



TEACH WITH ERASMUS+

ELTE Eötvös Loránd University
Department of Erasmus+ and
International Programmes

Teach with Erasmus+ Research Report – Executive summary



Erasmus+

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1.1 The changing context of higher education and internationalisation

Over the last decades, the rapid changes in the social and economic environment have been influencing higher education considerably. The growing emphasis on increasing migration, global integration, and other global processes (e.g. climate change, inequality) have **changed the landscape in which higher education institutions define their strategic goals and internationalizing activities.**

The **Leuven Communiqué** (signed by 46 countries of the Bologna Process in 2009) highlighted the importance of increasing the number of students (20% of the graduates by 2020) and staff participating in various mobility activities internationally. The Erasmus Impact Study (EIS) 2014 identified **staff mobility (including teachers) as a key factor** to be included as one of the **top priorities in the internationalisation strategies** of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) to reach the targets of the Leuven Communiqué.

Rooted in the Middle Ages, the **internationalisation in European higher education is not a new idea**: it has a long tradition and history. An extended understanding of internationalisation considers the phenomenon as “the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society” (*de Wit, Hunter, Howard, & Egron-Polak, 2015*). Institutions could have **many reasons for engaging in internationalisation**: increased international awareness of global issues by students, enhanced internationalisation of the curriculum, improved quality of teaching and learning, strengthened institutional research and knowledge production capacity, enhanced profile for the institution, opportunity to benchmark institutional performance within the context of international good practice, enhanced institutional cooperation and capacity building, increased international networking by faculty and researchers and increased/diversified revenue generation (*Seeber, Cattaneo, Huisman, & Paleari, 2016*).

In Europe, international higher education (student, staff, and teaching) **mobility is the most visible facet of higher education internationalisation**. In Europe, the main driver for higher education mobility is the Erasmus+ programme. In 2017, which was the 30th anniversary year of the programme, more than 312 300 student and 62 500 staff mobilities were supported.

It is undeniable that **internationalisation can lead to a diverse set of desirable outcomes** and impacts regarding the operation of higher education institutions and academics’ professional development, but it must be noted that universities are often considering such indicators like proportions of international staff, number of international students, research papers published with a co-author from another country etc., which limits our understanding of the possible supporting and hindering factors behind internationalisation.

1.1.2 Research on teaching mobility

While there are many aspects of internationalisation, **this report only focuses on academics' mobility and in particular, teaching mobility**. Generally, **staff mobility is given less focus in research regarding the internationalisation of higher education** and also, institutional strategies seem to be rarely systematic in promoting this opportunity (*de Wit et al.*, 2015), and it is rarely recognised towards career progression (*Racké*, 2013). Previous research uncovered that **a strategic approach to academic mobility has clear advantages for research, teaching and professional development** (*Colucci, Ferencz, Gaebel & Wächter*, 2014; *Svetlik & Braček Lalić*, 2016). The strategic role of academic mobility was reassured by Postiglione and Altbach (2013) as well. Teaching mobility can also play an important role in joint programmes, and through those, in the internationalisation at home agenda of institutions (*Erdei et al.*, 2018).

Despite its strategic importance and possible impacts, **outcomes assessment of staff mobility strongly focuses on input and output indicators and lacking important contextual and process elements** (*Deardoff & van Gaalen*, 2012; *Chang & Lin*, 2018). Therefore, a more rigorous and complex measurement regarding the topic is needed, e.g. from a **quality assurance perspective** (*Voroshilova*, 2015; *Hauptman Komotar*, 2018), taking into consideration **personality factors** (*Dewey & Duff*, 2009; *Li & Tu*, 2016) and the **pedagogical dimension** as well (*Wihlborg*, 2009).

1.1.3 The Teach with Erasmus+ project

The **Teach with Erasmus+ project (TWE+)**, as a logical continuation and extension of the staffmobility.eu website of the IMOTION project aims to create an online '*Marketplace*' for teaching staff in order to **facilitate, encourage, and promote teachers' mobility across Europe**.

