



**EMPLOYER'S ATTRACTIVENESS FOR FOREIGN EMPLOYEES:  
THE CASE OF LUT UNIVERSITY IN FINLAND**

Lappeenranta–Lahti University of Technology LUT

Master's Programme in International Business and Entrepreneurship

Master's thesis

2022

Nelli Laihanen

Examiners: 1<sup>st</sup> examiner: Professor Henri Hakala

2<sup>nd</sup> examiner: Post-Doctoral Researcher Ekaterina Albats

## ABSTRACT

Lappeenranta–Lahti University of Technology LUT  
LUT School of Business and Management  
Business Administration

Nelli Laihanen

### **Employer's attractiveness for foreign employees: the case of LUT University in Finland**

Master's thesis

2022

92 pages, 6 figures, 6 tables and 4 appendices

Examiners: Professor Henri Hakala, Post-Doctoral Researcher Ekaterina Albats

**Keywords:** employer attractiveness, employer branding, employee retention, employee engagement

Every organization wants to be an attractive employer. It is good for employers to know the factors explaining why job seekers want to work for company. With that information, the workplace can develop an employer brand for itself, which can be used in the marketing of open jobs. The organization must also know the ways how it can keep the most skilled employees in the company and prevent the skills from going to a competitor. This study examines the employer attractiveness of the Finnish LUT University for foreign employees and the retention of its employees. Therefore, the work is limited to the employees of the case company in question and to the employees who have moved from abroad.

The empirical part of the work focused on a case company as this work examined the attractiveness of the Finnish LUT University as an employer and its retention power of company's employees. The theoretical part is focused on the concepts related to the attractiveness of the employer and employee retention. Based on these, the research questions for the qualitative study were created. 20 LUT University's employees who had moved to Finland from abroad participated in the study.

The interviews showed that LUT University's biggest attractiveness factors are its international atmosphere and a good working community, the employee value propositions given to the university's employees, the know-how prevalent in the working community, and the university's success in various rankings. The location of the university was also an

attractive factor for some participants. However, the interviewees found it difficult to describe the university's employer brand. When it comes to employee retention, the biggest factors are the consideration of the well-being of the employees, the freedom given to employees to realize themselves through work, the organizational culture created to LUT University, and in general the support provided by the university in the form of both material and non-material support. Based on the results of the research, the university is recommended to increase the employer's international visibility so that the awareness of the international employer and the benefits it offers to its employees would increase.

## TIIVISTELMÄ

Lappeenrannan–Lahden teknillinen yliopisto LUT

LUT-kauppakorkeakoulu

Kauppätieteet

Nelli Laihanen

### **Työnantajan houkuttelevuus ulkomaalaisille työntekijöille: Suomen LUT-yliopiston tapaus**

Kauppätieteiden pro gradu -tutkielma

2022

92 sivua, 6 kuvaa, 6 taulukkoa ja 4 liitettä

Tarkastaja(t): Professori Henri Hakala, Tutkijatohtori Ekaterina Albats

Avainsanat: työnantajan houkuttelevuus, työnantajamaine, työntekijöiden säilyttäminen, työntekijöiden sitoutuminen

Jokainen organisaatio haluaa olla houkutteleva työnantaja. Työnantajien on hyvä tietää ne tekijät, jotka selittävät, miksi työnhakijat haluavat työskennellä yrityksessä. Tämän tiedon avulla työpaikka voi kehittää itselleen työnantajabrändin, jota voidaan käyttää avoimien työpaikkojen markkinoinnissa. Organisaation tulee myös tietää, miten se voi pitää osaavimmat työntekijät yrityksessä ja estää osaamisen siirtymisen kilpailijalle. Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan suomalaisen LUT-yliopiston työnantaja houkuttelevuutta ulkomaalaisille työntekijöille ja työntekijöiden pysyvyyttä. Työ rajoittuu siis kyseessä olevan tapausyhtiön työntekijöihin ja ulkomailta muuttaneisiin työntekijöihin.

Työn empiirinen osa keskittyi tapausyritykseen, sillä tässä työssä tarkasteltiin suomalaisen LUT-yliopiston houkuttelevuutta työnantajana ja yrityksen työntekijöiden sitouttamista. Teoreettinen osa keskittyy työnantajan houkuttelevuuteen ja työntekijän säilyttämiseen liittyviin käsitteisiin. Näiden pohjalta laadittiin laadullisen tutkimuksen tutkimuskysymykset. Tutkimukseen osallistui 20 ulkomailta Suomeen muuttanutta LUT-yliopiston työntekijää.

Haastattelut osoittivat, että LUT-yliopiston suurimmat vetovoimatekijät ovat kansainvälinen ilmapiiri ja hyvä työyhteisö, yliopiston työntekijöille annetut työntekijän arvoehdotukset,

työyhteisössä vallitseva osaaminen sekä yliopiston menestyminen erilaisissa rankingissa. Myös yliopiston sijainti oli houkutteleva tekijä joillekin osallistujille. Haastateltavien oli kuitenkin vaikea kuvailla yliopiston työnantajabrändiä. Työntekijöiden säilyttämisessä suurimmat tekijät ovat työntekijöiden hyvinvoinnin huomioiminen, työntekijöille annettu vapaus toteuttaa itseään työn kautta, LUT-yliopistolle luotu organisaatiokulttuuri ja ylipäättään yliopiston antama tuki sekä aineellisen että ei-aineellisen tuen muodossa. Yliopistoa suositellaan tutkimuksen tulosten perusteella lisäämään työnantajan kansainvälistä näkyvyyttä, jotta tietoisuus kansainvälisestä työnantajasta ja sen työntekijöilleen tarjoamista eduista lisääntyisi.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The long journey has finally come to an end and with a smile on my face I can say and sigh, I DID IT! It wasn't an easy journey but then it wouldn't have challenged me enough. There have been many tears and frustrations along the way but after each collapse I have stood stronger. To be honest, I am relieved that this chapter of my life comes to an end, and I can focus 100% on myself again.

Many thanks to my both supervisors Henri Hakala and Ekaterina (Katja) Albats. You have been a great help! Special thanks to you, Katja, for your invaluable advice and development ideas. It was always a pleasure talking with you. I wish you both all the best.

Also, thanks to my dear parents for their endless support and caring for me. Mom and dad, you have always shown me unconditional love and wanted only the best for me. And mom, thank you for being the 3rd examiner of my thesis. I really appreciate your persistence.

In Motala, Sweden, 8.12.2022

Nelli Laihanen

## Table of contents

Abstract

Acknowledgements

1	Introduction.....	10
1.1	Background of the study.....	11
1.2	Research question and the objectives of the study .....	12
1.3	Theoretical framework and key concepts.....	13
1.4	Limitations.....	16
1.5	Structure of the thesis .....	16
2	Theoretical background.....	18
2.1	Employer reputation.....	18
2.2	Employer branding .....	20
2.2.1	Employee value proposition.....	23
2.3	Employee retention.....	24
2.3.1	Employee engagement .....	26
2.3.2	Social support.....	29
2.4	Organizational culture .....	30
2.5	Summary of the theoretical insights .....	32
3	Research design and methodology.....	35
3.1	Research design.....	35
3.2	Data collection method.....	36
3.3	Selection of interviewees and interview process.....	37
3.4	Data analysis method.....	40
3.5	Reliability and validity .....	41
4	Empirical findings.....	43
4.1	Employer attractiveness .....	44
4.2	Employee retention.....	52
4.3	Employee engagement .....	57
5	Discussion and conclusions .....	69
5.1	Discussion .....	69

5.2	Answering to research questions .....	76
5.3	Conclusions .....	81
5.4	Practical implications .....	82
5.5	Future research suggestions.....	82
	List of references .....	84

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1. Interview questions

Appendix 2. Coding of the work

Appendix 3. Job advertisement of LUT University for junior research position in supply management and international business

Appendix 4. Job advertisement of LUT University for junior researcher in strategic finance



**Figures**

Figure 1. Theoretical framework

Figure 2. Structure of the thesis

Figure 3. Three-step process of employer branding

Figure 4. Links between different concepts

Figure 5. LUT employee value propositions

Figure 6. The researcher's interpretation of factors affecting attractiveness and employee retention

**Tables**

Table 1. The main concepts of the work with explanations

Table 2. Psychological factors affecting employee engagement

Table 3. Information about the interviewees

Table 4. Characteristics of LUT as an employer

Table 5. Factors affecting positively and negatively the attractiveness of LUT University as an employer

Table 6. Factors affecting positively and negatively the retention of employees at LUT University

# 1 Introduction

Today, companies strive to compete for the most skilled employees by offering an attractive work environment and various working opportunities. Employers should be aware of the factors that can help them attract employees to the company. This way they can differentiate themselves from other competing employers. In addition to attracting employees to the employment relationship, these relationships must also be taken care of in order to keep the talent in-house. Employers also need to know what the factors are to retain company's employees as employees form the competitive advantage of the organization.

In the media and in the public discussion, the growing competition of companies for skilled employees and retaining them has also been highlighted. According to a study, Large business survey 2021, conducted by Aalto University professor Pekka Mattila's team, up to 85.6 percent of large Finnish companies thought that employers in their field fight hard for good employees and for special talent. Companies have also realized that it is no longer so easy to engage employees. Solutions are being sought for this through, for example, rewarding the employee and making work meaningful. (Kallio 2022) Also, the Finnish business newspaper Kauppalehti wrote in a collaboration with IMAGO, a coaching service offered by the Finnish TE-service to develop company's employer image, that up to 40 percent of company employees are thinking about changing jobs in the next few months (Kauppalehti 2022).

Often you can hear the saying that employees do the workplace and that quality of employees' matter (Verna & Ahmad 2016). For a company, it is a setback if an employee wants to switch jobs to another company, especially if it is a competing company (Tanwar & Prasad 2016). The numbers described in paragraph above are large, which is why the researcher considers this thesis topic important, and its outcome can be considered valuable and useful for the case company. Companies need to understand how they can attract skilled employees from the labour market and do their best to keep the employee satisfied with the work through both tangible and intangible employee value propositions.

## 1.1 Background of the study

The employer brand is important as it seeks to attract skilled workers to apply for jobs. It also shows to job seekers how employers differentiate themselves from other employers offering same positions. (Verna & Ahmad 2016) Among many job seekers, the employer brand matters when applying for jobs but few employers are aware of the reasons why job seekers want to apply for jobs in their company (Pritchard 2014). One might also think that it is important for companies to understand what attracts job seekers and what are the company's competitive factors in the employer market.

This work is done for LUT University (Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology LUT) that is a university located in Lappeenranta, Finland. The university also has a campus in Lahti, and regional units in Mikkeli and Kouvola. Finland is in the northern hemisphere, which offers its residents four different seasons from bright spring and summer days to dark and cold autumn and winter days. The university began operations in 1969 and provides education and research in technology and economics. The university provides an international environment for its 7,500 students and experts. (LUT University 2022a) According to LUT University's HR department, the organization currently has 325 employees whose citizenship is not Finnish. LUT University has a strategy for 2030 that allows members of its community to feel like they are trailblazers and do science with purpose, meaning that they can bring solutions to companies to do business in a more sustainable way (LUT University 2022b).

Universities are international employers who compete for talented researchers. After discussing with LUT University's HR representatives, it turned out that it would be interesting to find out what makes LUT University an attractive employer. The university also wants to know how they can retain their employees who have come to work in Finland from abroad. In particular, the university wants to find out why foreign researchers want to work at LUT University and what makes it an attractive employer. It is important to research this topic because it is good for the organization to identify the reasons why people want to

come to work for them. Another important aspect of this research is that it is also good for the employer to understand how it can retain its skilled employees and how employee turnover can be diminished.

## 1.2 Research question and the objectives of the study

Since the representatives of the human resource side of LUT University wanted to understand why people from abroad want to work at LUT University, i.e., what is the attractiveness of that university and the employer, the main research question was formulated as follows:

***How does LUT University attract employees coming from outside of Finland?***

The answers to the main research question are obtained by researching the theory about employer reputation and employer branding and the factors that attract employees and by combining my findings with the interviews of LUT employees (research & teaching personnel) who have moved to Finland from abroad.

Sub- research questions that support the main question are:

- 1. How does LUT University engage its employees?***
- 2. How does the employer's reputation effect employee retention and commitment?***

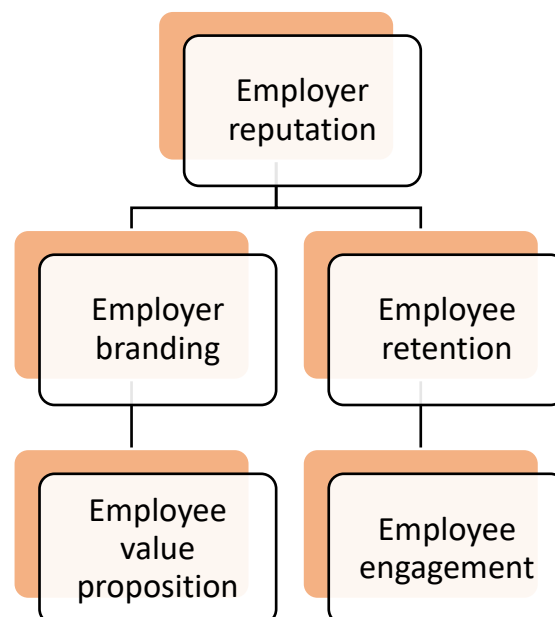
The first sub-research question seeks to address the LUT University-related factors that could further engage employees in the organization's operations. This can be influenced, for example, by the integration of LUT University employees into Finland and into the

university itself. Events during the employment relationship can also be important in terms of commitment. The purpose of the second sub-research question is to find answers whether the reputation of the employer is important in the fact that employees remain in the organization.

### 1.3 Theoretical framework and key concepts

Over the years the phenomenon of employer reputation has been researched and the topic has been linked to employee retention. The previous literature helps the researcher to form a theoretical framework on concepts that should be focused on when thinking of case organization LUT University's employer reputation and how they manage to retain employees.

The following figure (Figure 1) shows the theoretical framework of the work, in which the main concepts of the work are summarized.



**Figure 1.** Theoretical framework

The main concepts of the study are briefly explained in the following table (Table 1).

Concept	Explanation
Employer reputation	The employer reputation is important both in attracting qualified employees to work for the company and in keeping them in working for the company (Nguyen et al. 2021).
Employer branding	Through employer branding, a company communicates its employee value proposition to its employees and job seekers. Employer branding aims to create an attractive image of an employer. (Singh 2021; Leekha Chhabra & Sharma 2014)
Employee value proposition (EVP)	Employee value proposition (EVP) refers to the value an employee experiences when working for a company. EVP can also be defined as compensation, either tangible or intangible, provided by a company for the employee's contribution to the company as a skill and knowledge. Companies that fail to create their own employee value proposition will not be able to attract or retain a workforce. (Arasanmi & Krishna 2019; Browne 2012)
Employee retention	Retention of employees can be said to occur when employees are encouraged to stay in the company for a longer period of time. It is important for a company to understand the reasons why its employees want to work for the company but in the same way, it is important to understand the reasons why employees choose to change employers. (Kamalaveni et al. 2019; Tanwar & Prasad 2016)
Employee engagement	Employee engagement can be seen as a combination of employee's commitment to the company and its values, and at the same time as willingness to help co-workers. Through engagement, employees feel a passion for their job and perform excellently in the job assigned to them. (Torrington et al. 2011)

**Table 1.** The main concepts of the work with explanations

When reading the literature on employer attractiveness and reputation, same concepts seem to emerge in research. Both employer reputation and employer branding seem to be the main concepts when it comes to exploring employers' attractiveness among job seekers. Employer branding is said to link two concepts - branding and human resources, as with the help of employer branding the company promotes itself as a possible employer as well as a better alternative to other competing employers. Employer branding is even seen as a success factor in competition between employers and helps engage both existing and new employees. (Gilani & Cunningham 2017) Companies have paid more attention to employer branding as they are also willing to retain their skilled employees (employee retention) and acquire more talented people to work for them (Singh 2021). The theory part has two main focuses - how employers brand themselves to job seekers, i.e., how they attract job seekers to apply to the company, and the second part deals with employers' retention ability, i.e., how they can keep talented employees working in the company.

The aim of the study is also to look at the effect of an employer's reputation on employee retention. Employee retention has also been a well-researched topic in recent years, as companies want to benefit from their most qualified employees and retain high-quality skills in-house, as employees are important part of company's resources. Literature has also highlighted the role of internal marketing of a company in relation to work, as it affects employee engagement with the company and employees can be seen as the company's stakeholders. Internal marketing can be seen as actions in marketing to employees within the company that they effectively carry out company's strategies (Ambler & Barrow 1996). The employee value proposition (EVP) is also reviewed in this work. It is perceived to play an important role regarding the results, because with it the employer attracts the employee to work, i.e., tells what it offers the employee in exchange for the work done (Ariyanto & Kustini 2021). The EVP thus also plays a role in retaining the employee in the company, meaning that the company has also delivered the given value promise.

## 1.4 Limitations

The first limitation is that this is a single case study conducted among the employees of LUT University. The interview part of the thesis focuses to study the experiences of employees who have moved to Finland from abroad, because the desire is to find out what is the attraction of the university as an employer.

Another limitation of the work is that the research results cannot be fully generalized because the interview questions are aimed at foreign employees of a specific company. The experiences of the interviewees are also personal. The work therefore does not generally look at what factors attract employees to work in companies. In the results, it should also be noted that only 20 employees have been interviewed for the work, so the answers cannot be generalized too much, and people's experiences and feelings vary greatly.

## 1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of five different parts (Figure 2). The first section is a presentation of the thesis, in which the author briefly reviews how the thesis has been done. The second section goes through the theory related to employer attractiveness as well as employee retention. In the third paragraph, the employee introduces the research methodology of the work and how the interviews were conducted. The fourth section reviews the interviews in the study, and the final, fifth section reviews the author's discussion and conclusions on the topic and the answers to research questions are being presented. Practical implications are also discussed as well as future research suggestions.



Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Background of the study</li><li>• Research questions</li><li>• Theoretical framework</li><li>• Limitations</li></ul>
Theoretical framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employer attractiveness</li><li>• Employee retention</li></ul>
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentation of research method</li><li>• Data collection method</li><li>• Presentation of interview process</li><li>• Data analysis method</li><li>• Reliability and validity</li></ul>
Empirical findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The views of the interviewees on the attractiveness of LUT University as an employer and the retention of employees</li></ul>
Discussion and conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion of research results</li><li>• Answering to research questions</li><li>• Conclusions</li><li>• Practical implications</li><li>• Future research suggestions</li></ul>

**Figure 2.** Structure of the thesis

## 2 Theoretical background

Companies aim to be attractive employers with the aim of hiring qualified employees. Recruiting can be defined as ‘*organisational activities that affect the number and type of applicants who apply for an open position*’. (Sivertzen et al. 2013, 474) Nowadays, talented employees have a lot of job options, and at the same time employers face challenges in attracting these employees and keeping the talent in the company (Verna & Ahmad 2016). How then would the companies succeed in this? This section looks at theories related to employer reputation, employer branding and employee retention. These three concepts form the main concepts under which the researcher has gathered information on other issues affecting on them. Through theories, the researcher forms an understanding of what factors affect on employer’s reputation and how employers are able to retain their employees in the company.

### 2.1 Employer reputation

The employer reputation is important both in attracting qualified employees to work for the company and in keeping them in working for the company (Nguyen et al. 2021). Employer reputation can be even said to be one of the most important things affecting on attracting talented people to apply for vacant positions. Companies with a good employer reputation have easier to attract, recruit and retain employees (Benitez et al. 2020). Employer reputation, which is also known as organizational attractiveness, can be seen as a result of the signals given by the company, on the basis of which various stakeholders have formed their perceptions of the company. In general, employees of a company with a good reputation as an employer are more committed to work. They also strive to do their best so that the company performs as well as possible. (Dögl & Holtbrügge 2014)

In general, in addition to creating a good reputation, a company should also maintain it and promote it (Joo & Mclean 2006). Perceived reputation is subjective because it is based on an individual’s own perception (Verčič & Ćorić 2018). However, it is useful for companies

to understand the factors that influence an applicant's decision to apply for a job at that company, as these can be used to create increasingly effective job ads (Alniaçık & Alniaçık 2012). According to Backhaus et al. (2002) job seekers tend to apply for a job in a company whose values match the job seeker's own ones, and employees experience a sense of oneness with the company. According to research, the company's organizational image has also been seen as attractive to job seekers. An organizational image refers to the general impressions of a company by outsiders, and it is said to consist of knowledge, beliefs, and feelings a person has about a company. (Backhaus et al. 2002)

Job seekers may use a company's reputation as a source of information when thinking about jobs to apply for and when evaluating workplace working conditions (Sivertzen et al. 2013). It is important to distinguish a company's reputation from that of an employer because they are two different things. The employer's reputation refers more to the image of the company as an employer than just the usual reputation, such as its financial performance (Kanar et al. 2015). Employer reputation can also be seen as workplace reputation, as it tells how it is to work for a particular company and how the employer treats its employees (Benitez et al. 2020).

