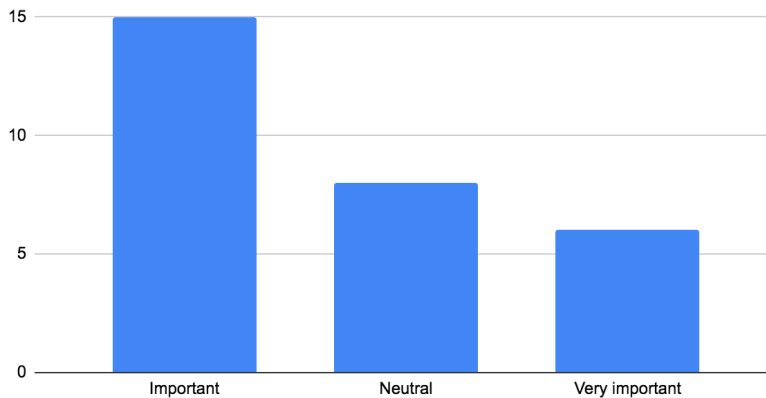
When respondents were asked about the importance of employees to have education related to their job, their responses were more varied. No respondents felt that education was not at all important. The majority of respondents were neutral on the matter (12 respondents, 41%). The second most common response was important (11 respondents, 31%). The least common responses were very important (5 respondents, 17%) and low importance (3 respondents, 10%).

How important is it for your employees to have education related to their job? [Please indicate the level of importance.]



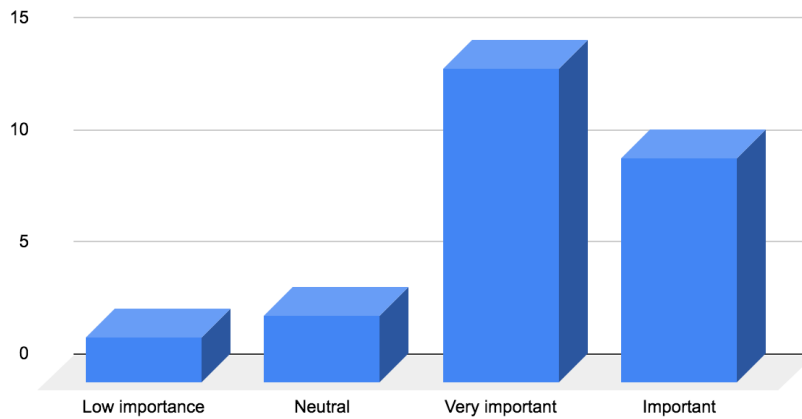
When respondents were asked about the importance of IT skills at their workplace, no respondents found IT skills to be not at all important or of low importance. Respondents described knowledge of various computer systems as being important (15 respondents, 52%), neutral (8 respondents, 28%), and very important (6 respondents, 20%).

How important is it for your employees to have knowledge of various computer systems? [Please indicate the level of impo...



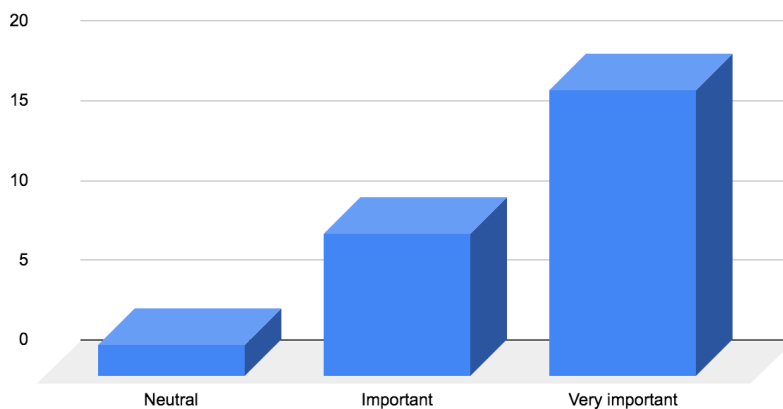
When respondents were asked to indicate how important it is for their employees to have strong interpersonal skills, no respondents indicated that it was not at all important. The most common responses were very important (14 respondents, 48%) and important (10 respondents, 35%), highlighting the importance of interpersonal skills. The least common responses were neutral (3 respondents, 10%) and low importance (2 respondents, 7%).

How important is it for your employees to have strong interpersonal skills? [Please indicate the level of importance.]



When respondents were asked to indicate how important it is for their employees to have strong self-management skills, no respondents indicated that it was not at all important, or of low importance. Respondents described self-management skills as being very important (18 respondents, 62%), important (9 respondents, 31%), and neutral (2 respondents, 7%).

How important is it for your employees to have strong self management skills? [Please indicate the level of importance.]



4.2 Interviews

4.2.1 Interview Group 1

At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked if they were comfortable with a follow-up interview. If so, they were asked to provide an email or contact information. Of the 29 questionnaire respondents, 9 respondents stated that they were comfortable with a follow-up interview and provided contact information. All 9 respondents were contacted. Of the 9 respondents contacted, 5 responded and agreed to a follow-up interview. The identities of the interviewees will remain anonymous. One interviewee grew up in Finland but has lived abroad for many years. All other respondents moved to Finland as adults. 2 respondents had no other employees in their organisation, but had experience working with international employees in the past. The remaining 3 respondents had staff members or co-workers of some form.

Interviewee 1's organisation provided services including: presentation skill training, teaching writing and culture, writing services (editing, copywriting, proofreading), producing small marketing films, and providing scripting and voiceovers.

Interviewee 2's organisation provided services including: virtual reality, 3D modeling, virtual events, and virtual shows.

Interviewee 3's organisation provided services including: journalism, content creation, editing, marketing and communications consulting, and coaching for immigrant women to help them find jobs.

Interviewee 4's organisation provided services including: B2C organic high quality, customizable, low waste, gourmet cookies Customized cookies or wedding cookies, B2B logo cookies and company specific recipes, and provides non-profit support to immigrant women. Immigrant women can sell their food through Interviewee 4's organisation. Interviewee 4 sells the immigrant women's products to the company. In addition, Interviewee 4 runs an association for Finnish and Immigrant women to provide information and clarity surrounding common misconceptions about childbirth in Finland.

Interviewee 5's organization provided services including: health care and homecare services for sick and elderly

All interviewees' organisations operate in Finland and in the Helsinki-area. Some interviewees organisations operate solely in Finland, and solely in Helsinki. However, some interviewees organisations operated in the Netherlands, Australia, Brazil, Belgium, Sweden, Estonia, UK, and the US. Some interviewees organisations operate throughout the EU, or even globally.

4.2.2 Interview Group 2

During the time of this interview, a second group of people were contacted. The individuals contacted provide support for immigrants looking for work in Finland, or for immigrants moving to Finland after finding work. Of the 8 individuals/groups contacted, 3 agreed to a video interview. Two interviewees were males, and one was female. Interviewee 1 and 2, were native-Finns. Both had traveled and lived abroad multiple times throughout their life. Interviewee 3 was from a foreign country but has been living in Finland for over 20 years.

Interviewee 1's organisation provides many services for hired foreign workers and their families moving to Finland, as well as for hired Finnish workers and their families, moving abroad for work. Their work starts where the recruiters' jobs ends. When clients (companies) want to bring in a particular customer that they hire to Finland, Interviewee 1's organisation provides many services. Their primary services are immigration services and relocation services. Regarding immigration services, Interviewee 1's organisation assists customers (expats, foreign workers, etc.) with the official parts of immigrating, filling out applications for residence permits, etc. The relocation services begin once the client has arrived in Finland. Relocation services provided include assisting clients with local registrations, social insurances, setting up bank accounts, registering with tax offices, assisting in customer's home search and utility contracts, finding schools and daycares for children, assisting spouses and families with integrating to Finland, etc. These services help customers to function as a productive member of society when moving to Finland, while preventing workplace disruption.

Interviewee 1's organisation also provides relocation services for people leaving Finland to work elsewhere globally. Interviewee 1's organisation works with a local partner (often through European Relocation Associations, Global Relocation Association, or International Relocation Association) when a company/person in Finland wants to move abroad. Interviewee 1's organisation coordinating with partners at the destination which the client/customer is moving to.

Interviewee 2's organisation provides career coaching, consultancy, personal assessment, leadership training, and speeches related to the development of people and organisations. Their services are provided to both foreign workers and companies to help foreign workers gain employment, and to help companies gain efficient employees.

Interviewee 3 is working on a project, which started in 2019. The project is focused on creating one portal and one platform for all companies and posting information for all students. This portal simplifies the process of talent recruitment. In the past, companies would have had to post job openings separately, on each university's job/talent recruitment platform. This new project harmonises the recruitment process for students. The platform was originally used by universities in the Uusimaa region only, but soon it will be used for all higher education institutes in Finland.

Interviewee 3's project conducted a survey, focusing on helping international workers find jobs more easily by raising their profile in the job market. Motivated by the survey results, Interviewee 3's project is now developing mentoring programs and spouse integration programs. The survey found that one reason international talents in Finland don't stay in Finland is because spouses can't find work or are unable to integrate into society. Offering moral support for spouses and spousal integration programs can be a solution to attract long-term, foreign talent to Finland.

Another survey conducted through Interviewee 3's organisation found that one of the challenges for foreign employees was discovering and promoting the skills of students that can be utilized for a company's benefit. Interviewee 3 emphasizes the importance of attracting foreign talent to Finland. "With the birth rate declining, Finland needs to secure their future. Having people study and want to stay and work in Finland is a great way to do that."

4.2.3 Experiences working with foreigners

Interviewees were asked: What has been your experience working with or employing international workers? All interviewees had experience working with international employees/coworkers. The interviewees who did not employ foreign workers directly or did not employ anyone at all, shared their experiences working with international employees before running their current organisation. All interviewees had worked with international employees in Finland either before or during their organisation's operation.

All interviewees had positive experiences working with international employees. Some emphasised the importance of working with international employees, stating that it helps open up opportunities for a business. Some stated that they prefer working in an international environment.

Interview Group 2 attendees had much to say on the topic. Interviewee 1 stated that, "There are a lot of different cultural differences that need to be accounted for. You have to meet everyone's individual wants, needs and expectations. There are similarities across cultures, no one is a walking, talking stereotype." Interviewee 2 emphasized the importance of hiring

international employees for creating an international network. Interviewee 2 highlighted the new perspective and creative possibilities gained from hiring foreign employees.

Interviewee 3's gained experience working with foreigners and international employees in Finland, working in the education sector. They mentioned that English has been widely spoken at their workplace, but it does vary. Interviewee 3 highlighted an important issue that many international employees (especially native-English speakers) face, "Finns often want to speak English to foreign workers." They mentioned that international workers have an important role and responsibility to learn Finnish, and that excellent integration and Finnish language learning programs are available.

Interviewee 3 highlighted the advantages and disadvantages that an international worker could face when moving to Finland and trying to learn the local language. "Generally, places with international workers are relatively accommodating. The benefit is that, if you know or learn English, you can come and live in Finland and integrate to a certain level easily. The disadvantage is that deeper integration to society is more challenging if you are unable to or not encouraged to learn the language."

4.2.4 Differences in foreigner's approaches to work

Interviewees were then asked about if they had observed any differences in the way Finnish employees and international employees approached work. Some interviewees did not notice any differences. Many interviewees mentioned that "if you train them, they can be the best workers." Many mentioned that interviewees are productive, focused on building relationships, and often feel that they have to prove themselves. Some interviewees stated that they observed Finns as being more direct. One interviewee observed that Finns have less of a drive than international employees. Many mentioned that they have observed cultural misunderstandings between Finns and international employees. Issues related to language, bringing emotional problems to work, and trust were discussed. Many interviewees emphasized the importance of networking and career development for international workers' employment success

4.2.5 Benefits

After that, interviewees were asked, "From your observations, what do you perceive to be the greatest benefit of hiring an international employee?" All interviewees mentioned that hiring international employees is beneficial if an organisation is interested in global expansion, networking in other countries, and that international workers provide a new and fresh perspective. Many mentioned that hiring international employees provides a larger hiring pool. Group 2's Interviewee 1, also observed that foreign talents are often more willing to work at a lower salary, however a minimum criterion must be met.

Group 2's, Interviewee 2, mentioned advantages including: gaining a new understanding of different cultures, language skills, a new way of thinking/doing, and a fresh perspective. Interviewee 3 emphasised the advantages when Finnish companies are looking to expand globally. Interviewee 3 stated foreigners can provide insider knowledge into their country's market, and potentially be more successful with selling products to other countries.

4.2.6 Setbacks

Interviewees were then asked what they perceive to be the greatest setback of hiring international employees. Common setbacks mentioned include: the fact that many international workers do not speak Finnish (language skills), cultural and social differences, the potential for an employee to have difficulty adjusting to Finnish cultures and customs, and the potential for an employee to be untrustworthy. Overall, a lack of Finnish language skills and cultural differences were mentioned by all interviewees.

Group 2, Interviewee 2 proposed a solution to this problem. Interviewee 2 would like to see the government provide Finnish mentors to foreign employees moving to Finland to help them integrate and learn Finnish. Interviewee 1 also emphasized the extra expenses that come when hiring foreign employees. "You [employers] need to meet certain criteria and pay. The hiring process is more expensive."

A majority of the interviewees mentioned that employers are concerned that international employees will not stay with their organisation long-term and may return to their home country. Another commonly mentioned setback was the fact that Finland's residence permit application process can be complex and a turn-off for Finnish employers.

4.2.7 Ideas to help foreign workers attract firms

With that in mind, interviewees were then asked what could be done to make international employees more attractive from a firm's perspective. Networking, being an active member of international business organisations in Finland, and a willingness to learn Finnish or Swedish, were commonly mentioned suggestions. A willingness for companies to run background checks, to express the validity of international employees was also mentioned. Three of the five interviewees emphasised the importance of educating companies on the benefits of hiring international workers.

4.2.8 Threats firms could face when hiring foreign workers

Interviewees were then asked if there are any threats that a firm would face when hiring international employees. Common threats mentioned included: the potential for international

employees wanting to move back to their home countries, potential security issues, potential difficulties with international employees obtaining a residence permit (including the potential for additional expenses), a lack of Finnish language skills, the potential for international workers to misinterpret information and social queues, and the potential for the international employee to feel left out.

Group 2, Interviewee 1, mentioned the misconception that hiring abroad is expensive and slow. They stated that, although hiring a foreign worker can be a bit more expensive, if you factor in the opportunity cost of waiting to find an employee in Finland and consider that most clients see their employees get their residence permits in 2-4 weeks after application, that's not that long. Over 30,000 people have used Interviewee 1's services. However, if mistakes are made in the residence permit application process, it will cause long delays.

Group 2, Interviewee 2, discussed the potential for foreign workers to feel left-out, and the potential safety problem if someone doesn't understand instructions. Interviewee 3 discussed the potential for foreign workers to lack local language skills, and the need for knowledge of Finnish culture, networks and contacts.

