

Pääkaupunkiseudun ja Tampereen vieraskielisten uskonnollisuus ja suhde evankelis-luterilaiseen kirkkoon

Religiosity and Relations with the Evangelical Lutheran Church among Foreign-Language Speakers in the Capital Area and Tampere

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Research design and data

Data: Religiosity among Foreign-Language Speakers 2026

(Vieraskielisten kaupunkilaisten uskonnollisuus 2026)

- **Commissioned** by Evangelical Lutheran parishes, Church Council, and Church Institute for Research and Advanced Training.
- **Data collection conducted** by Taloustutkimus.
- **Sampling method:** Stratified random sampling from the population registry (Digital and Population Data Services Agency), stratified by municipality of residence, mother tongue, and age (18+).
 - Four urban municipalities: Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Tampere.
 - Seven language groups:
 - 1) Arabic
 - 2) English
 - 3) Chinese
 - 4) Farsi (Persian)
 - 5) Ukrainian
 - 6) Russian
 - 7) All other languages
- **Method of data collection:** mail invitations to fill web survey ("push-to-web") in one's own language (except category "other languages" in English).
- **Data collection period:** April – May 2026.
- **Observations:** N=3227.

Distribution of respondents

			Language groups							
			Arabic	English	Chinese	Farsi	Ukrainian	Russian	Other	Total
Regions	Espoo	f.	82	123	94	222	107	97	107	832
		%	10 %	15 %	11 %	27 %	13 %	12 %	13 %	100 %
	Helsinki	f.	97	142	133	204	129	82	197	984
		%	10 %	14 %	14 %	21 %	13 %	8 %	20 %	100 %
	Vantaa	f.	86	107	80	103	115	89	82	662
		%	13 %	16 %	12 %	16 %	17 %	13 %	12 %	100 %
	Tampere	f.	72	151	79	103	104	106	134	749
		%	10 %	20 %	11 %	14 %	14 %	14 %	18 %	100 %
	Total	f.	337	523	386	632	455	374	520	3227
		%	10 %	16 %	12 %	20 %	14 %	12 %	16 %	100 %

Most important countries of birth by language group

Arabic		Chinese		English		Farsi, Persian		Ukrainian		Russian		Other	
Iraq	36 %	China	85 %	UK	21 %	Iran	85 %	Ukraine	94 %	Russia	71 %	Estonia	6 %
Syria	18 %	Taiwan	6 %	USA	17 %	Afghanistan	12 %	Russia	2 %	Estonia	8 %	Philippines	5 %
Other	46 %	Other	9 %	Other	72 %	Other	3 %	Other	4 %	Other	21 %	Other	89 %

Birth country	f.	%
Other	3115	96,5
Finland	112	3,5
Total	3227	100,0

Aspects of religiosity and religious needs

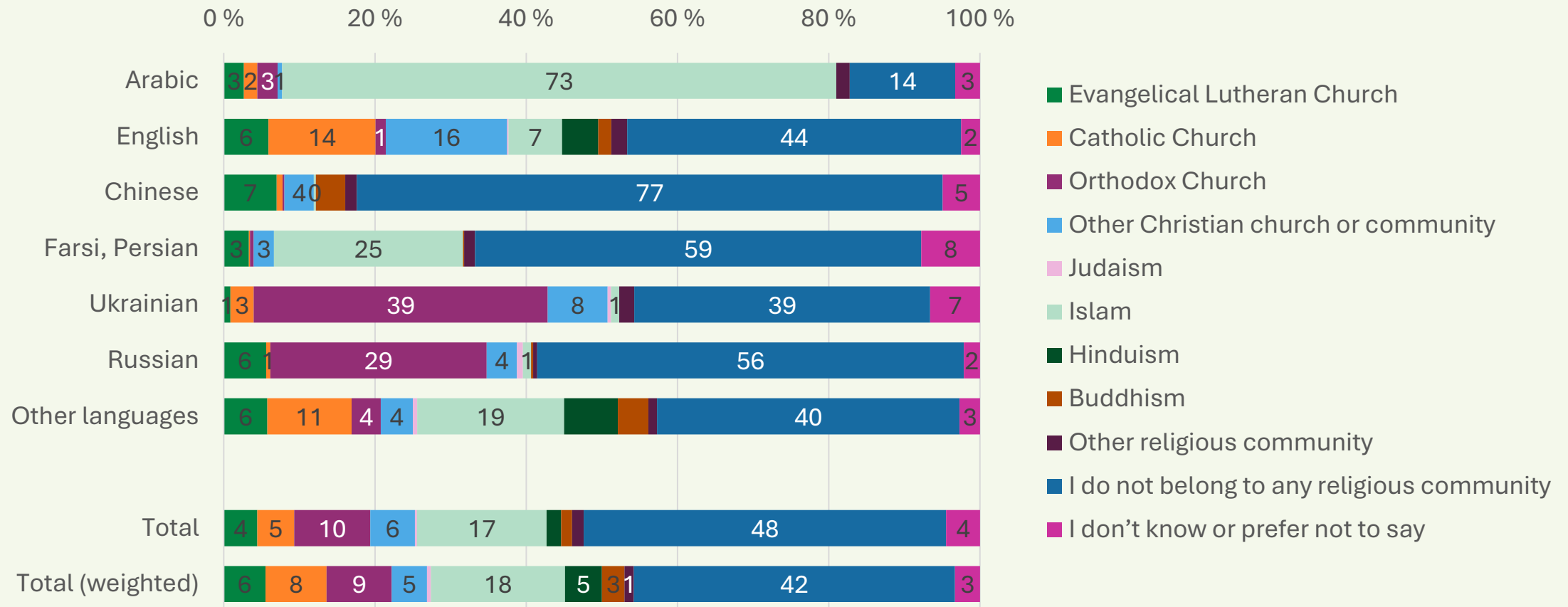
Religious belonging (%)

Whole population (Tilastokeskus / Statistics Finland, 2025)				
	Espoo	Helsinki	Vantaa	Tampere
Ev.Lut. Church	47,6	44,0	44,0	54,5
Other religions	4,0	4,6	4,7	3,5
Non-affiliated	48,5	51,3	51,4	42,0
Total	100	100	100	100

Foreign-language speakers (survey data)				
	Espoo	Helsinki	Vantaa	Tampere
Ev.lut. Church	3,8	5,7	4,7	4,2
Other religions	43,3	41,2	53,4	45,2
- Other Christian	21,0	19,8	26,2	21,5
- Muslims	17,6	15,1	22,1	18,3
- Other	4,7	6,2	5,2	5,4
Non-affiliated	52,9	53,2	41,8	50,7
Total	100	100	100	100

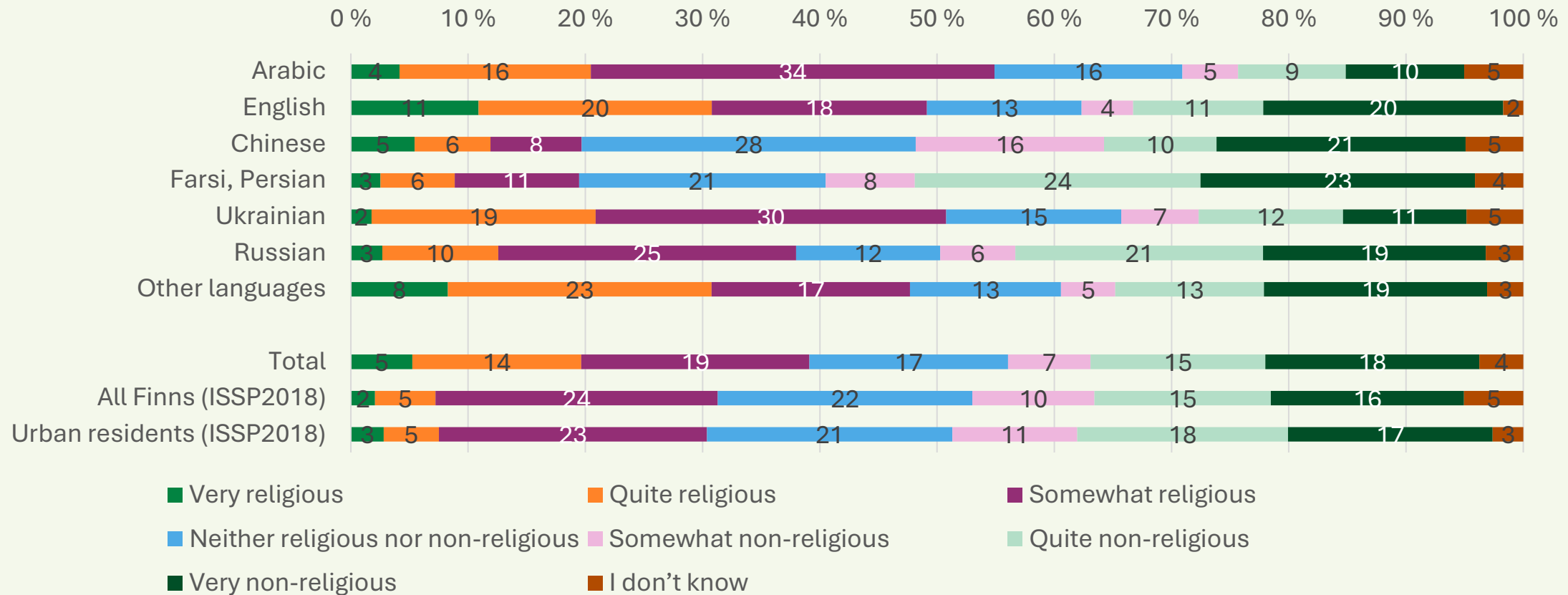
Religious belonging in different language groups