In order to help to fulfil this aim, the project has the objective to **identify and define quality teaching mobility**. This particular Intellectual Output (IO1) consists of exploratory research on quality aspects of teaching mobility that is followed by the development of the actual **"Quality & Impact Tool for Teaching Mobility Assessment" (QITTMA)** and is one of the four main pillars of the TWE+ project.

The project is realised by a consortium consisting of: **ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Institut polytechnique UniLaSalle, University of Alcalá, UNICA and European University Foundation**. The results of the project are disseminated through the <https://teachwitherasmus.eu/> website.

1.2 THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The research involved a mixed-methods strategy, combining qualitative and quantitative tools to have a broader understanding of the research questions. A preliminary, qualitative-focused research was applied in order to map the basic domains that could be involved in a large scale survey:

- 33 semi-structured interview conducted by members of the consortium from various countries

- 1 focus-group where various stakeholders shared their experiences through a customer journey mapping process

A large, international survey-based quantitative research were employed based on the results of the interviews distributed by the networks of the consortium members. The main aim was to reach at least 500 participants from different Erasmus+ Programme Country in order to be able to generate meaningful groupings and comparisons during the data analysis. Signaling the significance of the topic, at the end of the data gathering we have managed to surpass our initial goal regarding the number of participants (N=745, which will be detailed later).

The survey comprises of four blocks, one of which is for only those who have participated in teaching mobility before. Therefore, the research encompasses the experiences of those who have not participated in teaching mobility before in the hope of discovering the main barriers of abstaining as well.

The general structure of the questionnaire makes it possible to gather relevant organisational contextual data, data regarding personal aspects and factors related to a concrete mobility experience. A unique part of the survey is the third block, where we ask participants to think about a concrete mobility experience they had and the survey guides them to better focus on that memory with few introductory questions (e.g. when and where was the mobility). This would allow us to gather more specific data, tied to a real experience instead of a general approach.

In the survey, we implemented several standardized scales that have been used in previous research which would allow us an international and intersectoral comparison. The following scales are used:

- **International orientation and strategy of the institution:** the items are taken from a dimension of the HEInnovate tool
- **Personality factors:** Based on the interviews Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (*Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004*), ambiguity tolerance (*Herman et al., 2010*) and self-efficacy (*Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995*) were used.

The survey was followed-up by several post-interview to help us better understand the results that our analysis provided.

This research project will allow us to explore the following broad research questions and aims which will be examined via exploratory and multivariate statistical procedures:

- 1) What are the main differences between higher education systems, different types of institutions and different individuals regarding their attitudes and experiences towards teaching mobility?
- 2) What are the main outcomes and impacts of teaching mobility?
- 3) What are the main factors that could restrain individuals from engaging in teaching mobility?
- 4) What are the main factors that influence individuals' willingness to participate in and satisfaction with teaching mobility?
- 5) What are the main factors that influence the possible outcomes of teaching mobility?

The research project is approved by the Research Ethics Board of the Faculty of Education and Psychology of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE). The research is planned and executed by

concerning general standards for social sciences and humanities research (regarding human participation) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

1.3 MAIN RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

1.3.1 The sample

After data-cleaning, the final database contained responses from **745 academics from European HEIs**. Academics in the sample are mainly **from state or public HEIs (94,1%)**. Considering general demographic variables, 42,2% of the respondents are male, while 57,8% are female. Respondents are **fairly balanced regarding disciplinary orientation**. Most of the participants are from the field of social sciences (34,9%) and humanities (21,9%), while engineering disciplines are represented by 18,2% of the sample. The sample contains academics that have **already participated in teaching mobility (69%)** and those **who haven't participated yet (31%)** which is an important dimension to compare.

Although our study is not based on a representative sample, for the sake of the **explorative nature** of this research we can say that we have a fairly balanced sample which could provide valuable insights for developing a quality tool for teaching mobility.

1.3.2 Characteristics of reported teaching mobilities

The following questions (background information on the mobility experience, mobility factors, satisfaction with the experience and results and feedback sections) were only asked from those who have already participated in teaching mobility. The survey explicitly asked respondents to think about a certain teaching mobility experience and answer the questions in light of that specific experience. With this solution, the researchers tried to influence respondents in a way that they focus on a specific experience rather than generalities. Most of the sample consists of academics who have already been on teaching mobility (69%, N=455). **Most of the teaching mobilities reported in our survey were quite recent, 65,9% of them were realized in 2018 and 2019**. The most frequent countries to visit are Spain, Poland, France, Germany and Portugal (covering 36,7% of valid responses).

