

SNSF Career Tracker Cohorts (CTC)

Newsletter 2019/1

Successful start of the study

In October 2018, the first SNSF Career Tracker Cohort (CTC) started with a base survey among applicants for Early Postdoc.Mobility and Postdoc.Mobility. We invited 455 candidates to take the survey, of which 413 actually participated. This corresponds to an outstanding response rate of 91%. In March and April 2019, we

invited 1100 new applicants for Early Postdoc.Mobility, Postdoc.Mobility, Ambizione, PRIMA, and Eccellenza. Again, we achieved a very high response rate of 91%. These response rates mark a very promising start of the study. A big **thank you** to all applicants who filled out the questionnaire.

First results from the October 2018 survey

Who were the applicants for Early Postdoc.Mobility and Postdoc.Mobility?

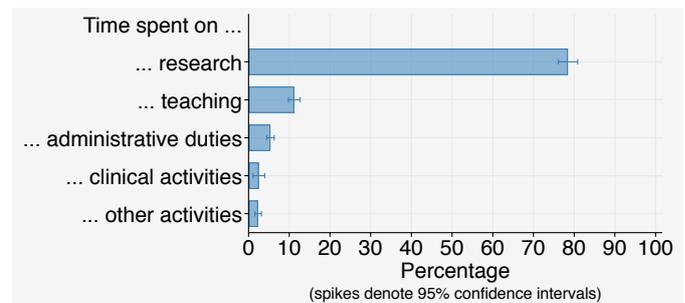
The majority of the Early Postdoc.Mobility and Postdoc.Mobility applicants were male, namely 62% compared to 38% female candidates. Their average age was 32; the age range was between 25 and 47.

Two thirds (68%) applied for Early Postdoc.Mobility, while one third (32%) applied for Postdoc.Mobility. Most

people submitted a funding proposal in mathematics, natural and engineering sciences (40%), followed by biology and medicine (33%) as well as humanities and social sciences (27%). At the time of application, 70% were employed at a Swiss research institution and 25% at a foreign research institution (5% unknown).

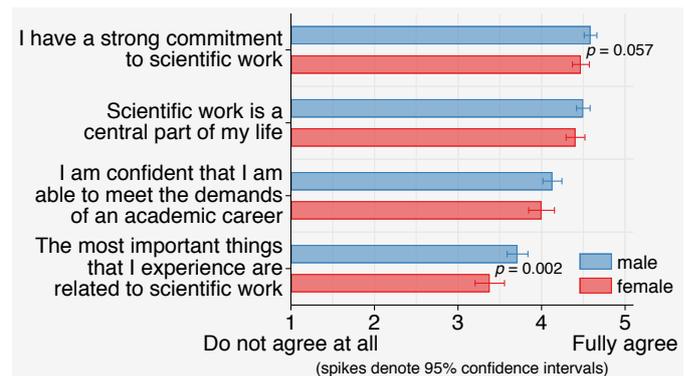
Work activities: most time used for research

In the survey, almost all employed participants (97%) indicated that they conduct academic research in their current job. When asked about the division of their working time into different activities, they indicated that they spend by far the most time on research (78%). Teaching requires 11% of their working time and administrative duties take up 5%.



Strong devotion to science

Four items in the survey were used to assess the participants' devotion to science. The results show a generally high level of devotion, with men identifying slightly more with scientific work than women. In particular, men more often indicated that they have a strong commitment to scientific work ($p = 0.057$) and that the most important things they experience are related to scientific work ($p = 0.002$). All respondents are rather confident that they are able to meet the demands of an academic career.



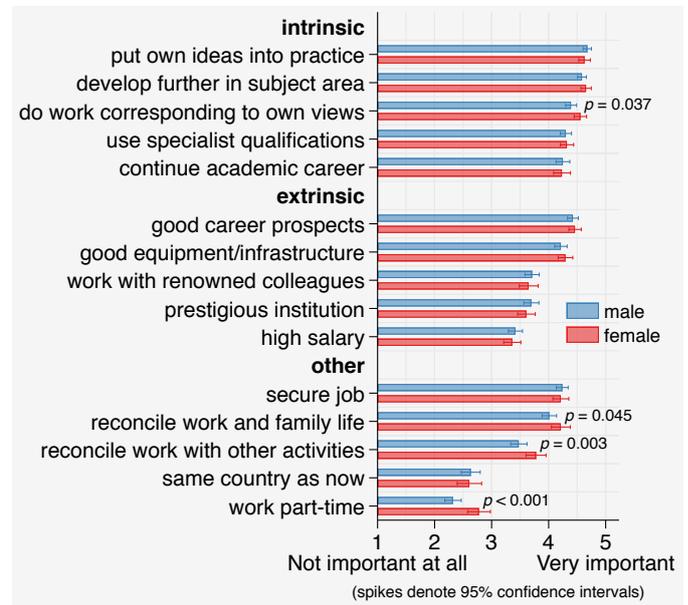
Career aspiration: professorship most preferred

The participants were asked what professional position they aspire most in the future. The data reveals a high proportion of applicants who aspire to a professorship (73%), followed by other leading research positions (20%). Only

small minorities aspire to a permanent teaching position (2%) or a leading management position (3%) other than a professorship.

