Kandipalaute

Report on the Cluster Analysis

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1 Introduction

With this report, we present a cluster analysis on the Kandipalaute data gathered from students who graduated in 2013. With a response rate of ca. 40% – 25% to 75% at the individual universities – the survey proved to be well-received among the students and thus reflects a broad spectrum of the student body.

But what constitutes “the student body” at Finnish universities? We might assume – and have at least anecdotal evidence for this hypothesis – that university students as a group differ from non-students as well as students at universities of applied sciences, and probably significantly so. However, it is not a homogeneous group: University students differ in their personal situation, they might not share the same rationale of why they study and thus they experience this phase of their lives in a very different way. The difference in student experience will also lead to different behaviour towards the demands and challenges of studying.

The Kandipalaute survey offers the opportunity to get a more complex picture of how students differ in experiencing university by reflecting the “adaptation situation”\(^1\) of the students, which includes the individual study related diversity of the students, the study conditions as well as the demands of the university.

Figure 1: The adaptation situation of the students

These aspects of the adaptation situation are not only assessed by demographic information or questions about the students' opinions of their study situation, but also by “psychometric” items: Students are asked to describe their behaviour at and their perspective on university, which are then factorised into aspects relevant to study success.

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\(^1\) This term has been introduced by Vincent Tinto when he described drop out as well as retention as a process of adaptation. (Vincent Tinto (1993): *Leaving college. Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition.* 2nd edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.)
Thus, this part of the survey can circumvent social response set when it comes to “expected” or “acceptable” behaviour as a student. Based on 10 factors\(^2\) the QUEST part of the survey thus reflects the personal, social, academic and orientational demands of studying.

**Figure 2: The 10 factors in the Kandipalaute analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal factors</th>
<th>Social factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extroversion</td>
<td>Social integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sociable, open, adventurous</td>
<td>• Existing contacts and exchange with other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame of mind</td>
<td>Accepting assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feeling powerful and comfortable, no (psycho-somatic) afflictions</td>
<td>• Knowledge about support options and accepting assistance, good contacts with teaching staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic factors</th>
<th>Orientation factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diligence</td>
<td>Determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Approach to learning, including ‘locus of control’, i.e. the belief that learning indeed leads to success</td>
<td>• Setting goals and proceeding accordingly and methodological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory orientation</td>
<td>Identification with the university</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interested more in theory than pure practical approaches</td>
<td>• Content at the university, trust in the institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic motivation</td>
<td>Fulfilment of expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Studying out of interest and personal development, less for financial reasons or career plans</td>
<td>• Self-image and self-perception while studying concur</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on a cluster analysis, we can then differentiate between a number of adaptation situations, reflecting priorities, abilities and foci of the students inside and outside university, which are correlated with a more or less smooth progress and success in their studies. With this information, universities are enabled to improve the adaptation situation of the students by adapting continuously to their (changing) needs.

The cluster analysis was based on the data from the second and the third wave (the first wave being considered as a testing round), i.e. the complete responses of the graduates of 2013.

A cluster analysis is a method to identify new groups in a data set, as compared to classifications, which use existing categories. The basis of the description of the clusters is the students’ self-reported behaviour towards university: For the cluster analysis, we only

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\(^2\) For more information about the factors, see the report “Results of the testing 2013-12-13” by CHE Consult.
used the information from the 10 factors. Hierarchical cluster analysis lead to eight clusters, even with different statistical procedures, which is the same number as we found in the German QUEST survey. That means that we can identify eight groups of students, which are significantly similar among each other while being significantly different from other students.³

Cluster analyses do not offer interpretations of the found groups by themselves. The aim of this report is to offer a suggestion how to describe the groups and summarize the peculiarities of each cluster. By adding other information gathered by the Kandipalaute survey – about their study programme, their opinions about support structures and study demands as well as some personal background information on the students – we aim to provide a three-dimensional picture of the students’ adaptation situations.

The cluster analysis provides results, which can be interpreted as “adaptation types”. While they are statistical artefacts, they highlight correlations between the occurrences of certain characteristics, thus offering a way of understanding how certain characteristics are related to behaviour: Most importantly, the characteristics might lead to a certain kind of behaviour in one case and to a different behaviour in other cases. The eight identified clusters are only named by numbers for the time being, but we suggest names for the clusters based on their most striking characteristics. Naming them has advantages and disadvantages: A name aggregates typical features and makes the differences between the types more clear. However, these names have to be understood as technical terms, defined by the results of the analysis, even when the names are close to everyday languages and thus suggest additional correlations, which are not part of the data set.