4.2.9 Most important skills/capabilities

Finally, interviewees were asked to mention the most important skills and necessary capabilities of employees working at their organisation. Common skills mentioned included: communication skills, technical skills, self-awareness, English language skills, software skills, and project management skills. Other aspects less commonly mentioned included knowledge of gaming platforms and knowledge of necessary sanitation practices. Other common skills and competencies desired include: a willingness to learn, confidence, trustworthiness, adaptability, and possessing a relevant degree.

Group 2, Interviewee 2 mentioned these skills: flexibility, a willingness to adjust and learn, the ability to talk about habits/culture in a cooperative way; punctuality, keeping promises, and honesty.

International students looking for work and job-hunting skills use Group 2, Interviewee 3's services. Common skills that yielded success included: language skills, a flexible mindset, adaptability, systematic skills, organisation skills, and patience (because the job market in Finland is not always easy). Interviewee 3 observed that Immigrants in Finland are not all treated equally. Immigrants from English speaking countries or Nordic countries are treated differently than people from Africa, the Middle East, and Southern countries.

5 Analysis

5.1 Introduction

Respondents were given the option to express their reasons for choosing their answer to the question: What is the likelihood that your organisation would hire foreigners/international employees? Respondents who were willing or somewhat willing to hire foreign workers provided many reasons for choosing their answer. The topic of necessary language skills was mentioned frequently. One respondent stated that they were willing to hire foreign workers, but the worker must speak Finnish fluently. Other respondents expressed their need for other language skills at work (including native-English), and one respondent stated that 50% of their clients don't require Finnish language skills. Other respondents mentioned that there is a lack of professionals in their field in Finland, motivating them to find more diversity and a bigger talent pool abroad. Another respondent expressed the need for international employees to support and promote their organisation. Other common reasons included: the mindset that international employees are dedicated or hard working, the fact that the respondent operates a global/international company, the fact that the respondent has already hired international employees, or the fact that the respondent is an international person also, and that the nationality of an employee is not important if they have the necessary skills and competencies.

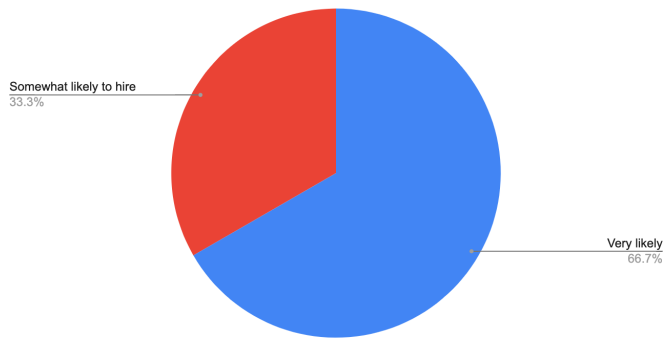
Respondents who stated that they were neutral, somewhat unlikely or very unlikely provided many reasons as well. One respondent stated that they would hire if they could find a suitable candidate. Another stated that it depends on the supply of the Finnish labor market. One respondent stated that the nationality of an employee is not important if they have the necessary skills and competencies. Common responses included respondents who stated that they: do not employ anyone directly, and respondents who stated that they needed fluent, Finnish speaking employees. The need for Finnish language skills, mentioned in the literature review above, stated that, "almost half of the people responsible for recruitment considered that an immigrant's proficiency in Finnish should be almost at fluency-level in order to succeed at work. For companies that had experience with immigrants as employees, the language proficiency requirement was lower." (Official website of the European Union)

5.2 What is the willingness of SMEs to hire immigrant workers?

Based on the questionnaire results, roughly 48% (14) of participants said that they were very likely to hire foreigners or international employees and roughly 25% (7) of participants were somewhat likely to hire foreign employees. Therefore, 73% of participants were either very likely or somewhat likely to hire foreign employees. Of those respondents who were likely or somewhat likely to hire foreign employees, 66.7% (14) stated that they were very likely to

hire foreign employees and 33.3% (7) of respondents stated that they were somewhat likely to hire foreign employees.

Respondents who were likely to hire vs somewhat likely to hire foreign employees



Respondents were given the option to express their reasons for choosing their answer to the question: What is the likelihood that your organisation would sponsor a work visa?

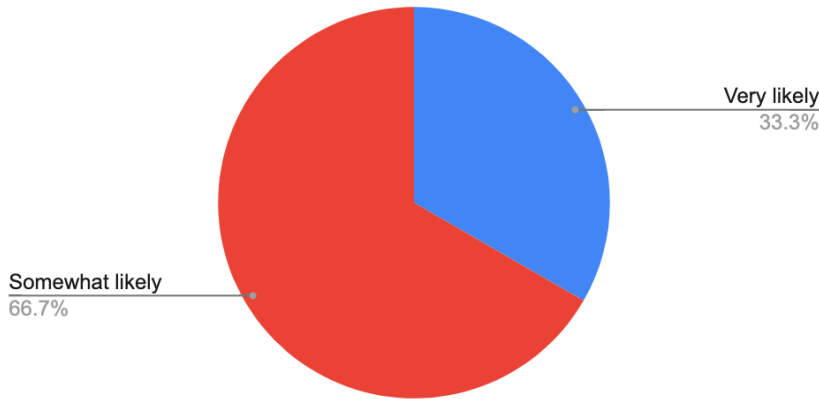
Respondents who were willing or somewhat willing to hire foreign workers provided many reasons for choosing their answer. Commonly, respondents expressed a willingness, stating that: when finding the right professional their organisation is ready to sponsor them; as an employer they must provide the work visa for the employees; if the employee needs a work contract, they are willing. Other respondents mentioned that it will help bring some balance to the labor front. One respondent stated that they have done it before. One respondent said that they would be willing if it doesn't require an additional investment. Another respondent stated that the visa process is too complicated.

Respondents who stated that they were neutral, somewhat unlikely or very unlikely provided many reasons as well. The most common reason was because the visa process is too expensive or complicated; or that hiring foreign workers is too much work, too much responsibility, or costs too much time and money. Another common reason was that respondents had no need for a foreign workforce or that they had enough skillful foreigners based in Finland. One respondent emphasized the importance that foreign employees understand the culture and people of Finland, and not just come here for a job. Other respondents' reasoning was because they operate a very small private business, or they don't employ anyone directly. Others stated that it depends or expressed uncertainty.

However, 45% (13) of respondents said that it was very unlikely that they would sponsor work visas for foreign workers and 17% (5) said that it was somewhat unlikely. Therefore 63% would likely not sponsor a work visa for international employees. 21% (6) of respondents were somewhat likely to sponsor a work visa and 10% (3) of respondents were very likely to sponsor a work visa. Of the respondents who stated that they were very likely or somewhat likely to

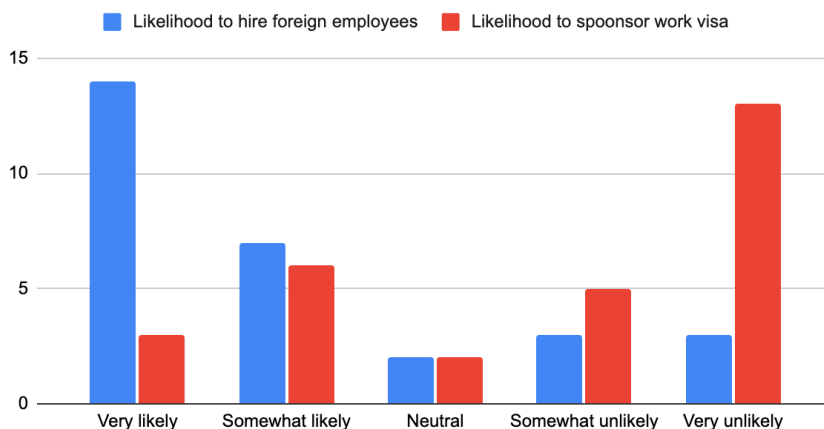
sponsor a work visa, a majority (14 respondents, 66.7%) were somewhat likely to sponsor a work visa and a minority (7 respondents, 33.3%) were very likely to sponsor a work visa.

Very likely to sponsor vs somewhat likely to sponsor a work visa

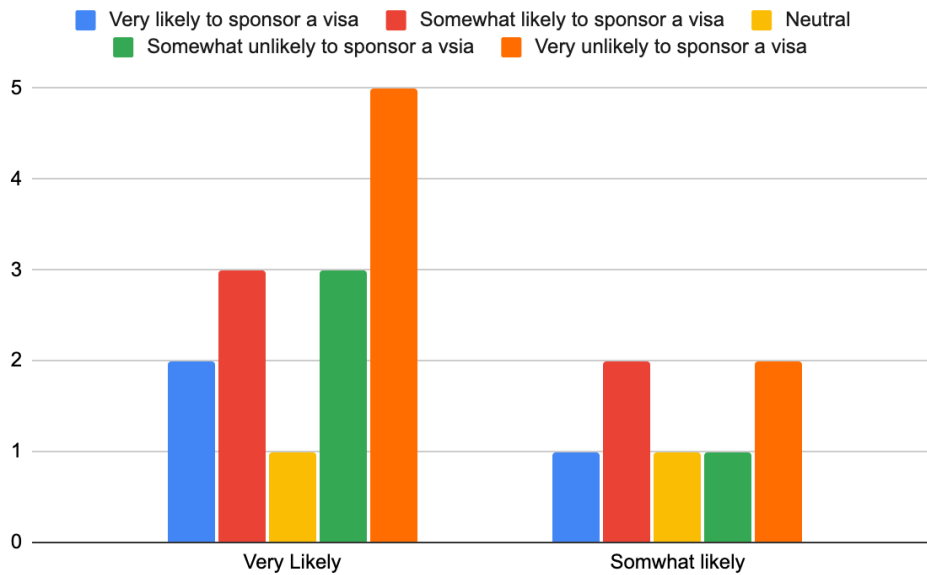


Therefore, although 73% (21) of respondents were willing to hire a foreign worker, just 31% (9) of respondents were willing to sponsor a work visa. Both the first and second interview group mentioned that a setback for hiring foreign workers was the fact that Finland’s residence permit application process can be complex and a turn-off for Finnish employers. Interviewee 1 of Interview Group 2, emphasized the extra expenses that come when hiring foreign employees, stating that, “You [employers] need to meet certain criteria and pay. The hiring process is more expensive.” Perhaps the potential expense and complexity of the residence permit process could be a contributing factor to the reason that only 31% (9) of respondents were willing to sponsor a work visa.

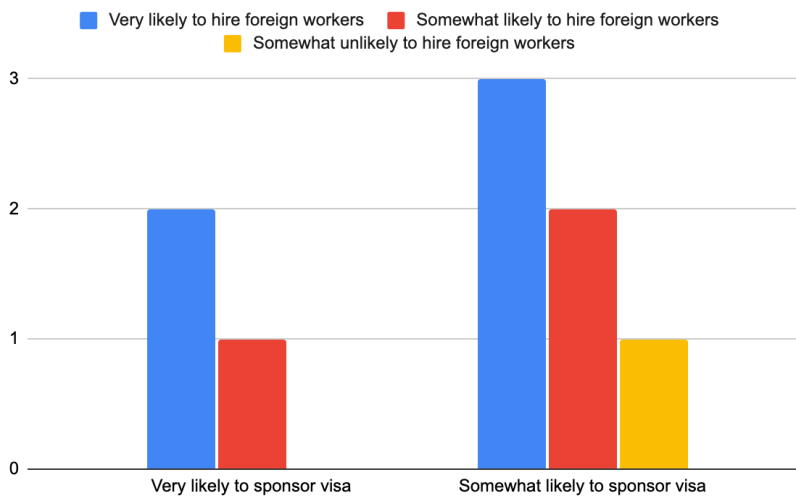
Likelihood to hire foreign employees and Likelihood to sponsor work visa



All respondents who were very unlikely or somewhat unlikely to hire foreign workers stated that they were very unlikely or somewhat unlikely to sponsor a work visa. Of the respondents who stated that they were very likely or somewhat likely to hire a foreign worker, roughly 38% (8) were very likely or somewhat likely to sponsor a work visa and roughly 53% (11) were very unlikely or somewhat unlikely to sponsor a work visa.



The majority of respondents who were likely or very likely to sponsor work visas were also likely and very likely to hire foreign employees, however roughly 11% of the respondents who were likely or very likely to sponsor a work visa stated that they were somewhat unlikely to hire a foreign worker.



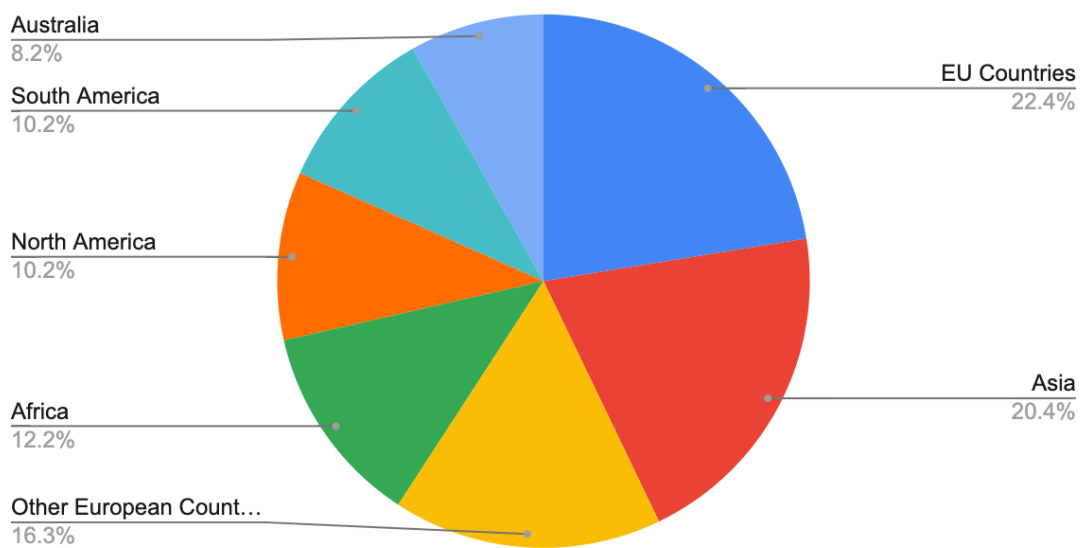
The majority of follow-up interview attendees stated that they were very likely to hire a foreign worker (4 respondents, 80%) and the minority stated that they were very unlikely to

hire a foreign worker (1 respondent, 20%). The majority of questionnaire respondents were also very likely (48.2%) or somewhat likely (14 respondents, 24.1%) to sponsor a work visa. The majority of both follow up interview attendees (3 respondents, 60%) and questionnaire respondents (13 respondents, 44.8%) were highly unlikely to sponsor a work visa. Overall, the majority of all respondents and respondent groups were very likely to hire a foreign employee, but very unlikely to sponsor a work visa.

Respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign employees were listed where the employees they had hired came from. Two respondents mentioned that they had not hired anyone yet. The majority of respondents had hired employees from the EU (13 respondents, 22.5%) and Asia (10 respondents, 20.4%). Other responses included Other European countries outside of the EU (8 respondents, 16.3%) and Africa (6 respondents, 12.2%). The remaining minority had hired employees from North America (5 respondents, 10.2%), South America (5 respondents, 10.2%), and Australia (4 respondents, 8.2%).