The company is able to utilize its employer reputation in developing the employer brand but in this case the company must be aware of the factors that job seekers value in the company as an employer. The better beliefs job seekers have about a company as an employer, the more they apply for jobs in such companies. There are different ways in which benefits can be classified, such as operational benefits (employee development opportunities), financial benefits (employee pay), or it can also be psychological (a job is perceived as a nice and/or innovative place to work). Of these three, the operational as well as the financial benefit can be seen as one. Also, as mentioned earlier, employees tend to apply for jobs in companies whose values match those of their own. In addition to this, they want to apply to a company where they can be themselves as well as be allowed to express themselves through work. (Reis et al. 2017)

Different characteristics affect how a job seeker perceives the attractiveness of an employer. Qualities are job seeker's personal experiences, and those vary between companies. Alniaçık & Alniaçık (2012) conducted research where they measured different factors that can have effect on company's employer attractiveness. They used six different employer characteristics as measures of attractiveness: social value, market value, economic value, application value, cooperation value, and working environment. The most important characteristic among the respondents was the social value brought by the company as an employer, and this characteristic was considered more important among the female respondents. Instead, the market value of the company was considered the least significant factor when considering the attractiveness of the employer. The dimension of social value included the following areas: gaining work experience, working in a company is perceived as meaningful, the employee feels accepted in the community, is valued, and has developed a good relationship with supervisors, the work is rewarded, they feel safe, and management recognizes the work done. (Alniaçık & Alniaçık 2012)

There is a lack of information in the literature about how job seekers search for information about an employer's reputation. It could be assumed that job seekers look for information on the internet or make use of social media platforms, such as LinkedIn, which is based on growing work networks. They can also ask from the existing employees their preferences.

## 2.2 Employer branding

Employers compete for employees due to a lack of skilled workers in the labour market. As a result, the concept of employer branding has emerged as one of the HR strategies of companies. The purpose of employer branding is to attract new employees and retain the existing ones. The goal of employer branding is to create a perception for job seekers of a company where its managers put effort in the well-being and development of the employees, and in good management practices. (Verna & Ahmad 2016) Employer branding aims to create an attractive image of an employer that is also called as employer attractiveness. Through the employer attractiveness, the employee can see in one's mind the benefits one can receive while working for the company. The purpose of the dimension is thus to

communicate to the employee the value proposition offered by the company. (Leekha Chhabra & Sharma 2014)

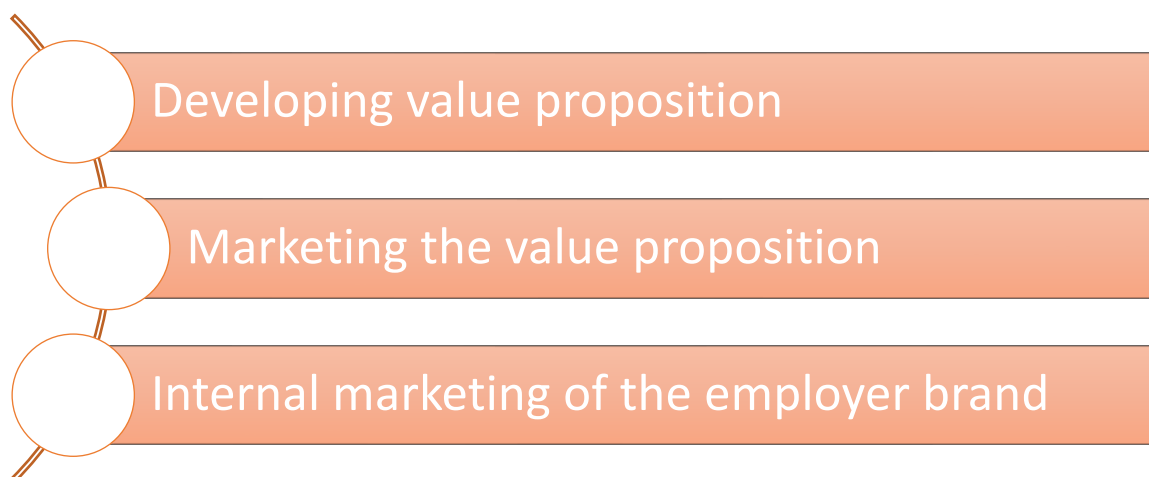
In its simplest form, employer branding can be defined by seeing the company as the best workplace from the point of view of both existing employees and job seekers. Through employer branding, a company communicates its employee value proposition to its employees and job seekers. (Singh 2021) Employer branding is used to engage the employees in company's strategy and culture (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004). An important element of employer branding is the differentiation of a company from other competitors and what different it offers to an employee's employment relationship compared to other companies. These areas can be, for example, high pay, good employment benefits, flexible working hours, the atmosphere created by the company in the workplace, good career development opportunities or job security in general. (Torrington et al. 2011)

Building a successful employer brand strategy is intended to form some theme that the company's current employees will pass on, about what it is like to work in the company. This strategy consists of three different steps. In the first step, the strategy shapes and strengthens the company's public image of its corporate culture, working methods, management styles and growth opportunities. In the second step, the company combines its employer brand with the company brand, and in the third step, the company always monitors that the employer brand it created is maintained high both among existing employees within the company and outside the company. After these steps the company encourages the potential job candidates to apply for vacant positions in the company. (Reihlen & Werr 2012) A company's employer brand should consist of three dimensions, which are consistency according to the company's realities, it should be different from the employer brand of competing employers, and the employer brand should attract the target audience (Verna & Ahmad 2016).

A big part of attracting employees to a company is that the company implements employer branding. Companies engaged in employer branding are said to seek to engage their employees, and in particular the head, heart, and soul of their employees, in the operations

of the company. In general, companies that engage in employer branding and are active in internal communications are companies that are rewarded as the best places to work. (Verčič 2021) Employer brand can be seen as company's employer identity. Many employers are not aware of how outsiders see the company and what perceptions they have of the company. Usually those are formed by personal experiences or knowledge about the company. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004; Pritchard 2014)

Employer branding can be seen as a three-step process and these three steps are shown in the figure below (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Three-step process of employer branding (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004)

In the first phase the company develops their value proposition which tells what it is offering for its employees. This dimension includes for example information about the organizational culture that is emerging in the company, management style, what kind of qualities the current employees possess and company's current employment image. The purpose of the value proposition is to tell its current and new employees what the company is offering for them. The second phase is about marketing the value proposition to targeted potential job candidates, and the third phase is about marketing the employer brand to the employees in the company. The third step is important because it allows the company to communicate to employees the promise it made during the recruitment phase. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004)

The concept of internal marketing is also linked to the employer branding. According to the concept of internal marketing, the company's employees are the company's first market area, where employees are seen as "internal customers" and vacancies are offered as "internal products". Thus, the vacancies offered must also attract, develop, and motivate employees, and at the same time meet the work needs of these internal customers. (Verna & Ahmad 2016) When the company's own employees, i.e., internal customers, are satisfied, it is easier for the company to start marketing its employer brand to external job seekers (Ahmed & Rafiq 2003). Internal marketing, on the other hand, can also be seen as actions in which the company communicates to its employees in some way the company's values, mission, vision, culture, objectives, or what it aims for with its actions. Through such actions, the company seeks to ensure that its employees understand the purpose of their work and why it is significant. This kind of activity can also have an impact on engaging employees. (Martyn Basset Associates 2021)

### 2.2.1 Employee value proposition

Employee value proposition (EVP) refers to the value an employee experiences when working for a company. EVP can also be defined as compensation, either tangible or intangible, provided by a company for the employee's contribution to the company as a skill and knowledge, and it can be seen as an employee-centred approach. The purpose of EVP is to set out the reasons why an employee makes the decision to engage to a company. It should identify the company's unique qualities in terms of staffing and the company's commitment to it. These can include for example supporting employee growth and job recognition. Companies need to consider their workforce in both the aging and younger generations and adapt their methods to retain talent. Companies that fail to create their own employee value proposition will not be able to attract or retain a workforce. (Arasanmi & Krishna 2019; Browne 2012) EVP has an effect on employee's personal feelings towards belonging to the company but this of course requires that the company maintains its EVP, so that it has an effect on renewing employee's devotion to the company (Human resource management international digest 2020a). EVP's purpose is also to define the essence of the company, its uniqueness and what it stands for (Pawar & Charak 2015).

Company's employee value proposition can be measured from five different perspectives. These are reward, opportunity, organization, work, and people. Reward refers to a recompense given by a company for work done by an employee, which may be, for example, salary, insurance, or other employment benefits. Opportunities refer to the different opportunities offered by a company, such as applying for different positions. Organization refers to a company culture or a specific industry where employees see themselves working. Work refers to work done in a company that may meet the desired of employees, and lastly, people that refer to the employees of the company, describing the overall relationship and working atmosphere between the employees, and its potential impact on the culture formed in the company. These factors can also be considered the biggest influencers when an employee is considering a potential future employer. (Ariyanto & Kustini 2021) Other factors that affect company's EVP are generally company's attractiveness, its responsibility and respect towards society, and how it takes into consideration the work-life balance of its employees and provides options for that (Bell 2005).

EVP can be considered as a strategic tool in retaining the employees in the organisation, as it helps a company to identify its employee engagement and retention strategies. It also aims to maintain a balance between the employee performance and what the company gives to its employees as a counterweight, so both parties of the employment need to be conscious what is expected from one another. It is obvious that companies that implement a good EVP strategy differentiate themselves from competing employers. (Arasanmi & Krishna 2019)

## 2.3 Employee retention

Employees are important resources for companies, and they form a competitive advantage for the company when employees are made up of skilled individuals. For a company to remain competitive, it is not enough that it not only attracts talented employees to work for it, but it must also retain its employees and their skills in-house. (Kossivi et al. 2016) However, companies cannot completely prevent employees from leaving the organization,



but the aim would be to keep employee turnover rate low and controllable (Rombaut & Guerry 2020).

In addition to gain a competitive advantage through company's employees, it can be said that companies even differentiate themselves from others with talented employees (Schlechter et al. 2014). It is also seen that common job satisfaction can affect on retention of the employee, and it can be classified into three different groups: intrinsic, extrinsic, and total. An employee is perceived to be intrinsically satisfied when one sees the outcome of the work without a reward, whereas in extrinsic satisfaction the employee is rewarded. (Bigliardi et al. 2012)

According to Cloutier et al. (2015), employee retention starts already from the orientation. Employees who stay in the company are said to be committed to the company, they value a sense of membership in the company and want to do their best to make the company success (Kyndt et al. 2009). Retention of employees can be said to occur when employees are encouraged to stay in the company for a longer period or until the end of a project, for example (Kamalaveni et al. 2019). It is important for a company to understand the reasons why its employees want to work for the company but in the same way, it is important to understand the reasons why employees choose to change employers. To this end, the company should create a retention plan that lists the various reasons why an employee has ended up changing jobs and also the positive reasons why employees still want to work in the company. (Tanwar & Prasad 2016)

According to Cloutier et al. (2015) different strategies in employee retention are an important part of organization and their operations, as those are aligned with the company's vision, mission, values, and policies. In order to engage employees in the company's operations and in the above-mentioned areas, management communication must be effective. Without effective commitment of the company's employees to the company, employee turnover is high and this in turn is reflected in the company's increased need for recruitment, which in turn is out of the company's core business. Cloutier et al. (2015) also noted that in addition to engaging employees in company's vision, mission, values, and policies, it is important for

companies to foster clear and positive communication. It is also important to promote the diversity of the company, assessing if job candidates fit the company and that they hire the right persons, and lastly that employees are being encouraged to train and develop themselves. (Cloutier et al. 2015)

Human resource management (HRM) plays a role in retaining employees in a company. HRM has different definitions and can be broadly described as any way of managing people in a company. (Beardwell & Claydon 2007) HRM is about reconciling two pieces - meeting both the requirements of the organization and the needs of the individual employee. HRM can be classified into two different groups: hard or soft. Hard HRM aims to achieve more financial goals and employees are seen more as company's resource while soft HRM is more person-orientated where the employee is integrated in the company through trust, commitment, and communication. (Beardwell & Holden 2001) Talent management theory can be linked to HRM. According to it, the company ensures that its employees are ready to perform their job duties and at the same time maintains the development of the employees. At the same time, talent management brings added value to the company and drive the company's business further. (Reis et al. 2021; Verna & Ahmad 2016) Human resources management is not only strategies built for the needs of the HR department. It also includes the organization's supervisors, whose responsibility it is to take care of employees within the framework of HRM strategies. According to Bibi et al. (2018) research, supervisor support has a positive effect on an employee's decision to remain at the company (Bibi et al. 2018). Perceived supervisor support can have a positive effect on the employee's belief in one's own skills, which can also improve work performance (Human resource management international digest 2020b).

### 2.3.1 Employee engagement

Once a company has successfully recruited new employees into the company, they should be engaged to the company as soon as possible so that they can be retained in company's operations and possible employee turnovers can be avoided (Pritchard 2014). Employee engagement can be seen as a combination of employee's commitment to the company and

its values, and at the same time as willingness to help co-workers. Through engagement, employees feel a passion for their job and perform excellently in the job assigned to them. (Torrington et al. 2011) Some researchers have also found that employee engagement has an effect on employee performance, the success of a company, and contributes to its financial performance (Saks 2006). An employee's engagement can also be defined as a psychological commitment to one's own work, and where the employee, through his or her own behaviour and intellectual commitment, works towards the company's goals (Ajayi et al. 2017).

When employees are engaged to the company, both productivity and moral are at a higher level. Several factors have been identified affecting to employee engagement, such as interest of top management towards employees and their well-being, career opportunities, and whether the work is challenging or not. (Fernandez 2007) Employee engagement can be considered as a two-way relationship of employer and employee, where both of the parties understand that they have their own responsibilities (Markos & Sridevi 2010).

According to Jiony et al. (2015) committed employees are also more satisfied with their personal lives, which also extend beyond the boundaries of the workplace. One thing that can also increase the number of employees staying in the company is that they are allowed to be their own selves and they are allowed to express themselves through work. On the other hand, if an employee must behave inauthentically, this increases the employee's psychological stress as well as well-being, and may result as a negative engagement to the company. (Reis et al. 2017)

Sultana and Bushra (2013) identified three factors in their study that matter in employee engagement, and this sum of factors is called the three Rs. These factors are respect, recognition, and reward. The first, respect, is considered to have the biggest impact on retaining the employees. If the company does not respect its employees, giving recognition and rewarding employees is mentioned to have a minimum impact. The second, recognition, can be defined as a notice or attention towards employees. Retention issues may appear if the management of the company does not pay attention on employees' needs. The third one, rewards, are extra for employees in addition to respect and recognition, and it is regarded to

have an impact on an employee's way of working and even to exceed expectations set for the employee. (Sultana & Bushra 2013) The other factors that influence the engagement of an employee are that the employee can use one's voice and one is allowed to involve in decision making, one is being offered opportunities, and inside the company there is open communication. It also matters that the employee supervisor is committed to the company. (Torrington et al. 2011)

In the paper of Saks & Gruman (2014) the authors present a theory created by Kahn (1990). According to this, employee engagement is affected by three psychological factors, which are psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability. Employees who strongly experience these three dimensions are more committed to their own job roles. This theory was tested in the paper of May et al. (2004) where the authors found that these three dimensions affect employee engagement. These three factors are described in more detail in the following table (Table 2).

<b>Psychological meaningfulness</b>	<p>One finds own work meaningful and feels rewarded for the effort one has put into the work.</p> <p>A meaningful feeling also comes when one is valued at work and has the feeling that one is considered useful and is not taken for granted.</p> <p>Psychological meaningfulness can also arise when a company offers a reward for a work done.</p>
<b>Psychological safety</b>	<p>Psychological safety refers to an employee's experience of employing and expressing themselves genuinely without fear of a negative consequence that could affect the employee's self-image or work position.</p> <p>A workplace with a social system that is predictable, consistent, and non-threatening will help create psychological security.</p>
<b>Psychological availability</b>	<p>Psychological availability refers to the state in which an employee feels that one has all the physical, emotional, and psychological resources to perform a job.</p> <p>Employees are also more engaged to jobs where they are offered all three of these dimensions to get the job done.</p>

**Table 2.** Psychological factors affecting employee engagement.

One of the challenges to employee engagement is the possibility of burnout. Burnout refers to a situation that is a psychological syndrome in which an employee feels unsuitable for the workplace (Freeney & Tiernan 2006). It is said that employee engagement can be seen as the opposite of burnout, which is characterized by employee exhaustion, reduced work efficiency, and cynicism at work. A committed employee is more characterized by energy, participation in work tasks, and efficient work. (Saks 2006) In order to avoid employee burnout, an environment should be created in the workplace that promotes employee engagement to the company and reduces work-related stress and dissatisfaction with work. If an employee is unable to engage to a company, one can also talk about disengagement, where the employee withdraws from his or her job physically, emotionally, and cognitively. (Freeney & Tiernan 2006) Burnout can lead to quiet quitting that is considered as one form of disengagement. It means a situation where the employee performs one's work according to the job description and does not give extra contribution to the work. The employee therefore only does what is expected of one to complete the work. Unrealistic expectations towards the employee can lead to quiet quitting. (Starling 2022)

### 2.3.2 Social support

An employee's work environment consists of both co-workers and supervisors. Workplace social assistance refers to a situation in which a person is targeted for activities that benefit the employee or are intended to benefit him or her. (Harris et al. 2007) After Kossivi et al. (2016), social support is an outcome of how an employee feels towards one's colleagues and what kind of relationship they have built together, and co-workers and good relationships are said to be the main reasons for staying in the job. A good relationship with a supervisor also encourages an employee to stay in the company, and the research shows that the lack of this relationship is the second biggest reason an employee to leave the company. Additionally, belongingness is also one factor that affects in employee's decision to stay in the company and that is one outcome of perceived social support. (Kossivi et al. 2016) It is important that the social support a worker receives is appropriate and that it meets one's needs (Streeter & Franklin 1992).

The main goal of social support is to increase the personal resources of the recipient (ten Brummelhuis et al. 2012). In the research of Barrera & Ainlay (1983) the authors identified six different categories of social support. The categories are as follows:

1. Material aid: tangible materials that include money or other physical objects
2. Behavioural assistance: providing physical assistance in performing work tasks
3. Intimate interaction: listening, caring, and expressing appreciation and understanding
4. Guidance: advice, instructions and information are available
5. Feedback: people are given feedback on their feelings, behaviour, or thoughts
6. Positive social interaction: people are offered the opportunity to participate in social interactions for fun and relaxation. (Barrera & Ainlay 1983)

According to ten Brummelhuis et al. (2012) social support can also be divided as follows: emotional support (includes given empathy, caring, love and trust), instrumental support (provides time, money, and energy), assessment support (gives tools for self-assessment), and informational support (provides advice, information, and suggestions). Social support also helps the employee to cope better with the reconciliation of work and personal life. The chance of burnout also decreases if the employee has access to social support. (ten Brummelhuis et al. 2012)

## 2.4 Organizational culture

The concept of organizational culture has become more common in research since the 1980s (Nayak & Barik 2013). A culture is created around a certain group of people who share similar attitudes as well as behaviours. They also share common values as well as norms, and that is why such cultures are diverse. (Belias & Koustelios 2014) Organizational culture can be seen as an activity that takes place in a company and more specifically, it refers to the common values and behaviours that emerge within the company. Organizational culture

can thus be said to be a combination of values as well as behaviour. In addition, it consists also of norms, attitudes, and assumptions. Organizational culture influences and changes the behaviour of employees in the organization. It may have given rise to certain types of rules, written or unwritten, that make employees understand what is expected of them and how they should act for the company and achieve set organizational goals. (Aboramadan 2020; Nayak & Barik 2013) After Sun (2008) the organizational culture describes a company's way of telling how things out there tend to be done.