³ While the German QUEST survey also produced 8 cluster types, they are very different except for two types (Kandipalaute Cluster 1 and 3).
2 The Finnish Adaptation Types

Sorted by number, we see that the adaptation types differ in group size. The clusters differ not so much in age non-academic background and gender; however, there is one cluster (No. 4), which includes many of the older students and at the same time many of those without academic background. At the same time, there are clusters where one of the genders is more strongly represented than in the average: in Cluster 5, there are more female students than on average; the same is true to a lesser degree for Cluster 8. In Cluster 6, there are more male students represented.

Figure 3: Descriptives of the adaptation types, ordered by Cluster name

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Group size</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Swedish</th>
<th>Non-academic background</th>
<th>Average Age</th>
<th>Self-assessment “Top third of the year”</th>
<th>Self-assessment Probability of success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kandipalaute</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>26,29</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 1</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>26,65</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandipalaute</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26,99</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 3</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>32,81</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandipalaute</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>25,66</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 4</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>27,97</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandipalaute</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25,31</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 7</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>25,61</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandipalaute</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>25,61</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster 8</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>25,61</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>7,90%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>27,05</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The clusters can also be sorted by the total value on the factors. Generally, it is true that the higher the total value, the less friction loss while adapting to university. However, that does not mean that lower values automatically mean “less good adaptation”: In many cases, it simply means “different adaptation”. Under the right circumstances – namely an open and diverse adaptation situation offered by the institution – these alternative adaptation types will be just as successful. The Kandipalaute data is meant to offer a perspective on those students who “fall through the cracks”, for whom the current offers are not adapted well enough yet. As Figure 4 shows, high values on the factors indeed correlate with a high self-assessment on the probability of study success in the current programme. Also having no financial problems seems to support adaptation. However, the self-assessment of the performance in the Bachelor-Programme is not directly correlated, and the same is true for jobbing during the semester. That means that a job can interfere with the studies, but it does not so necessarily.

The following description tries to find interrelations in the results per cluster in order to paint a picture about different types of adaptation most common at Finnish universities.
**Figure 4: Descriptives of the adaptation types, ordered by total value on all factors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No financial problems</th>
<th>Participating in the student union</th>
<th>First choice university</th>
<th>Job during semester</th>
<th>Self-assessment “Top third of the year”</th>
<th>Self-Assessment Probability of success</th>
<th>Total value in the factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kandipalaute Cluster 3</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>5.2423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandipalaute Cluster 5</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>6.2619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandipalaute Cluster 2</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>6.3204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandipalaute Cluster 6</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>6.4528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandipalaute Cluster 8</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7.2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandipalaute Cluster 7</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7.2102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandipalaute Cluster 4</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7.5233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandipalaute Cluster 1</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>8.1426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>6.9134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here as well as in the following chapters, colours are used to highlight the range between low values (green) and high values (white). The closer the colouring is to the light green of the Average row. The tables in the following chapters are all referring to Figure 3. The results are also shown in a graph (see Figure 5 on the next page). This graph is used in the following chapters to present the results per adaptation type. It represents the average values per cluster on each of the factors: The grey area signifies the values for the “middle third” of the whole group of participants: One third scores higher values and one third is below the values represented by the grey area. In the following, there will be red points representing the values for the cluster.
Figure 5: Presentation mode of the results per factor

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extraversion</th>
<th>Frame of mind</th>
<th>Diligence</th>
<th>Task orientation</th>
<th>Intrinsic motivation</th>
<th>Social integration</th>
<th>Accepting assistance</th>
<th>Determination</th>
<th>Identification with the HEI</th>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Factors</td>
<td>Academic Factors</td>
<td>Social Factors</td>
<td>Orientation Factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

The diagram shows the presentation mode of the results per factor, with bars representing the scores for each factor.
3 Descriptions of the Adaptation Clusters

3.1 Kandipalaute Cluster 1
Suggestions for names: The Self-sufficient; the Lucky Ones

3.1.1 Core findings

Figure 6: Factor values for Cluster 1

![Cluster 1 Factor Values](image)

Figure 7: Basic information on Cluster 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group size</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Swedish</th>
<th>Non-academic background</th>
<th>Average Age</th>
<th>Self-assessment “Top third of the year”</th>
<th>Self-assessment Probability of success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kandipalaute Cluster 1</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>26,29</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>27,05</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students of this cluster performed on all factors noticeably over the average, with a total value of 8.1426. Particularly striking are the comparatively high values on “Social integration” and “Accepting assistance”. Looking at some basic information, the group is average in many respects. They are a bit younger than the average and have a bit more often an academic family background. However, they assess their performance in their
previous studies as well as in the current studies better or even far better than the average does.