Participating in Erasmus+ teaching mobility programmes is related to some personal characteristics. A test of independence on this data shows that there are significant associations: **those who have participated in Erasmus+ programmes are more likely to have higher academic rank, more work experience and are from the older age groups**.

Institutional factors, such as the size or type of higher education institute are not related to participation, however, there are **significant associations with organisational support and strategic focus** on internationalization or with **the presence of mobility as expectation**.

1.3.3 Personality factors influencing teaching mobility

The Erasmus Impact Study used 6 memo© factors: curiosity, serenity, confidence, tolerance for ambiguity, decisiveness, vigour. In relation to these factors, we chose to integrate three measures:

- **tolerance for ambiguity scale** (*Herman et al, 2010*)

- **work-engagement** as measured in vigour, dedication and absorption using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale 9 items version (*Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004*)
- general **self-efficacy** scale (*Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995*)

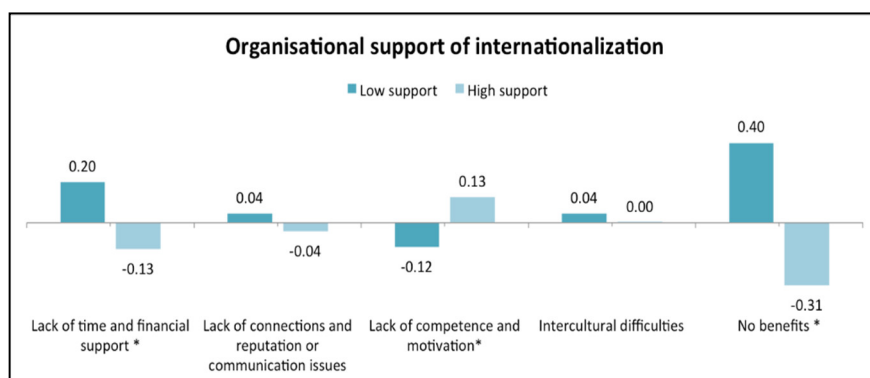
Regarding descriptive results, it is not necessary to go into details analysing these numbers. We can acknowledge that regarding work engagement scale, our sample presents a rather high average, where absorption and dedication plays a more important role than vigour. On the other hand, measured personality factors like self-efficacy and tolerance of ambiguity also came up quite high. These variables will be examined in relations of different target groups.

As for personal attitudes there are several significant correlations with hindering factors. It is worth to highlight, that **intercultural difficulties** (such as variant education system, students' expectations or research culture of the host institutions) are **only connected to personal attitudes**, while **socio-demographic or organisational factors are independent of it**. **Self-efficacy, dedication and absorption are all significantly associated with intercultural difficulties**. **The more positive attitude participants have, the fewer difficulties they face regarding different attitudes in the host country.**

1.3.4 The influence of strategic approach to and organizational support of internationalisation on teaching mobility

Respondents feel that their organisation supports teaching mobility as **academics have the opportunity to organise their classes in a way that they could go on a teaching mobility (65,3% of respondents stated that this is rather true in their university), and they feel supported in their endeavours (63,9% showed positive orientation towards this statement)**. Besides the reported positive atmosphere regarding support of internationalisation, it seems **when substitutions come into question, respondents are less likely to report positive attitudes (39,8% of respondents stated that if he/she would miss a class at home due to being on teaching mobility, the organisation wouldn't provide a substitution)**. Furthermore, it seems that teaching mobility is **not well-recognized in academics' career development (23,9% of respondents were not agreeing to the statement that teaching mobility is a recognized activity in their organisation)**. **Internationalisation became an integral part of HEIs operation, 76% of respondents stated that internationalisation is an important part of the institution's strategy and 68% perceived that they have some kind of incentive of support mechanisms in place for this field**. Although the **recruitment of international staff members is not that prevalent (23,9% disagrees with the statement that their organisation is trying to attract academics and staff member with international orientation)**.