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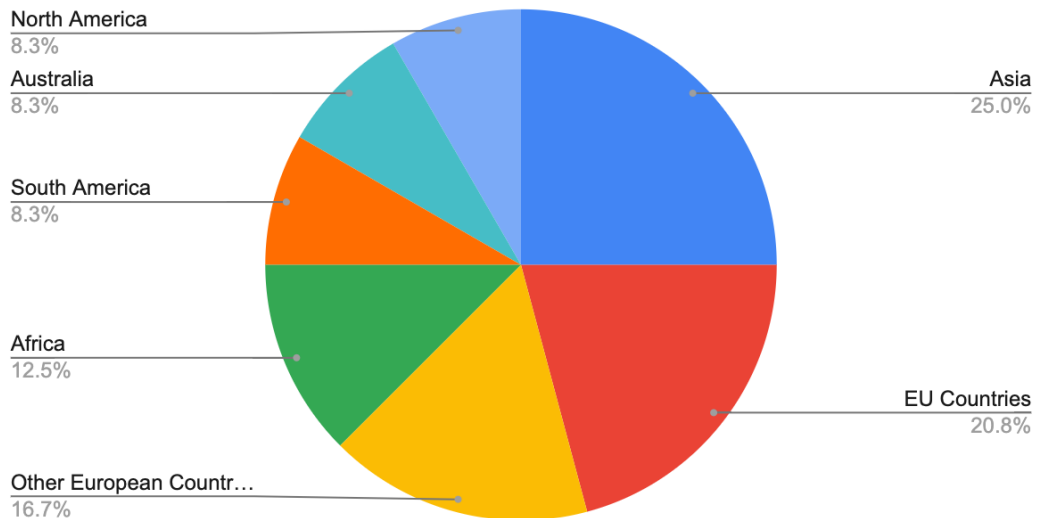
Places where respondents who expressed willingness to hire, have hired employees



Respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor work visas were listed where the employees they had hired came from. The majority of respondents had hired employees from

Asia (6 respondents, 25%) and the EU (5 respondents, 20.8%). Other responses included Other European countries outside of the EU (4 respondents, 16.7%) and Africa (3 respondents, 12.5%). The remaining minority had hired employees from North America (2 respondents, 8.3%), South America (2 respondents, 8.3%), and Australia (2 respondents, 8.3%).

Places where respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor visas, have hired employees

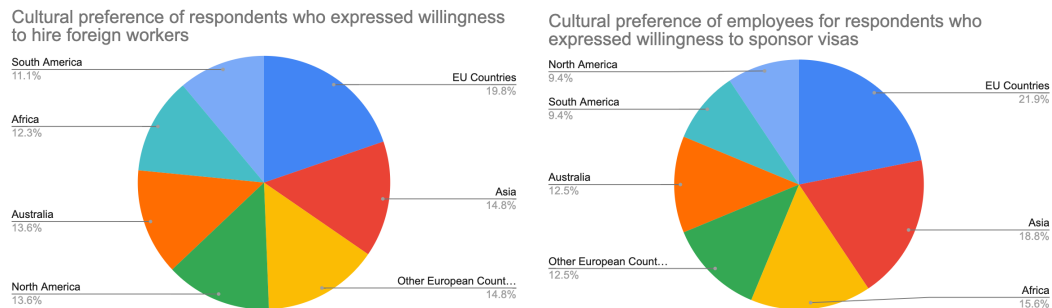


Overall, both respondents had hired employees primarily from Asia and the EU. Respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign workers were slightly more likely to hire employees from the EU than Asia. The reverse was true for respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor work visas. They were slightly more likely to hire employees from Asia than the EU. Follow-up interview attendees had hired workers for EU countries (3 respondents, 21.4%) and workers from other European countries outside of the EU (3 respondents, 21.4%) the most. The second most common locations were Africa (2 respondents, 14.2%), Asia (2 respondents, 14.2%), and South America (2 respondents, 14.2%). The most common locations selected by questionnaire respondents were EU countries (16 respondents, 55.2%) and Asia (12 respondents, 41.4%). All respondent groups had hired workers from EU countries the most. The second most common locations were European countries outside of the EU and Asia, overall.

Respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign employees were asked to list their preference on the cultural background of potential employees. Two respondents mentioned that they had no preference. One mentioned that they were unsure and that depended on the personal skills of employees, and if they can employees legally work. The majority of respondents prefer to work with employees from the EU (16 respondents, 19.8%). Other responses included Asia (12 respondents, 14.8%), other European countries outside of the EU

(12 respondents, 14.8%), North America (12 respondents, 13.6%), and Australia (12 respondents, 13.6%). The remainder preferred to work with employees from Africa (11 respondents, 12.3%) and South America (9 respondents, 11.1%).

Respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor work visas were asked to list their preference on the cultural background of potential employees. The majority of respondents prefer to work with employees from the EU (7 respondents, 21.9%) and Asia (6 respondents, 18.8%). Other responses included Africa (5 respondents, 15.6%), other European countries outside of the EU (4 respondents, 12.5%), and Australia (4 respondents, 12.5%) The remaining preferred to work with employees from North America (3 respondents, 9.4%) and South America (3 respondents, 9.4%).



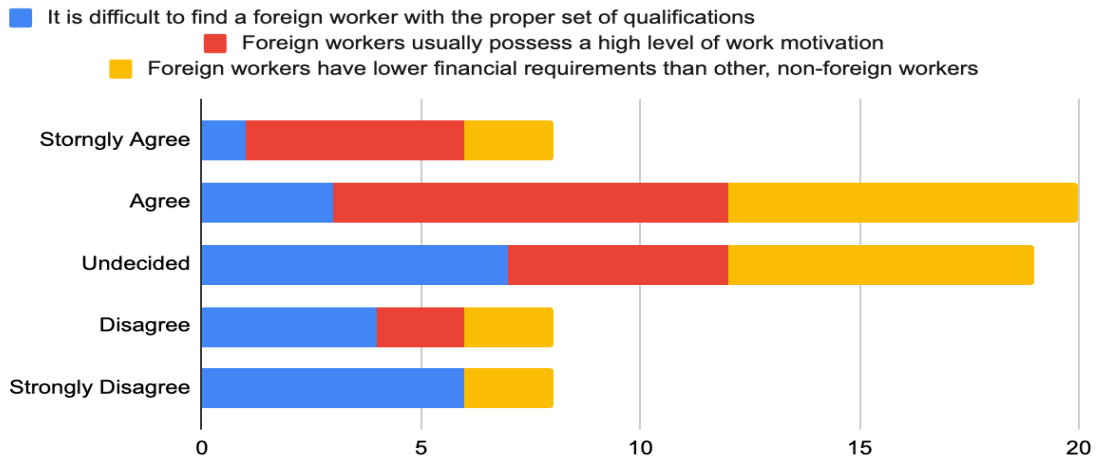
Overall, both respondent groups preferred to work employees from EU and Asian cultures. Respondents who were willing to hire foreign workers preferred to work with North American cultures but had not had as much experience working with people from North America. Respondents who were willing to sponsor work visas preferred to work with African cultures but had not had as much experience working with people from Africa. Follow-up interview attendees listed EU Countries (4 respondents, 20%), Africa (3 respondents, 15%), Asia (3 respondents, 15%), and South America (3 respondents, 15%) as their cultural preference of employees. Questionnaire respondents listed EU countries (24 respondents, 82.8%) and Asia (15 respondents, 51.7%) as their cultural preference of employees. The majority of all respondents preferred to work with people from EU countries and Asia. An interview attendee from Interview Group 2, observed that Immigrants in Finland are not all treated equally. "Immigrants from English speaking countries or Nordic countries are treated differently than people from Africa, the Middle East, and Southern countries." Perhaps this is why, overall respondents preferred to hire workers from the EU. This response is similar to the figure showing the unemployment rate of foreigners in Helsinki, in 2014, seen in the literature review. In the figure, primarily people from EU countries, and Asia had higher employment than people of other ethnicities. (Saukkonen, 2017)

Respondents were asked to state their level of agreement to these three statements. Regarding the statement: it is difficult to find a foreign worker with the proper set of

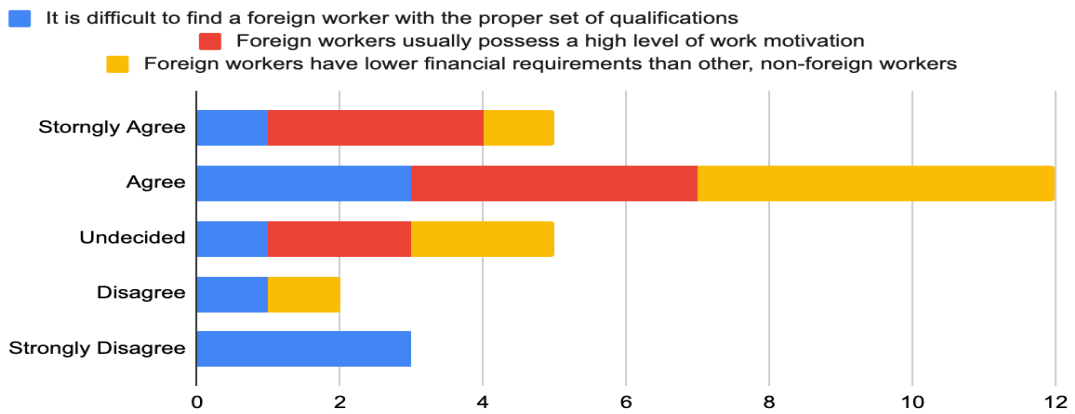
qualifications, the majority of respondents who expressed willingness to hire a foreign employee were undecided (7 respondents, 33.3%) or strongly disagreed with that statement (6 respondents, 28.5%). 19% (4) disagreed with that statement. The minority agreed (3 respondents, 14%) or strongly agreed (1 respondent, 4.7%) with that statement. Regarding the statement: foreign workers usually possess a high level of work motivation, the majority of respondents who expressed willingness to hire a foreign employee agreed with that statement (9 respondents, 42.8%). Other respondents strongly agreed (5 respondents, 23.8%) or were undecided (5 respondents, 23.8%). The minority disagreed with the statement (2 respondents, 9.5%). No respondents strongly disagreed. Regarding the statement: foreign workers have lower financial requirements than other, non-foreign workers, the majority of respondents who expressed willingness to hire a foreign employee agreed with the statement (8 respondents, 38%) or were undecided (7 respondents, 33.3%). The minority of respondents strongly agreed (2 respondents, 9.5%), disagreed (2 respondents, 9.5%), or strongly disagreed (2 respondents, 9.5%) with the statement.

Respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor work visas were asked to state their level of agreement to these three statements. Regarding the statement: it is difficult to find a foreign worker with the proper set of qualifications, the majority of respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor a work visa either strongly disagreed (3 respondents, 33.3%) or agreed (3 respondents, 33.3%) with the statement. The minority of respondents strongly agreed (11.1%), disagreed (1 respondent, 11.1%), or were undecided (1 respondent, 11.1%). Regarding the statement: foreign workers usually possess a high level of work motivation, the majority of respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor a work visa, the majority of respondents agreed with the statement (4 respondents, 44.4%). Other respondents strongly agreed with the statement (3 respondents, 33.3%). The minority of respondents were undecided (2 respondents, 22.2%). No respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Regarding the statement: foreign workers have lower financial requirements than other, non-foreign workers, the majority of respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor a work visa agreed with the statement (5 respondents, 55.5%). Other respondents were undecided (2 respondents, 22.2%). The minority of respondents strongly agreed (1 respondent, 11.1%) or disagreed (1 respondent, 11.1%). No respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

Level of agreement from respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign employees



Level of agreement for respondents who are expressed willingness to sponsor visa



Respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign workers were more undecided towards the statement: it is difficult to find a foreign worker with the proper set of qualifications. Respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor a work visa were more divided on the topic, both strongly disagreeing and agreeing equally. Follow-up interview attendees strongly disagreed with the statement (2 respondents, 40%). Questionnaire respondents were undecided (11 respondents, 37.9%). Interestingly, the majority of participants in the Beyond Diversity project questionnaire respondents expressed qualifications as one of their primary reasons for hiring employees of other nationalities. However, the respondent groups to the questionnaire conducted in this thesis provided more divided responses.

Both respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign workers and respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor work visas primarily agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: foreign workers usually possess a high level of work motivation. The majority of follow-up interview attendees equally agreed (2 respondents, 40%) or were undecided (2

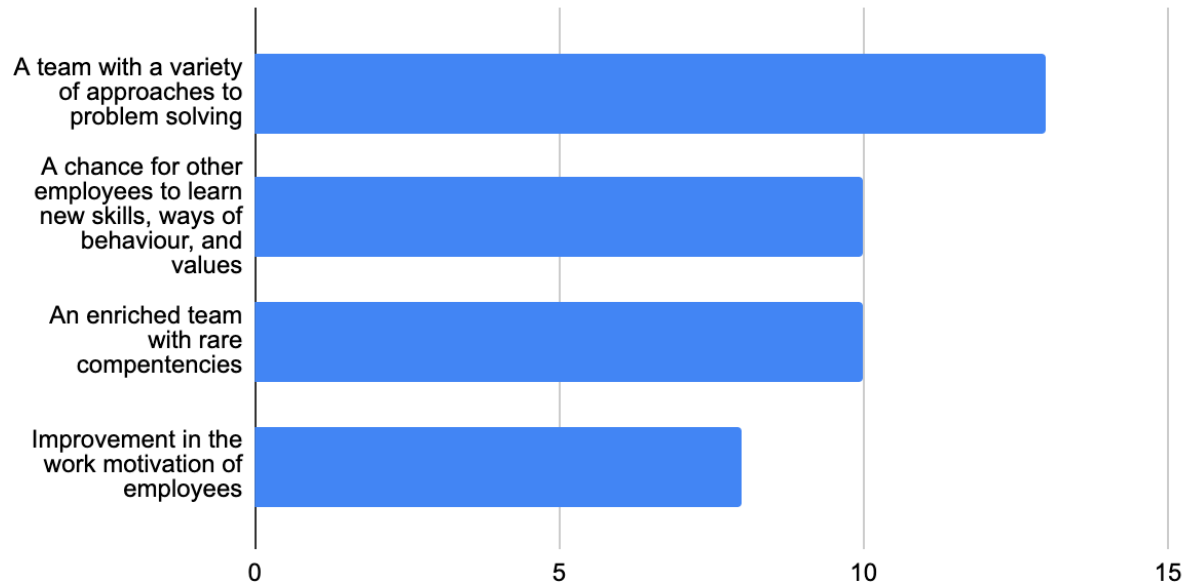
respondents, 40%). Most questionnaire respondents were undecided (11 respondents, 37.9%). The majority of participants in the Beyond Diversity project questionnaire respondents also agreed with this statement. (Beyond Diversity Project and European Institute for Managing Diversity, n.d.)

Respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign workers were more undecided or express disagreement/strong disagreement towards the statement: foreign workers have lower financial requirements than other, non-foreign workers. Respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor work visas were more divided. Primarily expressing strong disagreement or agreement towards the statement. The majority of follow-up interview attendees agreed (2 respondents, 40%) or strongly disagreed (2 respondents, 40%) with the statement. The majority of questionnaire respondents agreed with the statement (12 respondents, 41.3%) as did the majority of Beyond Diversity project respondents. (Beyond Diversity Project and European Institute for Managing Diversity, n.d.)

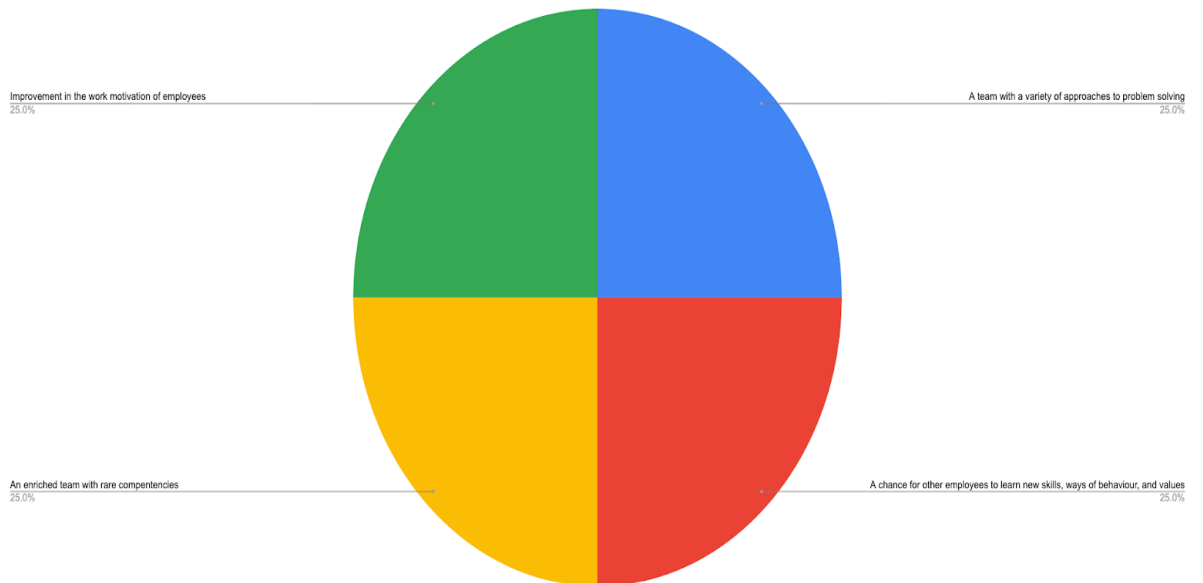
Respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign employees were asked about the benefits that their company gains from hiring foreign employees. They were given the option to select any or all of the four benefits listed, to select not applicable, and to fill in their own response. Two respondents chose the option: not applicable. Some respondents filled in their own answers. One respondent mentioned the opportunity to learn about subconscious biases, cultures, way of working/best practices etc. Another respondent viewed hiring foreign employees as beneficial to reach a global market. The most common benefit selected was: a team with a variety of approaches to problem solving (13 respondents, 31.7%). Other common benefits were a chance for other employees to learn new skills, ways of behavior, and values (10 respondents, 24.3%); and an enriched team with rare competencies (10 respondents, 24.3%). The minority of respondents selected the benefit: improvement in the work motivation of employees (4 respondents, 19.5%).

Respondents who expressed a willingness to sponsor work visas were asked about the benefits that their company gains from hiring foreign employees. They were given the option to select any or all of the four benefits listed, to select not applicable, and to fill in their own response. One respondent chose the option: not applicable. One respondent filled in their own answers, mentioning the benefit of reaching a global market. Regarding the benefits provided, an equal number of respondents selected each benefit: improvement in the work motivation of employees (4 respondents, 25%); an enriched team with rare competencies (4 respondents, 25%); a team with a variety of approaches to problem solving (4 respondents, 25%); and a chance for employees to gain new skills, ways of behavior, and values (4 respondents, 25%).

Respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign employees' perceived benefits



Respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor work visas' perceived benefits



While respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor work visas equally perceived each option to be a benefit. Respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign employees more often perceived a team with a variety of approaches to problem solving to be the greatest benefit. They also viewed a chance for employees to learn new skills, ways of behavior, and values; and an enriched team with rare competencies, to be greater benefits than improvement in the work motivation of employees.

Follow up interview attendees selected three benefits equally: a team with a variety of approaches to problem solving (4 respondents, 27.3%), a chance for other employees to learn new skills, ways of behaviour, and values (4 respondents, 27.3%), and an enriched team with rare competencies (4 respondents, 27.3%). During the follow-up, attendees commonly mentioned that hiring international employees is beneficial if an organisation is interested in global expansion, networking in other countries, and that international workers provide a new and fresh perspective. Many mentioned that hiring international employees provides a larger hiring pool; gaining a new understanding of different cultures, language skills, a new way of thinking/doing, and a fresh perspective; and insider knowledge into their country's market, and potentially be more successful with selling products to other countries. During interviews with the second interview group, attendees mentioned benefits include a far larger pool of resources to look at and the potential to find a higher-level of talent, faster. The second interview group attendees observed that foreign talents are often more willing to work at a lower salary, however a minimum criterion must be met.

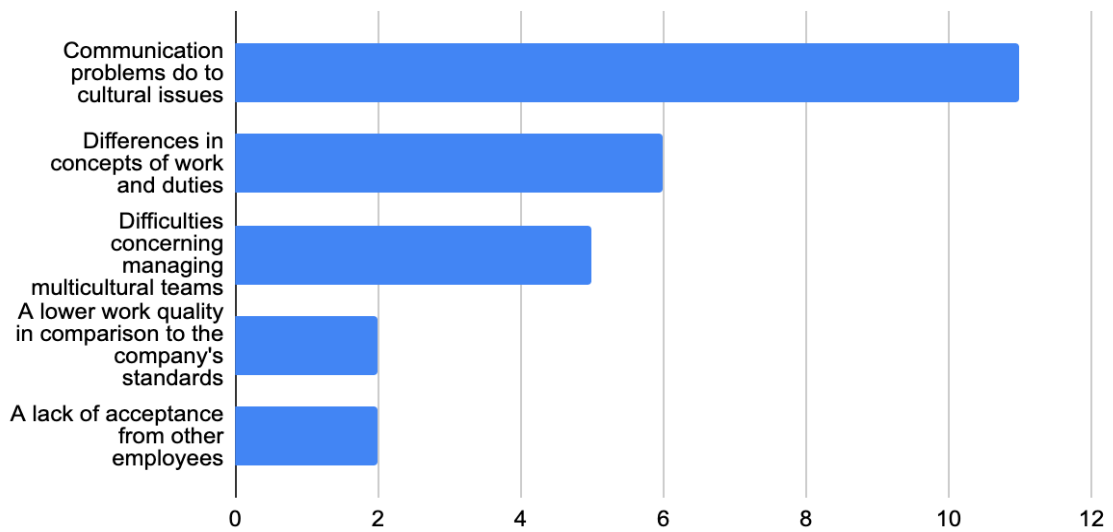
Questionnaire respondents most commonly selected a team with a variety of approaches to problem solving (15 respondents, 48.3%). Beyond Diversity questionnaire respondents commonly selected a team with a variety of approaches to problem solving (28%); and improvement in the work motivation of employees (23%). The most common benefit selected amongst all respondent groups was a team with a variety of approaches to problem solving. (Beyond Diversity Project and European Institute for Managing Diversity, n.d.)

Respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign workers were asked about the problems that their company could face from hiring foreign employees. They were given the option to select any or all of the four benefits listed, to select not applicable, and to fill in their own response. Six respondents selected the option: not applicable. One respondent mentioned the potential problem of a lot more paperwork needing to be done when hiring foreign employees. The majority of respondents selected perceived communication problems due to cultural issues, as the greatest perceived problem (11 respondents, 42.3%). Other common perceived problems were difficulties in the concepts of work and duties (5 respondents, 23%), and difficulties concerning managing multicultural teams (5 respondents, 19.2%). The minority perceived a lack of acceptance from other employees to be a problem (2 respondents, 7.6%) and a lower quality of work in comparison to the company's standards (2 respondents, 7.6%).

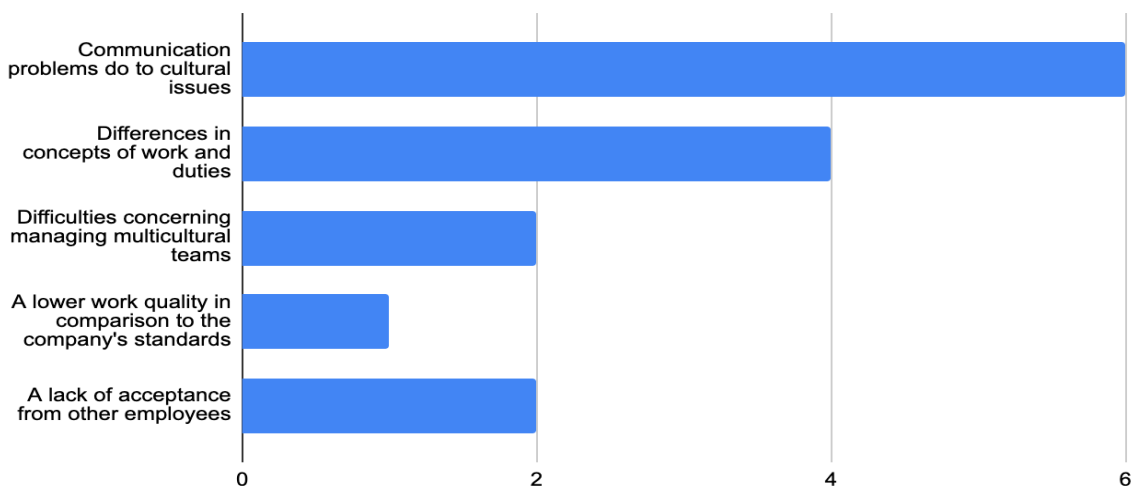
Respondents who expressed a willingness to sponsor work visas were asked about the problems that their company could face from hiring foreign employees. They were given the option to select any or all of the four benefits listed, to select not applicable, and to fill in their own response. One respondent selected the option: not applicable. One respondent mentioned that there was a lot more paperwork to be done when hiring foreign employees.

The majority of (6 respondents, 40%) selected the potential problems of communication problems due to cultural issues, and difficulties in concepts of work and duties (4 respondents, 26%). Other common problems listed were difficulties concerning managing multicultural teams (2 respondents, 13.3%), and a lack of acceptance from other employees (2 respondents, 13.3%). The minority of respondents selected the problem of a lower quality of work in comparison to the company’s standards (1 respondent, 6.6%).

Respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign workers' perceived problems



Respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor work visas' perceived problems



Both sets of respondents viewed the greatest potential problems to be: communication problems due to cultural issues and differences in concepts of work and duties. However, respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor work visas, viewed a lack of acceptance

from other employees as being a greater problem than respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign workers.

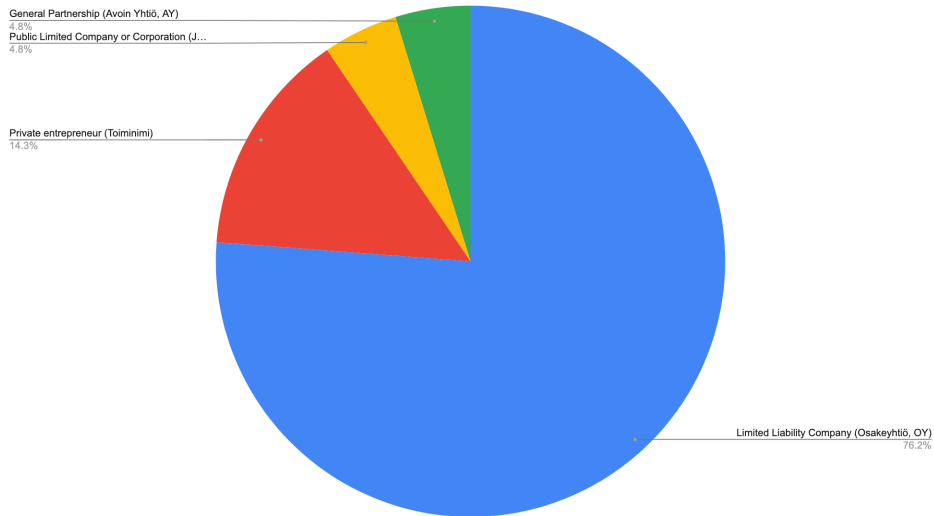
The majority of follow-up interview attendees selected communication problems due to cultural issues as a potential problem (4 respondents, 44.4%) as did questionnaire respondents (16 respondents, 55.2%). During the interview, attendees mentioned common setbacks when hiring foreign employees including: the fact that many international workers do not speak Finnish (language skills), cultural and social differences, the potential for an employee to have difficulty adjusting, and the potential for an employee to be untrustworthy. A majority of the interviewees mentioned that employers are concerned that international employees will not stay with their organisation long-term and may return to their home country. Another commonly mentioned setback was the fact that Finland's residence permit application process can be complex and a turn-off for Finnish employers. Interviewee 2 of the second interview group, discussed the potential for foreign workers to feel left-out, and the potential safety problem if someone doesn't understand instructions.

The second largest majority of questionnaire respondents selected differences in concepts of work and duties as a potential problem (6 respondents, 21.2%). The majority of Beyond Diversity questionnaire respondents selected: communications problems due to cultural issues (23%); and differences in the concepts of work and duties (19%). It is apparent that all respondent groups primarily view communication problems due to cultural issues as the greatest potential problem, and the majority of both questionnaire respondents and Beyond Diversity questionnaire respondents view differences in concepts of work and duties as a potential problem, as well. (Beyond Diversity Project and European Institute for Managing Diversity, n.d.)

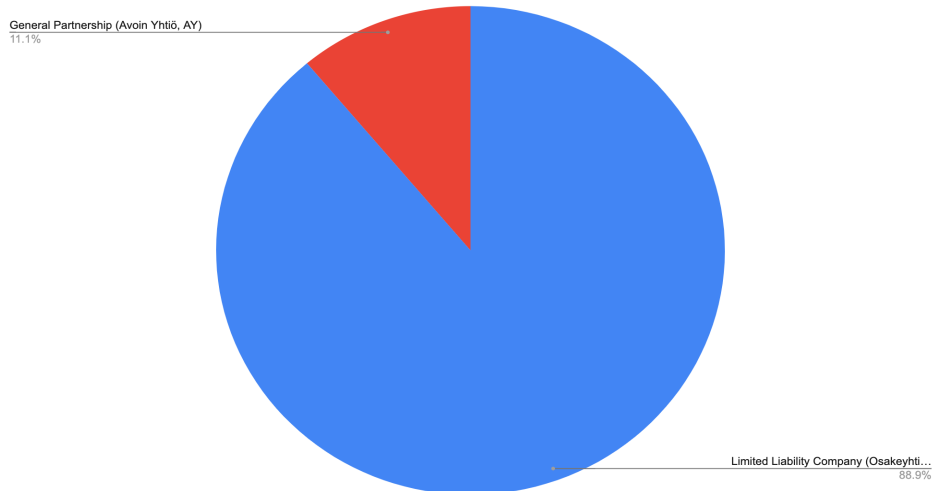
5.3 Which SMEs are willing to hire foreign workers?