3.1.2 Additional information

It is a younger group of students (63% are between 21 and 25 years old). The majority of this group finances their studies through student grant and they report that they do not have any problems with financing their studies. Housing supplements and jobs contribute to their income. Cluster 1 students often work only part time jobs but with a relation to their field of study. This group of students is very satisfied with study related topics (e.g. teaching methods, opportunities of participation or feedback of their professors) as well as with their private life and their life in general (on average 90-92%, on a scale with 100% meaning “completely satisfied”). They participate in volunteer activities more than any other cluster.

They are very confident regarding their former and their current performance, have no problems with their time management and they feel very comfortable at their university. This type of students knows about the importance of gaining international experience, and 28% have been abroad during their studies, which is slightly above average (25%). Moreover, they appreciate the positive aspects of teamwork: getting to know different people, learning about dealing with conflicts.

Although it seems that they would not need much support, they are very satisfied with the support structures in their private life and at the university. More than a half of the students of this group assess “finding information and support” as being easy. Especially on “support in socialising”, 78% agreed that there was “sufficient support”. However, for each topic a comparatively high percentage reports that they do not need support.

3.1.3 Conclusions

This group of students could be described as being satisfied with all aspects of studying as well as their life and they are confident about their studies. They adjust perfectly to a student life style. At the same time, it seems that not only did everything go right in their studies, but also in their personal lives. Even in a case when they would need any support, they would find it with their friends and family or know whom to ask at the university.

This is the group of the lucky students: Being at the right place at the right time, finding the right study programme and not having any major misfortune in their life, which would deviate their focus from their studies. Therefore, while this adaptation type reflects a high competence in dealing with the challenges of studying, it depends on being able to submit themselves to their studies. On the other hand, this might as well be the cluster of students, who has still open capacities: e.g. to help other students, and by that to learn about studying and living in other than ideal circumstances.

3.2 Kandipalaute Cluster 2

Suggestions for names: The Not-reached, the Apprentices

3.2.1 Core findings
Figure 8: Factor values for Cluster 2

Cluster 2

This cluster scores average on the personal factors, but rather low on all other factors, especially on Identification with the institution and on the academic factors. The low value on Theory orientation reflects a heightened interest in professional practice. Total value on all factors combined: 6.3204.

Male students are slightly overrepresented, also Swedish speaking students. Students with non-academic background are slightly underrepresented. The group is average or close to average in age and when it comes to self-assessment of success probability in the current programme For their previous programme, however, they assess their performance less well than the average.

This adaptation type is characterised at the same time by its strong orientation on professional practice and by a certain disappointment in the university. They feel a lack of support, at the university, but also outside of university: This cluster assesses their private life outside of university as less supportive, if not distracting. Their financial situation
seems to be acceptable, many of those students spent some time abroad during their studies, but only few are involved in extracurricular activities.

### 3.2.2 Additional information

The Cluster 2 students assess their performance during their studies rather low: 15% select the answer option “I belonged to the bottom third of my year”, which is double as many as on average. Additionally, this cluster includes many students, who are very critical about the feedback they received from the teaching staff and how that helped them: 62% disagree or somewhat disagree with the statement “I received sufficient feedback from the teaching staff”, and 46% with the statement “The feedback I received from the teaching staff has helped me with my studies.” – the second highest disagreement among the eight clusters for both.

These students feel rather not well educated at university (39% disagree or somewhat disagree with the statement “The skills I acquired in my education meet my expectations.”), similarly results can be found for “My education meets my expectations”, “The teaching was to a large extent of good quality.” and “I am satisfied with the teaching methods used.”. In addition, being able to attend class seemed to be more problematic for this group than for others, the same is true for independent study and also group work.

This finding can be interpreted in the context of their strong focus on professional practice: this might impede successful adaptation at university, since the goals of the students and the teaching goals of the university do not necessarily overlap. However in addition, for this group this goes along with the feeling of being less comfortable at the university than most of their peers (only 31% completely agree with the statement “I felt comfortable at my university”, which is the second lowest value). For all items concerning support offers by the university, this group scores low on the answer option “I did not need support in this issue”. That suggests that they seek support. At the same time, this cluster assesses the existing support offers to a high degree as not sufficient.