2.1. Do you belong to a religious community or tradition?



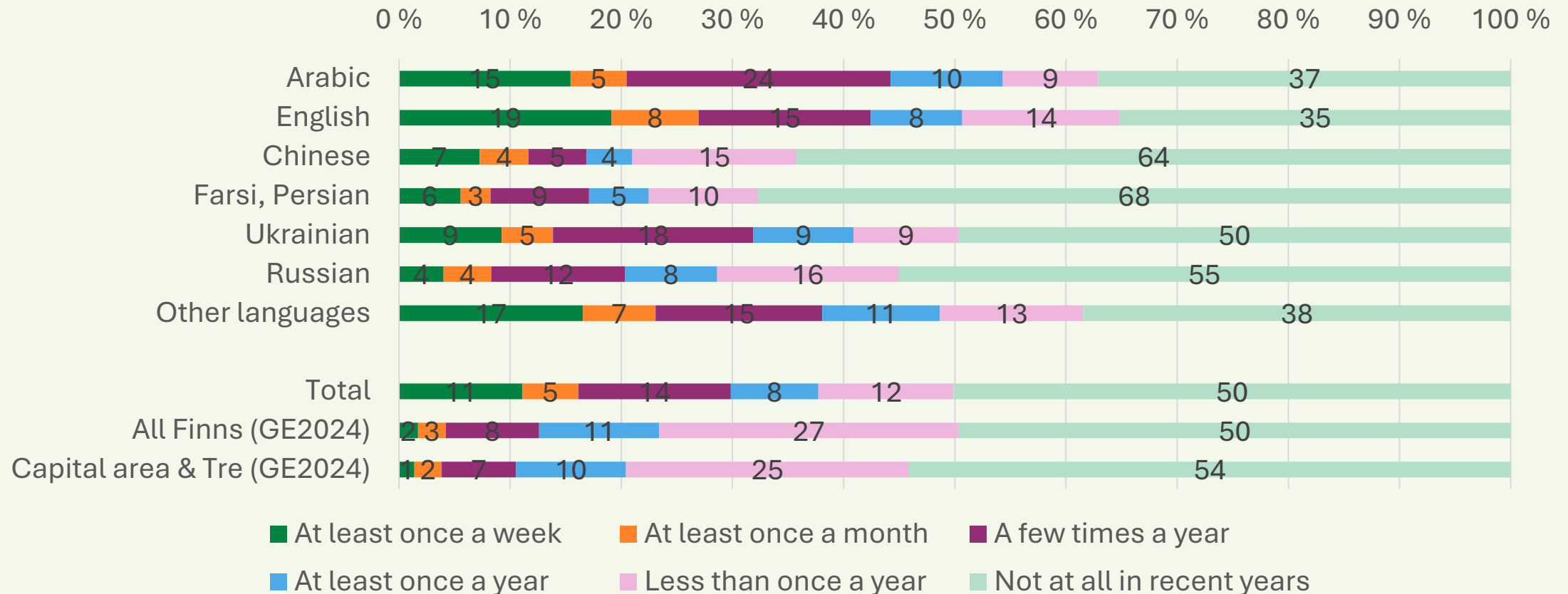
Religiosity (self estimated)

2.3. Do you consider yourself...



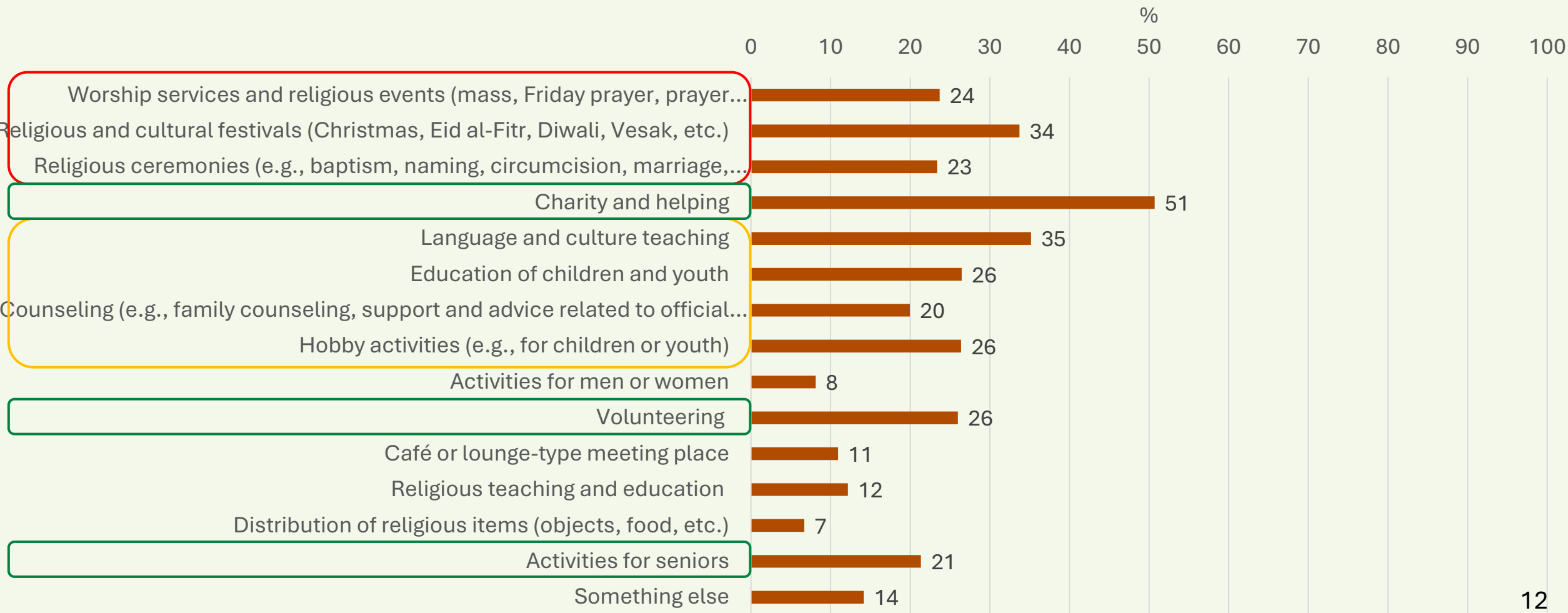
Participation in public religious events