The organizational culture is used to describe the uniqueness of the company. Organizational culture ensures long-term sustainability of a company, and it helps the company to stand out from the others. It is claimed that companies with a strong organizational culture are better able to retain their employees in the company and that employees feel satisfied with their jobs. A strong organizational culture also contributes to better company performance, and thus new employees should be engaged in the culture as quickly as possible. (Jigjiddorj et al. 2021; Lubis & Hanum 2020) Organizational culture also gives company's employees a sense of an identity. It also integrates people with one another and to work environment. (Jiony et al. 2015) In order for a corporate culture to spread throughout the organization, managers need to identify the qualities that affect the commitment, job satisfaction, and job performance of a company's employees (Lund 2003).

As mentioned earlier, there are several different organizational cultures which are risen from different values and norms. Every company possess a different and unique culture within the company that is created by its own employees. Belias and Koustelios (2014) have presented in their article the different organizational cultures that exist in organizations, and one of them is the suggestion of Deal and Kennedy (1982). The organizational culture they form is based on the company's strategy and the expectations of its employees. The first one is named as "The-Though Guy, Macho" -culture, where employees are expected to achieve results and they work under pressure. At the same time, however, employees are willing to take risks to achieve both corporate and personal goals. The second type is "The Work Hard/Play hard" -culture, where employee behaviour is shaped by customer needs and the pace of work is fast to achieve results. The third type, "Bet-Your-Company", is

characterized by making considered, yet risky decisions and investments in the company. Lastly, the fourth type is called “The Process” -culture where the culture is built around precision and detail working. It is also characterized by low risk-taking, and employees do not experience anxiety about their work.

In addition to the organizational culture, the learning culture created by the organization is important in retaining employees. According to Islam et al. (2013), employee commitment to the company is fostered by an organizational learning culture. This can be defined as a place where employees continually strive to create the results they want by improving their own abilities. It can also be a place where employees develop new mindsets and where they strive for continuous learning to see the whole together. Companies that implement an organizational learning culture are adaptive and flexible in nature. Those companies aim to improve company performance through employee learning. Such a culture is characterized by the following:

1. the company encourages dialogue
2. employees are offered a continuous opportunity to learn
3. group learning is encouraged
4. the company promotes collective learning by employees
5. company management encourages employees to learn both individually and in groups
6. the company has established a connection between the organization and its environment
7. employees have been given the opportunity to openly share the company's common values and vision. (Islam et al. 2013)

## 2.5 Summary of the theoretical insights

The company's goal as an employer is to attract skilled employees to work for it and even more important is to retain the workforce. The reputation of the employer is important when trying to attract employees to work for the company. As mentioned at the beginning of the theory part, it even influences on the performance of the employees. Sometimes, however,



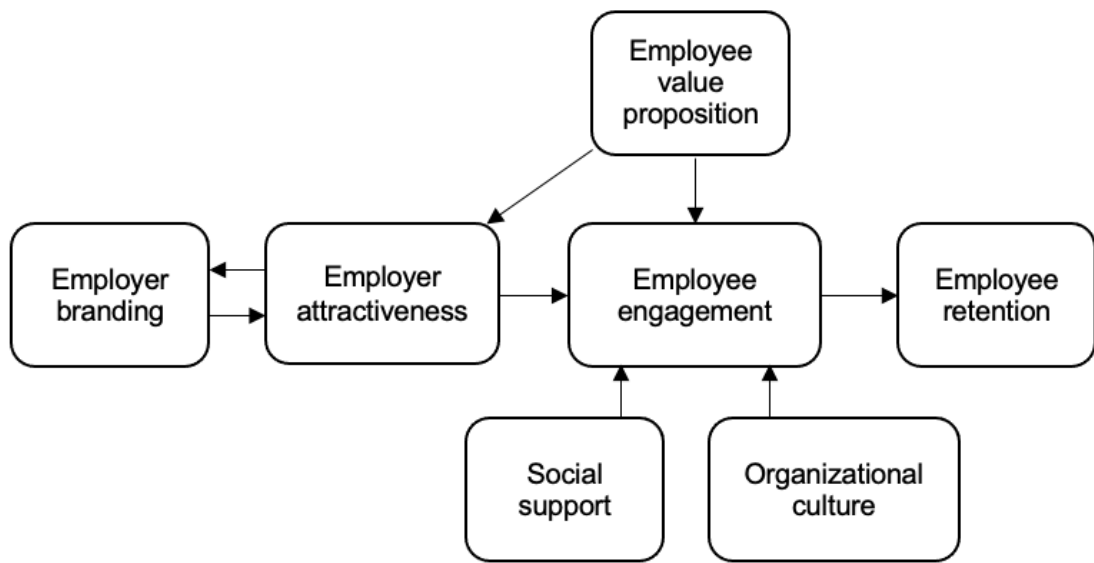
the applicant's decision is influenced by one's own values, which must be contrasted with the company's values. The decision can also be completely influenced by what kind of reputation the company has gained as an employer.

When the attractiveness factors are understood, the company can use them to build an employer brand for itself. This is good for marketing the workplace, because it is based on subjective opinions about the employer and personal experiences. In terms of attractiveness, it is important that potential employees are offered a place where they can see themselves working and that they are offered value in return for the work done, whether intangible or tangible.

After the company has attracted an employee to work for the company, the promises made must be redeemed, on both sides of the employment relationship, and the employee must be retained and even committed to the company. By engaging the employee, the skills are kept in-house and with it the company can even improve its own competitive advantage when the company has the best talent from the labour market at its service. Orientation plays a big role in engaging the employee in the company, so that the employee has all the possible resources to cope with the job in the best possible way. After this, throughout the entire employment relationship, social support and consideration of the employee's personal life situation are of great importance.

Organizational culture can be used to communicate to employees, and even outside the company, what the company's way of doing things is. In addition to the organizational culture, the learning culture of the organization has an impact, because in such an environment the employee can develop oneself. This in turn can influence on the company being able to produce better results. Organizational culture can also have an effect on whether an employee decides to stay at the company, or at its worst, to leave the company.

The following figure (Figure 4) shows the links between different concepts.



**Figure 4.** Links between different concepts

Based on the employer branding, an attractive picture of employer is made. Employee value propositions provided by the organization affects on the attractiveness of the employer and based on those attractiveness factors the employer branding can be done. That is why the links can be to both directions. Given employee value propositions also influence on the engagement of the employees when the value propositions are being implemented. The received social support and organization's culture influence employee's decision to engage to the organization. Based on these dimensions, the employee decides to stay working for the company.

### 3 Research design and methodology

The aim of this research is to identify and describe in more detail the reasons why jobseekers from abroad consider LUT University as an attractive employer. Also the retention factors of LUT University are explored. This chapter consists of a presentation of the research design and data collection method, as well as its reliability and validity. The chapter also explains how the interviewees were selected and how the interviews were conducted.

#### 3.1 Research design

Qualitative research is used as the research method. This allows the interviewees to describe in their own words their feelings on a topic that has not yet been researched so the factors of the phenomenon are unknown. The main purpose of qualitative research is therefore to understand the things that affect the phenomenon under study, after which they can be measured, if necessary, through quantitative research (Hodges 2011). The purpose of the work is also not to collect a large amount of data for analysis, which makes the qualitative research method more suitable for use in the work.

Qualitative research is based on the researcher's findings and interpretations (Khan 2014), and it seeks to describe the phenomenon through words and images. The qualitative research method seeks to understand the phenomenon from the perspective of the person participating in the research and it is also characterized by the search for meaningful things (Merriam 2002).

The university represents an extreme case, as it is a unique option among universities worldwide. One might think that foreigners would seek work in capital cities or metropolitan areas with a lot of people and close to, for example, an international airport. The main campus of LUT University is located more than two hours' drive from Helsinki, the capital of Finland. Finland is also a small country and Lappeenranta is only the 13th largest city in

Finland (Lappeenranta 2022b). The location of the main campus is also quite unique, as the Lappeenranta city is located in Eastern Finland, surrounded by forest and Lake Saimaa. According to Patton (1990), extreme cases are those that are unusual or special in some way and provide new information on the subject, meaning that they are rich in information. The information of why foreigners want to come to work at LUT University is still unknown and has not been studied.

### 3.2 Data collection method

Data collection methods characteristic of qualitative research are interviews, surveys, and observation situations. These methods can be used either in parallel or even in combination, depending on the problem being studied and depending on the research resources. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2003) The interview has been chosen as the method of data collection for this work because the purpose of the work is to know people's personal thoughts on the topic. The advantage of an interview can be considered its flexibility. If necessary, the interviewer can repeat or clarify the question, as well as have a free discussion with the interviewee. The interview also gives the researcher the opportunity to observe the way the interviewee talks about the matter, meaning, for example, how the interviewee expresses the matter using sound weight or expressions. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2003)

The interviews are conducted as semi-structured interviews. It is characteristic of a semi-structured interview that the questions are the same for all interviewees but the order in which they are asked may vary. This interview method can also be called a thematic interview with a predetermined theme and the topics revolving around it. It can also be said that this is a targeted interview in which the interviewees have experienced a particular situation (deciding to apply to LUT University and stay to work there). (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2001) The most important thing in the interview is to get as much information as possible about the desired topic, so it is a good idea for the researcher to send the interview forms in good time before the interview to the interviewees (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2003).

### 3.3 Selection of interviewees and interview process

As the purpose of this thesis was to study the attractiveness of LUT University as an employer to foreign employees and how the university is able to retain their employees, the interview group consisted of the university's employees and especially of international people. International employees were chosen to be interviewed because the purpose was to find out why they have chosen to come to Finland and to LUT University. Also, the university represents an extreme case, as the phenomenon is not yet researched, and the university is quite a unique option among the other universities known worldwide.

As the researcher did not have any specific people to contact for interviews, the human resource department of LUT University took care of spreading the information via e-mail to international employees. In interview request the study was briefly described and it was told how the interviews are conducted and from where the participants can book an appointment for the interview. In request it was emphasized that the interview results will be anonymized due to the sensitivity of questions. In addition to the request, the research questions were also sent so that the willing participants had a possibility to look at the questions in advance. The interview questions can be found in Appendix 1.

The following table (Table 3) shows information about the interviewees. The gender of the interviewees was left out, as it could have revealed some personal experiences. The table shows the date of the interview, the position of the interviewee at the university and the duration of the interview. The table also shows whether the person completed one's studies at LUT University or somewhere else. In addition, the table shows from where the interviewee found the vacancy announcement or from whom they received information about the open job position.

Code for the interviewee	Date	Position	Duration of the interview	Completed master's degree	From where the job was found?
1	17.5.2022	Junior researcher	37 minutes	LUT University	Supervisor shared the information about the position
2	17.5.2022	Junior researcher	53 minutes	LUT University	Through connections from LUT
3	17.5.2022	Post-doctoral researcher	51 minutes	No information	LinkedIn
4	18.5.2022	Post-doctoral researcher	54 minutes	Exchange master student at LUT University	Got a job offer from LUT after master studies
5	18.5.2022	Professor (tenured)	18 minutes	From other university	LinkedIn
6	19.5.2022	Junior researcher	55 minutes	LUT University	LUT teacher mentioned about the position
7	19.5.2022	Junior researcher	1 hour 4 minutes	LUT University	Got an email from the university that listed positions at LUT
8	19.5.2022	Junior researcher	37 minutes	LUT University	Information through master's programme
9	20.5.2022	Junior researcher	33 minutes	LUT University	Supervisor shared the information about the position
10	20.5.2022	Post-doctoral researcher	1 hour 19 minutes	LUT University	The position was proposed after master's degree by the university
11	23.5.2022	Junior research assistant	31 minutes	LUT University	Got an email from the university that listed positions at LUT
12	23.5.2022	Junior researcher	39 minutes	Exchange master student at LUT University	LUT professor suggested the position as a research assistant

13	24.5.2022	Junior researcher	32 minutes	LUT University	Through master studies at LUT
14	24.5.2022	Post-doctoral researcher	23 minutes	LUT University	A professor from LUT helped to find the project
15	24.5.2022	Junior researcher	34 minutes	LUT University	LUT open jobs website
16	25.5.2022	Post-doctoral researcher	22 minutes	From another university	Community site for computer scientist and mathematician
17	25.5.2022	Junior researcher	27 minutes	LUT University	LUT open jobs website
18	26.5.2022	Project researcher	54 minutes	From another university	Academic positions forum platform
19	26.5.2022	Junior researcher	46 minutes	LUT University	The programme director informed about the first position, listed on LUT open jobs website
20	27.5.2022	Junior researcher	41 minutes	LUT University	LUT professor shared the information about the position

**Table 3.** Information about the interviewees

Interviews were conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams during weeks 20 and 21 of May 2022. The interviews were conducted in English as it was a common language of communication for all participants. Before every interview a promise for recording was confirmed even though the matter was expressed in interview request. For recording, both phone recording and Microsoft Teams recording and transcribing were used. The first 8 interviews were recorded only by using a phone recording application, and the rest 12 were recorded by using both recording methods because one participant shared a tip of Microsoft Teams recording programme. In the beginning of every interview, the interviewer also explained the purpose of the work and how its themes are divided into the attractiveness of the employer and the retention of employees. In interviews the questions were presented, and thoughts were shared on the topic. Some questions were skipped due to a lack of experience on question topic. Also, some questions needed further explanation of their

purpose, for example in some interviews the concept of internal marketing or employee value proposition needed to be clarified for the interviewees. Couple of times some questions needed to be repeated due to a bad connection.

The first eight interviews were transcribed from recordings. As previously reported, the remaining 12 interviews were also recorded with Microsoft Teams, which provided spelling in connection with the recording of the program. Each interview was listened to carefully. At the same time, the researcher checked what was said in the recording corresponded to the automation spelling that Microsoft Teams had done because the programme might not have heard all the words correctly in the interview. The answers of each interviewee were then compiled under a question. This made it easier for the researcher to find similar themes when all the answers were found in one place.

In the original interview question template, the first three questions considered about interviewees age, nationality, and gender. However, these three questions were decided to pass, as there were quite many requests from the participants not to answer to these. This made the researcher to conclude, that the topic may be quite sensitive for some participants, and therefore decided to leave those questions out. All the interviews started from the question number 4.

### 3.4 Data analysis method

This work has been done as a qualitative study. Qualitative research was seen as a better option for the job than quantitative study, as it allows the interviewees to describe better their thoughts on the chosen topic. In this work, abductive logics has been used. Abductive logic can be defined as reasoning based on available information (Merriam-Webster 2022). The discussion about the topics and conclusions of this work have been influenced by the interviews with employees of the case organization.



As previously described, coding has been used in this work to organize the data and to find clear themes for the topics covered. The coding of the interviews can be found in Appendix 2. The interviews were coded, and the frequency of codes was also added to the table. The work has mainly focused on the topics that received the most mentions. Some individual comments have also been brought up because their topics were felt to be important for the topic. Inductive coding has been used in the work. In this case, the codes are derived directly from the interviews as some phrases or terms used by the interviewee. In this way, the codes are kept as close as possible to the collected data. (Skjott Linneberg & Korsgaard 2019)

### 3.5 Reliability and validity

Quality perspectives are an important part of the entire research process, from beginning to end including the phases of forming the research question, collecting data, doing the analysis and finally presentation of the findings (Ali & Yusof 2011). It is characteristic for a research that it seeks to avoid errors. The reliability of a study means that the study can be repeated so that two different researchers get similar results from the study. In other words, it measures the ability to give non-random results. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009) Some things may have affected to the reliability of this work. These may have been the concentration of participants during the interview or the perceived condition of being. Also, the overly tight schedule set aside for the interview may have had an effect so that the interviewee has not had time to think enough what to response and therefore has not been able to give full responses to the questions. So that everyone could answer according to their best ability, the interviewee gave a lot of time to think about the answers. An extra 30 minutes were also reserved after each interview, so that if the actual schedule was not enough, the interview time could have been extended. After the interviews, to six of the interviewees were sent an e-mail asking for clarification whether they had previously studied at LUT University, through which they would have continued working in the organization. This matter had come to light in other interviews, which is why it was not necessary to send them a follow-up question.

Another measure of quality in research work is validity, which means that the research has studied what was intended (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018). The interviewer formed the interview questions in such a way that they were in line with the research questions and that with them one would get as comprehensive perspective as possible on the researched topic. It should also be remembered that the interpretation of the results of the research is multiple and involves three participants: interviewee, the researcher, and the reader of the work. All three participants can interpret the topic in their own way. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009)

In addition to the interviews, observations about LUT University's own personnel strategy have been added to the empirical section as secondary data, as well as looking at a few job advertisements and how the university advertises itself to job seekers. By combining both interviews and secondary data provided by the university, the credibility of the research results can be increased.

## 4 Empirical findings

In this chapter the empirical findings and results of the research are being presented. The results and findings from the interviews are being separated under two themes, where the first one is the employer attractiveness and the second one is about employee retention. These two themes are very close to each other, because the first one represents the pull power of employer, meaning that how it is able to attract employees working for it, and the second one is about the qualities why employees have decided to stay working for the organization and why do they find their job meaningful under a specific employer. The interview questions were created based on a previously written literature. As described in the subsection 3.3, all the interviews started from the question number 4, leaving the three first questions out due to the sensitiveness.

LUT University's Intra website, which the university's employees and students can access, contains information about LUT University's personnel policy. At the very beginning of the page, it is explained how the university's goal is to create good working conditions for the staff, support the development of employees and promote their well-being. According to LUT University's HR policy, the strategic action plan pays attention to the working atmosphere of the workplace and the well-being of employees. This includes e.g., encouraging interactive management and building good management practices. The university also strives to develop the skills of university supervisors by offering needs-based education that takes into account the multicultural and international environment. In addition to this, the university strives to increase a stronger sense of community, where the contribution of every member of the university is equally significant. The goal is to emphasize the significance and competence of each employee as part of the organization. (LUT University 2022c)

## 4.1 Employer attractiveness

At the very beginning, the interviewees were asked what factors made them apply to LUT University as an employee. From the interviews, seven participants included locational attractiveness in their answers, and told how they felt Finland as an attractive and safe place to live in, and one thought it is close to home country. The opportunities and employment benefits offered, more precisely, the employee value proposition given by LUT University, were considered important by eight participants. Five people described that LUT University's skilled professors and other employees were an attractive factor. Seven interviewees mentioned the international aspect as an important factor in the decision to choose LUT University as an employer. The university is seen as a great place for an international employee to start a career abroad and just overall the international atmosphere of LUT University was considered important. The reputation of the university in various rankings attracted four participants. Also, five participants described the characteristics related to the organization's atmosphere important, where for example code of open and friendly community appeared three times. The idea of the atmosphere had arisen during the interviewees' master's studies. Two interviewees described their feelings as follows:

*''From the reputational point of view the most attractive option, it was convenient, it was exactly what I wanted to be doing, it just worked on every dimension. I don't know if it was LUT reputation specific that convinced me, but it was a really good opportunity, so I obviously took it.''* (E 2)

*''I liked the university since I arrived. I thought it is a really great place to be and liked the teachers and the whole atmosphere and everything. So of course it was, maybe it was more like an insider's view because I wasn't aware much about university's reputation like how it is seen in the global world. I didn't choose LUT because it was high in ranking, I didn't have any idea about that.''* (E 6)

The purpose of the following questions was to find out what kind of image the interviewees had formed about LUT University as a workplace according to the information provided by the university. Three people could not describe the subject at all, one of whom also stated

that one did not remember whether one had any kind of image. It was possible to collect five bigger themes from the interviews, of which the description of the workplace atmosphere and the intangible value promises given by LUT University received the most mentions. Other themes were the employer's description of employee well-being, the focus of research on the perspective of sustainability, and the description of material support.

When talking about the employer brand, it became clear that even eight participants had difficulty describing the employer brand of LUT University. Participants also pondered, that the image is formed after one has been able to work at the university for a while and formed their own experiences of the employer. This also included the observation that coming from outside the LUT University (the interviewee has not completed a master's degree at the university in question), the awareness of the employer was low. At the same time, two hoped that the university would be advertised as an employer more internationally than at the moment. Also, one mentioned that international organizational collaboration could bring LUT University more visibility internationally.

Many different views were expressed when the interviewees described the employer brand. The freedom described by the interviewees appeared in four answers, which were the feeling of independence, a flexible employer, the opportunities given to employees and the opportunity to work from home. In the answers of three, the theme of caring for employees appeared. In two answers, the university's focus on the employee's personal growth was mentioned. The sustainability aspect was also mentioned, and that the employees have a chance to do work that is meaningful and that has an influence for the future. One interviewee also said that when one tells own relatives abroad that one is working as a researcher at a university, the job is considered valuable.