These students are rather satisfied with their private life (means: 80-83%, with 100% “completely satisfied”). At university, however, they are not too keen on social integration: They not only score low on the factor social integration, but 80% say that they did not participate in voluntary or association activities at university.

The Cluster 2 students are rather less involved in extracurricular activities. However, a third of this group went abroad for at least a semester, which is only second to Cluster 7.

### 3.2.3 Conclusions

While the existing contacts with other students are assessed rather satisfactory, they are obviously not actively sought out. Results point to a rather unsatisfactory private life, rather distracting than supporting in the studies. Only few students conduct extracurricular activities, maybe because the private life outside of university is too demanding, or because these activities are not experienced as supportive. However, the resources of this group allow many of them to go abroad to study.
This type is characterised by a great measure of insecurity. There is not too much educational basis to rely on, but it seems the challenge is not so much in the structural aspects of studying, but the rationale and the goals of studying at university: They are focused on the practical side of their field, which – at least in some fields – might not be what the university is offering.

3.3 Kandipalaute Cluster 3

3.3.1 Suggestions for names: The Unconnected, The Lost (Or Did Not Find Their Way Yet)

Core findings

Figure 10: Factor values for Cluster 3

Figure 11: Basic information on Cluster 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group size</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Swedish</th>
<th>Non-academic background</th>
<th>Average Age</th>
<th>Self-assessment “Top third of the year”</th>
<th>Self-assessment Probability of success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kandipalaute Cluster 3</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>26.99</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>27.05</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the smallest of the 8 cluster groups: only 8% belong to this type. It scores 5.2423 on the total value, which is the lowest value among the types. All factors score distinctly below average. Gender distribution is similar to the average, just as is the age. Swedish
speaking student and students with non-academic background are slightly underrepresented. The group scores significantly lower in their self-assessment of their performance in their previous study programme as well as in the current one.

This group is clearly not well adapted to university. It seems that they are rather unsatisfied, not only with their life at the university but also with their private life. This is true for study related issues (e.g. the openness of the teachers) and personal issues (e.g. whether their expectations were met). Health issues could be one of the reasons for their comparatively bigger problems, as this group has one of the lowest values on the answer category "I did not need support" regarding support with health issues.

3.3.2 Additional information

This group of students is rather not satisfied with any study related topic that the questionnaire rises (e.g. the good quality of teaching and teaching methods, as well as their own study efforts and self-organisation). Their answers also reflect a sense of being overwhelmed by the demands of studying: the effort per credit seems rather high, and they did not find enough support for organising their studies and other demands in their life. However, if asked for their opinion about issues of studying, this group has also nearly everywhere the highest value on "I cannot assess this statement". Only 4% assume that they belonged to the top third students in their Bachelor programme, and now, this group has the lowest value on the self-assessment of probability of success in their current study programme.

However, at the same time, they are similarly dissatisfied with their life in general: In comparison to the other cluster types, this group reports the lowest values on satisfaction and the highest on dissatisfaction with support by their circle of friends and their family and with their life in general (means: 80-82%, with 100% meaning "completely satisfied").

There are only 16% in this group, who say that they do not need support in health related issues – the second lowest score, after Cluster 5. In the other clusters, there are 23-38% of students who say that they do not need support in this regard. At the same time, 29% of the Cluster 3 students disagree or somewhat disagree with the assessment that there is sufficient support available for students with health problems at the university.

16% – more than double as many as on average of the students – report serious financial trouble (8% with serious financial problems, 7% who believe that there troubles might be so serious that they even have to drop out of university). The majority, two thirds of this group, finances its studies completely through student grant. Only 39% can fund their studies largely through work (on average, that is 50%), and for those, balancing job and studies seems to be more demanding than for the other clusters. Financial issues are an important reason for them not to go abroad (23%, which is the highest value compared to the other clusters), but more than half of this group (53%) state that they “cannot assess this statement” – which might mean that they never even thought about going abroad.

3.3.3 Conclusions

The data shows that this cluster possesses a less than ideal ability to cope with the academic challenges of studying at university, and that this is a big part of the troubles
that this group had at university. However, this finding should not be treated as a matter of lacking cognitive abilities. Not only do they show severe problems of different nature in their life outside of university. Apparently, for this group there were no alternative ways open to adapt and to learn how to deal with the demands of university: They were not able to utilise their interest in practical implementation of theory to help them in their studies. If they were looking for support at the university, they often felt that it was not sufficient. Others report that they “cannot assess” the offers the university has in store, which means that they could not find support or that the connection between the support offers and their problems is not clear to them. This adaptation type is rather not able to use their social contacts to improve their situation at university and in their studies. They do not feel comfortable at the university; it seems as if they also did not feel welcome.