2.6. How often do you participate in religious events?



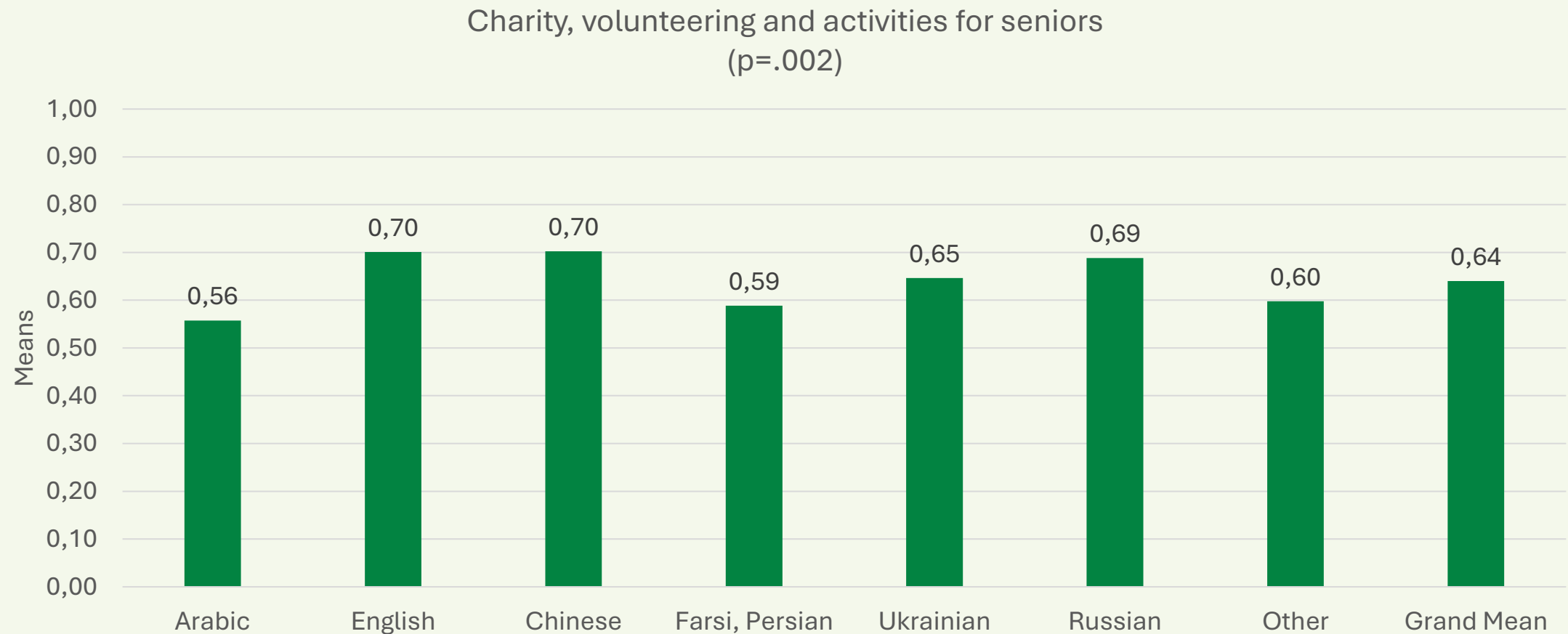
Importance of various kinds of religious activities

2.7. What kind of activities do you wish from religious communities? Which of the following activities do you consider important?
Select the five most important.



Importance of charity and volunteerism by language group

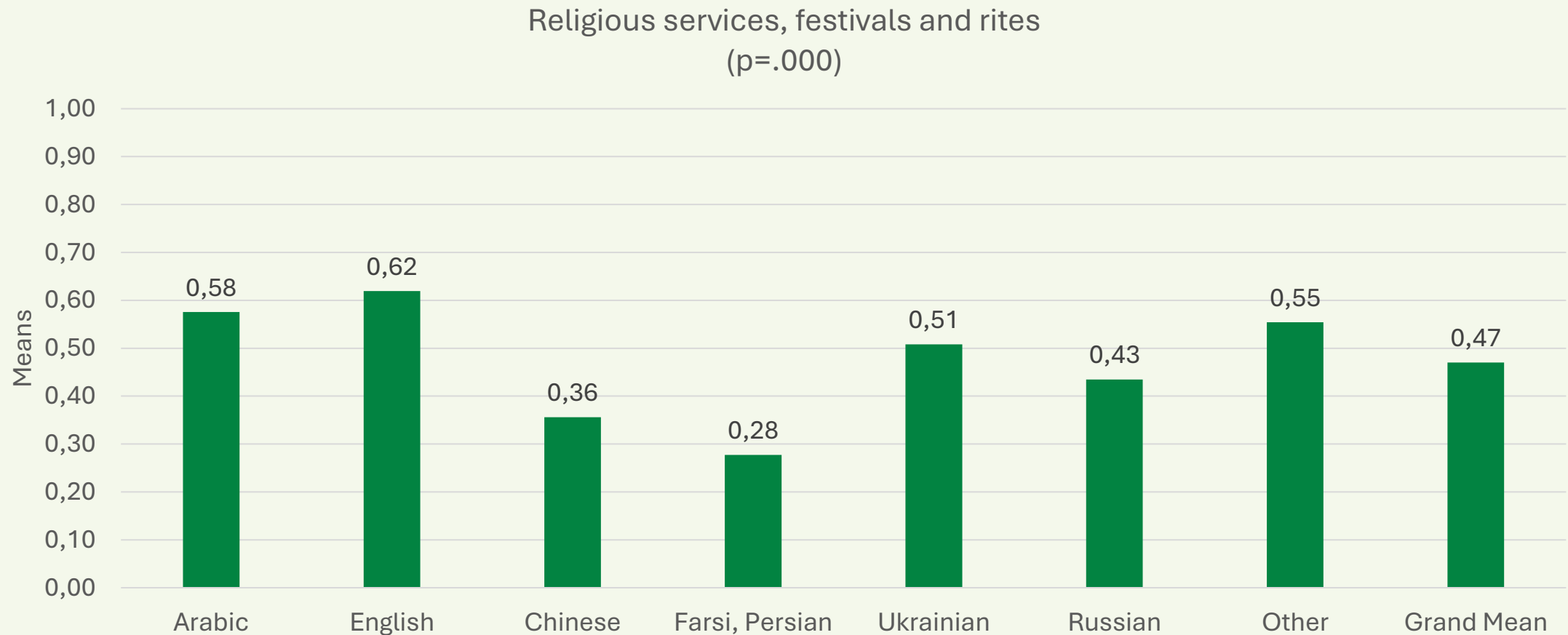
Dependent variable: composite variable (coded 0-1) of 3 variables of charity, volunteerism and activities for seniors.



Importance of the religious rituals/festivals by language group

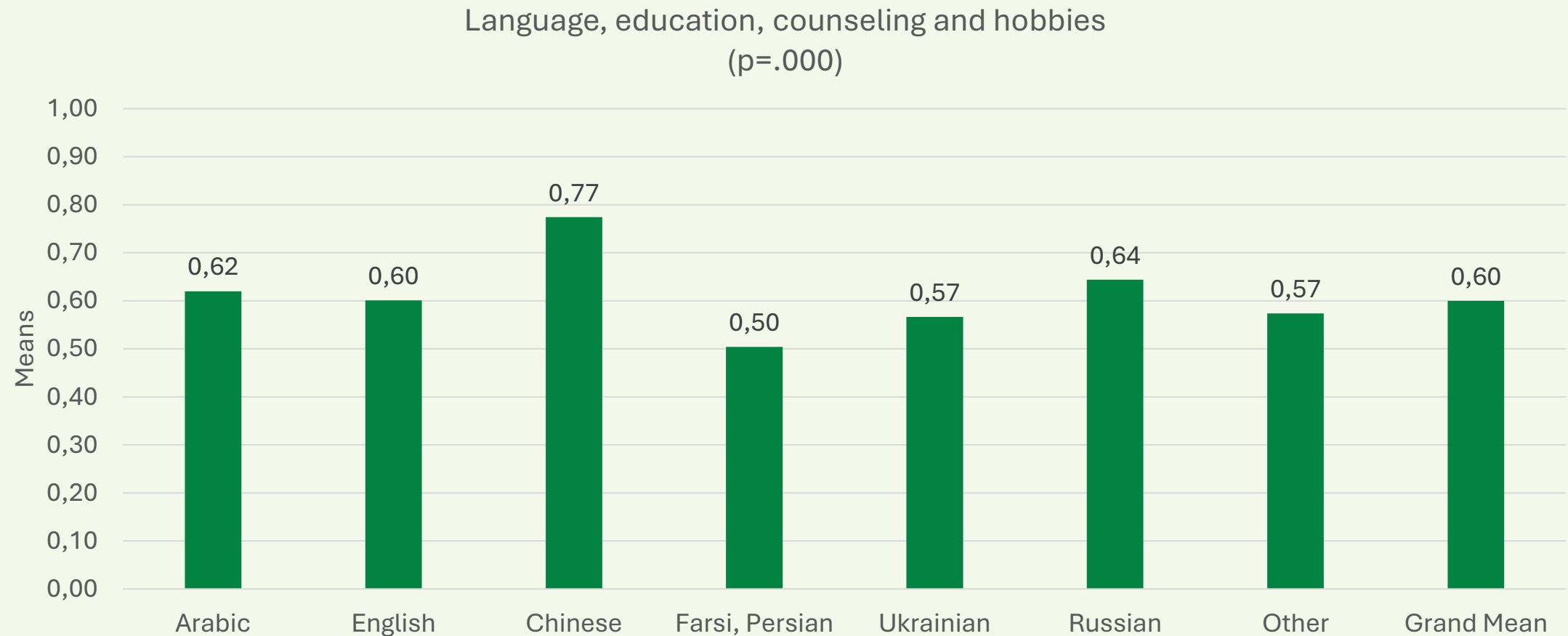


Dependent variable: composite variable (coded 0-1) of three religious ritual variables.