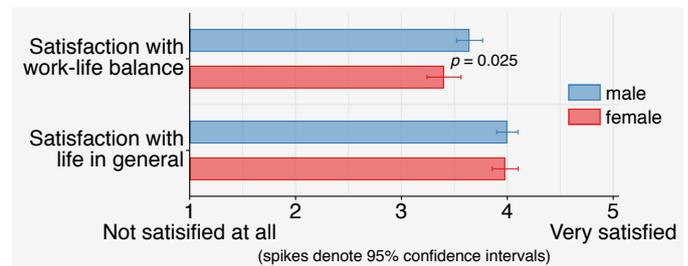
Work values: stronger intrinsic than extrinsic motivation

Participants were also asked about the importance of various aspects concerning their future professional career. The participants' motivation seems to be more intrinsic (for example, the importance of having a job in which one can put one's own ideas into practice) than extrinsic (for example, earning a high salary). Also, men and women show rather similar patterns. However, women place significantly more value on having work that corresponds to their own views and convictions, on being able to reconcile work with family life and other activities, and on being able to work part-time.



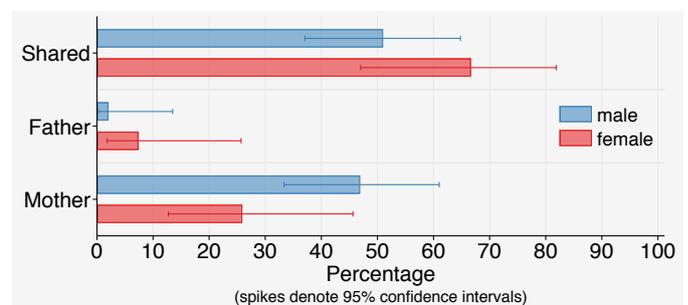
Life satisfaction: more satisfaction with work-life balance among men

We also found a gender difference with participants' perceived work-life balance, with men being slightly more satisfied in this respect than women ($p = 0.025$). However, the results show no gender difference in terms of general life satisfaction, which is at a higher level than satisfaction with the work-life balance for both men and women.



Childcare: predominantly a women's task

One fifth (19%) of all participants reported that they have one or more children. When asked about how they organise childcare, more than half of them (57%) indicated that they share the responsibility with the other parent in equal parts. Only 4% of the respondents indicated that the father is mostly responsible for childcare, while 40% said that childcare is predominantly the task of the mother.

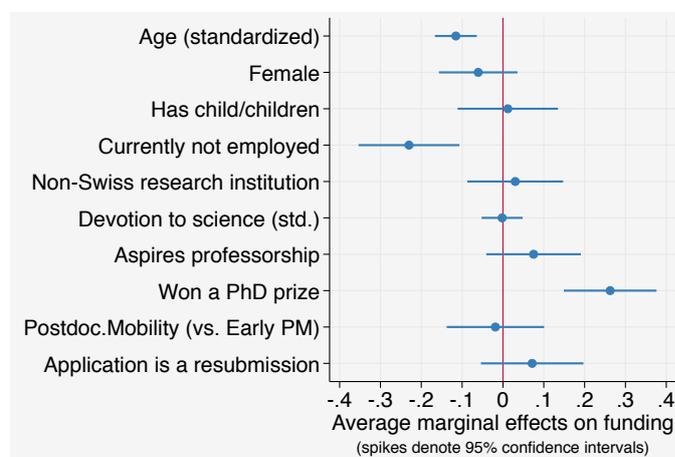


Funding success: effects of age, employment status, and awards

Of the 308 applications for Early Postdoc.Mobility, 52% were approved. The success rate for Postdoc.Mobility (147 applications) was 56%.

Using a logit model, further analyses of the CTC participants show a strong effect of age on funding success, with applications of older candidates being less likely to get approval (13 percentage points less likely per standard deviation of age, $p < 0.001$). The model further indicates that the employment status is a strong predictor for approval, with non-employed applicants being much less likely to get funded than those who were employed at the time of the survey, shortly after the submission of the proposal (23 percentage points, $p < 0.001$). A very strong positive effect can be found for having won a prize or award for one's PhD thesis (27 percentage points, $p < 0.001$). Neither gender nor having children have an effect on funding success. Whether candidates were employed at a Swiss or foreign research institution at the

time of their submission also does not have an effect. Neither does demonstrating a devotion to science or aspiring to a professorship as a career goal. Finally, the type of funding scheme and whether the application was a resubmission or not do not matter.



Up next

The next newsletter will present the results of the base survey conducted in March and April 2019. As for results regarding the respondents' career paths and the impact of the SNSF funding schemes on their career development, it will take a few years until enough data from follow-up surveys is available to allow for profound analyses.

We are looking forward to the next survey waves. In fall 2019, the new applicants for EarlyPostdoc.Mobility and Postdoc.Mobility will be invited to participate in the base survey of the CTC study. At the same time, the first follow-up survey among all participants of the base survey from October 2018 will be conducted.

About

The Career Tracker Cohorts (CTC) project of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) is a longitudinal panel study with yearly cohorts. It aims at tracking the career paths of young researchers applying to the SNSF career funding schemes at the postdoctoral level (Early Postdoc.Mobility, Postdoc.Mobility, Ambizione, PRIMA,

and Eccellenza). The main goals of the CTC are to monitor the careers of the researchers and to evaluate the impact of the different career funding schemes of the SNSF.

The SNSF has entrusted a project team from the University of Bern (Institute of Sociology and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies) to carry out the study.

For more information see: <http://careertrackercohorts.ch/>

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