3.4 Kandipalaute Cluster 4

Suggestions for names: The Mature Students, the No-nonsense-Students

3.4.1 Core findings

Figure 12: Factor values for Cluster 4
This adaptation type scores high, mostly clearly above average. The only exception is Social integration with below average values. In total, this type scores 7.5233.

Cluster 4 is the group with by far the highest percentage of students without academic background, at the same time the group with the highest average age (47% are over 31 years) and the lowest percentage in Swedish speaking students compared to the other clusters. Their self-assessment is above average. These students report a very supportive private life, but they are not well connected at the university. They are most satisfied with their study experience and especially with the support through teachers.

### 3.4.2 Additional information

51% with non-academic background, 47% are over 31 years old – this cluster is a cluster of non-traditional students, apparently, and they are very well adapted to university. 66% agree or somewhat agree with the statement “I received sufficient feedback from the teaching staff.” and even 78% with “The feedback I received from the teaching staff has helped me with my studies.”, for both the highest scores among the eight clusters.

For many kinds of support offers of the university, this group scores the highest or second highest rate (after Cluster 1) of persons who agree or at least somewhat agree that the support is sufficient. This refers to the items referring to “the organisation of my studies”, “problems encountered during the course of my studies”, “orientation in the course of studies”, “looking for orientation in professional life”. Aspects like socialising with other students, looking for accommodation or health problems are less important to them.

They often also score highest on the statement “I did not need support in this issue” – with the notable exemption of the item “There was sufficient support available for the preparation of the Bachelor thesis or final exam”, where they obviously sought out support.

They are rather critical about teamwork – they prefer to work alone and do rather not feel that they gain soft skills by teamwork. At the same time, diversity or different languages do not diminish teamwork results in their perspective, and they do not feel under pressure when teamwork is assessed or marked. This matches the low scores on social integration: Social integration happens outside of university, and they gain a lot of support from their friends and family. Their satisfaction with family and friends scores rather high: 85–87% (with 100% meaning “completely satisfied”). University – with students who are often much younger than this group – is not as important to them as a social context.
Students in this cluster are well organised and dedicated to their studies, but they very rarely go abroad for a semester (only 13% have this experience). They do not believe as strongly as other students that international experience is important for their future career. So apparently, they did not really consider a stay abroad, which is also reflected in a high score on “cannot assess” the financial burden of a stay abroad. They are more focused on a career in Finland and they weigh “completing the degree quickly” higher than abroad experience.

3.4.3 Conclusions
Cluster 4 students are well-organised, committed students who apparently know very well what they want to gain by a degree. They are able to study relatively late in their life since they have the support of their friends and family. They have very good experiences at university and feel exceptionally well supported by teaching staff, but are not interested in some aspects of university: like socialising with other students, or going abroad for a semester.

3.5 Kandipalaute Cluster 5
Suggestions for names: The Unfocused, “The Somewhats”

3.5.1 Core findings
Figure 14: Factor values for Cluster 5
This cluster scores highest on social integration (still within the middle third). On all other factors, they score average or below average, with a total value of 6.2619. Problematic might be their low values on the orientation factors, which cannot be counter-weighed by diligence, which also scores rather low. The low value on frame of mind means that the adaptation situation these students find themselves in is hurting them.

This is the cluster with the highest percentage of female students. The students are significantly younger than the average, and their performance self-assessment is lower than the average.

### 3.5.2 Additional information

54% of students of this cluster state that their financial situation is strained, which makes Cluster 5 one of the two biggest groups (together with Cluster 3) with serious financial problems. They rely heavily on student grants and housing supplements, which they need to complement by financial support of their parents and jobs. A third of this group reports international experience (a semester abroad), but 24% of this cluster (which is the highest percentage after Cluster 3) state that a stay abroad would have been difficult to finance.

The students in this cluster show rather low satisfaction levels with their private life, with support by family and circle of friends at 73-78% (with 100% meaning “completely satisfied”). At the same time, they are only “somewhat satisfied” with university: Almost two thirds of this group consider their expectations “somewhat” met, the teaching “somewhat” of high quality and they felt “somewhat” comfortable at the university. While the number of exams are considered rather high, the workload per credit point is considered to reflect their efforts realistically.

37% were engaged in volunteer work, which is one of the highest rates, together with cluster 1 and 7. However, these experiences seem to be less supportive for Cluster 5 students compared to the other two clusters.