Importance of the cultural support by language group

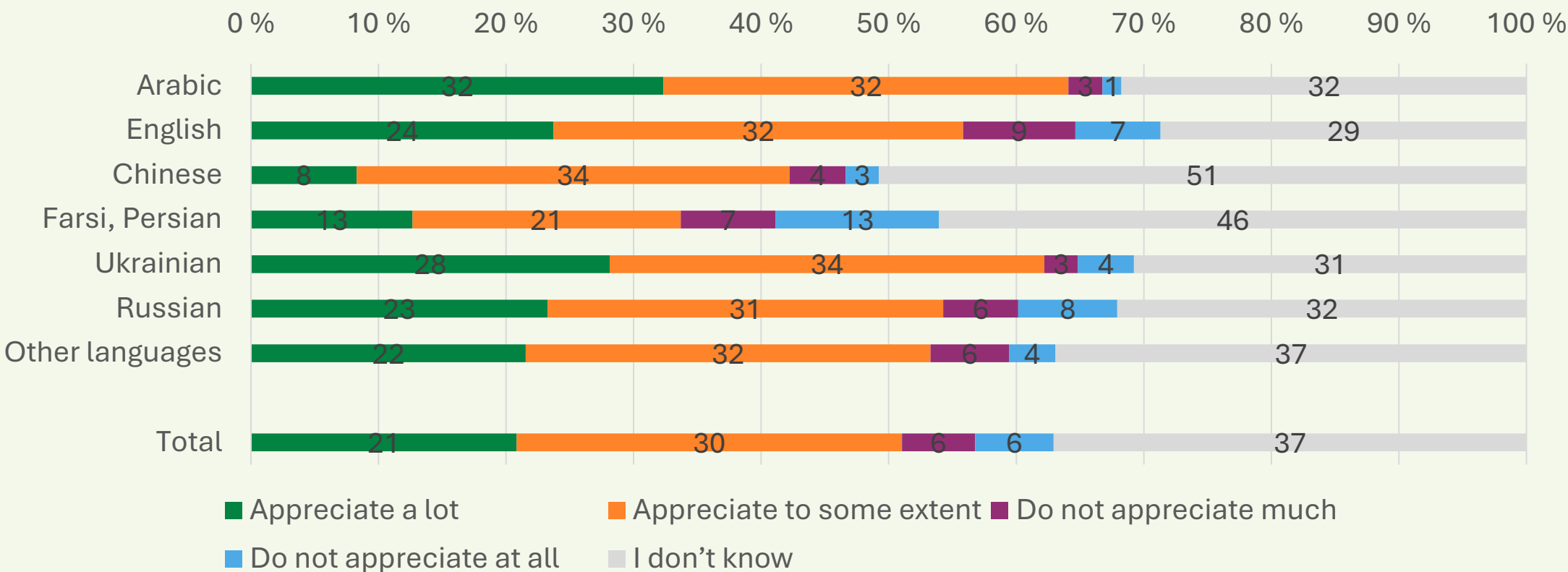
Dependent variable: composite variable (coded 0-1) of four cultural support variables.



Relationship to Christianity and Lutheran Parishes

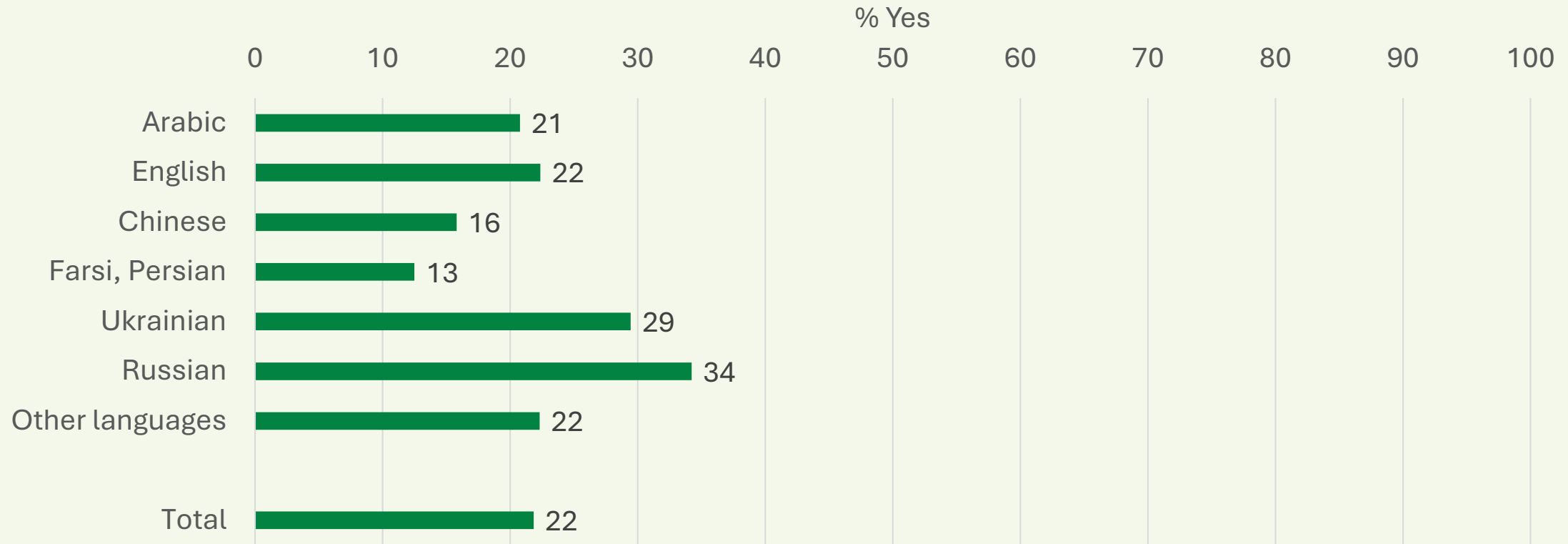
Appreciation of the work of Christian churches

3.2. To what extent do you appreciate the work of Christian churches in Finland?



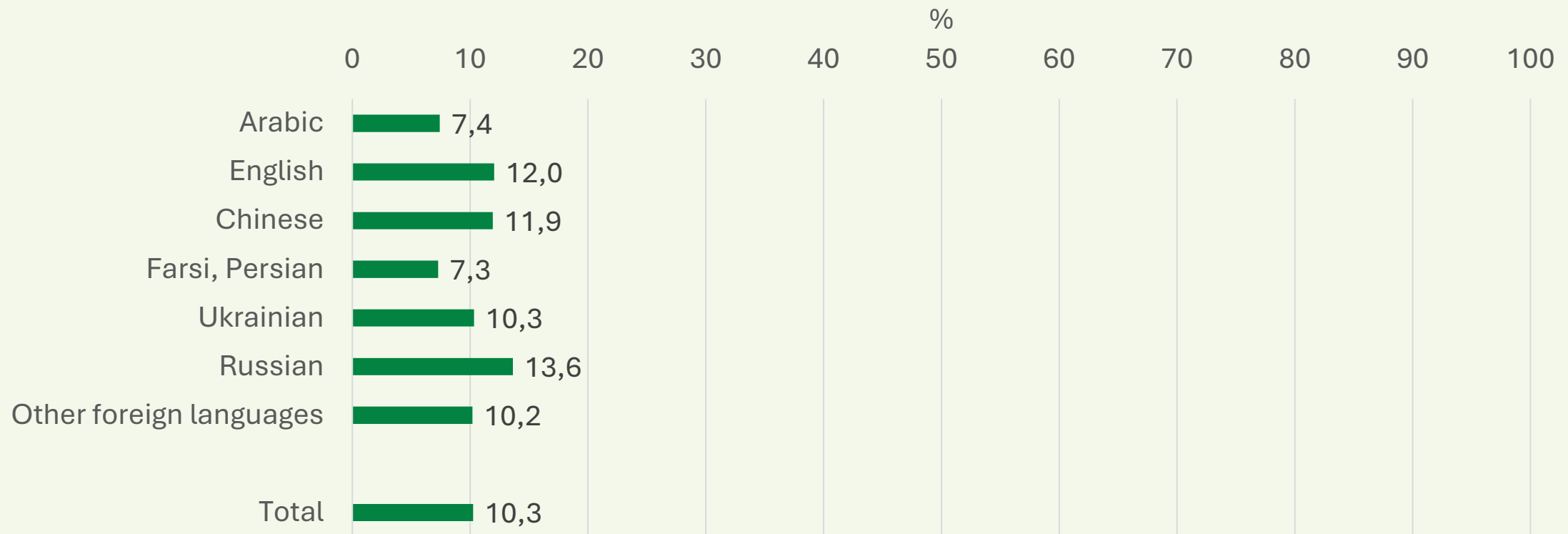
Familiarity with Evangelical Lutheran parishes