The purpose of the next question was to find out what kind of perception the employees had of LUT University as an employer before their employment. Many responses repeated the same themes but also different views. Seven interviewees had an image of a place where employees are taken care of. Four interviewees had an image of a good organizational culture. Three interviewees thought the culture would have been a work-oriented culture.

LUT seemed like a place where there is no boundary between the employees and the higher-level executives, rather it is flat organization where everyone can be each other's friends. Also, it was mentioned that everyone has a voice and is being respected. Some employees said that while they were still students at LUT University, they had an impression of happy employees who had a good time at work. It was also said that employees are allowed to do work within their own research interests and that the working environment at LUT is supportive. Four participants had no perceptions before starting the work. One participant described one's feelings as follows:

*‘‘It was a kind of a workplace where, if you have a vision, it's an excellent place to carry it out and you'll get lots of support.’’ (E 11)*

However, one interviewee had heard that there may be dissatisfaction in some teams that stems from different ways of working or the dynamics within the team. One also added that some employees are being demanded too much by their supervisors and their working ability may have been pushed to its limits.

When asked where employees had obtained information about their employer before employment, the most common answer was through their own personal networks from people who were already working for the organization. In this case, a word of mouth can be said to have played a major role in passing on employer characteristics information.

The kind of work atmosphere created for a workplace can be an important factor for employees to apply for an organization. As Torrington et al. (2011) described, it can differentiate the employer from other employers when the job is marketed. It was interesting to find out what kind of perceptions the interviewees had about LUT University's working atmosphere before they started working there. From ten of the interviewees' answers were able to form the theme of a respectful and friendly atmosphere among the employees. One interviewee had thought that communication between people would be a challenge, because the interviewee came from a country with strong communication. Two interviewees thought that the work pace at LUT University is intense. Three mentioned that the work community

is focused with the themes of sustainability. Two mentioned about an international atmosphere assumption.

The images of many turned out to be the same after starting the work but there were also differences. Although many felt that co-operation was encouraged, the level of individualism at work came as a surprise to some, meaning that they are not monitored around the clock by one's supervisor, and the work they do is trusted. According to the 16 interviewees, the characteristics of a pleasant working environment can be observed in the work community, which include people's friendliness, a relaxed spirit, helping people, and a generally good spirit. Three also mentioned that LUT University has an open culture where you can express your own ideas and they are supported. Some negative experiences have also been experienced.

According to the experience of one of the interviewees, the level of requirements of immediate supervisors varies, with some requiring more work than others. Also, group dynamics may have been challenging, solved by switching to a new team. After changing the team, work went smoothly and the group dynamics were open and friendly. The main reason for the emergence of such conflicts could have been different cultural attitudes on working habits that would require some form of guidance from the employer, as the community consists of different nationalities, cultures, and behaviors. The COVID-19 pandemic is also perceived to have had an impact on the work atmosphere. According to the three interviewees, the spirit of the community is no longer at the same level as it was before the pandemic. One of these interviewees hoped that the university would invest in this even more to bring it back.

One of the participants had just recently found characteristics of a great company culture and told that all the listed qualities can be found from LUT University's atmosphere among the employees. According to the employee (E8), the following characteristics can be found:

- It is possible for an employee to make friends in the workplace, which is perceived as important in the midst of work-related stress

- A high level of trust that occurs both with a supervisor and between employees, and an understanding that different things can happen in life that can affect work
- A one is comfortable to ask help, even from higher persons at the university, and the request for help is not rejected
- An employee has one's own authority at work

From these points, it could be concluded that the working atmosphere at LUT University is friendly and helpful, the work-life balance is valued, the employee has own responsibility for one's work and an employee is trusted.

The purpose of the next question was to find out whether the job interview gave a picture of LUT University as an employer. 15 interviewees said that they were not given any kind of description of what the employer would be like. The interview mainly focused on the job seeker and what one's contribution to the position would be. Instead, the nature of the job and research opportunities were described to ten job seekers. Two participants said that they did not have any kind of job interview. One interviewee said that one was given a short introduction about the university itself. Also, the work environment was described to one, the strategy to one, and cooperation opportunities with other companies to one.

In the next question, the interviewees were asked to describe the case organization as an employer. The table below (Table 4) lists themes that could be formed from the answers of the interviewees and how many times that theme occurred. Below the table, more has been opened about what these themes were formed from, and all can be found in more detail in Appendix 2.

Theme	Frequency
Freedom to do the work	9
Employees are considered important	7
Work is well organized	4
Attractive compensation	4
Offering an international environment	4



Giving possibility to network	3
Good communication	3
Employer focuses on sustainability	2
Hoping for a better process	2
Close supervisor misusing the power	1
Uncertainty about the continuation of work	1

**Table 4.** Characteristics of LUT as an employer

The most emphasized in the interviews was how LUT gives its employees the opportunity for freedom. This appears for example as employees' own choices regarding research orientations. Also, the freedom comes through choosing if you want to do teaching work or participate in other projects in addition to research work. The expression "employees are given room to thrive" also expresses freedom and that employees are believed in by the community and trusted that everyone is doing their best with work and no one is micromanaging them. In seven answers there were characteristics from which it could be concluded that the university cares about its employees, such as employees are taken into account. Also, two feels that the university invests in their employees and their work is appreciated. Under the theme "work is well organized", answers were collected about the thoughts that employees have all the necessary resources to perform their work (good work tools) and that the employer is perceived as resilient and agile. The attractive compensation consists of a salary and a bonus system. The international environment was seen as important in three responses when they described the employer. The possibility of forming networks was also seen as important. Good communication consists of the thoughts that employees can easily communicate with their supervisor, and that when an employee asks questions, they always get an answer from someone at the university. Two interviewees said that the employer focuses on sustainability issues.

Although many interviewees told good things, there were also a few negative experiences. One said that in some cases there has been a supervisor that has somewhat misused one's power, which is reflected as a heavy workload of employees. The lack of permanent employment contracts caused negative feelings in one of the interviewees. Also, according to one story bureaucracy appearing inside the organization sometimes affects the employee's

motivation negatively. Two were seen wishing for better processes, one of which was about getting work tools faster and the other felt that applying for bonuses separately was strange.

The type of organizational culture in the company can have a part influence on how the employer is perceived. About the LUT University's organizational culture, 11 participants said that the university has a flat organization. From 14 answers could come up with a theme of open culture. Ideas can be shared between "layers" and the atmosphere is friendly and there is trust. Some participants feel that the organization is flat and non-hierarchical. Four thought also that the communication between the employees inside the organization is good. One told that there is a goal-orientated culture at LUT University. Eight participants said that they feel that they are encouraged to learn and develop themselves. However, one added that one does not feel the need for such encouragement for some reason or feels that there are different attitudes towards trainings among the teams (depending on if the team consists of competitive persons or non-competitive).

Organizational culture can be both an attractiveness factor, but it also plays a big part in employee retention. According to LUT University's strategy (LUT University 2022c), the university's mission is to support the development and maintenance of everyone's professional skills. Employees from each unit of the university are sent to personnel training that supports professional development and competence. The university also supports the development of personnel by giving them 2 x 45 minutes of voluntary study time per week if the supervisor and the head of the unit sees this is as an activity that supports the needs of the working community. In the light of the above, it can be stated that the university has an organizational learning culture that values self-development and maintaining professional skills.

What comes to more negative aspects regarding the organizational culture, one participant told that sometimes one's immediate supervisor has been somewhat too hard regarding working hours and saw that one is using too much power and is too demanding. Five participants told that in some cases they have felt the organization is too hierarchical, meaning that sometimes it is hard to find a person who is responsible in certain task to be

done or who could give the information needed and two thought that there are multiple layers within the organization. One participant said that there could be even more room for learning and development.

The last question, regarding the attractiveness of the employer, was how the interviewees felt that LUT University could be even more attractive employer. Three participants thought that the employee value proposition given by LUT University should be clearer. Also, one added that LUT University's slogan "Land of the curious" should be somehow included also into job positions. From eight answers the author was able to form a theme that the visibility of LUT University should be increased even more. From these answers, four felt that the promotion of LUT University as an employer does not extend beyond the borders of Finland and that the visibility abroad should be increased somehow. In accordance with the wish of one of the interviewees, LUT University could publicize more research conducted at the university in order to increase visibility even more. However, one interviewee who shared the opinion about the visibility, has noticed an improvement here. The participant also pondered that it is mainly due to the fact that it is part of the country's culture not to brag too much about one's successes. Other things were that one would like to have more cooperation with international companies and two hoped that the salary would be better. Regarding the salary aspect, however, another interviewee stated that this is probably out of LUT's hands.

In this section, one interviewee also wanted to express warm thoughts about the communication of the university's rector, which could have an effect on the external attractiveness of the university. The interviewee expressed oneself as follows:

*‘I also wanted to mention that, maybe it's more related to my experience as an employee but I really love these mails from rector. He's writing us, like not every day maybe but every few days, and he's always like ‘hey I would like to tell you this and that’ and he always sounds so friendly, and for me, I feel really good about it, and I've never talked to the guy but I feel really good towards him (...) I like this kind of attitude of people in the university, and I think it makes it more like a community, not as like I'm afraid to approach*

*someone because I don't know what they will say but because everyone is so open and you feel accepted in this way.' (E 6)*

It can therefore be concluded that the interviewee would hope that the friendliness and care used by the university rector in internal communication towards the employees would somehow also be seen outside the university.

The following table (Table 5) summarizes LUT University's positive attractiveness factors and factors that negatively interfere with attractiveness.

Positive factors	Negative factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee value proposition attractiveness</li> <li>• Internationally driven workplace</li> <li>• Locational attractiveness</li> <li>• Talented workforce of LUT University</li> <li>• Organization's good atmosphere</li> <li>• Reputational attractiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough visibility about LUT University as an employer internationally</li> <li>• Uncertainty about the employment</li> <li>• No clear employer brand</li> </ul>

**Table 5.** Factors affecting positively and negatively the attractiveness of LUT University as an employer

## 4.2 Employee retention

This section deals with the retention of employees at LUT University and the factors that influence it. Employee recruitment and job orientation are gone through, as well as matters that have arisen during the employment relationship. Views on the LUT University's employee value proposition will also be reviewed.

First, the employees were asked how they experienced the recruitment process. The four interviewees had no experience in the formal recruitment process but were chosen for the job because of their academic achievements. Six participants shared that the recruitment was transparent, and they were kept informed. From seven answers, you could form an idea of a quick recruitment process that was also described as systematic. One participant felt that the

recruitment process felt bureaucratic and wished that the process would be much easier. One participant had an experience heard from another person, according to which recruitment was perceived as complicated when the person had come to the university as an employee from elsewhere. This had included sending one's own research plan to the university, on the basis of which one was directed to a potential supervisor. However, as shown in the appendices (Appendix 3 and 4), this is part of the university's own recruitment process. One interviewee did not expect so many tests in recruitment process and felt exhausted during it. Thus, it can be concluded that recruitment processes vary between different positions.

Work orientation plays an important role, because based on it, the employee is introduced to the work to be performed. Work orientation can also mean the employee's orientation to other things in the workplace, than just the work itself. Seven interviewees told that they had good feelings about their orientation. It was described ritual, they were given good instructions to everything at work, and they also received help in practical matters in Finland. Three people said that they generally felt that the help they received from the university staff was good. Thirteen interviewees told that they felt that orientation to work was somewhat lacking. Not mainly to the work itself, rather to the additional tasks regarding the employment relationship. The most mentioned problem was filling out the timesheet. Two even wished for more orientation. One interviewee said that one found coming to Finland difficult and was left with the feeling that one did not receive that much help and described feelings as follows:

*‘‘I think that the move from such a distant place, as I was moving, was not necessarily acknowledged very well, the university could have done a little more help out with the moving and things like that. I mean it was a really major move.’’ (E 3)*

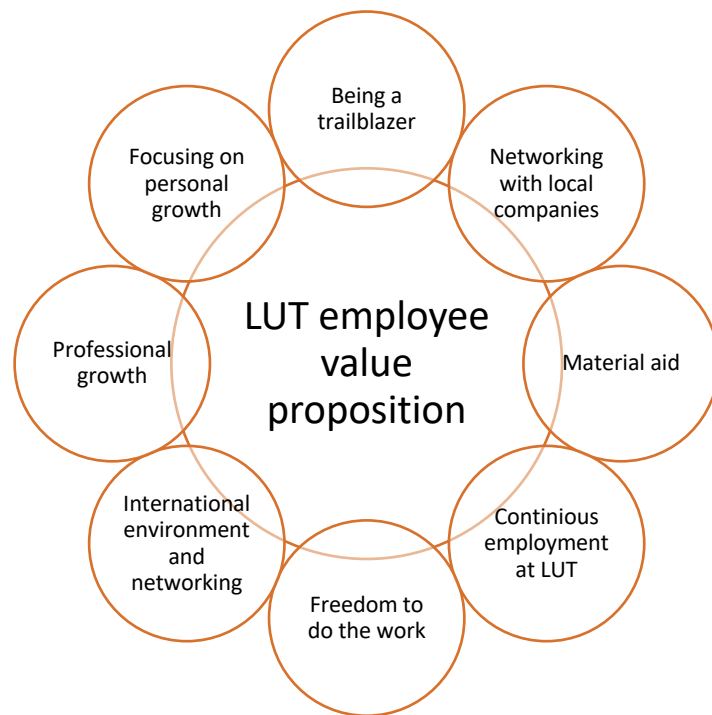
One person said that one had a bad job orientation and had to figure out many things by oneself. The interviewee emphasized that this feeling was especially present on the Mikkeli campus.

According to LUT University's HR policy (2022c), the aim of orientation is for the new employee to learn one's new task and the organization's operating principles. Knowing the organization and its operating environment is part of an employee's professional competence. This is certainly aimed at so that the employee knows how to do one's job in the best possible way in accordance with the goals of the organization and its stakeholders. According to the policy, supervisor is responsible of new employee's orientation. In addition to this, an orientation contact person has been appointed to each unit of the university. In each unit, the purpose is to familiarize the employee with the work tasks and the practices of the own unit. Monthly orientation meetings are also organized for new employees. The materials related to orientation can be found on the university's Intra. (LUT University 2022c)

Employee value proposition is important in attracting the talent. More important is to deliver it to the employees to retain the sourced talent. Seven interviewees told that they did not have any clear vision what the employee value proposition was or had not heard it at all. One of these persons was originally coming from outside of the LUT University (meaning that this person did not conduct a master's degree at LUT). Other interviewee also added that the proposition from both sides was unclear and described the situation as follows:

*“Well, of course I understood that I get salary, but I wasn't—well, I was explained by my supervisor what I'm expected to do and what is the priority of my work, what I should prioritize but it was wrong, as I learned later. It wasn't supposed to be like this at all, so I was for long time prioritizing the wrong thing (...) I wasn't communicated this what I deliver to university and what the university delivers to me in return, I wasn't communicated that.” (E 6)*

Thirteen interviewees said that they had some kind of picture of the value proposition. The following figure (Figure 5) illustrates the value propositions that received the most mentions.



**Figure 5.** LUT employee value propositions

If we start with concrete value promises, the theme of material aid was found in 14 responses. The employees are promised to be paid for their work and they are also given the tools to do the work, such as computers and good laboratory facilities, and all other benefit that comes with the work, such as healthcare. However, most of the answers emphasized value propositions that can be classified as intangible. One interviewee said that there is feeling that once one has been able to work at the university, the employee has the certainty of being an employee tomorrow as well. International environment was also mentioned and how employees are given a chance to network internationally. The freedom to do work comes from a point of view where employees feel that they are allowed to do exactly the work that they find interesting. Professional growth is seen as part of the various job opportunities offered by LUT University, and personal growth through self-development and learning. Also, the possibility to network with local companies was mentioned. The last thing that was mentioned two times was LUT University's employee value proposition of being a Trailblazer, which is part of LUT University's strategy.

There are four job advertisements on the vacancies page of LUT University's English-language job search website (November 10, 2022). Two job advertisements (Appendix 3 and 4) in English were selected for review and both of these were positions for junior researchers. Since the work is limited to employees who have moved from abroad to work for LUT University in Finland and their primary working language is English, it is natural to assume that they look first at job advertisements in English. In both job advertisements, the beginning already describes how they are looking for a person with a curious mind and who aims for an academic career, and in the second advertisement it is added that the potential employee is passionate about discovering through research how to promote sustainable growth while simultaneously creating value for companies, the public sector and society. When looking at the offer given by LUT University, what the employee receives in exchange for the work done, the same promise of an academic career is repeated and, in addition, the promise to become an expert in specific field. The job advertisement also adds that the employee will receive encouraging and supportive guidance from the university's professors. The job description also states how the job seeker is promised a four-year contract, the condition of which is that the employee performs research work and studies in an exemplary manner during the first year. The purpose of both jobs is to complete a doctoral degree. The job seeker is hired by the organization to do research and as part of the job one completes studies aimed at a doctorate degree. A salary description is also given.

At this point, the value proposition given by LUT University remains a bit short. However, at the bottom of the page there is a link where an applicant can read more about LUT University as an employer. Right in the beginning of the page there is a line *“We support working together in all our activities. Our management is based on values by which we operate in a financially responsible and fair manner”* which encourages cooperation and tells about the university management's way of managing the community. The page also tells how the university offers two campuses and two regional units, describes the green campus on the shores of Lake Saimaa, good transport options, top-class health care, various lunch options, a workplace focused on well-being and a healthy work-life balance, opportunities for self-development (the opportunity to study during working hours 2 x 45 min per week), and finally, challenging, and versatile tasks in an international and lively environment. (LUT University 2022d)



Below the offers is a picture of a smiling and friendly-looking university rector, who says that a better tomorrow is built together and briefly tells about the ranking results achieved by the university. When above quoted sentence spoke about the values on which management is based, this meant the courage to succeed, the passion for innovation through science, and the will to build well-being. The importance of sustainability is also emphasized and at the end of the page it is stated that the university supports the maintenance and development of the expertise of all its employees. LUT University is also committed to being an equal employer, where every member of the working community is treated with respect. Equal treatment focuses on interactive situations and personnel recruitment, management, working conditions, salaries, and the person's career development. (LUT University 2022d)

It was also natural to ask whether the interviewees felt that the value promise given to them had been delivered and in which ways. Seven interviewees could not say their opinion and these participants were the same ones who could not give an answer to the previous question because they did not remember how it was described or they were not given a value proposition. Thirteen participants said that the employee value proposition has been delivered to them as promised and if not completely, then at least partially from the given perspectives above. Participants told for example that salary is received normally and participants feel like they can develop themselves in terms of learning and professional growth. The promise of working in an international environment and networking has come true, also as an opportunity to travel.

### 4.3 Employee engagement

Employee engagement is also one part of retaining in the workplace. Twelve participants out of twenty said that they feel engaged to LUT University as employees. Participants who currently do not feel engaged said that one of the reasons was the "distancing" from the community caused by the COVID pandemic and remote working, and thus hoped for more shared moments between colleagues and the whole community, also outside of working hours in addition to official work meetings, so that the feeling could be restored. One

participant also said that would like to have more cooperation between different guilds at the university, and another participant would like to have more cooperation with other PhD students. What comes to collaboration, one interviewee also said that it would be interesting to get together with people from different fields and present their own work, which could also be taken as a learning experience. One could ask more public recognition for the work that is done, and one interviewee said that would like to have a stronger union or a representative who would promote the status and issues of researchers and employees. Dean's coffee moments were also mentioned valuable, which is very much appreciated event and is found to be useful, because a lot of current issues and information concerning the university are shared at the meeting.