These students are looking for support and feel they do not find it: When it comes to the questions about support offers, the cluster scores lowest on the answer options “I do not need support…” and they more often than not consider the support offers not sufficient.
3.5.3 Conclusions

The students of this cluster are in a rather bad situation, which is reflected by the low score on the factor frame of mind. The data suggests that they are rather unfocused when it comes to studying. Apparently, conflicts or problems in their private life contribute to this. However, it comes also with a rather critical perspective on study structures and offers of the university, despite the fact that many of these students are engaged in voluntary activities. They know a lot about the support offered by the university, but it is not meeting their needs. They feel only “somewhat” comfortable at university.

3.6 Kandipalaute Cluster 6

Suggestions for names: The Shy, the Introverted (apparently reflecting existing anecdotal experiences about “The Finns“ in Finnish higher education)

3.6.1 Core findings

Figure 16: Factor values for Cluster 6
Figure 17: Basic information on Cluster 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group size</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Swedish</th>
<th>Non-academic background</th>
<th>Average Age</th>
<th>Self-assessment “Top third of the year”</th>
<th>Self-assessment Probability of success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kandipalaute Cluster 6</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>27.97</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>27.05</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cluster performs on most of the factors within the average, but scores below average on both social factors (Social integration and Accepting assistance) and on Extraversion. Total value is 6.4528.

Cluster 6 has the highest percentage of male students and the second highest of non-academic background. Swedish speaking students are represented below average.

3.6.2 Additional information

As their self-assessment of their performance suggests, this group of students is relatively satisfied with topics related to study organisation and demands as well as the university’s support offers. They are among the groups with the highest values on the answer options “I did not need support.”. Feedback from teaching staff is considered only “somewhat” sufficient and also only “somewhat” helpful; also communication with staff is considered “somewhat” satisfying.

Compared to the other clusters, this group feels less satisfied with their private life (71-77%, with the highest value scored for “satisfied with their family life”).

What stands exceptionally for this group is the lowest participation in voluntary or association activities (86% do not participate in such activities) and the lowest scores for teamwork (78% prefer to work alone).

When asked, if the study programme offers enough possibilities to socialise with other students, this cluster answers in a very specific way: They agree less than the other clusters with the statement (only 32%). At the same time, the group scores very high for the answer options “I cannot assess this statement” (second highest value at 6%) and “I did not need…” (third highest value on 7%).

These students do not give great importance to gaining international experience (82% have not been abroad, which is the second highest value after Cluster 3): They answer to a very high degree that they cannot even assess the financial demands of a stay abroad, which might mean that they did not even think about it yet.

26% did not work during their studies, which is the highest value among the clusters. In this cluster, there is the highest percentage of students who rely completely on their parents’ financial support (7%), but overall, this group is rather not under financial duress.

These findings for voluntary activities, teamwork, socialising with other students and international experience as well as work are somewhat reflected in the low values for the
social factors. The low value on Extraversion might contribute to that: For introverted persons it is more difficult to get to know new people and open up to new situations. It seems that in this group, many try to actively avoid socially challenging situations.

3.6.3 Conclusions

This cluster consists of students, which are rather self-sufficient: Especially inside university, they succeed in their studies and feel that they do not need support. It seems that they perceive the social aspects of studying as less satisfying than the content aspects.

The results show that introverted students can be successful at Finnish universities. However, they also show that avoiding the social aspects of becoming an academic might be a disadvantage for the students: They miss out on experiences which might be of value for them in the future.

3.7 Kandipalaute Cluster 7

Suggestions for names: The Networkers (apparently reflecting existing anecdotal experiences about „The Swedes“ in Finnish higher education)

3.7.1 Core findings

Figure 18: Factor values for Cluster 7
With the exemption of Diligence, this cluster performs within or above the average on almost all the factors. Distinctive are the high values on Social integration and Extraver-
sion. Total value is 7.2102.

Cluster 7 is one of the biggest group of students. Students with academic background are overrepresented (lowest percentage for non-academic background), and they are the youngest of the eight clusters. While they assess their performance in their Bachelor programme lower than their peers do, they are very confident that they will succeed in their current programme.

### 3.7.2 Additional information

This group seems to be very satisfied with their life in general and with their life at the university especially. They enjoy strong support from and embeddedness in their private life (84-89%). The students feel comfortable at university (96% agree or somewhat agree). The remarkably high scores on participation in voluntary or association activities (highest value: 36%) and one of the highest scores for teamwork, especially when it means cooperating with friends (80% agree or somewhat agree), show that this group of students puts high emphasis on networking and not so much on concentrating on the study itself.