3.4. Are the Evangelical Lutheran parishes in your area familiar to you?



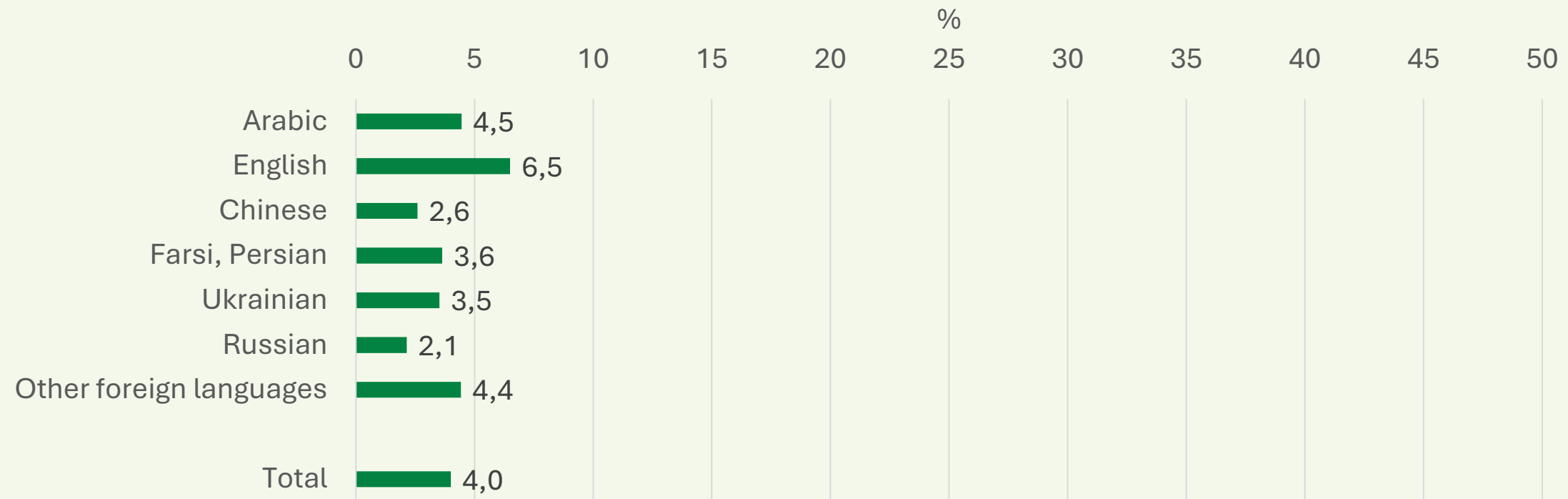
Participation in the activities of Evangelical Lutheran parishes

3.5. Have you ever participated in the activities of the Evangelical Lutheran parishes in your area?
(Percent "Yes", N=3227)



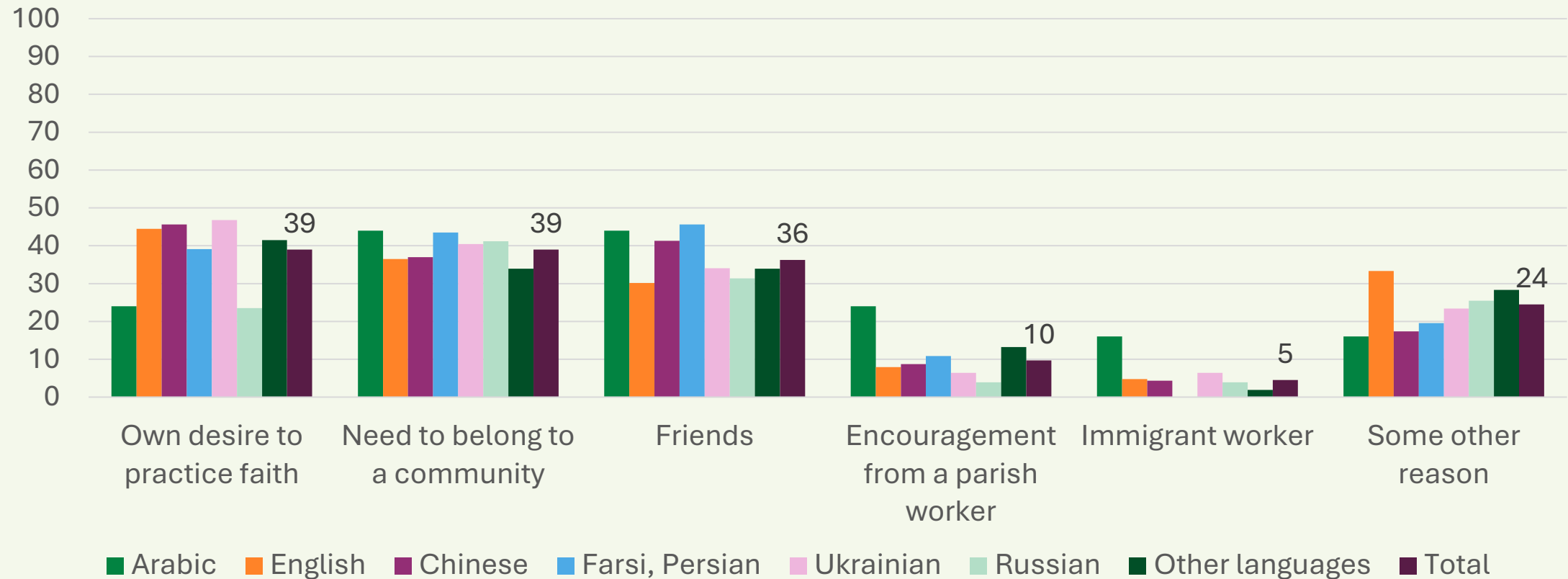
Willingness to join the Evangelical Lutheran Church

4.5. Would you be willing to join the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a member?
(% of all respondents, N=3227)



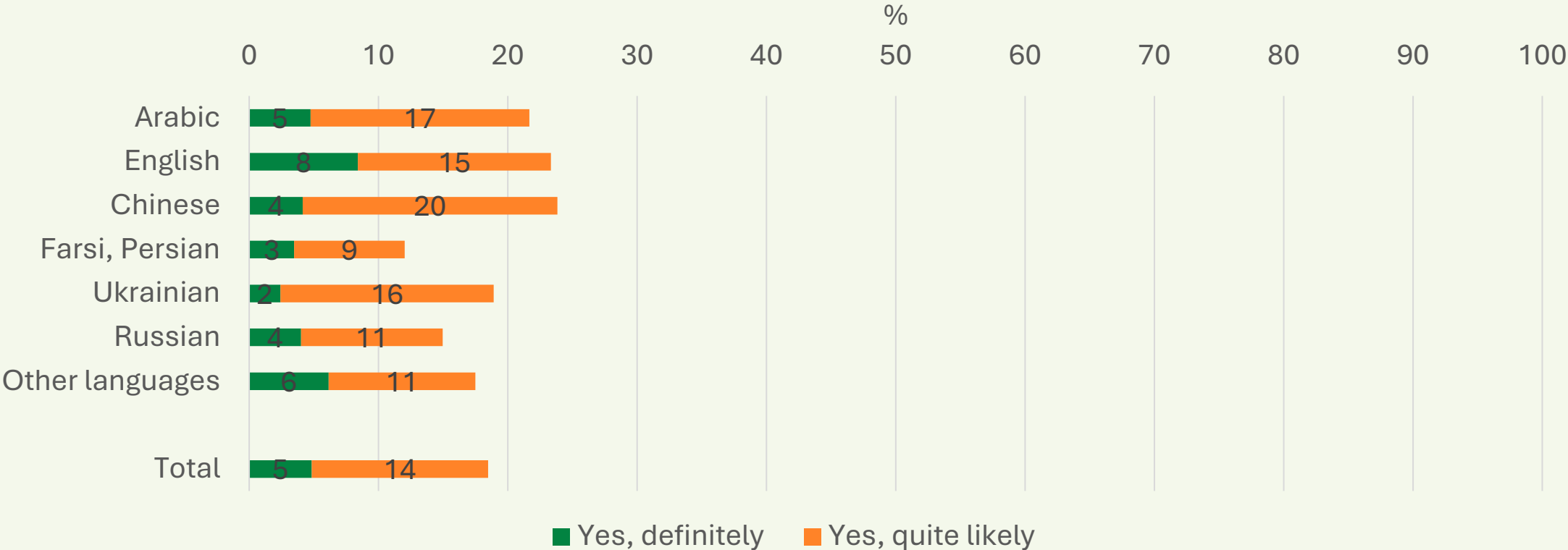
Motivations for participation

3.7. What motivates you to participate in the activities of the Evangelical Lutheran parish?
(N=331, asked only from those who have participated)