To understand who the SMEs are that were willing to hire foreign employees, data on the demographics of respondents who stated that they are willing or somewhat willing to hire foreign workers and/or willing or somewhat willing to sponsor a work visa (expressed willingness), will be examined. 76.2% (16) of respondents who were very or somewhat likely to hire foreign workers were part of a Limited Liability company. 14.3% (3) were private entrepreneurs, 4.8% (1) were part of a Public Limited Company or Corporation and 4.8% (1) were part of a General Partnership. 88.9% (4) of respondents who were very or somewhat likely to sponsor a work visa were part of a Limited Liability company, and 11.1% (1) were part of a General Partnership.

Somewhat Likely/Very Likely to Hire Business Type



Somewhat/Very Likely to Sponsor Visa Business Type



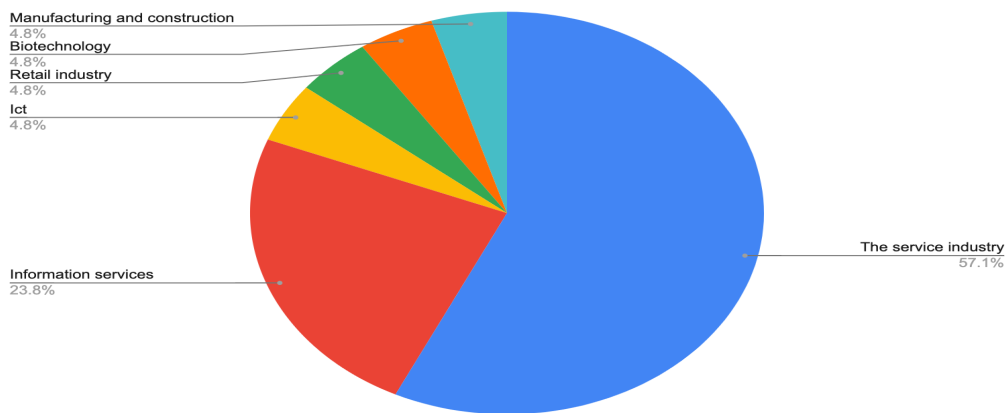
Therefore, the majority of the respondents' who were likely to hire a foreign worker and likely to sponsor a work visa were part of Limited Liability Companies. The majority of follow-up interview respondents were part of a Limited Liability Company (4 respondents, 60%). The minority were part of a Private Entrepreneurship (2 respondents, 40%). The same is true of the majority of questionnaire respondents and follow-up interviewees. 69% (20) of questionnaire respondents were members of a Limited Liability company. The respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign workers and follow-up interviewees more accurately represented the questionnaire respondents overall since the second largest majority of respondents were part of Private entrepreneurship, while respondents who were likely to sponsor a work visa's second largest majority were part of a General Partnership. The majority of follow-up interview attendees were also part of a Limited Liability Company (4 respondents, 60%), and other respondents were part of a Private Entrepreneurship (2

respondents, 40%). The respondents who were willing to hire foreign workers and the follow-up interview attendees most accurately represent the largest majority of Finnish businesses, since they are registered as Limited liability companies (making up roughly 41% of all Finnish businesses), and private traders (making up roughly 36% of all Finnish businesses).

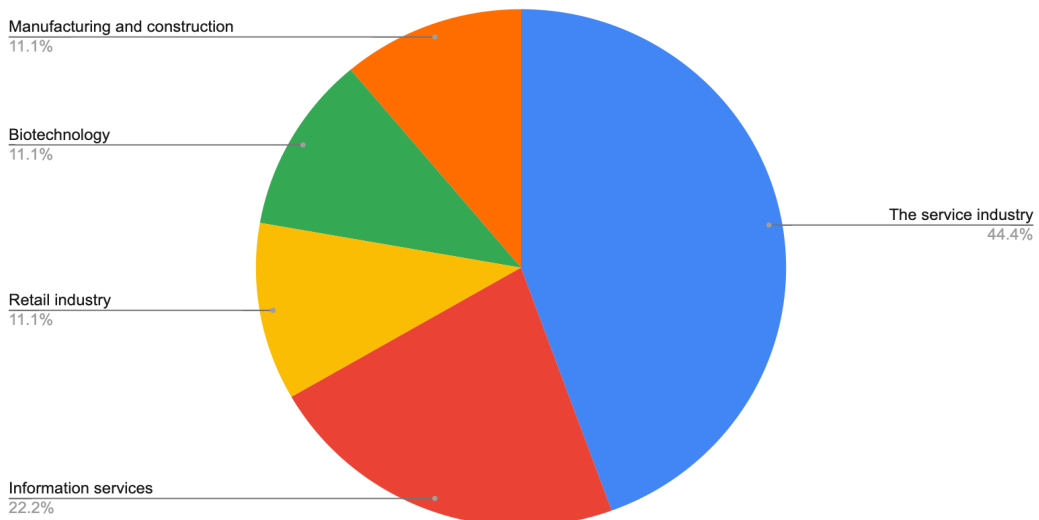
The majority of respondents who expressed willingness to hire a foreign worker or sponsor a work visa were part of the service industry sector, with the second largest majority of respondents participating in the information services industry. Of the respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign employees: 57.1% (12) worked in the service industry and 23.8% (5) worked in information services. The remainder worked in ICT (1 respondent, 4.8%), the retail industry (1 respondent, 4.8%), biotechnology (1 respondent, 4.8%), and the manufacturing/construction industry (1 respondent, 4.8%).

Of the respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor work visas: 44.4% (4) worked in the service industry and 22.2% (2) worked in the information services industry. The remainder worked in the retail industry (1 respondent, 11.1%), biotechnology (1 respondent, 11.1%), and manufacturing/construction (1 respondent, 11.1%).

Industry sector of respondents who were willing/somewhat willing to hire a foreign worker



Industry sector of respondents who are willing/somewhat willing to sponsor a work visa

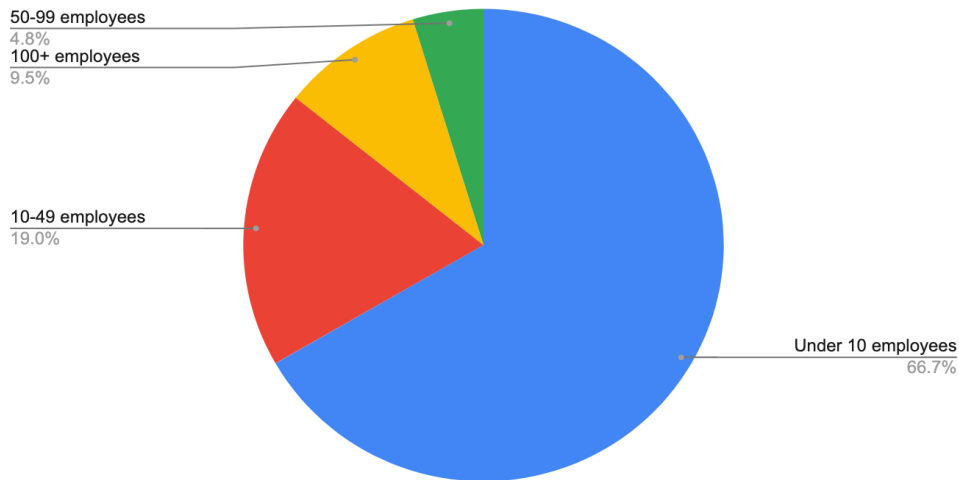


The majority of follow-up interview respondents were part of the service industry (4 respondents, 60%) and information services sector (2 respondents, 40%). The majority of questionnaire respondents were part of the service industry (14 respondents, 48.3%) and information services (8 respondents, 27.6%) overall. Therefore, both the largest majority of participants were willing to hire a foreign worker or sponsor a work visa, the largest majority of follow-up interview attendees, and the largest majority of questionnaire respondents were part of the services industry.

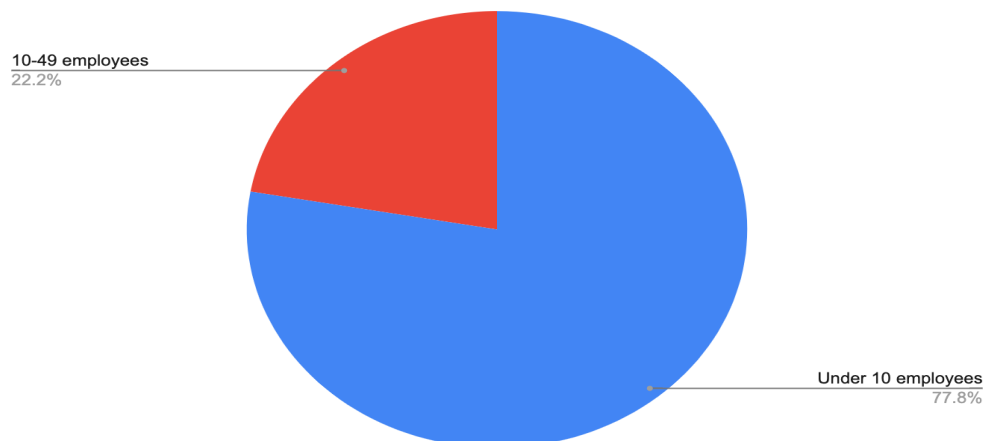
Of the respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign workers, 66.7% (14) operated in organisations of under 10 employees and 19% (4) operated in an organisation of 10-49 employees. The remainder operated in organisations of 50-59 employees (2 respondents, 4.8%) and 100 + employees (1 respondent, 9.5%).

Of the respondents who expressed a willingness to sponsor work visas, 77.8% (7) operated in organisations of under 10 employees, and 22.2% (2) operated in organisations of 10-49 employees. Therefore, the majority of participants who expressed willingness to hire a foreign worker or sponsor a work visa were participants whose organisations contained under 10 employees or 10-49 employees.

Organisation size of respondents who were willing/somewhat willing to hire a foreign worker



Organisation size of respondents who are willing/somewhat willing to sponsor a work visa

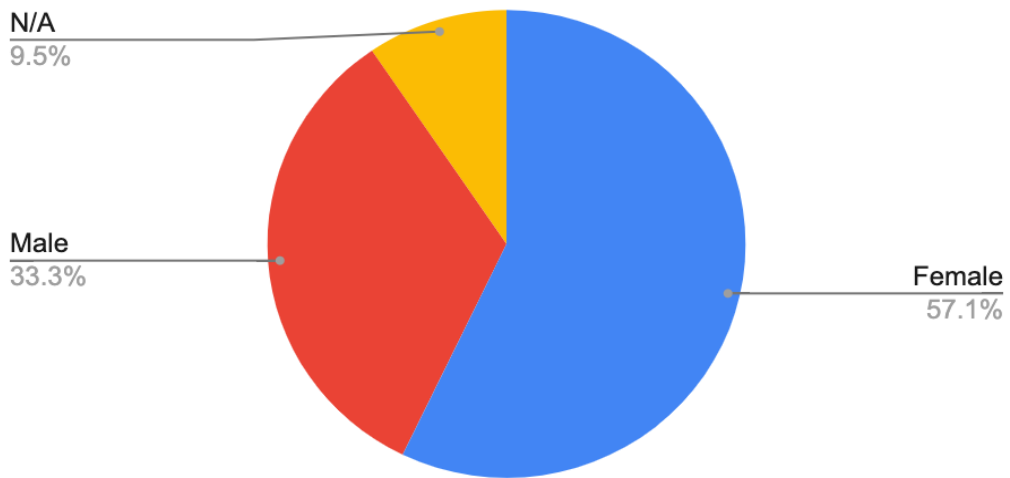


Overall, both the majority of respondents willing to hire foreign employees and the respondents willing to sponsor work visas were part of organisations of under 10 employees. The majority of follow-up interview attendees were part of organisations of under 10 employees (4 respondents, 60%). 69% (20) of questionnaire respondents were part of organisations of under 10 employees. Overall, the majority of all respondents and respondent groups were members of organisations that had under 10 employees.

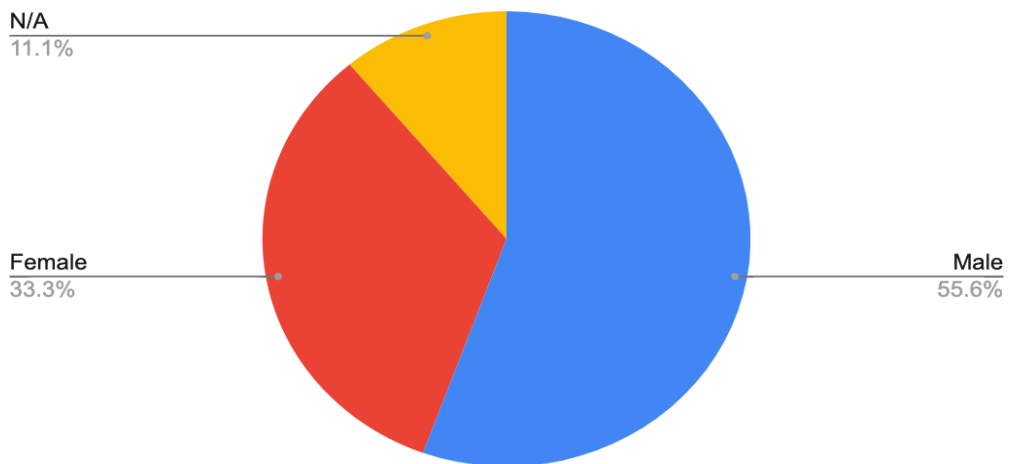
The most common gender of respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign employees differed from those who expressed willingness to sponsor work visas. The majority of respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign employees were female (12 respondents, 57.1%). The second largest majority were male (7 respondents, 33.3%). The minority of respondents did not specify their gender identity (1 respondent, 9.5%).

The largest majority of respondents who expressed a willingness to sponsor work visas for foreign employees were male (5 respondents, 55.6%). The second largest majority were female (3 respondents, 33.3%) The minority of respondents did not specify their gender (1 respondent, 11.1%).

Gender of respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign employees



Gender of respondents who expressed a willingness to sponsor work visas



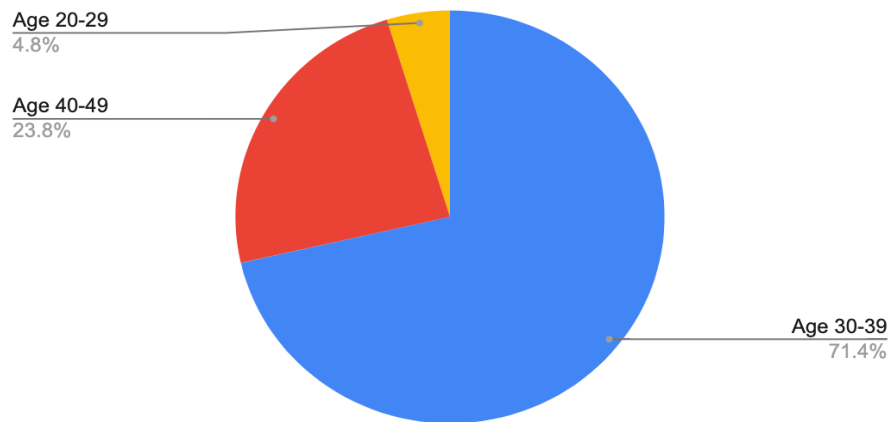
The majority of follow-up interviewee attendees were female (4 respondents, 60%), as were the questionnaire respondents (15 respondents, 51.7%). Based on the 2016 data, representing entrepreneurs aged 18 to 74, the overall majority of respondents do not accurately represent

the 2016 data, since the majority of entrepreneurs in Finland male (19 respondents, 66.5%) and the minority were female (10 respondents, 33.5%).