The cluster 7 students agree to the second highest degree (75%, after cluster 1) with the statement that there was sufficient support available to socialise with fellow students. But generally, they are only moderately satisfied with the support offered, having average results concerning all the support items, and using the answer ‘somewhat agree’ most frequently.

Many items reflect that studying for this group does not necessarily mean hard work: e.g. they only “somewhat” agree with the statement “I dedicated enough time to the required independent study” and they score rather low on the factor Diligence. Respondents of this group consider themselves “average students” (63%, highest value), but they are rather confident about study success in the current programme. One of the aspects that they seem to put more emphasis on is international experience: 34% have been abroad, which is the largest amount among the clusters.

47% work during the semester as well as during breaks (highest value). 53% state that “money is rather tight” (highest value), however, the number of students who suffer financially is below average.
3.7.3 Conclusions

Universities are clearly places to build networks for a future career, and especially so for this group. They come with a special ability: To network and socialise with other students.Apparently, this also helps them to succeed in their studies, and it helps them to be open for new experiences like the volunteer work or international experiences.

This group of students finds its way through the university well, and they do not seem to need special support. However, they also seem rather selective in what they want to learn in their time at university.

3.8 Kandipalaute Cluster 8

Suggestions for names: The “On their way to be securely established”

3.8.1 Core findings

Figure 20: Factor values for Cluster 8

![Cluster 8](image)

Figure 21: Basic information on Cluster 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group size</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Swedish</th>
<th>Non-academic background</th>
<th>Average Age</th>
<th>Self-assessment “Top third of the year”</th>
<th>Self-assessment Probability of success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kandipalaute Cluster 8</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>25,61</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>27,05</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This cluster scores well within the average on all factors. Diligence and Identification with the university are comparably high. Extraversion is one of the lowest values for this group. The total value is 7.2001, which is above average.

Female students are overrepresented and the age is well below average. Their self-assessment of their performance is above average, and they are very confident to be successful in their current study programme.

3.8.2 Additional information

Cluster 8 students can rely on a very supportive private life: Their family “supports and strengthens” them in their studies (81% agree with the statement), and private life (family as well as circle of friends) is considered as rather satisfactory (average 82-84%, with 100% “completely satisfactory”).

Next to the student grant, the financial support of the parents as well as jobs constitutes part of their income. 36% work only during breaks, which is the highest rate among the clusters. Overall, cluster 8 belongs to the clusters with no big financial issues.

At the university, they rather not participate in voluntary activities (only 20%). However, they feel that it was “easy to make contact with fellow students” during their studies (76% agree or somewhat agree).

Students are satisfied with the support by teaching staff: 68% agree or somewhat agree with the statement “Teaching staff is open to students' questions and concerns outside class and office hours.” When asked to assess if feedback by teaching staff is sufficient, they answer close to the average; however, those who did get feedback are more satisfied with it as helpful in their studies (67% agree or somewhat agree) than most other cluster (except cluster 1 and 4). They believe that they “dedicated enough time to the required independent study” (80% agree and somewhat agree), which is also reflected in the high factor value on Diligence.

They have a rather strong focus on Finland as their place to work in the future (76% agree or somewhat agree – even Cluster 4 reaches only 73%), which might be the reason why even though they feel that international experience is rather important for a professional career, a comparably low percentage of this group has had an experience abroad (28%). While they prefer to work alone (61% agree or somewhat agree), teamwork for them seems most rewarding if conducted in a group of friends (79%).

They are relatively satisfied with their studies and score highest on “somewhat agree” for “The skills I acquired in my education meet my expectations” and “I am satisfied with the teaching methods used”. The students feel comfortable at university (96% agree or somewhat agree).

3.8.3 Conclusions

Cluster 8 is a group of students, which can rely on a very supportive family and circle of friends. They also have no problem to find new persons at university. They are very focused on their studies and rather satisfied with their studies: over all they are rather satisfied with their teachers and the study and support structures. Most of them do not have any financial problems.
The cluster 8 students are rather young, and they seem to be rather reserved: not only introverted, but also not keen to expose themselves e.g. in activities at university.

4 Comparisons

4.1 Comparison with the German study

Generally, the data shows that Finnish universities are very different from German universities. Taking the idea of adaptation seriously means that students are influenced massively in their behaviour by the adaptation situation prepared by the university – comparing the students would then be less informative than comparing institutions: comparing their structures and processes, experiences and good practices.