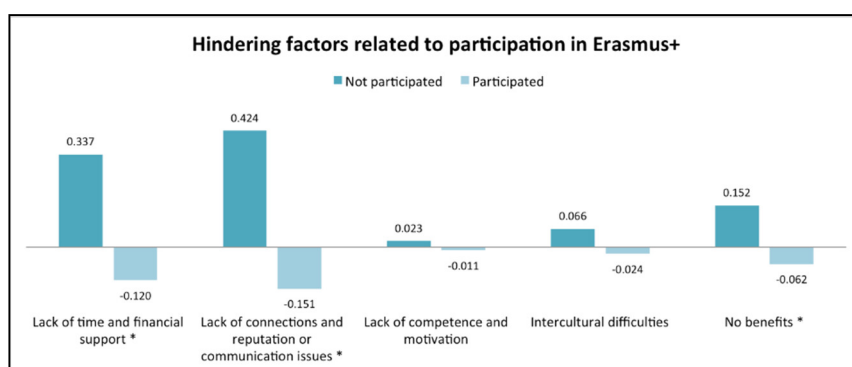
Organisational support on internationalization also affects how respondents consider some of the factors. Difference between institutes with low support comparing to high supporters is statistically proven with the following factors: lack of time and financial support, lack of competence and motivation and lack of benefits. While facing the **difficulties of lack of time, support and benefits appear in organisations with low support**, lack of motivation reflects the opposite tendency: **those who teach in highly supportive institutions, facing less (or none) difficulties with lack of competence or motivation.**



1.3.5 Factors that hinder participation in teaching mobility

The **most important hindering factors** reported by participants are considering the **administrative and organization tasks** regarding mobility. 30,55% of respondents stated that it is a **great inconvenience to organise and realise teaching mobility**, while 28,32% fear that the **budget won't be enough to cover their expenses**, 26,4% has **issues with solving their substitution at their home university for the duration of the mobility**. In order to have a clearer picture regarding hindering factors, we employed data reduction methods (exploratory factor analysis) to uncover the latent structure between variables describing hindering factors. 5 factors were extracted explaining 61,65% of the total variance: lack of time and financial support, lack of connections and reputation or communication issues, lack of competence and motivation, intercultural difficulties, no benefits.

Participating in Erasmus+ affects how respondents see hindering factors regarding teaching mobility, however, intercultural issues (such as variant education system, student expectations and research attitudes in the host country) and the lack of competence or motivation are at the same level in both groups. Nevertheless, **dealing with lack of time, connections or benefits when talking about teaching mobility programmes tends to disappear among those, who have already tried themselves abroad.**



Where respondents have no **information about teaching mobility programmes, the lack of time, financial support and the lack of benefits are significantly higher**, showing the importance of formal dissemination when someone participated in teaching mobility program. However, organizing **formal events** after a colleague participated in a particular teaching mobility program **raises the degree of concern about the lack of competence and motivation**.

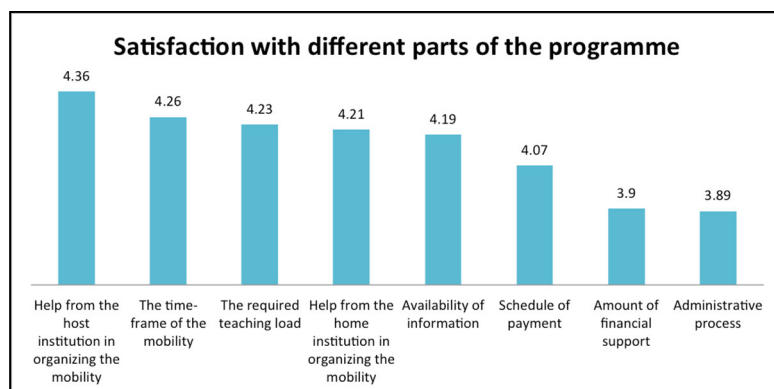
1.3.6 Factors that motivate academics to participate in teaching mobilities