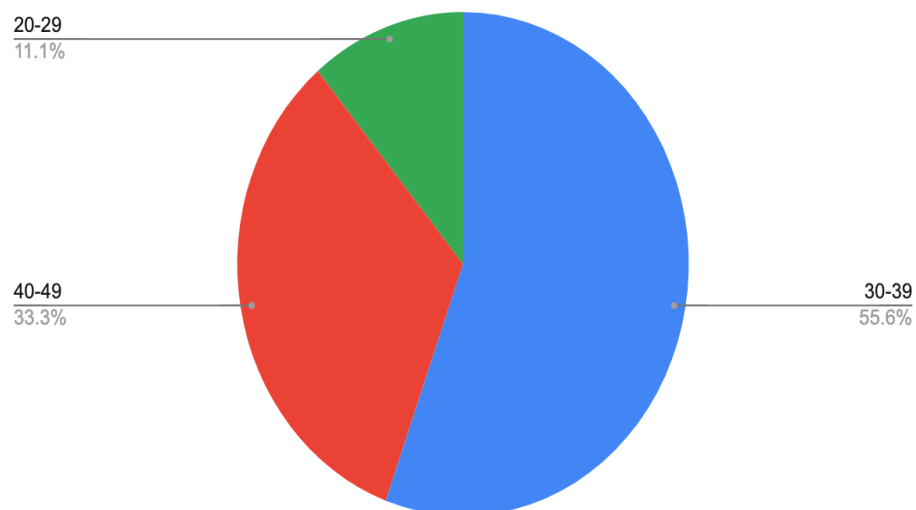
All respondents who expressed a willingness to either hire foreign workers or sponsor a work visa were between the age of 20-49. The majority of respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign workers were in the 30-39 age group (15 respondents, 71.4%). The remaining respondents were in the 40-49 age group (5 respondents, 22.8%) and 20-29 age group (1 respondent, 4.8%).

The majority of respondents who expressed a willingness to sponsor work visas were in the 30-39 age group (5 respondents, 55.6%). The remaining respondents were in the 40-49 age group (3 respondents, 33.3%) and 20-29 age group (1 respondent, 11.1%). 60% (4) of follow-up interview attendees and 62.1% (18) of questionnaire respondents were between the age of 30-39. Therefore, the majority of both respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign employees and respondents who expressed a willingness to sponsor work visas, as well as the majority of all respondent groups were between the age of 30-39. The respondents did not accurately represent the self-employment and entrepreneurship target groups conducted in Finland between 2012-2016 or the age groups involved in start-ups in Sweden in 2019 (Statista, 2021). This could be due to the fact that Finland's entrepreneurship target age group does not accurately represent the current Finnish entrepreneur age groups. This also could be due to the fact that age groups involved in start-ups in Sweden do not accurately represent the Finnish age group, or that the questionnaire groups did not accurately represent the age groups of entrepreneurs in Finland.

Age groups of respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign employees



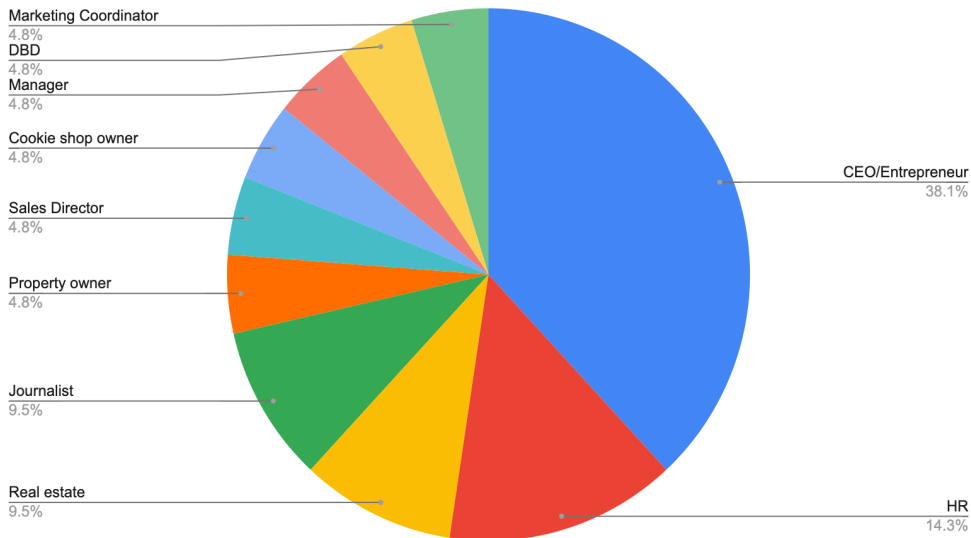
Age groups of respondents who expressed a willingness to sponsor work visas for foreign employees



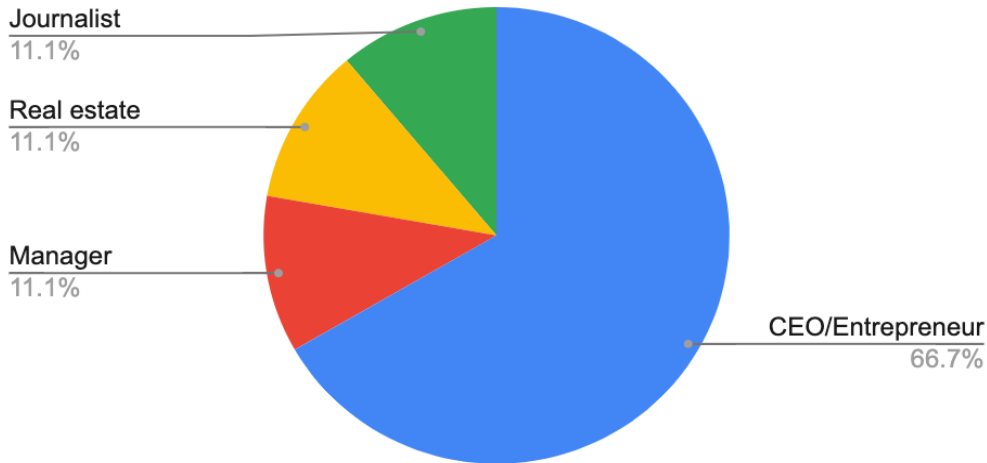
There was a larger variety in the occupations of respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign workers (10 occupations), when compared to the respondents who expressed a willingness to sponsor a work visa. (4 occupations). The majority of respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign workers were CEOs/Entrepreneurs (8 respondents, 38.1%) or completed HR tasks (3 respondents, 14.3%). The next most common occupations were Journalist (2 respondents, 9.5%) or completed real estate-related tasks (2 respondents, 9.5%) The remaining minority were property owners (1 respondent, 4.8%), sales directors (1 respondent, 4.8%), cookie shop owners (1 respondent, 4.8%), managers (1 respondent, 4.8%), DBD (1 respondent, 4.8%), or marketing coordinators (1 respondent, 4.8%).

The majority of respondents who expressed a willingness to sponsor a work visa were CEOs/Entrepreneurs (6 respondents, 66.7%). The remaining minorities were managers (1 respondent, 11.1%), completed real estate tasks (1 respondent, 11.1%) or were journalists (1 respondent, 11.1%).

Occupation of respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign workers.



Occupation of respondents who expressed a willingness to sponsor work visas



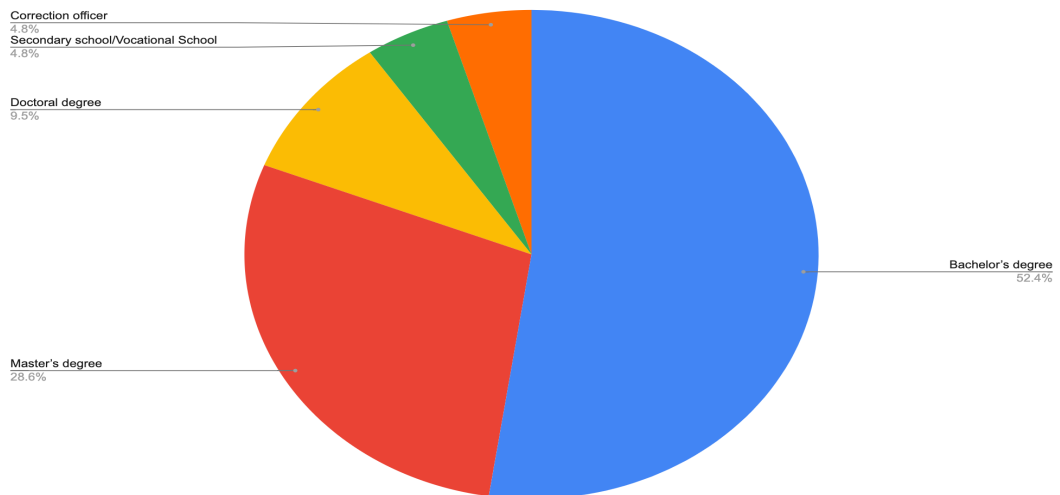
Overall, in both categories, the majority of respondents were CEOs/Entrepreneurs. However, a small majority of respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign workers, but did not express a willingness to sponsor work visas held an HR-related title or completed HR-related tasks for their occupation. Follow-up interview attendees common occupations included: CEO/Entrepreneur (1 respondent, 20%), Real estate (1 respondent, 20%), Cookie shop owner (20%), Business Communications Consultant (1 respondent, 20%) and Journalist (1

respondent, 20%). The largest majority of questionnaire respondents were CEOs/Entrepreneurs. Overall, the majority of respondents in most categories were CEOs/Entrepreneurs.

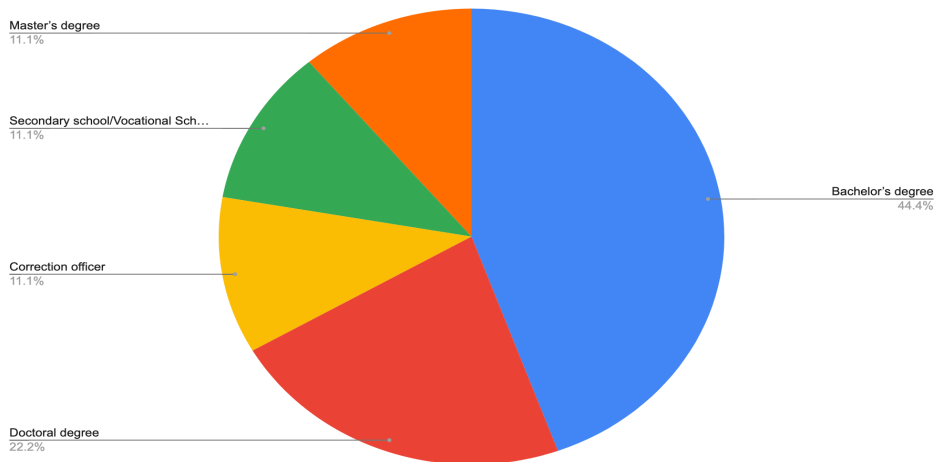
The majority of respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign employees completed a bachelor’s degree (11 respondents, 52.4%) or master’s degree (6 respondents, 28.6%). Other respondents completed a doctoral degree (2 respondents, 1 respondent, 9.5%), secondary school/vocational school (4.8%), or correction officer school (1 respondent, 4.8%).

The majority of respondents who expressed a willingness to sponsor work visas completed a bachelor’s degree (4 respondents, 44.4%) or doctoral degree (2 respondents, 22.2%). Other respondents completed a master’s degree (1 respondent, 11.1%), secondary education/vocational school (1 respondent, 11.1%), or corrections officer school (1 respondent, 11.1%).

Highest education completed of those willing to hire foreign workers



Highest education completed of those willing to sponsor a work visa

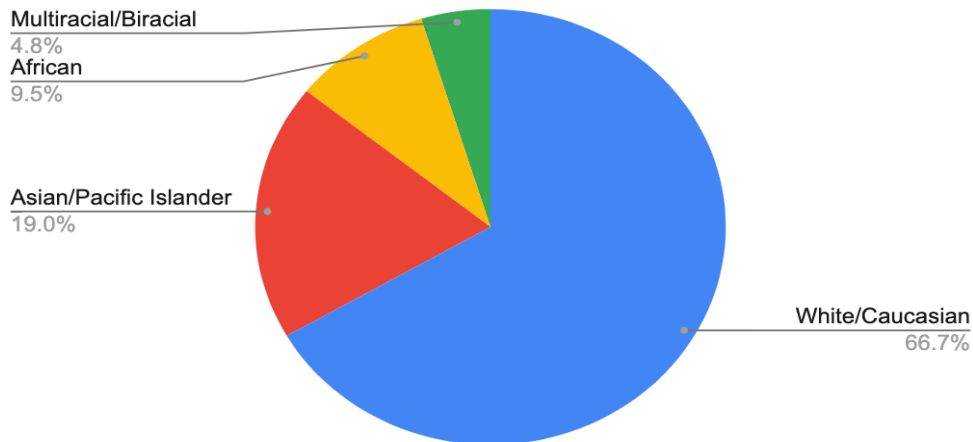


Overall, both the majority of respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign workers and the respondents who expressed a willingness to sponsor a work visa completed a bachelor's degree. However, the second largest majority of respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign workers completed a master's degree, while the second largest majority of respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor work visas completed a doctoral degree. The distribution of small and medium sized business owners in Canada is not an accurate representation of questionnaire respondents only the majority of medium business owners had completed a tertiary education in Canada. Therefore, both the majority of entrepreneurs in Finland (as of 2014) and the majority of respondents have completed a tertiary level of education. (Statista, 2016)

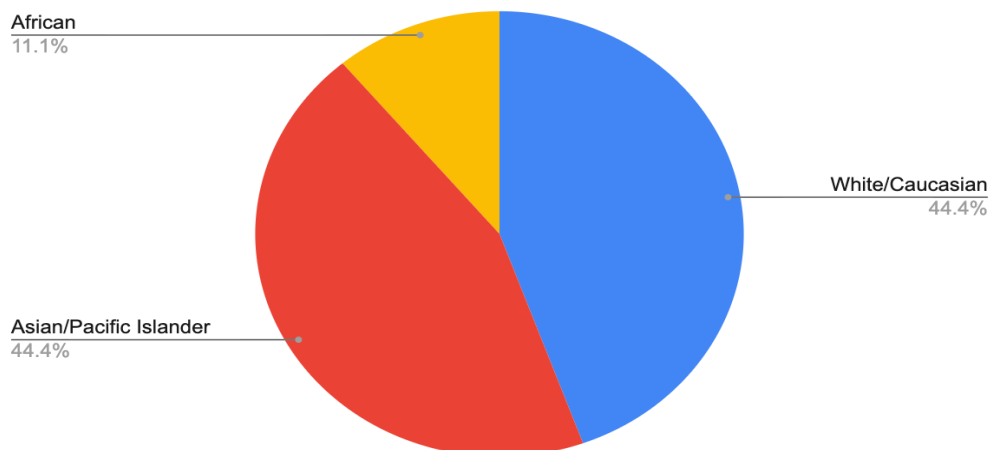
The majority of respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign workers identified as White/Caucasian (14 respondents, 66.7%) and the second largest majority identified as Asian/Pacific Islander (4 respondents, 19%). The remaining respondents identified as African (2 respondents 9.5%) and Multiracial/Biracial (1 respondent, 4.8%).