The company's internal marketing can be considered as one tool for engaging employees in the company. Two respondents felt that the organization's internal marketing is weak, and two participants could not answer at all. One participant described own feelings as follows:

*‘‘I do think that LUT community is very fragmented, I think that internal marketing is not that great, it is hard to know what is going on. People often don't know what is going on, I found a number of even professional relevant events, I only found out about because I saw a poster, right in my field and in my target.’’ (E 2)*

The participants said that they receive e-mails about various events or read about them on the university's Intra or from newsletters. One participant said that one still feels that the content provided by Intra is poor. Some also said that they feel it is internal marketing when the university's achievements are shared in general, for example if the university has received a lot of funding or improved its ranking, because they get a sense of pride when they get to work at the university. The encouraging words of the university's rector also received praise, which can also be experienced as a form of internal marketing. Since the university is very focused on a sustainable perspective, some participants said that the windmills and solar panels standing in the yards communicate to the community the values that the university considers important, and those act as a concrete form of internal marketing. One interviewee

also said that feels that the computer wallpaper is a form of internal marketing, where the university's strategy is presented. Internal marketing is also perceived to help people get to know other people. Three participants described their feelings as follows:

*‘‘I feel that I’m very well informed. In this way I’m like more belonging to uni, I’m not left out, I’m part of this information exchange.’’ (E 6)*

*‘‘If there wouldn’t be internal marketing it would be really sad. You not only learn people, you learn names, (...) we need to have internal marketing in place, so we can, you connect to each other.’’ (E 8)*

*‘‘We even have to celebrate the smallest things to motivate everybody.’’ (E 10)*

As for the effect of internal marketing on employee engagement, it depends entirely on the person and how it is received. Four interviewees felt that the internal marketing produced by the university has no effect on engagement as an employee and seven participants could not say their opinion. However, for those who responded positively to the question, as mentioned in above section, the interviewees feel proudness when the university's achievements are shared, which in turn increases the feeling of engagement to LUT University, as well as the feeling of belonging to the community. Some also feel it is important that community members are informed of what is happening at the university and that they are kept up to date on current issues. One interviewee described the relationship between internal marketing and engagement as follows:

*‘‘Yeah [it has an effect on engagement] and in positive way. I know what's going on. (...) It's integrating us. It's taking us closer to each other. You know, if somebody's doing well, that's good.’’ (E 10)*

Different commitment factors were also discussed with interviewees. The theme "freedom to do the work" could be formed from the five answers. The university gives its employees an opportunity to be independent and take responsibility for their own work, without excessive monitoring of what the employees are doing. According to one of the interviewees, freedom from working hours is one of the things that affects commitment, i.e., being able to choose what time of the day you do your work. Three interviewees said that the opportunity to do interesting work keeps the employee committed. Two interviewees said that when the university does well in various rankings, it keeps the employee committed to the organization. The material support offered by the university is perceived as one factor in terms of commitment, as well as the feeling of togetherness that comes from joint events. According to one interviewee, at LUT University you get to work with the best talent, and according to another, the source of motivation is hearing about other people's work, which formed the theme of an inspiring community. According to one interviewee, the feeling of commitment is increased by the fact that other university employees understand the importance of personal life in addition to work and that it is valued.

Some negative things also emerged that has an effect on one's commitment. Three interviewees said that the commitment was negatively affected by uncertainty about the continuation of the employment contract, and it also affected employee's well-being in a form of stress. One participant expressed a feeling that one's low salary has affected on commitment negatively. Regarding the salary issue, however, the interviewee again stated that you cannot really influence the matter yourself. One interviewee told that one had experienced a conflict among one's own work group, however, the interviewee told that the actions of the university's highest authorities in the situation were able to correct the situation and restore employee's commitment. The interviewee also added that if there are personal conflicts within the workplace, those greatly affect work commitment, especially if they are not taken seriously enough and taken care of on behalf of the employer. One interviewee stated that one's own attitude is the reason for weak commitment, and that the university's actions had no bearing on this. Four interviewees could not express an opinion on the matter at all.

The purpose of the next question was to find out what the interviewees considered to be the most important feature or features at LUT University which made them stay to work for the organization. Out of ten answers, the theme of "culture inside the university" could be derived. There are for example good relationships between people, employees have the opportunity for open discussion, and there is a trust among employees. Nine interviewees considered material support important, such as salary and provided healthcare services. From seven answers, the theme of work flexibility could be derived, which includes the person's ability to control their own workload and different work opportunities. Work-life balance was an important factor for three people. From four responses were able to form the theme that LUT University is a stable employer. One interviewee considered the university's reputation and the job itself as meaningful, and summed up own thoughts as it follows:

*‘‘I also like that there is this reputational element, I like to work for an employer who has a good reputation and is valued by others and respected, and also for me it is very important that my work is meaningful and it has higher purpose or value, so I work for making world a better place, I feel good about it and I think that is what LUT is providing.’’ (E 6)*

According to the interviewee, for some people it is important that the employer is reputed, which in turn can add one's commitment, as stated earlier. The nature of the job also affects staying at work, and for example, according to the interviewee, it is important to be able to make an impact on the world around you with your own work. The interviewee also added later that, for example, issues of sustainability are on the surface, and LUT University takes a strong position on them. Another interviewee was also of the opinion that the meaningfulness of the work is an important factor in terms of commitment.

Social support gives an opportunity to coordinate both personal and work life. Its purpose is also to ease the employee's feelings in difficult situations or to offer concrete help, for example in the form of material aid. Over the years, many crisis situations have occurred in the world, which may have affected both the physical and psychological endurance of employees. Social support related to crisis situations was emphasized in the answers of five

interviewees. The answers mainly emphasized the current crisis in Ukraine. Seven interviewees highlighted how they think the material support offered by the university is sufficient, which listed both issues related to coping with work (equipment and working facilities) and health services. Eleven interviewees mentioned that the activities organized by the university give them a sense of social support. The interviews also revealed how the interviewees considered it important that many of the workers have come from abroad, some even from far away from their own home country and separated from their families. In this situation the importance of social support is emphasized even more to make them feel at home and safe. Three interviewees also thanked the university for how the spouses who moved with them have been taken into account. From five answers, it was possible to form the idea that LUT University has an open and supportive community. One interviewee also said that feels that the social support between the people in the entire organization is strong and described the situation as follows:

*‘‘Social support is quite strong. If you have an opinion, then the others don't accept it, we still support it to have that opinion. Which is a, which is a good thing you know. (...) Without social support or being, being there for the others, the organization would, would fail fast.’’ (E 10)*

One interviewee also brought up the impact of the pandemic on social support, when everyone suddenly had to work from home and events were cancelled. However, the interviewee feels that social support is beginning to strengthen again after difficult years. One interviewee did not know how to express own thoughts on the subject at all. The experience of one interviewee was that the interviewee feels social support only from one's own supervisor and colleagues but according to interviewee's experience, there is no social support from the university, and feels it is poor. At the same time, the interviewee hoped for more support from the university, which would focus on the employees' well-being and on the emotional side. According to one interviewee, the university tries hard to do things for social support but feels that the reason may be its own extensive network outside the university. This is why the interviewee does not feel the social support given is good or necessary at this point.

As Kossivi et al. (2016) emphasised, employee's and one's supervisor's relationship is a one factor in terms of retention. From eighteen answers it could be concluded that supervisor's help is sufficient and good. It was described that the supervisor gives feedback, the supervisor is encouraging, and that the supervisor is interested in one's own well-being. One also added that feels own supervisor's encouragement to study and develop oneself also as a format of social support. Another interviewee, who thinks that own supervisor has not offered support, had just started, which is why one could not really say whether support was available or not. Another person who answered negatively stated directly that support is not available. One participant said that support is available when asked but otherwise the supervisor does not offer additional support. However, the interviewee added that feels it works well this way.

Thirteen respondents felt that they receive help from their colleagues. People have discussed about each other's topics, shared ideas, and supported each other in their personal lives as well. Also, two interviewees felt that their colleagues are interested in other's well-being. Two said that there is open communication between the team members. Perceived support, however, varies between teams, in which case some have not yet developed a sense of social support or have not yet been able to build a relationship with others. Two interviews revealed that, according to one interviewee, the other members of the team were too demanding, and according to another interviewee, a culture of helping has not been built within the team. The reason may be different cultural attitudes towards working or valuing independent work. Also, according to one interviewee, the widespread remote working has also caused a decrease in the feeling of social support.

When the interviewees were asked how they hoped the sense of social support could be further improved, seven wished for more joint activities within the team or with university employees in general to bring people together. Two interviewees revealed the difference between cultures, of which another added, that everyone should do their part for the sake of the community. There can be, for example, people's different cultural views on working, which might cause unnecessary disagreements among teams. These can be different attitudes

towards working life, for example if you come to work with even a small flu, even if it is acceptable in your own culture, for others such an action is completely the opposite. Cultural differences in people's working methods and performance can also cause conflicts between people, where in one's culture one should work almost around the clock, while for others this can cause exhaustion at work and thus burn out. The other participants could not express their opinion on how the situation could be improved, or they thought that everyone was fine and there is no need to improve the matter.

One part of social support can also be considered work-life balance, which is a big part of employees' coping at work. Six interviewees said that it is more their own responsibility to take care of their own work-life balance, although the university also encourages it. Freedom and flexibility were also mentioned in the interviews, which are felt to improve work-life balance. The employee can decide what time does one's work and everyone is free to go as long as one does own part. Six interviewees, on the other hand, said that their supervisors encourage to take break from work. According to another interviewee, one's own supervisor constantly asks how the employee is coping and even demands that the employee takes breaks from work. However, some interviewees said, that this is totally dependent on one's own supervisor and that they act differently. It may be that some supervisors encourage to continuous and hard work, which, according to the interviewee, promotes a slightly bad image, and which can eventually drive the employee to burn out. As already mentioned earlier, university's employees consist of citizens of different countries, many of whom have a different understanding of work, which has been adopted through their own culture, in which case the work ethic may be different from others and cause different views on work. In this regard, one interviewee also stated as follows:

*“I think this should also be somehow communicated by the university that it is important to take time off and it's, like no one will think less of you if you do it. This kind of unhealthy competition should be somehow worked with because it is present.” (E 6)*



However, the university has given instructions on how employees should take care of their own self-sufficiency, encourages to take holidays and time-off, and employees have been given working hours. The freedom to work from home brought by the pandemic also gives flexibility to balancing work life but may also lead to longer working hours. However, it is very much up to the employee oneself when one uses own working hours. One interviewee said that when doing creative work as a doctoral student, creativity does not look at the time of day. The interviewee added how it is entirely up to the employee to take care of coping and pacing the work. However, the university offers its employees an opportunity to do different projects and participate in teaching activities with courses, which balances the research work itself. Two interviewees said that through development discussions, one's own performance is also evaluated and factors affecting coping at work are discussed, so this gives a good opportunity to reflect on the employee's work-life balance with the supervisor. Two interviewees also expressed the wish that they would like the university to increase joint activities and recreation days that would take your mind off work.

Employer's reputation can influence on retention of employees as Nguyen et al. (2021) presented. Sixteen interviewees believed that reputation has its effect on retention. Two interviewees responded more to the perspective of how reputation influences attracting employees to the company. According to the other interviewee, the salary and the lack of permanent employment may cause that Finnish people do not to apply for an academic career as much as those from abroad. According to another interviewee, some employees apply to work in the company because of its good reputation but the reality is completely different and the employee leaves. At the same time, the interviewee stated that reputation has no effect on employee retention, rather more in recruiting.

A total of two were of the opinion that reputation has no effect on an employee's retention in the company. Both stated that their personal experiences with the employer and the happenings along the employment relationship have a greater influence on staying. At the same time, four were also of the opinion that the employee's personal experiences influence the decision to stay. They also think that employees pass on their experiences, causing them to spread within the organization and this may affect the reputation of the employer and the

decision of other employees to stay or leave. One interviewee said that the employer's reputation is somewhat important. As an example, the interviewee said that if one received two job offers, one of which had better job benefits, but the workplace atmosphere and community would not be as good as at LUT University, the interviewee would not change jobs, because the atmosphere is of great importance.

Many of those who responded positively thought about both the external reputation (received reputation through rankings) and the reputation of the employer itself (how it has treated its employees), both of which have their own aspects. The environment created inside the company by the employer seems to have a strong influence on the employee's decision to remain in the employment relationship. From nine points of view, it was possible to form an image that the employer's reputation and thus the employee's retention in the company strongly depends on how it treats its own employees. This included the general treatment of the employee in the company but also the conflicts faced by the employee and how those are solved. One interviewee described one's thoughts as follows:

*‘‘I think if you're at a place that you feel like there's a lot of room for growth, you're probably gonna stay a lot longer.’’ (E 11)*

As an international employee, you probably also automatically apply for a community where an international atmosphere is valued. This also applies to the employee staying at a company where an international environment and support networks are offered to the international employee, and where one feels safe. Two were also of the opinion that when the university offers the employee the resources to do the job, the employee will stay. One interviewee described as follows:

*‘‘If people feel that they can do good work here and have all the resources to have good job and that their work is appreciated, I think that is important.’’ (E 5)*

Also, the vision, mission and strategy of the workplace, such as the perspective of sustainability in the case of the case organization, are considered important in retention of employees. When sustainable development is on the surface, employees consider it important that the employer also participates in the action. On the other hand, two participants also added that if the employer's actions were unethical, employee would leave the company. In other words, values must meet on both sides to maintain the employment relationship. Another interviewee also referred to the topic, and further stated that social norms should also be confronted as well as gender politic questions.

According to two interviewees, it is good that one's employer appears in general ranking lists, which also helps to possibly get funding and looks good on a personal CV when thinking about career development. At the same time, there is a sense of pride in working for a reputable company, which in turn increases the feeling of permanence in the company. Another interviewee also said that knows people who have transferred to LUT University from elsewhere just because of its reputation, so in this situation the reputation has been a part of attraction, not in the retention itself. Also here, however, one must think about whether it was because the university is doing well in various ranking lists, or whether they have heard from someone how good an employer LUT University is, because it did not appear in the interview situation. One interviewee stated one's opinion about the reputation as it follows:

*“Reputation is always important in every, every step, because people are talking, people are communicating and there are social networks and you can just google LUT employee feedback and you can always read and as usual, people are writing only about bad stuff. It's, it's very important to just eliminate a bad reflection of the employee, and even if the contract ends, I think it's very important to finish this relationship, work relationship in a good way to eliminate this bad feedback.” (E 13)*

According to this, the good reputation of the employer should remain throughout the entire cycle, right from recruitment to when the employee decides to leave the company, or the employment relationship is terminated by the company, because the employee always has something to say about one's own experiences.

As a summary of the retention of employees, the following table (Table 6) shows the factors that affect positively and negatively on retention at LUT University.

Positively influencing factors	Negatively influencing factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good social support between employees and supervisors</li> <li>• Common activities with the community</li> <li>• Encouragement to work-life balance</li> <li>• Internal marketing</li> <li>• Good organizational culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A missing sense of social support</li> <li>• Lack of physical meetings and activities as an aftermath of COVID-19</li> <li>• Too demanding team or supervisor</li> <li>• More visible recognition of the work done</li> <li>• Uncertainty about one's employment causes stress</li> </ul>

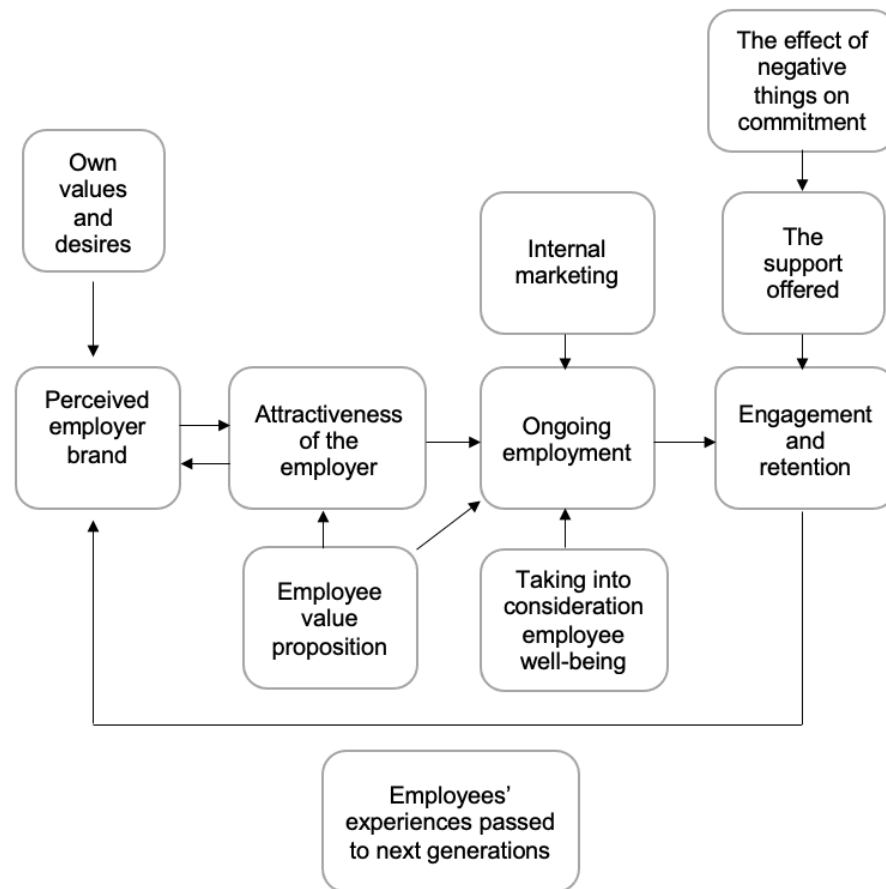
**Table 6.** Factors affecting positively and negatively the retention of employees at LUT University

## 5 Discussion and conclusions

The purpose of this chapter is to consider the research results in parallel with previously written literature. Section 5.1 contains the researcher's reflection on the topic and observations of the research results. Section 5.2 answers the research questions of the work, the purpose of which is to study the attractiveness of LUT University as an employer in relation to foreign job seekers. In this subsection the answers to the sub-research questions are also being presented, in which it was intended to find out how the case organization engages employees and how the employer's reputation effects on employee retention and commitment in the organization. Section 5.3 summarizes the conclusions of the work, and section 5.4 presents practical implications for the case organization. Finally, section 5.5 presents suggestions for future research.

### 5.1 Discussion

When an employee is looking for a suitable job, one usually chooses a job that matches one's own interests or values. Every employee has their own preferences, why they want to apply for a job at that particular company, and many things affect them. In this situation, the job seeker may also look for information about the employer online what kind of employer the company is considered to be. Some people may ask from others who have experiences of working for the company in question as it was highlighted in the interview results. As Benitez et al (2020) stated, companies without a high employer reputation are less able to attract, recruit and retain employees. Also, Dögl & Holtbrügge (2014) pointed out, that if a company has a high employer reputation, its employees are more engaged and perform higher because they want the best for the company's success. Before going deeper into the discussion of the work, the following figure (Figure 6) shows the researcher's interpretation made based on the interviews. In the figure below, the researcher has illustrated in outline which things effect on the attraction of employer and which things possibly effect on the retention of employees in the company.



**Figure 6.** The researcher's interpretation of factors affecting attractiveness and employee retention

As already presented at the beginning of the work in theoretical framework, the employer's attractiveness has a role when it starts looking for new employees from the labor market. In the case of LUT University, many employees have been influenced by the fact that they have personal experiences through master's studies of what the university is like. After their master's degree, they have wanted to continue working for the organization. These people have already been able to talk with existing employees, who have shared their own experiences about the employer, which explains the observation at the bottom in Figure 6: "employees' experiences transferred to the next generations". Figure 6 shows that the attractiveness of the employer brought by the company is a continuous cycle, which is greatly influenced by the employees' experiences with the employer, and which is further communicated to new, potential employees. As Reihlen & Werr (2012) pointed out, the

existing employees are the ones who pass their experiences about the employer to new generations.

From the very beginning of the employment relationship, it is good to make it clear to the employee what is expected from one but also what the company gives in return for the work done, more than the salary which every employee automatically assumes they will receive. The employee value proposition can act as a good incentive when looking for employees to work for the organization but at the same time the organization must stick to it in order to keep the employees working for it. Based on these value propositions, the employee also makes the decision to commit to the organization as Arasanmi & Krishna (2019) and Browne (2012) brought out in their studies. Basically, one could think that the employee is interested in hearing what the organization can give in return for the work done to the employee, and even more important that the value proposition is brought to the employee, so that the employee decides to stay.

It can be easily stated that if the employee has had bad experiences with the employer and the employee's experiences have not been corrected, the employee will not have a very good image of the employer. In order for employees to enjoy their work and stay in the employment relationship, the employer must address the grievances faced by the employees and correct them. This can also be a factor of commitment, that the employee trusts in one's own employer and its desire to do everything for the employee. Otherwise, the employee may decide to leave the company. It is important for employees that the employer gives the impression that they are cared for and that the company considers them as an important asset. Obiekwe & Uchechi Eke (2019) discussed in their work that with the help of handling the grievances faced by the employees, it will also be possible to identify possible problem situations in the future and offer solutions to them. In this way, the relationship between the management and the employees can also be kept open and the actions take place in mutual understanding.