Based on the results of the preliminary interviews and focus group, we identified 15 items that could describe the possible range of motivations. The data tells us, that academics who have participated in teaching mobility were **mainly motivated** by their inner curiosity to **learn new educational practices** (84,4% felt that this was very important motivation for them), and to **learn about the research projects of the host institution** (81,3% found it very important). On the other side, it seems that **expectations or encouragement from the organisation or the leadership is simply not that important** (55,6% and 53,1% stated that these factors were not important in their decision), also which is quite contradictory to our expectations, **recommendations from colleagues proved to be a weak factor as well** (45,6% stated that this was not important). We used data reduction techniques here as well for us to be able to present a more focused analysis of the different groups regarding their motivation. The 4 principal components extracted explained 70,54% of the total variance: learning (languages, pedagogical methods), getting to know new places and cultures, research opportunities, expectation and urge.

The motivation of learning is connected to age, title and vigour, and it is also affected by discipline and organisational support on mobility programmes. Getting to know new cultures only relates to vigour and tolerance for ambiguity, while research opportunity is associated with both personal attitudes and disciplines. Self-efficacy and absorption lead to higher motivation of research opportunities, as well as being a lecturer in the field of natural sciences, engineering or agriculture and veterinary. Expectation and urge are higher among women, among those who scored higher in vigour and dedication on work, and among those who are more intolerant for ambiguity. It is also connected to the organisational profile, where high supportive institutions lead to a higher score for urge and expectation as a motivational factor. Urge and expectation is also higher among short-termed and repeated mobility, suggesting that younger participants rather have internal motivation (such as learning, getting to know new places, seizing research opportunity), while older respondents, who have participated in teaching mobility programmes earlier tend to have external motivation which is expectation or urge.

1.3.7 Satisfaction with teaching mobility

It seems that those who have participated in teaching mobilities reported a **rather high satisfaction regarding different elements** of the programme. Respondents were **most satisfied with the help they received from the host institution** organising the mobility (82,91% were rather satisfied with this element), and with **the time frame of the mobility** (81,03% were rather satisfied). Academics were **least satisfied with the administrative process** (only 66,82% reported that they are rather satisfied) and the **amount of financial support** (only 66,44% reported that they are rather satisfied).



Besides the specific elements, the survey also measured **respondents' general satisfaction with their teaching mobility experience using a Net Promoter Score (NPS) approach**. Respondents who gave a score of 0-6 are grouped as "Detractors", those who gave 7 or 8 are grouped as "Passive" and those, who scored 9 or 10 are belong to the "Promoter" category. The NPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters. Considering the **overall satisfaction** of respondents with their teaching mobility experience, it seems that they **rated it as excellent**, as it is evident from the reported NPS values (56 and 63,4 for overall satisfaction and return-intent respectively). The **intention to repeat the mobility** (with the same conditions) could **signal a strong commitment towards the experience and in return, a strong indicator for satisfaction**.

Respondents' **mobility intention are correlated with self-efficacy** and each component of **work engagement**, while **none of the socio-demographic factors affects it significantly**. On the other hand, organizational factors are also related to mobility intention: in **those institutions where mobility is highly supported, respondents' intention to participate in mobility programmes are significantly higher**.

Motivation and hindering factors also connect to **mobility intention**, where **learning and getting to know new places show positive relationship** (meaning that higher motivation on these components results in higher mobility intention) while hindering factors show negative association: the **more concerns respondents have, the lower his mobility intention is**. There is a significant and strong correlation between the satisfaction with mobility programme and return intent: **higher the satisfaction, greater the return intent is**. Except for tolerance of ambiguity, both self-efficacy and elements of work engagement (vigour, dedication and absorption) are in a positive association, meaning that **more positive attitude comes with higher satisfaction with mobility programme, and higher return intent, as well**.

Useful **feedback from students, self-efficacy and hindering factor of no benefits explains 22% of satisfaction**, where feedback and self-efficacy contribute positively and the lack of benefits¹ affects satisfaction negatively.

Significant **positive connection between return intent and learning motivation**, while the **lack of benefits, time and financial support negatively affects it**.