The majority of respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor a work visa was equal between those identifying as White/Caucasian (4 respondents, 44.4%) and Asian/Pacific Islander (4 respondents, 44.4%). The remainder identified as African (1 respondent, 11.1%).

Ethnicity of respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign workers



Ethnicity of respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor work visas



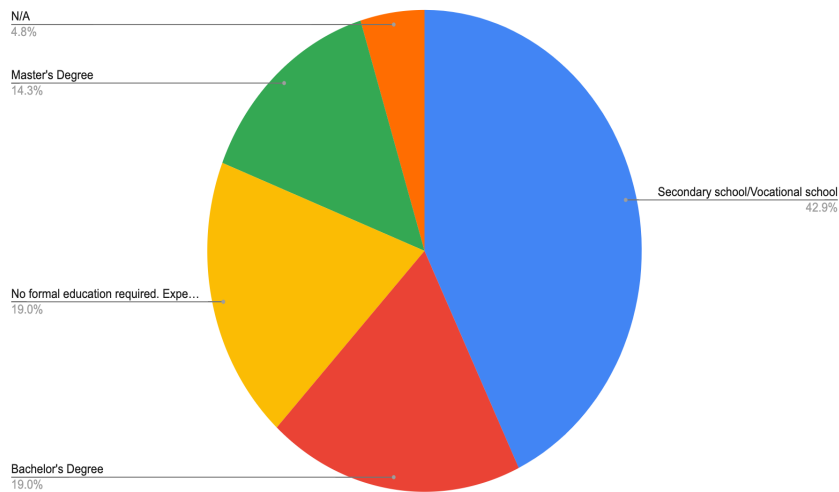
Overall, the majority of respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign employees or sponsor work visas identified as White/Caucasian or Asian/Pacific Islander. However, the largest majority of respondents who were willing to hire foreign workers identified as White/Caucasian, whereas the majority of respondents who were willing to sponsor work visas identified equally as White/Caucasian or Asian/Pacific Islander. The majority of follow-up interview attendees were white/Caucasian (5 respondents, 80%). The minority were African (1 respondent, 20%). Möttönen's dissertation explained how, "the number of entrepreneurs [in Finland] with foreign backgrounds increased by 92% between 2006 and 2014." (Möttönen, 2020) Overall, the majority of respondents were either White/Caucasian or Asian/Pacific islander. Respondents did not specify as if they were Finns or foreign entrepreneurs.

5.4 What are their needs?

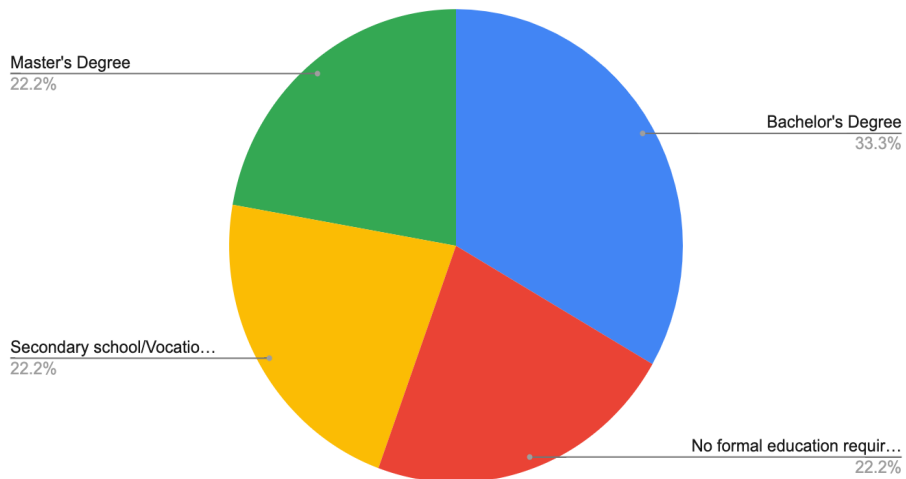
Based on the responses, the highest level of education necessary to be employed by respondents varied between respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign workers and respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor work visas. The greatest majority of respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign workers required employees to complete secondary school/vocational school (9 respondents, 42.9%). The second largest majority either required employees to complete a bachelor's degree (4 respondents, 19%) or did not require formal education (4 respondents, 19%). The minority required employees to complete a master's degree (3 respondents, 14.3%) or stated that it was not applicable (1 respondent, 4.8%).

The majority of respondents willing to sponsor a work visa required employees to complete a bachelor's degree (3 respondents, 33.3%). The remaining respondents either required employees to complete a master's degree (2 respondents, 22.2%), secondary school/vocational school (2 respondents, 22.2%), or did not require formal education (2 respondents, 22.2%).

Lowest level of education required to be employed by respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign workers



Lowest level of education required to be employed by respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor work visas

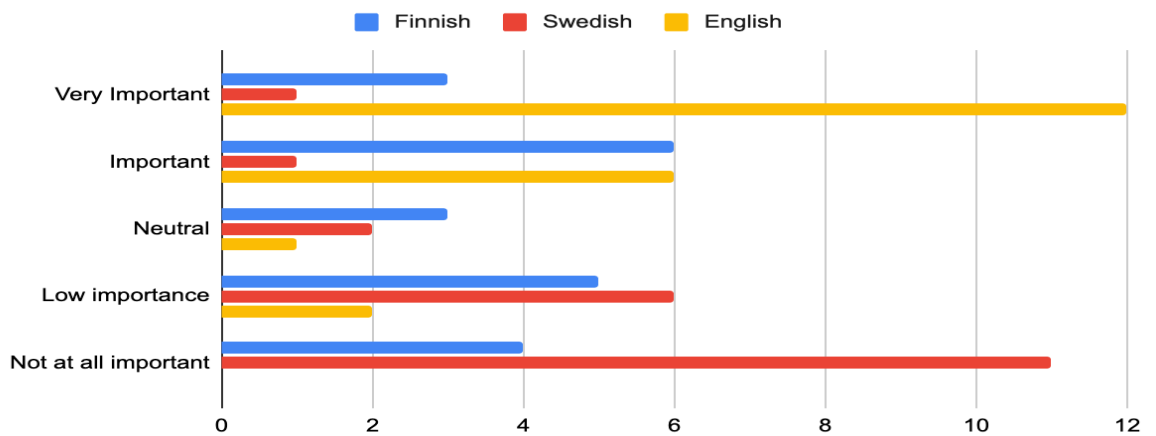


Overall, both respondent groups preferred employees to have a bachelor's degree to a certain extent. 40% (2) of follow-up interview respondents required their workers to complete a master's degree, 40% (2) did not require formal education, and 10% (1) required workers to complete secondary education/trade school. Overall, the majority of respondent groups primarily preferred foreign workers to complete some level of tertiary education. This does not accurately represent the statistics on employment rate of Finns and foreigners by education in 2014, since all foreigners and Finns who completed a tertiary education had the highest employment rate. However, perhaps employers' expectations on education and employment have changed since this statistic was released, or the respondents in this questionnaire do not accurately represent the employment rate of foreigners and Finns in Finland by education completed. (UTH survey, Statistics Finland, 2014)

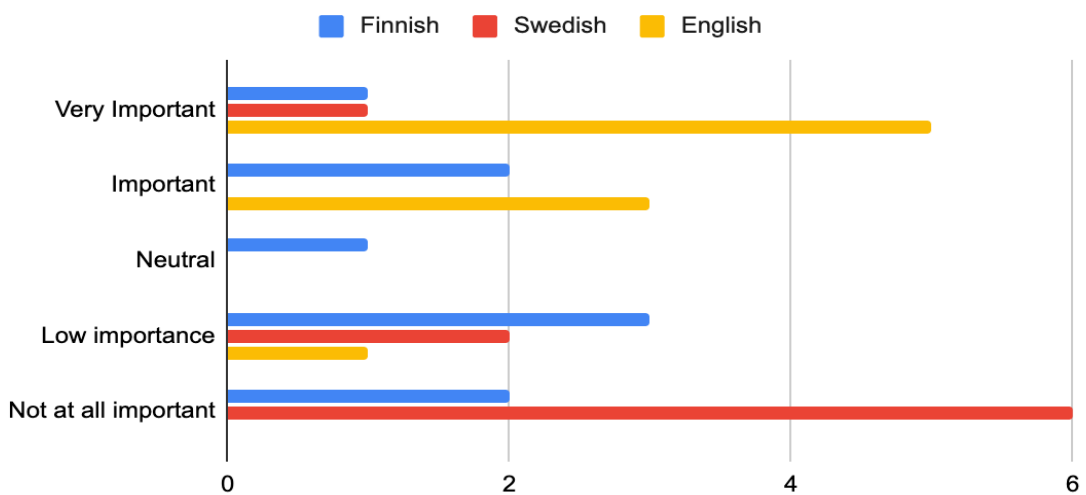
The majority of respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign workers viewed Finnish language skills to be important (6 respondents, roughly 28.5%). Other respondents viewed Finnish language skills to be of low (5 respondents, 23.8%) or no importance (4 respondents, 19%). The minority of respondents viewed Finnish language skills as neutral (3 respondents, roughly 14.3%) or important (3 respondents, roughly 14.3%). The majority of respondents viewed Swedish language skills to be not at all important (11 respondents, roughly 52.4%). Other respondents viewed Swedish language skills to be of low importance (6 respondents, roughly 28.5%) or neutral (2 respondents, 9.5%). The minority viewed Swedish language skills to be important (1 respondent, 4.7%) or very important (1 respondent, 4.7%). The majority of respondents viewed English language skills to be very important (12 respondents, 57%) or important (5 respondents, 25.7%). The minority viewed English language skills to be of low importance (3 respondents, 9.5%) or were neutral on the matter (1 respondents, 4.7%). Respondents were asked to mention other language skills desirable for potential employees. Japanese, Russian, and German were the most common answers. Other languages mentioned included: Twi, Portuguese, Turkish, Spanish, Arabic, French, Chinese, and Estonian.

The majority of respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign workers viewed Finnish language skills to be of low importance (3 respondents, 33.3%). Other respondents viewed Finnish language skills to be important (2 respondents, 22.2%) or not at all important (2 respondents, 22.2%). The minority of respondents viewed Finnish language to be very important (11.1%) or were neutral on the matter (1 respondent, 11.1%). The majority of respondents viewed Swedish language skills to be not at all important (6 respondents, 66.6%). The remaining respondents viewed Swedish language skills to be either of low importance (2 respondents, 22.2%) or very important (1 respondent, 11.1%). The majority of respondents viewed English language skills to be very important (5 respondents, 55.5%). The remaining respondents viewed English language skills to be either important (3 respondents, 33.3%) or of low importance (1 respondent, 11.1%). Respondents were asked to mention other language skills desirable for potential employees. Japanese was the most common answer. Other languages mentioned included: Portuguese, Twi, German, Chinese, and Russian.

Language skill needs of respondents who expressed willingness to hire foreign workers



Language skill needs of respondents who expressed willingness to sponsor work visas



Overall, the majority of both sets of respondents found Swedish skills to be not at all important. Respondents expressing willingness to hire foreign workers found Finnish language skills more important than those willing to sponsor work visas. No respondents found English language skills to be not at all important and the majority of both respondent groups found English language skills to be very important. Both respondent groups mentioned the importance of Japanese language skills more than once. The majority of follow-up interview respondents found Finnish language skills to be of low importance (2 respondents, 40%), Swedish language skills to be not at all important (3 respondents, 60%), and English language skills to be very important (3 respondents, 60%). Based on this data, all respondent groups primarily did not Swedish language skills to be important, Finnish language skills were valued by all respondent groups, but English language skills were the most valued by all respondent groups.

Interview attendees in both groups commonly suggested that foreign workers should display a willingness to learn Finnish or Swedish and that a lack of Finnish language skills was a potential threat that companies could face when hiring foreign workers.

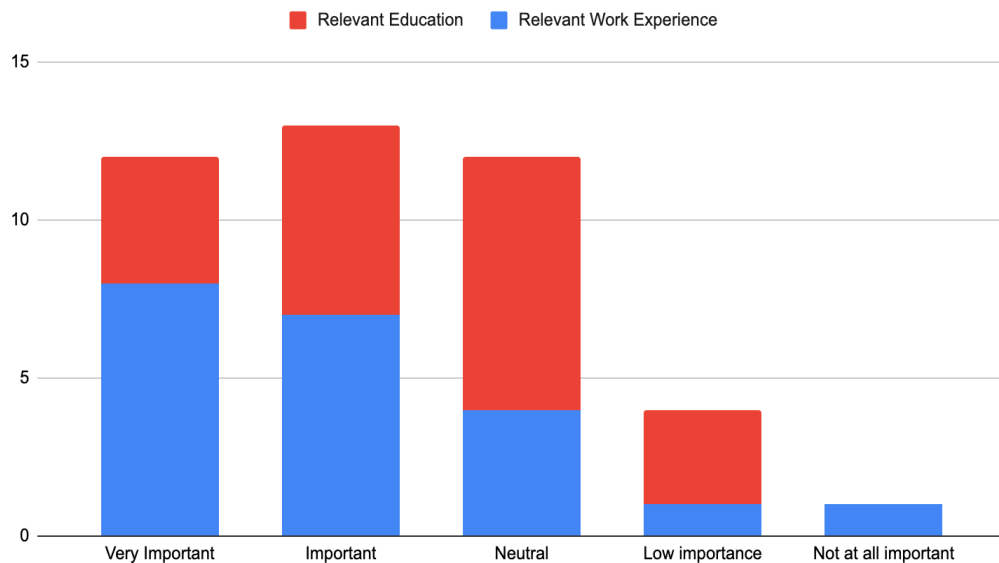
The aforementioned bachelor's thesis focused on discovering Finnish company's need and use of the English language at work's results concluded that it is highly possible that English is a desired skill for both foreign and Finnish employees to have. The data further expresses the importance that employers place on English skills Finland (Mäkiö, 2016). The figure displaying Swedish-speakers' and foreign-language speakers' proportion of the population (1900-2019) in Finland, showed that foreign language speakers do outnumber the Swedish speakers in Finland (Statistics Finland, 2020b). That could explain why the majority of all questionnaire groups did not find Swedish language skills to be important, since the number of Swedish speakers is becoming far less than the number of foreign language speakers in Finland. The aforementioned study shows that companies which hired immigrants in the past are more likely to continue doing so compared to companies that had never recruited immigrants, mentioned that "almost half of the people responsible for recruitment considered that an immigrant's proficiency in Finnish should be almost at fluency-level in order to succeed at work. For companies that had experience with immigrants as employees, the language proficiency requirement was lower." (EUROPEAN WEB SITE ON INTEGRATION, Migrant Integration Information and good practices, 2020) The fact that questionnaire respondents valued Finnish language skills further backs up the findings of the study.

