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PATHWAYS of ACADEMICS in
the CONTEXT of
EDUCATIONAL INNOVATIONS
and INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

EXPLORING PROFESSIONAL
LIVES, IDENTITIES,
EXPERIENCES AND WELL-
BEING

Tampere University, Finland

Sample group

- 10 Interviewees
- Faculty of Education and Culture, Faculty of Management and Business, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Information Technology and Communication Sciences
- 3 Males, 7 Females
- 1 Senior Lecturer, 4 University Lecturers, 2 Professors, 2 Associate professors, 1 Senior research fellow
- more than 20 years of experience (2) , 5 to 20 years of experience (3), experience at the university less than 5 years (5).

Thematic Tree

Perception of Oneself as an Academic

- *Identity as an academic*
- *Career progression*
- *Academic roles and satisfaction*

University Context

- *Well-being*
- *Changes*
- *Technology*
- *Academic environment*

Personal Future

- *Academic future*
- *Personal commitments*

Perception of Oneself as an Academic



- Academics at Tampere University draw inspiration from diverse sources in their teaching roles, aiming to engage students and broaden their academic perspectives, reflecting a range of teaching-related identities. This complexity highlights the diverse nature of academic identity.
- In terms of career progression, participants display a wide array of paths and satisfaction levels. Some entered by chance, while others meticulously planned their academic careers, with varying levels of contentment in their roles. These differences underline the tangled nature of academic career trajectories, shaped by individual choices and institutional factors.
- Academic roles differ in terms of the balance between teaching and research, and satisfaction levels range from contentment to the desire for more research opportunities or grant support, emphasizing individualized experiences within the same academic institution.



University Context

Participants' well-being within the university context is diverse and multifaceted. Some exhibit balanced well-being, demonstrating adaptability and resilience among changes, while others face negative changes that can result in stress or dissatisfaction.

Conversely, those experiencing positive changes or who consider their roles as a "dream job" report higher well-being and job satisfaction.

Feeling supported by colleagues, mentors, or the organization is associated with positive well-being, while limitations in roles may hinder well-being due to frustration or hindered professional development.

These variations highlight the nuanced experiences of academics within the university environment, crucial for understanding and enhancing their overall job satisfaction and productivity

Personal Future

Within the "Personal Future" topic, the participants' academic future and personal commitments converge to reveal a spectrum of outlooks. While some express clear intentions to remain at Tampere University, underlining their commitment to the institution, others have not firmly planned their future within the university. This range reflects both individual career aspirations and the flexibility that academics exhibit in constructing their academic paths. It highlights the importance of acknowledging diverse academic futures and personal commitments among participants, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of their evolving roles within the university environment

General implications on the data

Academics experience excessive teaching work and lack of time for further research experience.

Experienced staff have a more positive attitude towards changes in the university to adopt student-centred supportive approaches

All the participants see themselves as educators who adopt student-centered supportive approaches.

The vision of the participants is to contribute to a more sustainable, productive world through their roles in the university.

General implications

- There are three main tensions that academics feel can be seen from the answers:
 - *Career vs identity*
 - *Changes ; digitalization and pandemic*
 - *Teaching vs research*


RQ1: How have the academics experienced themselves at the university?

Based on the interpretations provided, we can answer the first research question as follows:


- Academics at the university have diverse experiences that span various aspects of their professional and personal lives. Their self-experience is shaped by factors such as their multiple roles as educators and researchers, the support they receive, their adaptability to changes, and their well-being within the university context. Some academics view their roles as "dream jobs," finding fulfillment and alignment with their career aspirations, while others may feel limited or overwhelmed. These experiences elaborate the versatile nature of academic identity within the university environment.

Conclusion


In summary, the analysis of the dataset emphasize the complicated and varied experiences of academics within the university setting. These experiences embrace a wide spectrum of roles, teaching and research dynamics, interpersonal relationships, and overall well-being.



Academics' sense of self and their well-being are notably influenced by their adaptability in the face of changes and the degree of support they receive.



The university environment itself undergoes transformations, both positive and negative, which in turn affect how academics approach their teaching and research. Collaborative bonds with colleagues and research groups play a pivotal role in shaping the academic landscape.



Recognizing this diversity and addressing the associated challenges and opportunities is crucial to fostering a thriving academic community and enhancing the overall well-being and productivity of academics in higher education institutions.