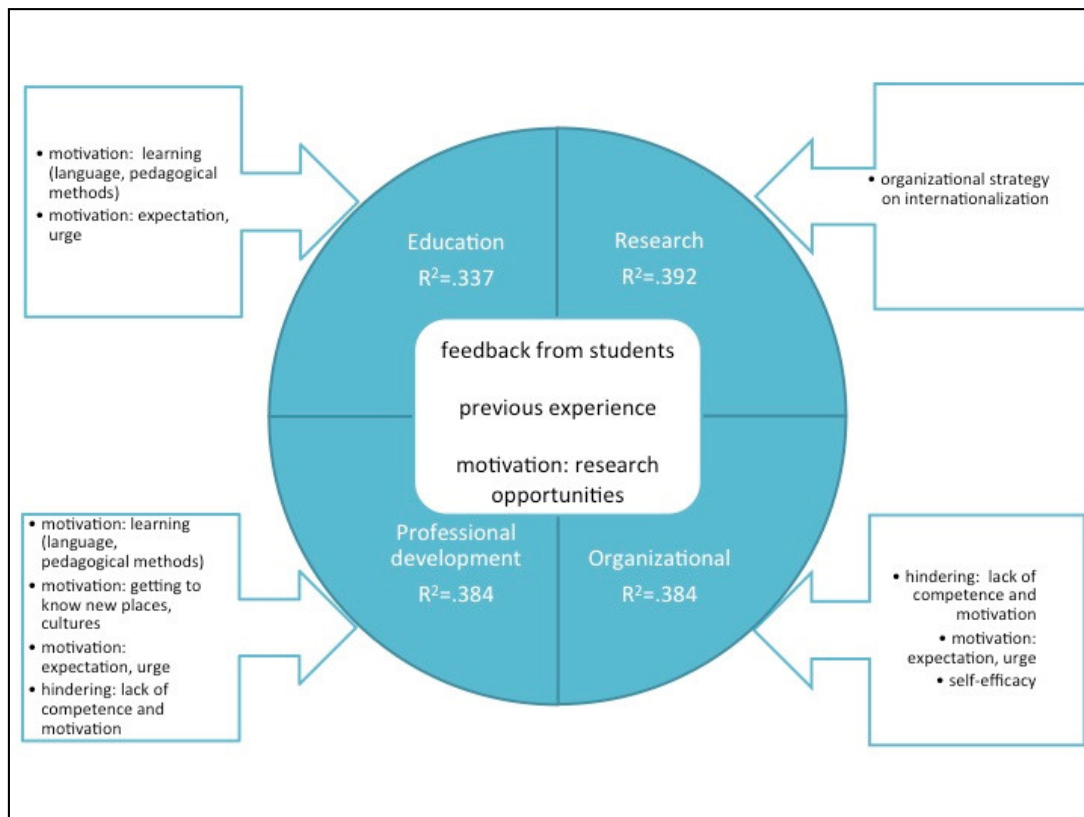
1.3.8 Possible contributions and perceived results of teaching mobility

In the survey, we used items describing **potential results** that we identified through the preliminary interviews and focus group. Initially, we clustered results around broader topics: **education** (8 items, eg. better teaching competence, new pedagogical methods), **research** (9 items, eg. opportunity to present empirical results at a conference, joining to a research team), **professional development** (14 items, eg. networking, development of interpersonal competencies) and **organisational results** (7 items, eg. greater intense of student mobility and cooperation with host institute).

The most important results reported by academics are the **expansion of their professional network (71,2%** rated this as a direct result of their mobility), **getting to know the culture, the educational system and the operation of higher education institutions in a foreign country (65,6%** stated that it was a direct result of their mobility), and **getting to know the work-culture of another organisation (64,3%** stated that it was a direct result of their mobility). On the other hand, it seems that teaching mobility **rarely contributes to introducing new joint degree programmes (79,1%** reported that this hasn't happened), **nor new courses/modules (65,8%** reported that this hasn't happened). Overall, respondents rated items regarding **professional development higher** than those items that are dealing with other possible results.