However, there are some notable similarities and differences in the results of the cluster analysis: First of all, it seems that the social dimension of academia plays a much more important role at the Finnish universities than at German universities. That is true for the factors Extraversion and Accepting Assistance (which in the Finnish version also includes a good relationship to teaching staff), and at least partly for Social integration: It seems that while a good social integration contributes to satisfaction at German universities, in Finland, it helps also to be successful.

There are two adaptation types which are very similar between the Finnish and the German version: That is Cluster 1 (all factors above average) and Cluster 3 (all factors below average). Similar is also Cluster 4 (older students who are less well socially integrated without negative effects on their success in studying), and Cluster 2, who are characterised by a high practical orientation which in this case does not find a fitting place at university (overall a rather problematic adaptation situation).

Another two types also occur in the German version, but with very different quality of adaptation: Cluster 8 and 5. Curiously, also in the German version, these are clusters with above average rates of female students, and both show strikingly low values on the factor Frame of mind.

Similar to Cluster 5 there is also a type at German universities which is characterised by low values on the orientation factors, especially Expectations. In the German version, they are called the “Disenchanted”: students who find themselves disappointed by how they experience themselves at university. However, in the German context, this kind of adaptation seems to create better results than in Finland: The students score above average on the total value of the factors, while Cluster 5 scores below average.

---

4 In this context it has to be noted that in virtually any kind of comparison between men and women, women show lower values when it comes to issues of happiness, and at the same time higher values when it comes to depression or anxiety. This is also reflected in behaviour: women tend to go to the doctor or seek psychological treatment more often than men. Sometimes in psychological studies a “female scale” is applied to normalise the female and the male results. However, for the German version we also found that women are more burdened while they study: e.g. they have more often non-academic background, have more financial problems, more family responsibilities and are less free in their choice of the place to study.
There also seems to be a German version of Cluster 8, which is characterised by high values on the academic factors, especially on diligence. However, in the German context, this cannot compensate for the low values on the orientation factors, while Cluster 8 reaches a total value above average. In other words: High affinity to learning and studying is not enough at a German university, while the Finnish university offers a framework which enables students concentrate on studying, even if it is not clear yet to what end.

What we cannot find at the Finnish universities are the German types of the “Pragmatists” (students with high practical orientation in a good overall adaptation situation) and the “Swim-Alongs” (student with below average values on all factors except for Frame of mind). At the same time, adaptation types like cluster 6 and 7 could not be found at the German universities.

4.2 Comparison among universities

Figure 22: Distribution of the Clusters at the Universities (table)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kandipalautaue Cluster</th>
<th>Kandipalautaue Cluster 1</th>
<th>Kandipalautaue Cluster 2</th>
<th>Kandipalautaue Cluster 3</th>
<th>Kandipalautaue Cluster 4</th>
<th>Kandipalautaue Cluster 5</th>
<th>Kandipalautaue Cluster 6</th>
<th>Kandipalautaue Cluster 7</th>
<th>Kandipalautaue Cluster 8</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Jyväskylä</td>
<td>N 106</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Lapland</td>
<td>N 17%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Oulu</td>
<td>N 89%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>112%</td>
<td>104%</td>
<td>702</td>
</tr>
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<td>University of Tampere</td>
<td>N 6%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Jyväskylä</td>
<td>N 13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Tampere</td>
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<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Helsinki</td>
<td>N 12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>128%</td>
<td>136%</td>
<td>133%</td>
<td>139%</td>
<td>159%</td>
<td>1034</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lappeenranta University</td>
<td>N 39%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>191%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aalto University</td>
<td>N 52%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>567%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Vaasa</td>
<td>N 36%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Eastern</td>
<td>N 76%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>498%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>N 15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Turku</td>
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<td>93%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>88%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abo Akademi University</td>
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<td>24%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>249%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of the Arts</td>
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<td>3%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanken University</td>
<td>N 18%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>132%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N 816%</td>
<td>669%</td>
<td>466%</td>
<td>700%</td>
<td>705%</td>
<td>637%</td>
<td>856%</td>
<td>851%</td>
<td>5700%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kandipalautaue Adaptation Types 2014

27
Figure 23: Distribution of the Clusters at the Universities (graph)

4.3 Comparison among fields of study

Figure 24: Distribution of the Clusters among the fields of study (table)
Figure 25: Distribution of the Clusters among the fields of study (graph)

Adaptation types per field of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field of Study</th>
<th>Cl1</th>
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