While doing the interviews, I came to an understanding that LUT University's employer brand does not extend so much to those outside the university. The image of LUT

University's employer brand is formed when the employee starts to work at organization and forms one's own image or gets to talk with people who have already worked there. The interviews also showed that those who came from outside LUT University could not describe what kind of employer LUT University would be. As the researcher noticed in the empirical part of the work, the job advertisement did not really give a picture of the organization as an employer, but one could read more from the link below it. As Leekha Chhabra and Sharma (2014) pointed out, the purpose for the attractiveness of the employer is to communicate to potential employees the value proposition. In addition to this, the goal is to create a vision to job applicant's mind what are the benefits for working for the company. Also, as Backhaus & Tikoo (2004) discussed, employer brand can be seen as an identity of an employer. It would be good if the job advertisement itself opened up a little more about what the employee can expect from the employer. In this way, at first glance the interest of the job seeker might increase immediately even more towards the employer in question, because not everyone might notice the link. Figure 5 presented various employee value propositions listed by the university's employees, which had both tangible and intangible value propositions that could be used for this purpose, in addition to the existing information on LUT University's webpage.

The reasons for to apply for a job in the organization are other than having some kind of vision of LUT University as an employer. Those who have completed a master's degree at the university have been able to talk to existing employees who have shared their experiences, and from that they got some kind of an image of what kind of employer it is. One interviewee even expressed later in an e-mail after the interview that without master's programme at LUT University the interviewee would not have connections to the university nor an idea to continue personal career as a junior researcher. As Reis et al (2017) mentioned, the company can utilize its' employer reputation in developing an employer brand. However, many people know how valuable work is done at LUT University but what it offers to its employees, both intangible and tangible benefits, and what is the employer brand kind of is somewhat overshadowed. Those other reasons for external job seekers to apply to the university have been LUT's reputation outside the university, which has arisen, for example, from its rankings in various listings. Also, the positive agenda the university pursues in creating a better future through science could be seen as an attractiveness factor. Some also



feel a personal attraction to Finland or they think LUT University is a good addition to their career path. As Alnıaçık & Alnıaçık (2012) stated in their own research, job seekers cherish the employer's social value, which also includes the purposeful working of the company. The international environment revealed by the interviewees can also be said to have influenced the employees applying for a career at LUT University, just as Alnıaçık & Alnıaçık listed working environment as one of important factors when choosing a job. In the case of LUT University, its social value became the most important of all, because it combines both a pleasant environment for employees and its goal (sustainable development research) that both are important to employees.

As mentioned in the theory part, internal marketing can be seen as situations where employees are satisfied with their job description, or where the company's values, mission and vision are revealed to them, so that employees also understand why the work they do is important. If we think about LUT University's internal marketing, it could be said to be quite strong. The campus is surrounded by various green technology inventions (for example solar panels and a windmill), and employees are informed about various achievements. The interviews also revealed that some did not recognize internal marketing at all or that it is weak. Of course, the answers may be influenced by the fact that the interviewee did not fully understand what internal marketing actually is. However, it is completely up to the individual, how they perceive it affecting to individual's engagement with the organization. For some, it might increase pride and a sense of community. As Martyn Basset Associates (2021) expressed, internal marketing can have an effect on commitment. When employees' achievements and publications are boldly revealed, employees feel valued and through this employee engagement could increase. Also, as one interviewee pointed out, by bringing out the achievements of colleagues, people get to know each other. Also, when different studies are introduced, new research targets can be drawn from them. When achievements are also shared outside the organization, it gives a good image of itself, which in turn can increase the interest of potential job seekers.

During their working career, the employees have also had to face various crisis situations, when the need for social support has been strong. The rector's encouraging words also came

up in the interviews. Leaders have to prepare themselves for crisis management. An abnormal situation may undermine the working ability of the employees and thus the functions of the entire organization. Puyod & Charoensukmongkol (2021) discussed in their study that in crisis situations, timely and effective information provided by senior management ensures that the organization's employees are up-to-date. In this way, possible negative reactions can also be reduced. In crisis communication, it is also good to emphasize supporting colleagues. This can be practiced through organizational citizenship behavior, which refers to the employee's discretionary activities that are not directly related to the company's remuneration. This is, for example, supporting colleagues in their work problems or help them to handle workload. (Puyod & Charoensukmongkol 2021) Social support from top management can give employees the feeling that they are cared for.

The interviews revealed that most of the participants were satisfied with the work orientation of the university. The biggest problem that appeared in the interviews was filling out the time sheet. There were no major problems in the work orientation itself, so the HR policy prepared by LUT University regarding work orientation can be said to be successful. However, it was not clear from the responses whether this has had such a big impact on employee engagement, as Cloutier et al (2015) suggested.

Regarding the organizational culture of LUT University, based on the interviews, the case organization has an open culture among the employees where ideas can be openly shared with the higher organization level, which makes LUT University's organizational culture a flat one. As Islam et al (2013) listed, in addition to organizational culture in some companies there is also organizational learning culture. Based on the interviews, it could be said that a certain kind of organizational learning culture prevails at LUT University. It can also be seen from the university's HR policy (LUT University 2022c) that they encourage their personnel for self-development. The participants in the interview consisted of various employees doing research work, so it would be assumed that in the workplace in question employees are encouraged to develop themselves, are allowed to fulfill their work according to the organization's vision and mission, and dialogue is shared through the organization between the layers. When the people inside the organization can talk openly about everything, even

about difficult issues, it helps employees to perform better at work. Through this, the organization can also achieve better performance, as Jigjiddorj et al. (2021) and Lubis & Hanum (2020) brought out in their works.

Beardwell & Holden (2001) talked about soft and hard human resources management in their work. Of course, every company has its own financial goals. However, it is more important that people feel good in the organization so that they can do their work as well as possible. As Human resource management international digest (2020b) brought out, the support the employee receives can have an effect on one's own performance at work. Based on the interviews, it could be said that the management of LUT University has both parts of hard and soft management. However, those people who have experienced so-called hard management have at some point chosen to change their manager and team. Of course, this can again be a cultural difference, where someone from a culture of hard-working sees work differently. Through trust, commitment, and communication, i.e., the characteristics of soft HRM, the employee feels being a part of the community. However, it seems that LUT University has more of the soft HRM side of management than the hard side. Also, in accordance with the university's strategy, they want to invest in employees so that they feel well and have the resources to do the work.

Sandhya and Pradeep Kumar (2014) discussed how employee development can be one retention strategy. As other strategies, they listed, for example, recognition, work flexibility, work-life balance, and communication as important strategies. These dimensions also came up in the interviews, which were felt to be important from the point of view of retention. Other potential dimensions of retention were presented in the paper of May et al. (2004) where they discussed about the effect of psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability in retention of the employees. All of these dimensions could be identified from the interview results. Employees feel that they have the resources to do the work that is also considered as meaningful. At LUT University, people are allowed to be who they are and express themselves freely. Support is also available from both supervisors and colleagues, and there is a good organizational culture.

The thing that came to the researcher's mind while examining the interviews is the emphasis on different cultures in the work community. Since the employees of LUT University consist of citizens of different countries and therefore different cultures, many employees have different ways of working. Employees who come from countries where fast-paced work is valued may inadvertently affect others working in the same team in a harmful way. Some people can get stressed from working too hard and, at worst, burn out. It can also be a big threshold for some to stay home and rest if an employee has a cold. It should be made clear to employees that no one's dignity is measured by whether one comes to work sick. This can also cause conflicts within the team, as one interviewee expressed.

## 5.2 Answering to research questions

In this section, the research questions of the work are answered. First, the main research question is being answered to, after which the views on the sub-research questions are presented.

### ***RQ 1: How does LUT University attract employees coming from outside Finland?***

Based on the interviews, it can be said that LUT University's big attractiveness factor as an employer is its international environment it offers to its employees coming from outside of Finland. Also, the community that has formed to LUT University is international where those who come from elsewhere are not left alone and understand that the new environment is foreign for everyone. The interviews also revealed that the people who have completed their studies at LUT University already had a pleasant impression of other employer during their studies, and that the organization has an open culture, which is also one factor of attractiveness. For some of the interviewees, Finland, where LUT University is located, was also an attractiveness factor.

Based on the answers, many continue directly from master's studies to employment at LUT University. During their master's studies, they have formed some kind of vision, based on

other people's stories, of what kind of an employer LUT University is. They have also been able to spot in-house talent among existing employees, which has acted as attractiveness factor.

LUT University is also a locally large organization that collaborates with various companies. In this case, employees have the opportunity to network with different companies and expand their own networks. The university also gives its employees an opportunity to build an international network by getting to know other employees, which could help one build an international career in the future. These are also part of the employee value proposition given by LUT University, which some felt as attractive. Employees are also given the opportunity to participate in other projects and teaching work in addition to research work.

One factor is also the fact that those interested in research apply to LUT University because of its important sustainability agenda. The fact that an employee gets to do something significant through one's work can be an attractive factor. Through the interviews, you could also say that LUT University aims to be a sustainable workplace, where everyone is given the same opportunities, employees are taken care of, and they are given room to thrive.

### ***S-RQ 1: How does LUT University engage its employees?***

In order for an organization to be able to keep its employees, they must be engaged in some way and maintain the commitment. As one factor, you could consider the employee value propositions given by the university. Since LUT University has many international employees, the international environment it offers, and the good networking opportunities could be one of the factors of commitment when it comes to employees coming from abroad.

Many also mentioned that the social support they receive is perceived as valuable, both from the university's side and fellow colleagues' side, because many are away from their own country and far from their own support network. The pandemic that ruled the world for two years has, of course, taken its toll on the feeling of social support, as physical meetings have not been able to be organized as much as before. However, for example, the encouraging words of the university's rector have been of great importance, which has brought at least some of the interviewees a feeling of support in the form of words as well. This was also discussed in the study of Puyod & Charoensukmongkol (2021). Therefore, internal marketing can also have a great importance in terms of engagement when one gets a feeling of caring from the top management. Of course, here you have to remember that all individuals experience communication differently and it does not matter to everyone in terms of commitment. For some, the more important factors that increase the feeling of engagement to the organization is how the work they do is noticed and appreciated.

It is the task of all employers to ensure that a good employer does not only focus on providing material support but also gives the employee the opportunity to develop as a person and as an employee. Also, good employer allows the organization's employees to do exactly the work they are interested in within the organization, and invests in the employee's well-being and support, i.e., also offers that non-material support. A big part of commitment and the employee feeling engaged is the culture created in the workplace. In such a culture, there is open dialogue, interpersonal relationships are good, and everyone helps each other. These are the dimension that also Sandhya and Pradeep Kumar (2014) highlighted in their study and are seen as factors of retention.

Thus, LUT University also gets to engage its employees even more to the organization, when it offers its employees a good initial orientation and comprehensive support during the entire employment relationship. Providing social support also has a positive effect on the burnout experienced by the employee. When you are interested in the employee and one's well-being, it would be possible to prevent burnout in time. The employee gets the feeling that one is really cared for, and through this the employee's commitment can be increased. It is

good if the employer goes through with the employees every now and then whether they have all the necessary resources to do the work, especially from the psychological side.

A big part of commitment and the employee feeling engaged is the organizational culture created in the workplace. A good organizational culture makes people stay and it can also spread outside the organization, which can, on the other hand, increase the attractiveness of the organization. Based on the interviews, it could be concluded that for many LUT University employees, the people at the workplace are an important factor in terms of commitment. Therefore, the culture created by the working community also has its place. Employees want to be in a work community where everyone feels valued, and every individual is considered.

***S-RQ 2: How does the employer's reputation effect employee retention and commitment?***

When thinking about an employer's reputation, two different reputations should be distinguished in this question as Kanar et al. (2015) discussed. One is the employer's reputation, i.e., the reputation the company has as an employer, and the other one is the company's general reputation outside, such as its financial performance. An employer's reputation can be seen, for example, in how it has treated its employees, whether it gives them the opportunity to grow as people and in their careers, and how it takes them into account as individuals and their mental endurance, or whether the company runs a culture of burnout. This reputation can be visible both to existing employees within the workplace, and outside the company if people have shared their own experiences with people outside. Internal reputation is largely built on the words of the company's employees when they share their own experiences with other employees.

Part of the reputation is also how the company fares in different rankings or whether it approaches different aspects of sustainability in its operations. If the company has participated in unethical actions, it can have unattractive effect on a decision to apply for a job or stay working for particular company. Especially, the reputation which is visible to outside the organization greatly affects whether a job seeker decides to apply for a job at a company as Benitez et al. (2020) discussed in their research. Some of the interviewees also shared this opinion. Of course, it can also have an effect on retention if the values of employee and company do not meet.

When you think about how the employer has treated its own employees and what kind of reputation it has gained as a result, it has an effect for retaining the employee in the organization. The interviews also showed that when thinking about reputation, the employer's way of treating its employees is the biggest factor. If an employer has treated badly one of its own employees, one will probably share own experience and the word will start to spread. Of course, everyone is having personal experiences that should be considered and which probably do not happen to everyone, but it can still have negative effects on another employee's image of the employer. This can occur especially, if the issue has not been fixed or it has remained to bother one in some other way.

Based on the research, it could be concluded that the employer's mission and vision have an effect on the employee's retention in the organization. If the employer participates in creating a common good and participates in developing a better future with its actions, it also makes the employee commit to their work and do their part. If, on the other hand, the employer succeeds in various rankings, it would seem to be important for some people in terms of commitment and proudness. This gives the person a sense of pride, which makes the employee want to contribute even more to the organization's success. The organization's success should be boldly revealed both in internal marketing, where the information goes to the employees, and also outside the organization, so that it could potentially attract new employees.



### 5.3 Conclusions

Employers must think carefully how they can attract the best employees in the field to work for the organization. For this, companies should create an attractive employer brand. It is even more important that the organization gets its employees committed and, in this way, prevents knowledge and skills from escaping to a competing employer. Commitment is influenced by many things that the employee experiences during the employment relationship. The starting point for those applying for a job is to be able to do important and meaningful work. After this comes a work environment where important factors are trust among all employees, including senior management and supervisors. The employee also wants to be recognized for one's own work so that one feels that one is a valuable part of the community. Therefore, the feeling of social support is also a significant factor in order for the employee to feel that one is being heard. In addition to all this, it is good for the employee to grow as a person and professionally. People are not machines, and their needs should be listened to carefully. When an employee feels well and has all the necessary resources to do the job, one can achieve the best possible work performance.

LUT University attracts foreign employees by offering them an international environment and a place where everyone can fulfill themselves through research and other work opportunities. The culture inside the organization is open and there is trust between people. LUT University offers its employees a place where they can grow professionally, and the well-being of employees is taken care of. In the organization, employees feel that they receive social support both among the employees and from their supervisor. The employees of LUT University consist of citizens of many countries, so it offers a culturally rich environment where everyone can learn from each other. Offering an international environment is a good competitive factor in the international employer market. When an organization's employees consist of different cultures, it also means different habits related to working life. These can be, for example, the employee's goal orientation, work pace, and the person's work ethic.

## 5.4 Practical implications

It became clear from the interviews that the employer brand does not extend much outside of Finland. Considering how international employer LUT University is, its visibility as an international employer should be increased. As one interviewee stated, without a master's program the interviewee would have no information about the university as an employer. The university regularly publishes content on LinkedIn, which could be used for the employer's marketing internationally. Many people use it to look for work or to network with people who can share information about the employer in question. As revealed in the interviews, two of the interviewees had found the job advertisement through LinkedIn. One thing could also be that researchers' work and working days would be brought out more, for example, through social media, as it enables the global spread of information. LUT makes good use of Instagram in describing students' lives, but research students seem to be left a little behind. In this way, it would also be possible to increase interest towards research positions internationally when they get to show their lives as researchers as well as their work tasks.

The university has a good page where it presents itself as an employer and all the benefits employees receive, but this may go unnoticed by some when these are listed behind a link. It would be good if all the employee value propositions were already added to the job advertisement, in which case those would attract the attention at the very beginning. If the job seeker wants, one could read more information from the link. Various employee comments could also be added to the description of the employer, in which case they are subjective opinions and based on experiences.

## 5.5 Future research suggestions

In this work, it has been investigated what have been the attraction factors of a case organization and how it can retain its employees. Since some of the interviewees had come from another university, it could be interesting to study how LUT University differs from these employers. Through this, it would be possible to receive suggestions for improvement

based on experiences. The interviews also revealed that LUT University's employer brand does not extend abroad that much so it would be interesting to study those employees' perspectives on LUT as an employer when they have not had any kind of information about the organization.

Only 20 foreign employees of LUT University participated in this work and the work was done as a qualitative study. With the help of a quantitative study, it would be possible to obtain a larger sample. Also, it could be done so that all the LUT University's employees would be included, not just the international staff. Could be so that some topics would have new perspective when those are thought from Finnish participant's point of view. It could be studied even further how the employer preferences of Finnish and international employees differ from each other. Also, since LUT University is made up of different schools and employees form several teams, it could also be researched with focused samples whether these have any different practices when it comes to working life. It could also be researched whether the employee's own background affects on perceptions of different practices. These could be influenced by one's own culture, the employee's relationships with those who have studied or worked in the organization, or if those perceptions are influenced by family or friend connections in the country.

Since employee retention is an important part of an organization's competitiveness, it would be good to study engagement factors in more detail. It would be good to understand the difference between the views of the university's current employees and those who have left the organization. Especially the views of those who have left could have benefits in terms of retention strategy.

## List of references

- Aboramadan, M., Albashiti, B., Alharazin, H. & Zaidoune, S. (2020), Organizational culture, innovation and performance: a study from a non-western context, *Journal of Management Development*. Vol. 39. No. 4. pp. 437-451
- Ahmed, P. & Rafiq, M. (2003) Internal marketing issues and challenges. *European Journal of Marketing*. Vol. 37. No. 9. pp. 1177-1186
- Ajayi, O. M., Odusanya, K., & Morton, S. (2017). Stimulating employee ambidexterity and employee engagement in SMEs. *Management Decision*. pp. 1-19
- Ali, A. M. & Yusof, H. (2011) Quality in Qualitative Studies: The Case of Validity, Reliability and Generalizability. *Issues in social and environmental accounting*. 5.1. pp. 25-64
- Almıaçık, E., & Almıaçık, Ü. (2012). Identifying dimensions of attractiveness in employer branding: effects of age, gender, and current employment status. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 58. pp. 1336-1343
- Ambler, T. & Barrow. S. (1996) The employer brand. *Journal of Brand Management*. 4. pp. 185-206
- Arasanmi, C. N. & Krishna, A. (2019) Linking the Employee Value Proposition (EVP) to Employee Behavioural Outcomes. *Industrial and commercial training*. Vol. 51 (7/8), pp. 387–395
- Ariyanto, R. & Kustini, K. (2021) Employer branding and employee value proposition: The key success of startup companies in attracting potential employee candidates. *Annals of Human Resource Management Research (AHRMR)*. Vol 1. No 2. pp. 113-125
- Backhaus, K., Stone, B. & Heiner, K. (2002) Exploring the Relationship Between Corporate Social Performance and Employer Attractiveness. *Business and Society*. Vol. 41. No. 3. ABI/INFROM Collection. pp. 292-318

Backhaus, K. & Tikoo, S. (2004) Conceptualizing and researching employer branding. *Career Development International*. 9. 4/5. pp. 501-517

Barrera, M. & Ainlay, S. (1983) The structure of social support: A conceptual and empirical analysis. *Journal of community psychology*. Vol. 11. pp. 133-143

Belias, D. & Koustelios, A. (2014) Organizational Culture and Job Satisfaction: A Review. *International Review of Management and Marketing*. Vol. 4. No. 2. pp. 132-149

Bell, A. (2005) The Employee Value Proposition Redefined. *Strategic HR review*. Vol. 4(4).

Beardwell, I. & Holden, L. (2001) Human resource management: A Contemporary Approach. Pearson Education Limited. Third edition.

Beardwell, J. & Claydon, T. (2007) Human resource management: A Contemporary Approach. Pearson Education Limited. Fifth edition.

Benitez, J., Ruiz, L., Castillo, A. & Llorens, J. (2020) How corporate social responsibility activities influence employer reputation: The role of social media capability. *Decision Support Systems*. 129. pp. 1-33

Bibi, P., Ahmad, D. & Majid, A. H. A. (2018) The impact of training and development and supervisor support on employees retention in academic institutions: The moderating role of work environment. *Gadjah Mada International Journal of Business*. Vol. 20. No. 1. pp. 113-131

Bigliardi, B., Dormio, A., Galati, F. & Schiuma, G. (2012) The impact of organizational culture on the job satisfaction of knowledge workers. *Emerald Group Publishing Limited*. Vol. 42. No. 1. pp. 36-51

Browne, Ronald. (2012) Employee value proposition. *Beacon Management Review*. 2. pp. 29-36

Cloutier, O., Felusiak, L., Hill, C. & Pemberton-Jones, E. J. (2015) The Importance of Developing Strategies for Employee Retention. *Journal of Leadership, Accountability and Ethics*. Vol. 12(2). pp. 119-129

Deal, T., Kennedy, A. (1982). *Corporate Cultures. Penguin Books*. First Publication by Addison Wesley.