These types of **results may be predicted by different factors**, which was examined by regression models. Numbers show that there **are some common factors** that affect each kind of results, such as **feedback from students, previous experience and the motivation of research opportunities** – three of the predictive factors from the derived results variable emerged in each of the segmented prediction models, as well. Results on the side of **education** can be predicted by **the level of learning motivation and organizational expectation**, while results connected to **research** are only affected by **organizational strategy on internationalization** (above the common factors). **Organizational results** are higher with **higher concerns about lack of competence and motivation, higher expectation and higher self-efficacy**. **Professional development** has the most significant connection, it is growing with each component of **motivation plus with higher concerns about lack of competence**. Each connection is significant and positive, meaning that higher predictive factors grow the level of results in each component.

¹ Negative scale for hindering factors means less concern about the particular factor, therefore negative affect means that less concern will result in higher satisfaction.



1.4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, **respondents differ within the categories of participants and non-participants** in academic rank, age and work experience:

- seizing the opportunity of gathering teaching experience abroad with Erasmus+ is more favoured among non-starter professors, according to the sample
- the organisational profile also determines participation: institutions where strategic focus and support on internationalization is higher, and where they provide more information about teaching mobility programmes, have a higher ratio of Erasmus+ participants.

According to **hindering factors**, both organisational attitudes, information flow and mobility as expectation seems to be affected by disciplines, which then affects the degree of particular hindering factors:

- fields where organisational support on mobility programmes are high result in fewer concerns about the lack of time, financial support and benefits while raising the scores for lack of competence and motivation.

Personal characteristics were only connected to lack of connections, reputation or communication issues from hindering factors:

- the association may be tracked back to participating in Erasmus + programmes: sociodemographic factors (except for gender) are significantly related to participation

in Erasmus+ teaching mobility programme, which then affects how respondents consider lack of connections, reputation or communication issues. With higher position, longer work experience and older age respondents face fewer difficulties according to this factor

- international issues are correlated to personal attitudes, where higher scores correlate to fewer concerns of international issues.

Different elements of motivation depend on various factors, suggesting that younger participants rather have the internal motivation (such as learning, getting to know new places, seizing research opportunity), while older and more experienced respondents, who have participated in teaching mobility programmes earlier tend to have external motivation which is expectation or urge:

- learning is connected to age, title and vigour work as personal factors, and it is also affected by discipline and organisational support on mobility programmes: higher motivation appears in the field of health - and medical sciences
- getting to know new cultures only relates to vigour work engagement and tolerance for ambiguity
- self-efficacy and absorption leads to higher motivation of research opportunities, as well as being a lecturer in the field of natural sciences, engineering or agriculture and veterinary
- expectation and urge are higher among women, among those who scored higher in vigour and dedication on work, and among those who are more intolerant for ambiguity. It is also connected to the organisational profile, where high supportive institutions lead to a higher score, and it is also higher among short-termed programmes and repeated mobility.

Mobility intention is connected to motivation and hindering factors and some of the personal attitudes and organizational factors:

- highly supportive organization shows a higher intention
- mobility intention is higher among regional studies compared to foreign language or nationally embedded disciplines
- higher motivation results in higher mobility intention while hindering factors reduce the level of mobility intention
- higher self-efficacy and work engagement comes with higher mobility intention.

Overall satisfaction with teaching mobility programme and return intent are both related to personal attitudes and organisational profile, but they are independent of sociodemographic factors and discipline.

- participants are most satisfied with the help from the host country and with time-frame of the programme, while financial support and administration are the least satisfying

- motivational factors also correlate to some of the elements of teaching mobility programmes, showing that higher motivation comes with higher satisfaction
- return intent can be enhanced by greater learning motivation and fewer concerns about benefits, time and financial support, according to a predictive model
- overall satisfaction is affected by the amount of feedback from students, self-efficacy and lack of benefits.

Results experienced by participants depend on personal characteristics, such as gender and age, and also some personal attitudes (self-efficacy, work engagement and tolerance for ambiguity):

- women reported more professional development than men
- organization results ended up higher among younger respondents
- higher scores on personal attitudes show more experience, except for tolerance of ambiguity which comes with a negative correlation
- organisational support on teaching programmes also affects results, higher support means considering more results
- level of motivation and satisfaction connects to results as well, on a positive way
- according to a predictive model, higher motivation in expectation or research opportunities will lead to a greater amount of results of teaching mobility programmes.