The majority of respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign employees found relevant work experience to be very important (8 respondents, 38%) or important (7 respondents, 33.3%). The minority were neutral on the matter (4 respondents, 19%), or found relevant work experience to be of low importance (1 respondent, 4.7%) or not at all important (4.7%). The majority also found relevant education to be of low importance (8 respondents, 38%) or to be important (6 respondents, 28.5%). The minority found relevant education to be very important (4 respondents, 19%) or of low importance (3 respondents, 14.2%). No respondents found relevant education to be not at all important.

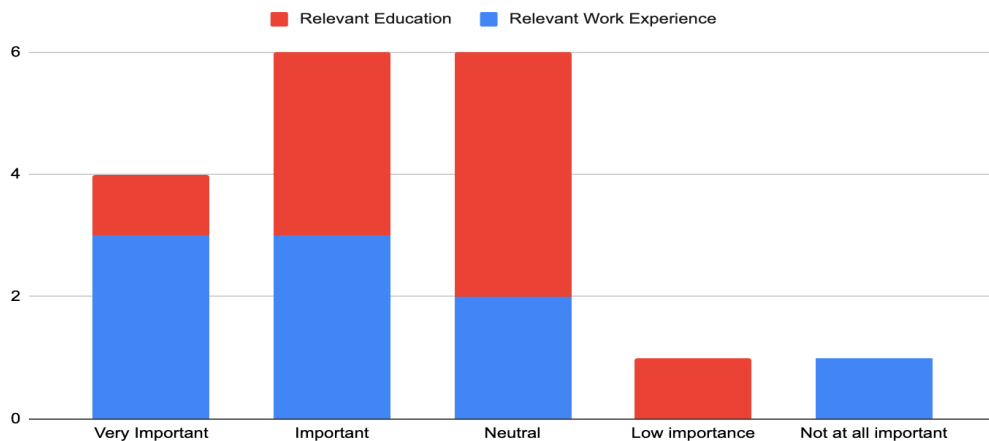
The majority of respondents who expressed a willingness to sponsor work visas found relevant work experience to be very important (3 respondents, 33.3%) or important (3 respondents, 33.3%). The minority were neutral (2 respondents, 22.2%) or found relevant work experience to be not at all important (1 respondent, 11.1%).

The majority of respondents found relevant education to be of low importance (4 respondents, 44.4%) or were neutral on the matter (3 respondents, 33.3%). The minority found relevant education to be very important (1 respondent, 11.1%) or of low importance (1 respondent, 11.1%). No respondents viewed relevant education to be not at all important.

Importance Relevant Work Experience vs Relevant Education for respondents expressing willingness to hire foreign employees



Importance Relevant Work Experience vs Relevant Education for respondents expressing willingness to sponsor visas

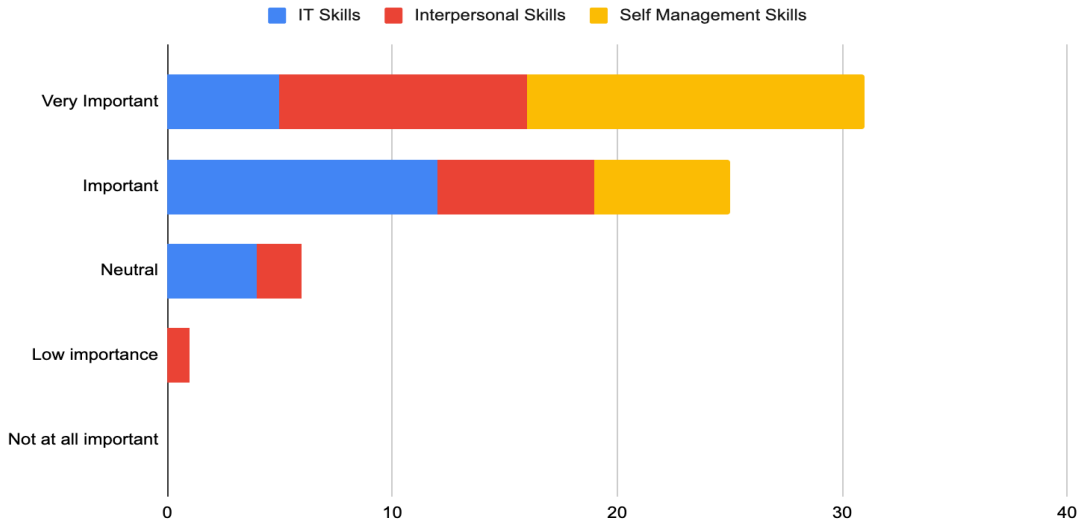


Both respondent groups viewed relevant work experience to be more important. The majority of respondents found relevant education to be important or were neutral. No respondents from either group stated that relevant education was not at all important. The majority of follow-up interview respondents found relevant work experience (3 respondents, 60%) and relevant education (2 respondents, 40%) to be very important. Overall, most respondent groups found relevant work experience to be slightly more important than relevant education. These findings accurately represent the findings from the Journal of Communication publication's findings that: workers in the medium range of educational qualification perform better compared to those in the extremes and the same holds good in the case of work experience. (Bambacas and Patrickson, 2008)

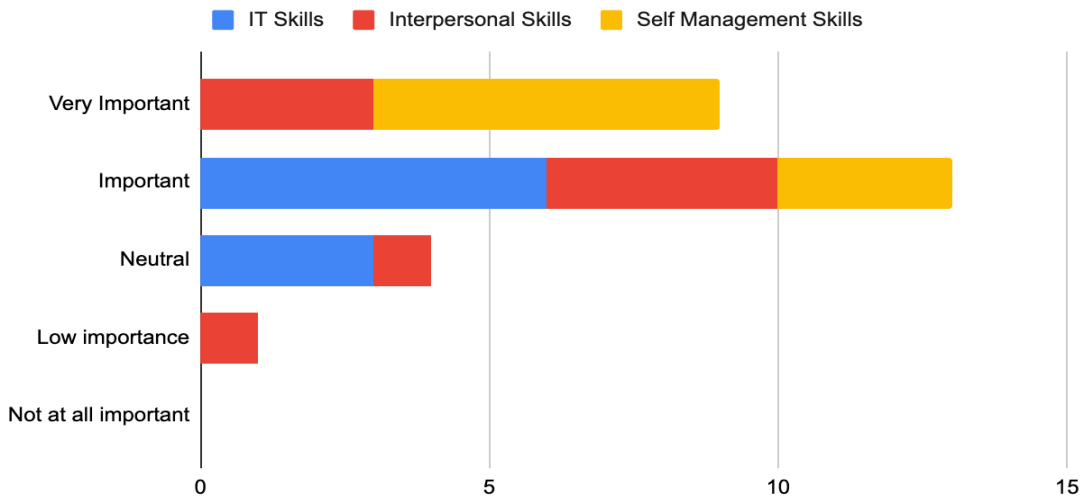
The majority of respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign employees found IT skills to be important (12 respondents, 57%). The minority found IT skills to be very important (5 respondents, 23.8%) or were neutral on the matter (4 respondents, 19%). No respondents found IT skills to be of low importance or not at all important. The majority of respondents viewed interpersonal skills to be very important (11 respondents, 52.3%) or important (7 respondents, 33.3%). The minority were neutral (2 respondents, 9.5%) on the matter or viewed interpersonal skills to be of low importance. No respondents viewed interpersonal skills to be not at all important (1 respondent, 4.7%). The majority of respondents viewed self-management skills to be very important (15 respondents, 71.4%). The minority viewed self-management skills to be important (6 respondents, 28.5%). No respondents were neutral or viewed self-management skills to be of low importance/not at all important.

The majority of respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign employees found IT skills to be important (6 respondents, 66.6%). The minority were neutral on the matter (3 respondents, 33.3%) No respondents viewed IT skills to be very important or of low importance/not at all important. The majority of respondents found interpersonal skills to be important (4 respondents, 44.4%) or very important (3 respondents, 33.3%). The minority viewed interpersonal skills to be of low importance (1 respondent, 11.1%) or were neutral on the matter (1 respondent, 11.1%). The majority of respondents found self-management skills to be very important. The minority found self-management skills (6 respondents, 66.6%) to be important (3 respondents, 33.3%). No respondents were neutral or viewed self-management skills to be of low importance/not at all important.

Importance of IT Skills, Interpersonal Skills and Self Management Skills



IT Skills, Interpersonal Skills and Self Management Skills for respondents expressing willingness to sponsor work visas



Both sets of respondents overwhelmingly found self-management skills to be very important. All respondents listed self-management skills as being either very important or important. The majority of both sets of respondents found interpersonal skills to be either very important or important. Respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign employees valued IT skills slightly more than respondents who expressed a willingness to sponsor a work visa. However, the majority of both respondent groups listed IT skills as important, and no respondents viewed IT skills as being of low importance or not at all important. The majority of respondents and follow-up interview respondents found IT skills to be important, and self-management and interpersonal skills to be very important.

Interview attendees from both groups mentioned that networking, Finnish language skills, willingness to have background checks ran on them. Interview Group 1 attendees mentioned: communication skills, technical skills, a willingness to learn, confidence, trustworthiness, adaptability, and possessing a relevant degree. Interview Group 2 attendees mentioned flexibility, a willingness to adjust and learn, the ability to talk about habits/culture in a cooperative way; punctuality, keeping promises, and honesty; language skills, a flexible mindset, adaptability, systematic skills, organisation skills, and patience.

The findings of IT skills to be important or very important mirror the findings of the master's thesis published by Åbo Akademi University's findings that: the employees perceive information literacy as an important set of skills to have in the digital workplace. (Almeida Rocha, 2018)

The importance of interpersonal skills found from this data further supports the Journal of Communication Management's findings that, "senior HR managers expected managers to be effective in interpersonal communication focusing mainly on the clarity and frequency of the messages, their ability to actively listen and the ability to lead in a collaborative way...however, these skills were also the ones found most lacking." (Bambacas and Patrickson, 2008)

The importance of self-management skills found from this data further supports the Journal of Managerial Issue's findings, suggesting that "teams with high levels of self-management may be more effective in organizations where the authority to make decisions about task performance is distributed, and in organizations with fewer explicit rules, policies, and procedures." (Tata and Prasad, 2004)

6 Conclusion

There were some limitations that occurred during this thesis. Firstly, the sample size of questionnaire respondents (29) and interview attendees (8) may not represent the entire population of SMEs in Helsinki. In an ideal situation, more time to complete the thesis and a larger sample of respondents and interviewee attendees would be preferred.

This thesis aimed to further understand a diverse workforce's contribution to a SMEs in the Uusimaa region by answering the questions: How can immigrant capabilities be improved to increase their employment opportunities at small and medium businesses in Helsinki? How willing are SMEs to hire immigrant workers? What are the needs of SMEs? Which SMEs are willing to hire immigrant workers?

Most respondents expressed willingness (were likely or highly likely) to hire immigrants but were highly unlikely to sponsor work visas. The majority of respondents who expressed a willingness to hire foreign employees did not express willingness (were highly unlikely, unlikely, or neutral) to sponsor work visas. This could be because many respondents perceived the residence permit process to be expensive, time consuming, and cause too much paperwork. The majority of all respondent groups had primarily hired foreigners from EU countries and Asia. Most responding groups had a cultural preference towards working with people from EU countries and Asia.

Most respondents had mixed responses and perceptions towards foreign worker's qualifications and financial requirements. Most respondents perceived foreign workers to have high levels of motivation. The most prominent benefit of hiring foreign workers perceived by all respondent groups was a team with a variety of approaches to problem solving. A majority of respondent groups also perceived: an enriched team with rare competencies; and a chance for other employees to learn new skills, ways of behaviour and values, as other prominent benefits of hiring foreign workers. All respondent groups perceived communication problems due to cultural issues and differences in concepts of work and duties, as a primary disadvantage of hiring foreign employees. Another common perceived problem was differences in concepts of work and duties.

Limited Liability companies were overwhelmingly most likely to hire foreign workers and sponsor work visas. They also represent the largest majority of companies in Finland. The service industry (first) and the information services sector (second) were most likely to hire foreign workers and sponsor work visas. Most organisations that were willing to hire or sponsor work visas had under 10 employees operating in the organisation. The majority of respondents in most respondent groups were female. Those most willing to hire foreign workers were female, however those most willing to sponsor work visas were males. It is not clear if gender played a factor in their willingness to sponsor work visas or hire, or if there were other unperceived outside factors influencing their decisions. The overwhelming majority of respondents in all respondent groups were self-described CEOs and Entrepreneurs. The majority of respondent groups had completed tertiary education of some form. Most respondent groups identified as white/Caucasian. However, it is unclear whether the respondent's ethnicity affected their decision.

The majority respondent groups preferred for their employees to have completed a bachelor's degree. The majority of all respondent groups primarily found Swedish language skills to be of low importance, Finnish language skills to be of some importance, and English language skills to be very important. All respondent groups valued both relevant work experience and education but found relevant work experience to be slightly more important.

All respondent groups valued IT skills, interpersonal skills, and self-management skills, but interpersonal and self-management skills were slightly more valued than IT skills.

Based on these findings, it is possible that the need for a foreigner's visa status and country of origin may affect their employability by SMEs in Helsinki. Foreigners looking for work should be aware that SMEs in Helsinki may perceive workers to have high levels of motivation. Foreign workers should highlight their approach to problem solving and rare competencies. They should highlight their ability to share their values and beliefs, while showing a willingness to learn and adapt to the Finnish language and culture. They should also focus on finding ways to display their effective cross-cultural communication skills. They should research concepts of work and duties in Finnish culture and display their adaptability towards Finnish work and duties to potential employers.

Foreign workers may get the best results when looking for employment at a Limited Liability company, within the service industry or information service sector, that has under 10 employees, with the owner working as a CEO/Entrepreneur, who has completed some form of tertiary education. It is unclear whether the gender or ethnicity of an employer affected the employability and likelihood of work visa sponsorship for foreign workers.

Foreign workers may improve their hire-ability by completing a bachelor's degree, speaking Finnish well, and English very well, have relevant education, and especially relevant work experience. Foreign workers should also have excellent IT, self-management (especially), and interpersonal skills (especially).

Based on this research and analysis I would recommend that other students and scholars undertake researching possible links between gender/ethnicity, and the employability of foreign workers from different cultures. I would also recommend doing more research on perceptions of SMEs when it comes to employing foreign workers vs. sponsoring work visas. Finally, I would recommend that more research be conducted on a larger scale, to get a more accurate understanding of SMEs in Helsinki as a whole.

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