Willingness to participate in activities of Lutheran parishes

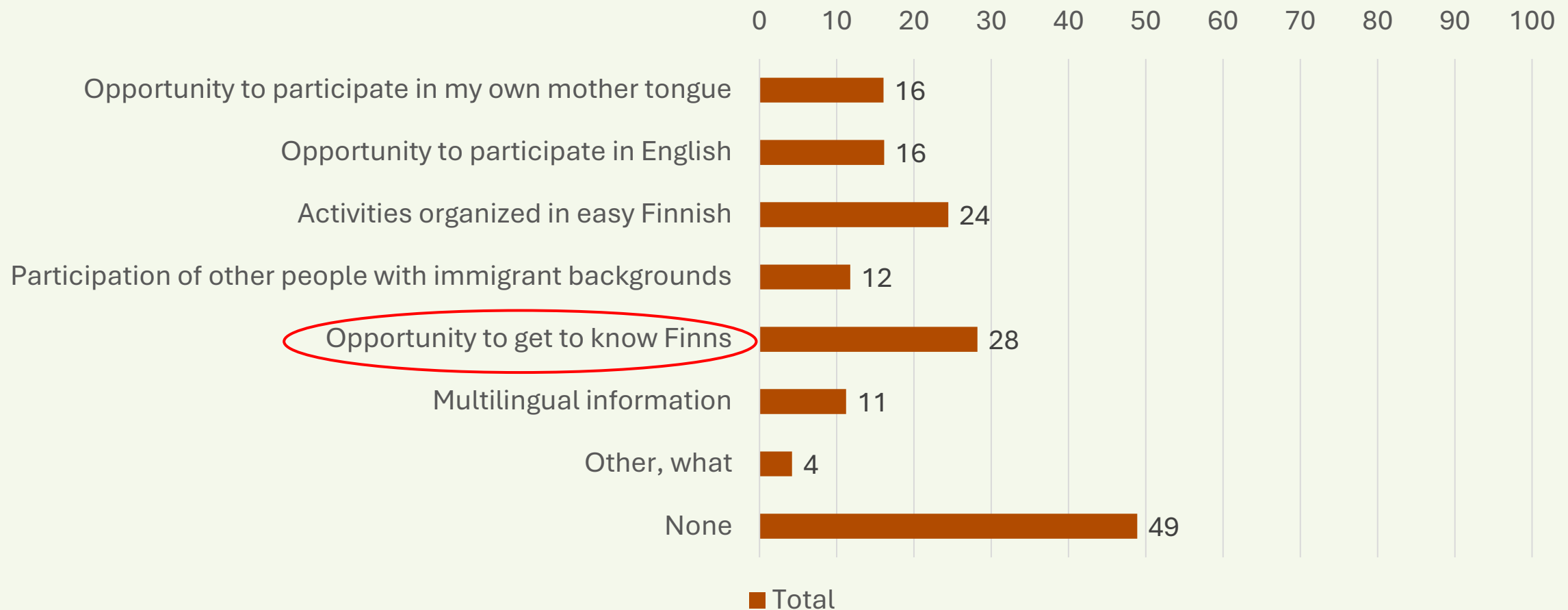
4.2. Would you be willing to participate in the activities of the Evangelical Lutheran parish in your area?



Factors that would strengthen the willingness to participate in Ev. Luth. Parish activities

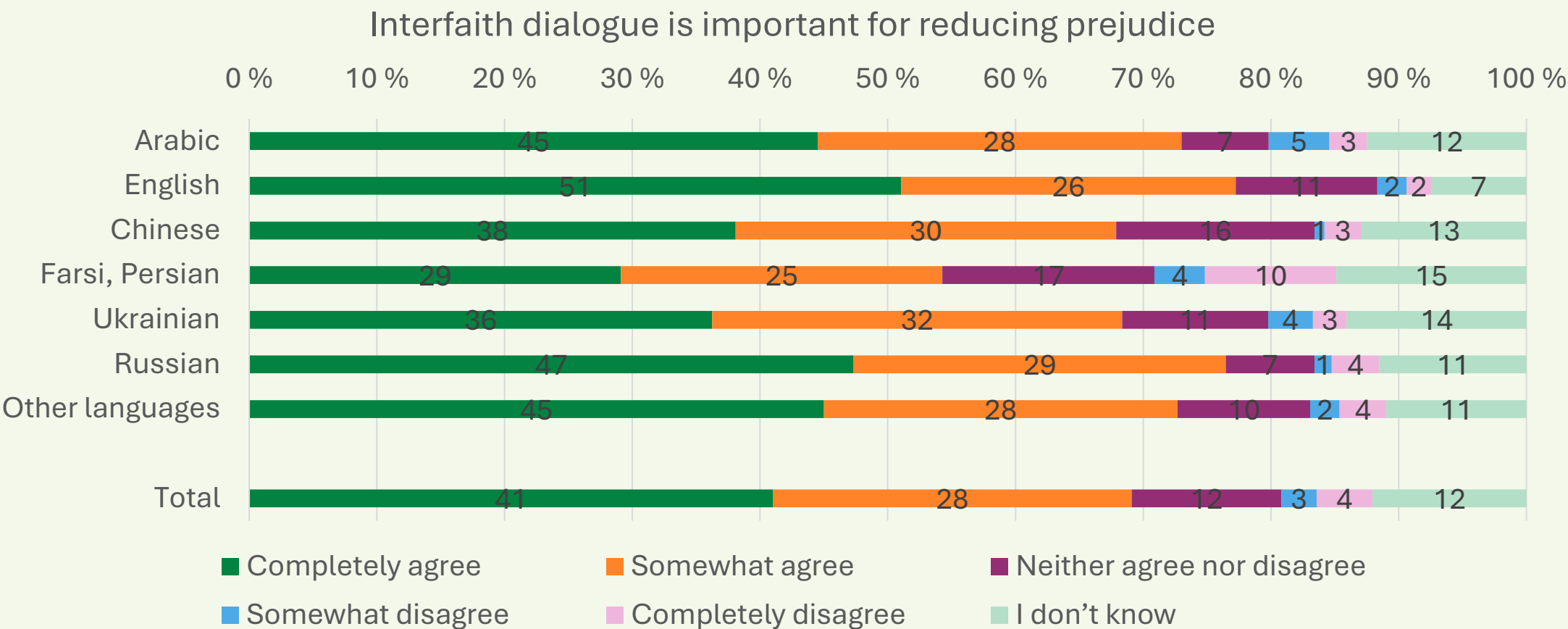


4.3. What would strengthen your willingness to participate in the activities of the Evangelical Lutheran parish?
You can choose more than one option.