Dögl, C. & Holtbrügge, D. (2014). Corporate environmental responsibility, employer reputation and employee commitment: an empirical study in developed and emerging economies. *The international Journal of Human Resource Management*. Vol. 25. No. 12. pp. 1739-1762

Fernandez, C. (2007) Employee Engagement. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*. Vol. 13. Issue 5. pp. 524-526

Freeney, Y. & Tiernan, J. (2006) Employee Engagement: An Overview of the Literature on the Proposed Antithesis to Burnout. *The Irish Journal of Psychology*. Vol. 27. Nos. 3-4- pp. 130-141

Gilani, H. & Cunningham, L. (2017) Employer branding and its influence on employee retention. *The Marketing Review*. Vol. 1. No. 2. pp. 239-256

Harris, J. I., Winskowski, A. & Engdahl, B. (2007) Types of Workplace Social Support in the Prediction of Job Satisfaction. *The Career development quarterly*. Vol. 56 (2). pp. 150–156

Hirsjärvi, S. & Hurme, H. (2001) Tutkimushaastattelu: Teemahaastattelun teoria ja käytäntö. Helsinki. Yliopistopaino.

Hirsjärvi, S., Remes, P. & Sajavaara, P. (2009) Tutki ja kirjoita. 15. uudistettu painos. Hämeenlinna. Kariston Kirjapaino Oy.

Hodges, N. (2011) Qualitative Research: A Discussion of Frequently Articulated Qualms (FAQs). *Family & Consumer Sciences Research Journal*. Vol. 40. No. 1. pp. 90-92

Human resource management international digest. (2020a) Unlocking Concealed Value in the Employee Value Proposition (EVP): A Behavioral Journey through Employee Commitment Within the Work Environment. *Human resource management international digest*. Vol. 28 (5). pp. 41–43

Human resource management international digest. (2020b) Supportive Supervisors: The Key to Employee Retention? *Human resource management international digest*. Vol. 28 (2). pp. 39–41

Islam, T., ur Rehman, K., Norulkamar Ungku Bt. Ahmad, U. & Ahmed, I. (2013) Organizational learning culture and leader-member exchange quality: The way to enhance organizational commitment and reduce turnover intentions. *The Learning Organization*. Vol. 20. No. 4/5. pp. 322-337

Jigjiddorj, S., Zanaabazar, A., Jambal, T. & Semjid, B. (2021) Relationship Between Organizational Culture, Employee Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment. *SHS Web of Conferences*. 90. pp. 1-8

Jiony, M., Tanakinjal, G. Gom, D. & Siganul, R. (2015) Understanding the Effect of Organizational Culture and Employee Engagement on Organizational Performance Using Organizational Communication as Mediator: A Conceptual Framework. *American Journal of Economics*. 5(2). pp. 128-134

Joo. B-K. & Mclean, G. (2006) Best Employer Studies: A Conceptual Model from a Literature Review and a Case Study. *Human Resource Development Review*. Vol. 5. No. 2. pp. 228-257

Kahn, W. A. (1990) Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal*. 33. pp. 692–724

Kallio, K. (2022) LifeMagazine. Mandatum. Sitoutunut työntekijä seisoo palkitsemisen ja merkityksellisyyden risteyksessä. Published 25.5.2022. [Webpage] [Accessed 31.10.2022] Available: <https://www.mandatumlife.fi/life-magazine/2022/miten-palkitsemisella-ja-tyon-merkityksellisyydella-voidaan-vaikuttaa-osaajapulaan/>

Kamalaveni, M.S., Ramesh, S. & Vetrivel, T. (2019) A Review of literature on Employee Retention. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Management Studies (IJIRMS)*. Vol. 4. Issue 4. pp. 1-10

Kanar, A., Collins, C. & Bell, B. (2015) Changing an unfavorable employer reputation: the roles of recruitment message-type and familiarity with employer. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*. 45. pp. 509-521

Kauppalehti. (2022) Imago-hanke. Kilpailu osaavista työntekijöistä kiihtyy – Mikä työnantajabrändin rakentamisessa on tärkeintä juuri nyt? Published 15.3.2022. [Webpage] [Accessed 31.10.2022] Available: <https://www.kauppalehti.fi/kumppanisisallot/imago-hanke/haluatko-kehittaa-yrityksesi-tyonantajamielikuvaa-ja-rekrytointiosaamista-nyt-siihen-on-tilaisuus/>

Khan, S. (2014) Qualitative Research Method: Grounded Theory. *International Journal of Business and Management*. Vol. 9. No. 11. pp. 224-233

Kossivi, B., Xu, M. & Kalgora, B. (2016) Study on Determining Factors of Employee Retention. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*. 4. pp. 261-268

Kyndt, E., Dochy, F., Michielsens, M. & Moeyaert, B. (2009) Employee Retention: Organisational and Personal Perspectives. *Vocations and Learning*. pp. 1-21

Leekha Chhabra, N. & Sharma, S. (2014) Employer branding: strategy for improving employer attractiveness. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*. Vol. 22. No. 1. pp. 48-60

Lubis, F. & Hanum, F. (2020) Organizational Culture. *2nd Yogyakarta international conference on educational management/administration and pedagogy (YICEMAP 2019)*. Atlantis Press. pp. 88-91

Lund, D. (2003) Organizational culture and job satisfaction. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*. Vol. 18. No. 3. pp. 219-236

LUT University. (2022a) Get to know us. Introducing the University. [web page]. [Accessed 8.9.2022]. Available: <https://www.lut.fi/web/en/get-to-know-us/introducing-the-university>

LUT University. (2022b) Introducing the University. Strategy. [webpage]. [Accessed 14.6.2022]. Available: <https://www.lut.fi/en/node/42/strategy>

LUT University. (2022c) HENKILÖSTÖPOLITIikka - HR POLICY. University management. HR policy. [webpage]. [Accessed 17.11.2022] Available (only for LUT University's personnel and students): <https://intranet.lut.fi/universitymanagement/henkilostopolitiikka/Pages/Default.aspx?authToken=eyJ0eXAiOiJKV1QiLCJhbGciOiJSUzI1NiIsIng1dCI6ImdqZldRT0tWNjQ2SGxxd25PWnFEcWJoRmJGVVSj9.eyJhdWQiOiJ1cm46QXBwUHJveHk6Y29tIiwiaXNzIjoiaHR0cDovL2ZzLmx1dC5maS9hZGZzL3NlcnZpY2VzL3RydXN0IiwiaWF0IjoxNjY4NTE4OT>



g1LCJleHAiOjE2Njg1MjI1ODUsInJlbHlpbmdwYXJ0eXRydXN0aWQiOiI4ODAxZmM2ZC02NGY1LWU0MTEtODBjZS0wMDUwNTY5YzRhMTgiLCJ1cG4iOiJuZWxsaS5sYWloYW51bkBzdHVkZW50Lmx1dC5maSIsImNsaWVudHJlcWlkIjoieYzU2OWMzMGMQQtZTI5Ny0wMDAwLWFkNTMtNmZjNTk3ZTJkODAxIiwieYXV0aG1ldGhvZCI6InVybJpvYXNpczpuYW1lc3p0YzptQU1MOjIuMDphYzpjbgGFzc2VzOiBhc3N3b3JkUHJvdGVjdGVkVHJhbnNwb3J0IiwieYXV0aF90aW1lIjoieMjAyMi0xMS0xNVQxMzoyOT00NS44Nz daliwidmVyljoiMS4wIn0.PpwmEgofQ4DRLUrYG5ivdo6pSLnB2Jk7GyufLNcHnD3OPoSJAbxR36JCn9VjKulJLo5vVs1Rt7pgxPA1RxZNJh7sg7cFTk0pw\_nt9\_vuoOHsOICkOqVDGLxoQtahU0OQhwKEkDoORluDVCuyt5mZaJJbMqYxwLI9VALRg1xeDdXK-V2Xbatk71wyKyCqbPq\_Vz2ZrzFDicjeGqj8b9uPWwfCMJbe8tVuezSfOKkWi6HDolOC OrodFccoE2ODDVY\_HNISLNdmd8pWZHLMDOhrG4\_p7r3k3IGl3bfrptZhKmAiY3te23yVS0DtbDhTiVTDugEEO3PxUmxbwD0QhP9w&client-request-id=c569c30d-e297-0000-ad53-6fc597e2d801

LUT University. (2022d) LUT University. About us. Come work with us. LUT as an employer. [webpage]. [Accessed 13.11.2022]. Available: <https://www.lut.fi/en/about-us/come-work-us/lut-employer>

May, D., Gilson, R. & Harter, L. (2004) The psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability and the engagement of the human spirit at work. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*. 77. pp. 11-37

Markos, S. & Sridevi, M. (2010) Employee Engagement: The Key to Improving Performance. *International Journal of Business and Management*. Vol. 5. No. 12. pp. 89-96

Martyn Bassett Associates. (2021) Internal Marketing: What It Is and Why You Need It. [Webpage]. [Accessed 9.8.2022]. Available: <https://www.mbassett.com/blog/internal-marketing>

Merriam, S. B. (2002) Introduction to qualitative research. *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. 1(1). pp. 1-17

Merriam-Webster. (2022) 'Deduction' vs. 'Induction' vs. 'Abduction'. Learn the differences between these three types of reasoning. [webpage]. [Accessed 2.12.2022]. Available: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/deduction-vs-induction-vs-abduction>

Nayak, B. & Barik, A. (2013) Assessment of the link between Organizational culture and job satisfaction (Study of an Indian Public Sector). *International Journal of Information, Business and Management*. Vol. 5. No. 4. pp. 47-61

Nguyen, M., Nguyen, V. & Bui, T. (2021) Employer Attractiveness and Employee Performance: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of System and Management Sciences*. Vol. 11. No. 1. pp .97-123

Obiekwe, O. & Uchechi Eke, N. (2019) Impact of employee grievance management on organizational performance. *International Journal of Economics and Business Management*. Vol. 5. No. 1. pp. 1-10

Patton, M. (1990) Qualitative evaluation and research methods. *Beverly Hills, CA: Sage*. pp. 169-186

Pawar, A. & Charak, K. S. (2015) Efficacy of Employee Value Proposition on Enactment of Organizations. *International Journal of Advance Research and Innovative Ideas in Education*. Vol. 1. Iss. 5. pp. 890-896

Pritchard, K. (2014) Using employee surveys to attract and retain the best talent. *Strategic HR Review*. Vol. 13. No. 2. pp. 59-62

Puyod, J. V. & Charoensukmongkol, P. (2021) Interacting Effect of Social Media Crisis Communication and Organizational Citizenship Behavior on Employees' Resistance to Change During the COVID-19 Crisis: Evidence From University Employees in the Philippines. *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review*. Vol. 21. No. 3. pp. 1-15

Reihlen, M. & Werr, A. (2012) Handbook of Research on Entrepreneurship in Professional Services. *Edward Elgar Publishing Limited*.

Reis, G. G., Braga, B. M., & Trullen, J. (2017) Workplace authenticity as an attribute of employer attractiveness. *Personnel Review*. Vol. 46. No. 8. pp. 1962-1976

Reis, I., Sousa, M. & Dionísio, A. (2021) Employer Branding as a Talent Management Tool: A Systematic Literature Revision. *Sustainability*. 13. pp. 1-22

Rombaut, E. & Guerry, M-A. (2020) The effectiveness of employee retention through an uplift modeling approach. *International Journal of Manpower*. pp. 1-22

Saks, A. (2006) Antecedents and consequences of employee engagement. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*. Vol. 21 No. 7. pp. 600-619

Saks, A. & Gruman, J. A. (2014) What Do We Really Know About Employee Engagement? *Human resource development quarterly*. Vol. 25 (2). pp. 155-182

Sandhya, K. & Pradeep Kumar, D. (2014) Employee retention – A strategic tool for organizational growth and sustaining competitiveness. *Journal of Strategic Human Resource Management*. Vol. 3. Iss. 3. pp. 42-45

Schlechter, A., Hung, A., & Bussin, M. (2014). Understanding talent attraction: The influence of financial rewards elements on perceived job attractiveness. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management/SA Tydskrif vir Menslikehulpbronbestuur*. 12(1). Art. #647. pp 1-13.

Singh, R. P. (2021) Employer branding literature review. *Journal of Human Resource*. Vol. 1. No. 2. pp. 105-112

Sivertzen, A-M., Nilsen, E. & Olafsen, A. (2013) Employer branding: employer attractiveness and the use of social media. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*. 22/7. pp. 473-483

Skjott Linneberg, M. & Korsgraad, S. (2019) Coding qualitative data: a synthesis guiding the novice. *Qualitative Research Journal. Emerald Publishing Limited*. Vol. 19. No. 3. pp. 259-270

Starling, S. (2022) Quiet Quitting: What to Know & How to Prevent It. *Arkansas Business*. Vol. 39. Iss. 38. pp. 29

Streeter, C. & Franklin, C. (1992) Defining and Measuring Social Support: Guidelines for Social Work Practitioners. *Research on Social Work Practice*. Vol. 2. No. 1. pp. 81-98

Sultana, N. & Bushra, B. (2013) Employee retention practices in Indian corporate – A study of select MNCs. *International Journal of Engineering and Management Sciences*. Vol. 4. (3). pp. 361-368

Sun, S. (2008) Organizational Culture and Its Themes. *International Journal of Business and Management*. Vol. 3. No. 12. pp. 137-141

Tanwar, K. & Prasad, A. (2016) Exploring the Relationship between Employer Branding and Employee Retention. *Global Business Review*. Vol. 17(3S). pp. 186-206

ten Brummelhuis, L., Oosterwaal, A. & Bakker, A. (2012) Managing Family Demands in Teams: The Role of Social Support at Work. *Group & Organization Management*. 37(3). pp. 376-403

Torrington, D., Hall, L., Taylor, S. & Atkinson, C. (2011) Human resource management. *Pearson Education Limited*. Eight edition.

Tuomi, J. & Sarajärvi, A. (2003) Laadullinen tutkimus ja sisällönanalyysi. 1–2. painos. Helsinki. Kustannusosakeyhtiö Tammi.

Tuomi, J. & Sarajärvi, A. (2018) Laadullinen tutkimus ja sisällönanalyysi. Uudistettu laitos. Helsinki. Kustannusosakeyhtiö Tammi

Verčič, A. (2021) The impact of employee engagement, organisational support and employer branding on internal communication satisfaction. *Public Relations Review*. 47. pp. 1-7

Verčič, A. T. & Ćorić, D. S. (2018) The relationship between reputation, employer branding and corporate social responsibility. *Public Relations Review*. Vol. 44. Iss. 4. pp. 444-452

Verna, D. & Ahmad, A. (2016) Employer Branding: The Solution to Create Talented Workforce. *IUP Journal of Brand Management*. Vol. 13 (1). pp. 42–56

## **Appendix 1. Interview questions**

### **The interview questions**

1. Age?
2. Gender?
3. Country of birth?
4. From where did you find an open job position at LUT University?

### **Employer reputation**

5. What exactly made you apply for a job at LUT University?
6. How has the university described itself as a workplace for job seekers?
7. How would you describe LUT's employer brand?
8. What was your perception of LUT University as an employer before you applied to work for the company?
9. Where or from whom you had obtained information about the employer?
10. What assumptions did you have about the working atmosphere at LUT University?
11. How would you now describe the university's working atmosphere?
12. How was the university described as an employer in a job interview or was it described at all?
13. How would you now describe LUT as an employer?
14. How would you describe the university's organizational culture?

15. How could the university even improve its attractiveness? Any suggestions?

### **Employee retention**

16. What did you think about the university recruitment process?

17. What did you think about job orientation, was it smooth? Why / why not?

18. Did the university make it clear enough what their employee value proposition is? What is included in LUT's employee value proposition?

19. Has the university delivered on its promise of employee value? In what ways?

20. Do you feel engaged to LUT University as an employee? What could possibly make you feel more engaged?

21. Do you think the university implements internal marketing and in which ways? How has this affected your engagement to the university?

22. What things have affected on your commitment to the workplace?

23. What do you think are the most important things that have affected your retention at the university? (Meaning the features of the university what have they offered)

24. How would you describe the university's social support?

25. Is there social support both from your co-workers' side and supervisors' side? How the feeling of social support could be improved?

26. How does the university take into account employees' work-life balance?

27. Do you feel that the reputation of the employer has an effect on the retention of employees in the company? In which ways?

## Appendix 2. Coding of the work

<b>Attractiveness factors of LUT University</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Talented employees (5)	Talented workforce of LUT University
Finland attractiveness (6) Close to home country (1)	Locational attractiveness
LUT reputation in rankings (4)	Reputational attractiveness
Opportunities and other employment benefits offered (8)	EVP attractiveness
Good possibilities for international employee to get an employment contract (3) Open environment for international people (3) Multicultural ecosystem (1)	Internationally driven workplace
Great place to be (2) Open and friendly community (3)	Organizational attractiveness
Green and sustainability focus (2)	Company focuses on sustainability issues
Good experience through studying at LUT (2)	Good past experience of LUT University
Good place to grow networks (2)	Providing good connections

<b>Description about the employer given by LUT University</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Work-life balance described (1) Equal treatment of every employee (1) Employee satisfaction kept important (1)	Employee well-being
Compensation (2)	Material support
Attention to sustainability in research (2) Green campus (1)	Sustainability focus in research
Open and friendly environment (2) Strong work ethics (1) International community (2)	Work environment description
Being a Trailblazer (2) Possibility to be innovative (1) Flexible environment (doing what you are interested in) (2)	Intangible value promise

<b>Described employer brand</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Sustainability orientated research and science (2)	Sustainability orientation
Attractive university from job perspective (1)	Giving a promise of attractive job
Results-orientated (1)	Results-orientated
Salary comes in time (1)	Compensation for the work done
International employer (1)	International employer
Positions are independent (1) Flexible employer (1) Many opportunities as an employee (1) Possibility to work from home (1)	Freedom given to employees
Development discussions (1) Support for career development (1)	Focusing on personal growth
Being close to employees (1) Integrating international employees to the community through common activities (1) Giving a vacation for employees (1)	Taking care of employees' well-being
A generally respected brand at universities outside of Finland (1)	General appreciation towards universities as an employer
Pioneering university in many levels (1)	Pioneering employer
Good visibility but not very popular (1)	Not popular option among others
Difficult to describe / not given description from the interviewee (5) People coming from outside LUT University have no idea (1) No information about LUT University before applying (1) No information how the university is organized (1)	No full image of the employer brand
Not introduced to the team (1)	Not given full support what hoped for
Hoping for more international promoting of the university (2) More international collaboration with other companies abroad (1)	Promoting the University more abroad



<b>Perceptions of LUT University as an employer before the job</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Work-orientated culture (3)	Work-orientated culture
Locational marketing of Lappeenranta campus beside the lake Saimaa (1)	Locational impression
The employer respects employees work-life balance (1) Giving the employees a possibility to have free time (1) Relaxed employees (1) Flexible employer (1) Happy employees (1) People are not verbally abused (1) Employees are being paid (1)	Taking care of employees and their needs
Same opportunities for everyone despite their age (1)	An equal employer
Talented employees (2)	Place of talented people
Dynamic and interactive society (2) You get support for your own visions (1) Non-hierarchical (1)	Good organizational culture
Collaboration with companies (1)	Expanding personal network
Innovation focused employer (2)	Innovation focused
Well-organized company (1)	Well-organized company
Focused on sustainability (1)	Sustainability focused employer
Differences in teams of team-workloads (1)	Conflicts within work teams
No perceptions (4)	No perceptions about the employer

<b>Working atmosphere assumptions</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Intense working conditions (2)	Culture of hard working
Not open communication (due to culture difference) (1)	No communication inside the workplace
Very international (2)	International atmosphere
Green focus (1) Doing sustainable research (2)	Sustainability focus
High level of education and research (1)	Talented workforce
You have everything to cope with the work (1) Cozy atmosphere (1)	Well-organized company
Transparent culture (1)	Organizational culture
Everyone's taken into account (2) Friendly staff (4) Helpful atmosphere among employees (2) Open-minded atmosphere (1) Relaxed environment (1)	Respectful and friendly environment among employees
Working with big groups (1)	Working with many people
Just professors working there (a vision back from student times) (1)	No other employees than professors teaching
No assumptions (4)	No assumptions