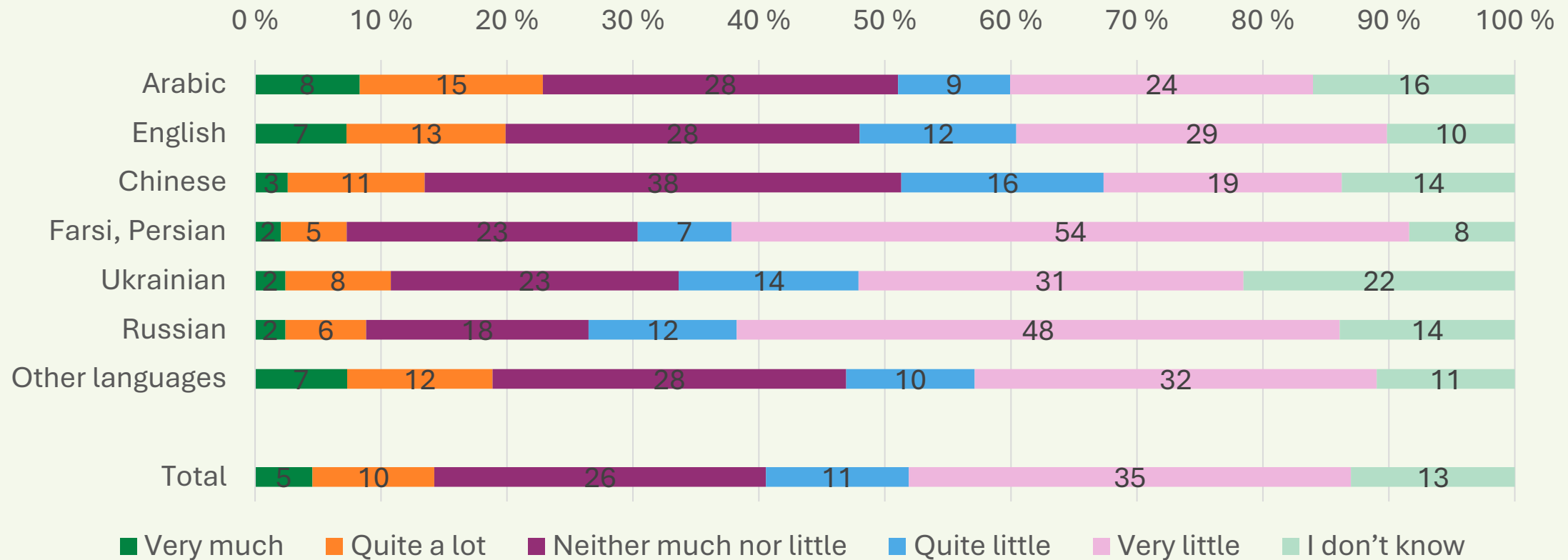
Attitudes towards interfaith dialogue

Thoughts about religious dialogue



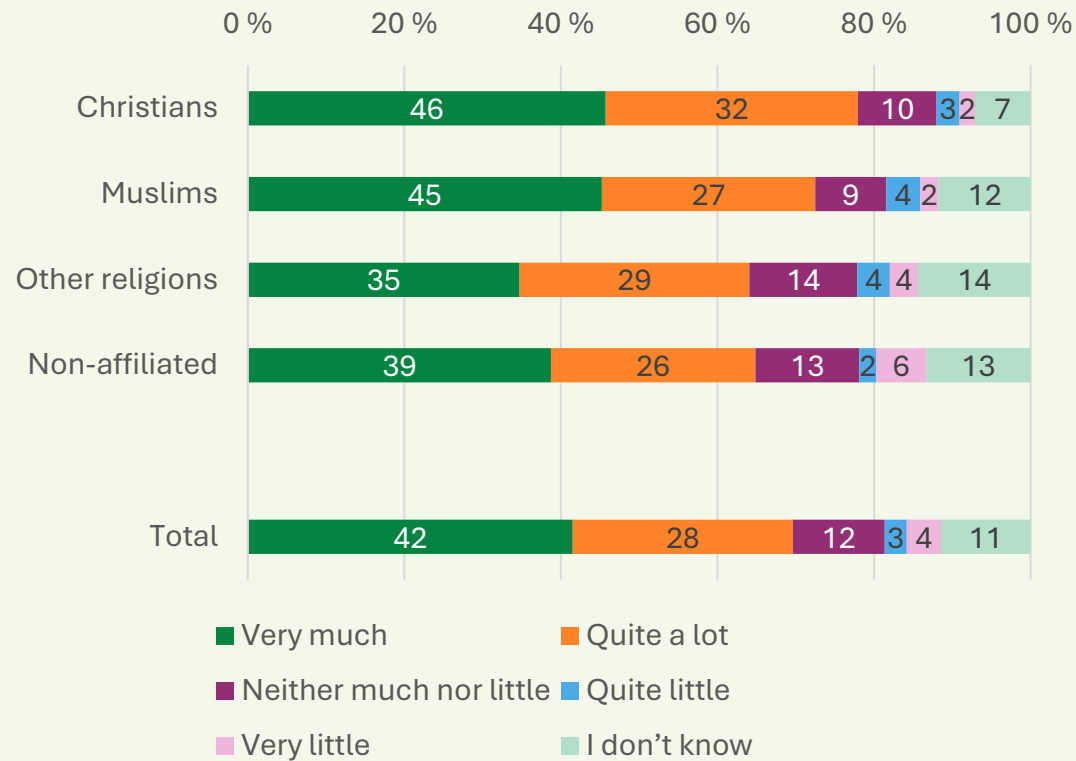
Personal willingness to participate

5.3. How much would you personally like to participate in interfaith dialogue?

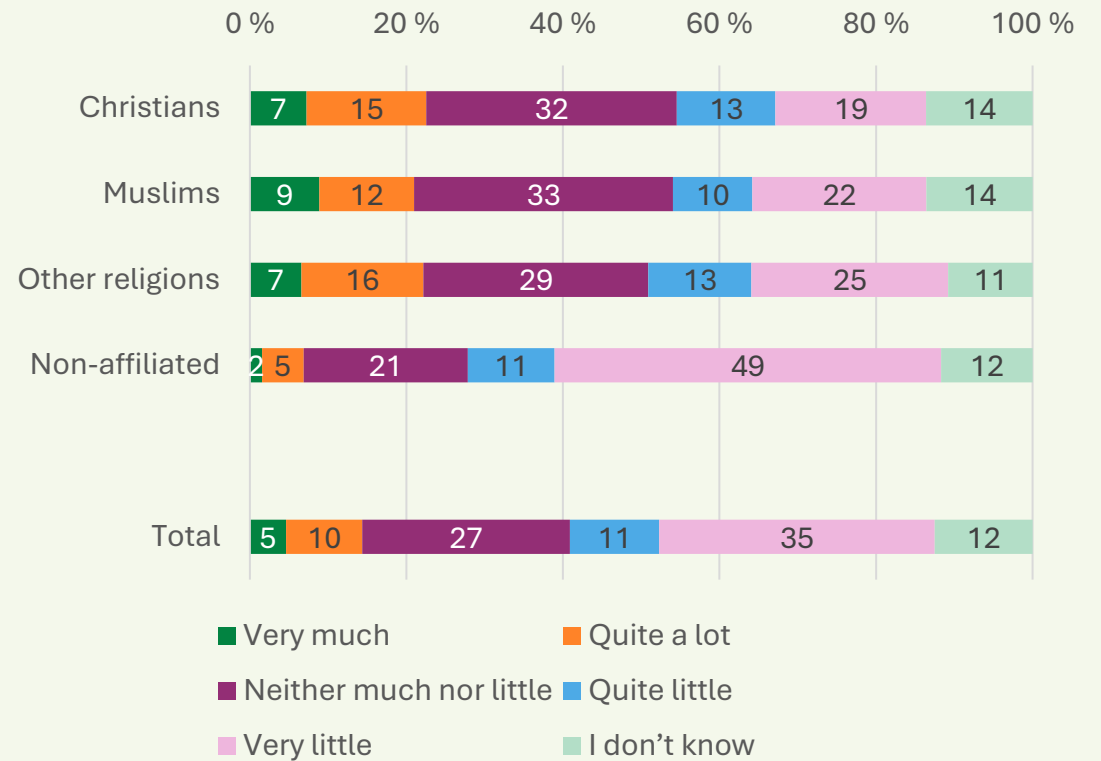


Influence of religious identity to attitudes towards interfaith dialogue

Interfaith dialogue is important for reducing prejudice



How much would you personally like to participate in interfaith dialogue?