<b>Working atmosphere at LUT University</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Everyone's trusted to do the work (3)	Trust
Relaxed working atmosphere (5) Friendliness (2) Everyone's helping each other (4) Good atmosphere (3) Good work-life balance (1) Making friends at work (1)	Pleasant working atmosphere
Some supervisors stricter than others (1)	Some demanding supervisors
International environment (2)	International environment helping to integrate
People are taken into account (1) Questionnaires to ensure the well-being of employees (1)	Employees are taken care of
People get along inside the group (1)	Good group dynamic
Bringing own ideas is allowed and supported (3)	Open culture
Some administrative burdens (1)	Administrative burdens
Decreased community spirit and mood of employees due to the pandemic (3) Missing the team meetings (1)	COVID-19 effects
Feeling of loneliness (1)	Not feeling being part of community
People not getting along inside the group (1)	Issues in group dynamics
Too little working space at the office (1)	Not enough working space
Decreased interaction between people (1)	People do not interact

<b>Employer description in job interview</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Practical matters were introduced (1)	Introduction to the university
Description about the working environment (1)	Work environment description
Strategy was introduced (1)	Introduction of university's strategy
Research orientated (1)	Research orientated
Collaboration with companies (1)	Possibility for collaboration with companies
Focused only on job applicant him/herself (1)	Only talk about the job applicant
Employee was given a job description and was explained his/her contribution to the position (10) No description about the employer (15)	Job description given about the position, not about the employer itself
No job interview (2)	No job interview

<b>LUT as an employer</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Freedom to choose the topic to do research of (3) Not too much guidance to do the work (1) Giving the opportunity to thrive (2) Offering possibilities and opportunities for employees (3)	Freedom to do the work
Employee has everything to do the work (2) Resilient employer (1) Agile organization (1)	Work is well organized
Ability travel and attend to events and network (3)	Giving possibility to network
Good and transparent salary system (3) Possibilities for bonuses (1)	Attractive compensation
Giving its employees an international environment (3) A melting pot (1)	Offering an international environment
Employees are taken into account and cared of (3) Work is appreciated (1) Feeling that the university invests in its' employees (2) Employees are given the possibility to develop themselves (1)	Employees are considered important
Communication between employee and supervisor is good (1) Questions can be presented, and answers are given on behalf of the employer (2)	Good communication
Satisfied with the employer (2)	Satisfied with the employer
Focusing on green transition (1) Impactful research (1)	Employer focuses on sustainability
Some professors are too demanding regarding the workload (1)	Close supervisor misusing the power
Some bureaucratic things arising and affecting on motivation (1)	Bureaucracy affecting motivation
Weird to ask money from supervisor (applying for bonus from publication) (1) Gets time to get new equipment (1)	Hoping for a better process
Lack of permanent contracts (1)	Uncertainty about the continuation of work

<b>Organizational culture of LUT University</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
People are being respected (2)	LUT cares about its employees
Open culture (4) Friendly culture (2) Feels like employees have a voice (1) Good communication between people (4) Community of trust and agility (1) Cooperative culture (2)	Open culture
Relaxed organizational culture (2)	Relaxed culture
Encourages employees' personal growth (8)	Self-development is encouraged
Goal-orientated culture (1)	Goal-orientated culture
An organization with multiple layers (2) Hard to find a people who is responsible of something (1) Decisions needs many people's approval (1) Overly organized (1) Direct supervisor too strict (1)	Hierarchical organization
No hierarchy (3) Everyone has their own place (1) Higher levels very friendly and approachable (6) Strong visions are supported by higher level (1)	Flat organization
Difficult to understand the culture (1)	Not a vision of an organizational culture
Wishes more room for learning (1)	Wishes more self-development

<b>Ideas of improving the attractiveness of the employer</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Telling more about the employment and its benefits (3) Incorporate the "land of the curious" into the job positions (1)	Clear employee value proposition
No one explained what to do with timecard (1)	Better employee orientation
More attractive salary (2)	Improvement for salary
Not selling enough itself (3) More visibility abroad (4) Popularizing more research (1)	Increasing LUT University's visibility
More Finnish lessons (1)	More Finnish lessons
Taking more control on work distribution (1)	More control on work loads
More international cooperation with other international companies (1)	More international cooperation

<b>Feeling about LUT University's recruitment process</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Transparent (6)	Transparent recruitment
Fast experience (4) Systematic feeling of recruitment (3)	Fast recruitment
No recruitment experience (4)	No recruitment experience
Did not expect so many tests and it felt exhausting (1) Complicated process (1) Bureaucratic process (1)	Complicated recruitment experience

<b>Job orientation experience at LUT University</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Ritual job orientation (5) Good instructions for example to taxation matters (1) All needed procedures before arrival were explained (1)	Good feelings about job orientation
HR team was supportive for any additional questions (2) Management of the research team was supportive for any additional questions (1)	Good overall support from the university's staff
Performance valuation was not clear (1) Weak time sheet orientation (4) Bad feelings towards the job orientation (1) Wasn't completely sure of one's own areas of responsibility (1) Missing information about the unemployment funds (1) Mikkeli's orientation was bad (1) Would have liked to have more job orientation than one received (2) Would have wanted a PDF guide about practical matters (1) PDF guide wasn't enough (1)	Somewhat lacking orientation / missing information
Explanatory welcome from higher level than just from the department (1) Too dry job orientation (1) Encourages people to attend to orientation meetings (1) Hoping for help in moving (1)	Additional

<b>LUT employee value proposition</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Being a Trailblazer (2) Confidence of continuous employment (1) Freedom to do research about topics you are interested in (1) Professional growth (1) Personal growth (1) Gaining new knowledge (1) Networking with local companies (1) International environment (1) Employee will be taken care of (1)	Intangible value proposition
Material support such as laptop, office, health services (5) Salary (8) Finnish language courses (1) Research trips (1)	Tangible value proposition
Was unsure if it is possible to get a new laptop (1)	Unclear material support
Employment contract doesn't show how much one is being paid (1)	Unclear salary
No understanding of the LUT University's employee value proposition (7)	No understanding of the LUT University's employee value proposition

<b>Things making employee more engaged to LUT University</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
More (informal) activities together (10) More Finnish language courses (1) Presentation events where people can get to know each other's topics (1) Dean's coffee moments are good (1)	Activities
Practicing presentation skills (1)	Developing presentation skills
Giving more recognition and visibility to work done (1)	Adding employee's visibility and giving recognition
The system is based on grants, so the system fails (1)	More stability to funding
Working more with other schools or teams (1) More collaboration with other students (1)	More collaboration with other PhD students
The university doesn't have very strong union, representative is missing for jr. researchers (1)	Hoping for a representative
If LUT would have a campus near Helsinki (1)	Adding a campus to capital area of Finland

<b>Internal marketing of LUT University</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Information about events through email (7) Information through intra (2) Newsletter what is happening, also overall in Lappeenranta city (5) Reports about the university receiving funding or improvement in rankings (2) Posters (1) Picture on computer screen about the university's strategy (1) Social media marketing (1) Rector's messages and friendly behavior towards people (1)	LUT University's internal marketing
Solar panels and windmill outside (1)	Showing concretely internal marketing
Interviews of the university's employees (2) Bringing out if someone has won a prize/rewarded (1)	Helps getting to know to people
Hoping for more effort on internal marketing (1) Intra is poor tool (1)	More effort on internal marketing

<b>Things affecting on commitment</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
To be in charge of one's own work (1) The opportunity to do research that interests one (3) Ability to choose one's own working hours (1)	Freedom to do the work
The LUT University's culture has drawing effect (1)	The LUT University's culture
Working with the best talent (1) Hearing about everyone's research and get motivated from that (1)	Inspiring community
The reputation of the university (2)	Reputational aspect
Good bonus system (1) LOAS apartment (1) Good facilities of the university (1)	Material aid given by the university
Developing and growing employer (1)	Stable employer
Doing activities together (1)	Team activities
Some professors also understand that there is a personal life (1)	Valuing personal life
Bad people chemistry (1) Feeling that no one cared even though an issue was recognized (1)	Bad personal experiences
Low level salary (1)	Low salary
The uncertainty of the continuation of the employment relationship caused stress (2) Issues with contracts has affected dis-commitment (1)	The uncertainty about the employment

<b>Things affecting to retention</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Overall helpful organization (3)	Helpful atmosphere
Providing LOAS housing (1) Good laboratory facilities (1) Salary is enough (3) Good overall funding possibilities (1) Healthcare (2) Sport facilities (1)	Material support given
Availability to control own workload (5) Different opportunities inside the university (2)	Work flexibility
Providing work-life balance (1) Providing vacation (1) Families are also involved in activities (1)	Work-life balance
Good relationships with people (2) Rector's communication style with people received positively (1) Open dialogue between people (3) Talented people from whom you can ask questions (1) High level of trust (1) Having a possibility for individual development (1) Relaxed environment among employees (1)	The culture inside the university
Good working conditions (1)	Working conditions
One keep getting new projects (1) Continuous employment (1) Large organization (1) Economic stability (1)	Stable employer
Good reputation of LUT University (1)	Reputational aspect
Possibility to do meaningful work (2)	Meaningful work
Everyone's having the same opportunities at work (1)	Equal treatment of employees
The nature in Lappeenranta (1)	Nature aspect



<b>LUT University's social support</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Quite good social support (2)	Quite good support
Good material aid (healthcare, working equipment, facilities) (7)	Material aid
Helping to cope with stress in crisis situations (5)	Crisis situation support
Organizing events to bring people together (7) Informing about events happening in Lappeenranta (3) Finnish mentality course, which helps you learn to understand Finnish culture (1)	Activities
Employees' family members are also being noticed with activities (3)	Taking into consideration families
Everyone's allowed to have their own opinions (1) Open communication between people (1) People helping each other (2) Helpful HR team (1)	Open and supportive community
Poor social support (1) Feels like the university needs to improve social support towards family members (1) The effects of COVID-19 to the feeling of social support (1)	Negative experience of social support

<b>Supervisor and employee level social support</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
Supervisor had helped to collaborate with other researchers (1)	Collaboration help
Co-workers help each other (13) Co-workers are interested in one's well-being (2) Other co-worker helping in practical matters (helping with Finnish authorities for example) (1) Open communication between team members (2) Easy to make friends with one's colleagues (1)	Described co-worker support
Supervisor gives feedback (2) Supervisor is supportive (10) Supervisor is interested in one's well-being (5) Development discussions as one form of social support (1) One's supervisor is giving help when needed, otherwise not giving extra help (1) Supervisor encourages to learn (1)	Described supervisor support
Feels like there is no helping culture between employees in team (1)	Employees not helping each other
Remote working has affected to the feeling of social support received from colleagues (1)	Effects of remote working to received social support
Supervisor is not offering help (1)	No help from supervisor
In some teams co-workers are too demanding (1)	Demanding co-workers

<b>Improving the feeling of social support of LUT University</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
More free time activities among employees (3) More meetings among the team (1) More mutual meetings with junior researchers and research assistances (1) Seminars where people get to present their own research (2)	More employee meetings
Emphasizing different working cultures and that everyone's having their own working methods (1) Emphasizing different backgrounds of people (1)	Emphasizing different cultures and ways people cope with things
Will be naturally improved when getting back to offices (1)	Post-COVID behavior
Building 2 needs more places where people can get together and talk in peace (1)	More space for employees to gather in peace

<b>Described work-life balance at LUT University</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
As long as one does one's own parts, one is free to go home (2) No one is micromanaging (1) Working hours can be decided during the day (if one needs for example to go somewhere during the day) (4)	Freedom and flexibility
Supervisor encourages to take brake from work (6)	Supervisor supports free time from work
Supervisor asks the employees how their colleagues are doing (1)	Supervisor is interested in employees' well-being
Possibility to have a vacation from work (1) University is emphasizing to have free time from work (2)	University's encouragement
Official working hours from the university (1)	Giving working hours
Dependable on supervisor if one is interested in employee's work-life balance (1) Each team has a different understanding of work-life balance (1)	Different attitudes towards work-life balance
The opportunity to participate in teaching work or various projects gives variety to research work (1)	The variability of the work makes it easier to cope
Feels like supervisor does not care about work-life balance (1)	Supervisor does not support work-life balance
Supervisor supports hard working (1)	Supervisor supports hard working
It is employee's own responsibility to take care of their work-life balance (6)	Taking care of work life balance by oneself
Some people are stressed and starts working from home after full day at work (1) Despite of official working hours some people work on evenings and weekends (1)	Working overtime
University's being open all the time encourages people to work evenings and weekends (1)	University's open times
Development discussions to check up (2)	Development discussions
The quality of work (creative work) makes it hard to restrict working to some particular hours of the day (1)	Quality of work has an effect on balance
Wishes that more wellness-focused activities would be offered (2)	Doing activities that take away from work

<b>Effect of employer's reputation to retention</b>	
<b>Code (frequency)</b>	<b>Themes</b>
People want to come from elsewhere to work for LUT University because of its' reputation (1) Reputation plays only a role in hiring (2) Good culture reflects outside and makes people want to apply (1)	Reputational benefits in hiring
The fact that the university seems to care about the employees matters (7) Employees conflicts are being noticed and fixed (2) The work done is appreciated (1)	University takes into account its' employees
Working for a reputed university makes one proud to be part of it (1) Reputation in one's own career development (1)	Reputation makes people stay
If employees feel that they have all resources to cope with work, they will stay (2)	Resources to cope with work
International environment for international employees (2)	Employer branding itself as international employer
Working atmosphere has an effect in retention (1)	Working atmosphere makes one stay
Employer's sustainable behavior has an effect in retaining (3)	Employer's sustainable behavior
Employer's unethical actions affect negatively (e.g. money laundering, fraud) (2)	Employer's unethical actions
Personal experiences affecting and forwarded (4)	Personal experiences
Structural elements make LUT university less appealing employer (1)	Structural elements affecting
Reputation is somewhat important in retention (1)	Little effect on retention
Reputation has no effect on retention (2)	No effect on retention

### **Appendix 3. Job advertisement for junior research position in supply management and international business**

#### Junior researchers in supply management and international business

The LUT School of Business and Management is looking for two junior researchers (doctoral students) to strengthen its Supply Management team and International Business and Entrepreneurship team. Specifically, we are looking for two curious minds who are aiming for an academic career and are passionate about the digitalization of supply chains or business creation in digital business ecosystems.

The school's research on digital supply chains examines how digital services change supply chains and enable more resilient and sustainable operations in the future. Digital business ecosystems research focuses on how to orchestrate data-driven platforms covering the private and public sectors and society at large. Both topics are related to energy independence and reducing society's reliance on fossil fuels.

To apply to these positions, you must have a master's degree (M.Sc. or equivalent) in a relevant field (e.g. supply chain management, international business, or entrepreneurship) and the ability and motivation to complete the doctoral studies within their normative duration (i.e. four years). Written and spoken fluency in English is required. Proficiency in Finnish is an advantage.

#### You should

- be interested in writing a dissertation on topic 1 or 2:
- Topic 1
  - digital services and supply chain analytics
  - value of data in business creation
- Topic 2
  - orchestration of emergent business ecosystems
  - international commercialization of data-driven services
- have basic knowledge of supply chain management, international business, or entrepreneurship
- have basic skills in qualitative and quantitative research methods as well as digital platforms and business analytics

#### Job description

- Completion of the doctoral degree within four years
- Participation in research projects
- Assisting in teaching

#### What we offer

- An opportunity to launch a successful academic career and to become an expert in digitalized supply chains and supply chain analytics OR data-driven ecosystems and digital service platforms
- A four-year (1+3 years) contract for completing the doctoral degree

- An employment contract can be concluded only if the candidate obtains the right to pursue postgraduate studies at LUT University
- The contract will be made initially for one year and can be extended by three years provided that the studies and research have progressed successfully
- Encouraging and supportive supervision by and research collaboration with Professor Jukka Hallikas, Associate Professor Mikko Pynnönen and Associate Professor Mika Immonen

The work will start in February–March 2023 (negotiable) with a six-month trial period. The job is based in Lappeenranta, Finland. The typical gross annual starting salary for a junior researcher is approximately 30 800 euros (plus a holiday bonus in accordance with the collective agreement).

### How to apply

Please submit all the application materials in English:

1. Cover letter including introduction and indication of interest in topics 1 and 2.
2. Your curriculum vitae
3. A copy of your degree certificate; if the original documents are not in English, Finnish or Swedish, each document must be accompanied by an official certified translation into English or Finnish
4. A motivation letter: an account of your merits and activities of significance to the vacancy (max. 2 pages),
5. A research plan (5–10 pages) on the specific subject area, either digital supply chain management OR digital business ecosystem orchestrations, presenting your dissertation research plan, a review of relevant literature, and possible research methods and data.

The deadline for applications is 30 November 2022 at midnight, Finnish local time (UTC +2h). Please submit your application together with the required attachments through the university's online application system.

For more information, please contact Associate Professor Mikko Pynnönen ([mikko.pynnonen@lut.fi](mailto:mikko.pynnonen@lut.fi)) or Associate Professor Mika Immonen, ([mika.immonen@lut.fi](mailto:mika.immonen@lut.fi)).

### Read more

LUT as an employer  
LUT Doctoral School

*Clean energy, water and air are life-giving resources for which we at LUT University seek new solutions with our expertise in technology, business and social sciences. We help society and businesses in their sustainable renewal. Our international community consists of 7 500 members. Our campuses are in Lappeenranta and Lahti, Finland. We are the world's ninth best university for climate action.*

## Appendix 4. Job advertisement for junior researcher in strategic finance

### Junior researcher in strategic finance

The LUT School of Business and Management is looking for a junior researcher (doctoral student) in strategic finance to strengthen its finance and business analytics team.

Specifically, we are looking for a curious mind who is aiming for an academic career and is passionate about how strategic finance and an analytical mindset can drive sustainable growth and create value for companies, the public sector and society at large.

You must have a master's degree (M.Sc. or equivalent) in a relevant field (e.g. finance, accounting, or computational economics) and the ability and motivation to complete the doctoral studies within their normative duration (i.e. four years). Written and spoken fluency in English is required.

### You should

- be interested in writing a dissertation on innovative research areas such as:
  - the role of ICT in financial decision-making
  - the role of financial technology (fintech) in sustainable growth
- have basic knowledge of financial management or business analytics modelling in finance, data management, and quantitative research methods
- have operating knowledge of at least one statistical tool, such as MATLAB, Python, R, or STATA

### Job description

- completion of the doctoral degree within four years
- participation in research projects
- assisting in teaching

### What we offer

- an opportunity to launch a successful academic career and to become an expert in strategic finance and business analytics
- a four-year (1+3 years) contract for completing the doctoral degree
  - an employment contract can be concluded only if the candidate obtains the right to pursue postgraduate studies at LUT University
  - the contract will be made initially for one year and can be extended by three years provided that the studies and research have progressed successfully
- encouraging and supportive supervision by and research collaboration with Professor Eero Pätäri and Associate Professor Sheraz Ahmed (LUT)

### Salary

The typical gross annual starting salary for a junior researcher is approximately 30 800 euros (plus a holiday bonus in accordance with the collective agreement).

The job is based in Lappeenranta, Finland. The work will start in March–April 2023 (negotiable) with a six-month trial period.

## How to apply

Please submit your application together with the required attachments through the university's online application system.

1. Your curriculum vitae
2. A copy of your degree certificate; if the original documents are not in English, Finnish or Swedish, each document must be accompanied by an official certified translation into English or Finnish
3. A motivation letter: an account of your merits and activities of significance to the vacancy (max. 2 pages)
4. A detailed research plan (5–10 pages) on the subject area of quantitative financial economics and data analysis presenting your dissertation research plan, a review of relevant literature, and possible research methods and data.

The appendices must be in English.

The deadline for applications is 30 November 2022 at midnight, Finnish local time (UTC +2).

### More information

For more information, please contact Associate Professor Sheraz Ahmed, [sheraz.ahmed@lut.fi](mailto:sheraz.ahmed@lut.fi).

[Read more here](#)

[LUT as an employer](#)

[LUT Doctoral School](#)

*Clean energy, water and air are life-giving resources for which we at LUT University seek new solutions with our expertise in technology, business and social sciences. We help society and businesses in their sustainable renewal. Our international community consists of 7 500 members. Our campuses are in Lappeenranta and Lahti, Finland. We are the world's ninth best university for climate action.*