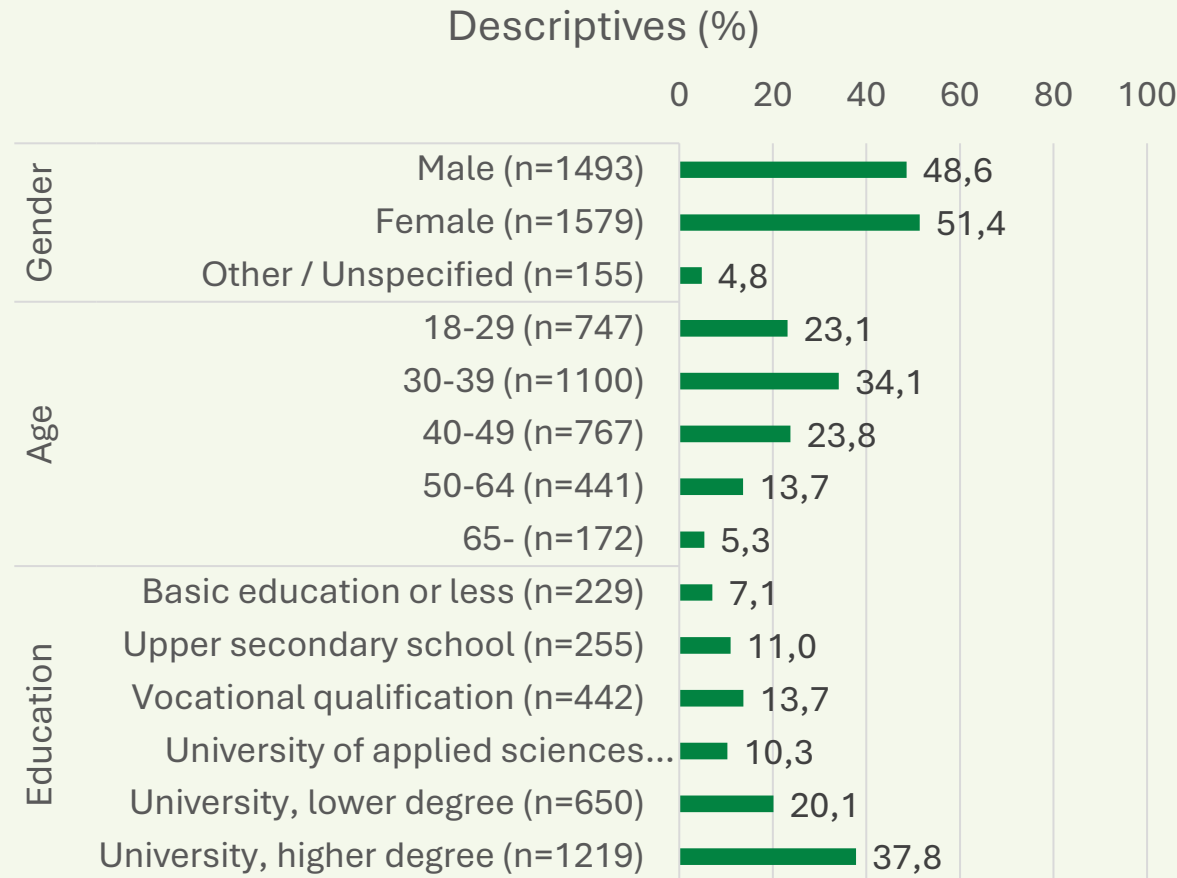


Summary and conclusions

- Foreign language speakers form a very diverse group in terms of religion and culture.
 - Relationship to religion varies a lot depending on cultural background and societal conditions in origin countries.
 - For a large segment of respondents religion was not at all an important part of life.
- Expectations regarding religious communities can be divided into three main areas: Charity; religious rites and festivals, and more general forms of cultural support.
- Christian churches are very widely appreciated regardless of respondent's religious identity. Yet willingness to join is relatively rare.
- Building social networks to Finns is an important factor behind contact and willingness to participate in activities organised by Lutheran parishes.
- The aim to reduce prejudices is widely considered important function of interfaith dialogue.
- Results indicate that Evangelical Lutheran parishes could have a potentially fruitful role in integration of immigrants to Finnish culture and society.

Thank you!

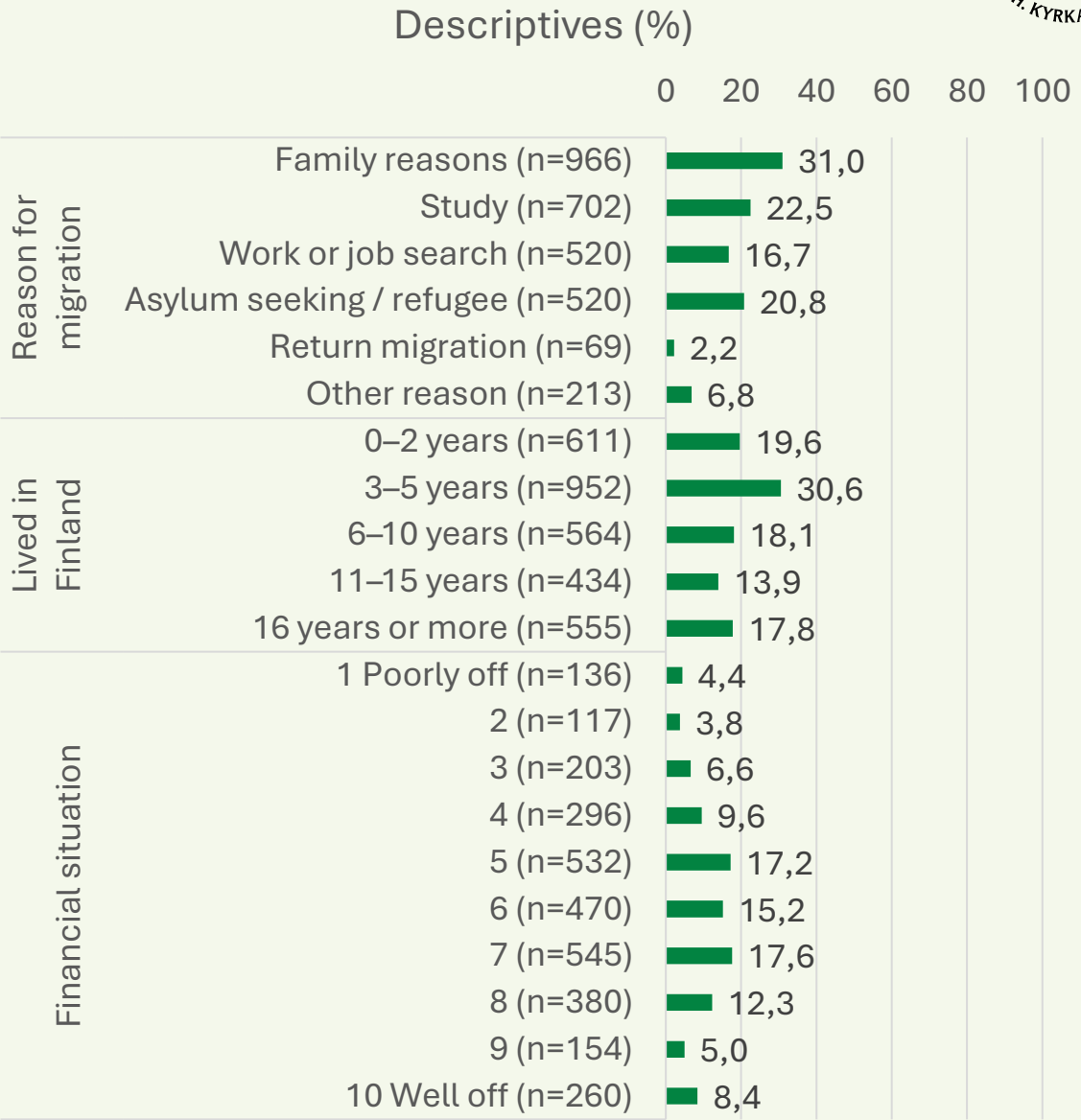
Appendix: Gender, age and education



- The respondents' level of education was remarkably high in most language groups. Of the total data, 38% had a master's degree.
- Nearly half of the respondents reported that they spoke Finnish (or Swedish) at least at an average level. Only a little over a tenth said that they do not speak them at all. Chinese speakers rated their language skills as the weakest, while Russian speakers rated them as the best.

Appendix: Migration background and financial situation

- The reasons for immigration varied by language group: refugees and asylum seekers were emphasised in Ukrainian (65%) and Arabic (47%) languages, and family reasons and studies in other languages.
- About half of the respondents had lived in Finland for 5 years or less. However, there were significant differences between language groups: the corresponding figure for Russian speakers was 29% and for Ukrainian speakers 85%.
- The majority also rated their financial situation as at least average, on a 10-point scale to categories 5-7 (48% in total) (average 5.98).



Appendix: statistical background

- According to Statistics Finland, there are about 646,000 foreign-language speakers in Finland, i.e. about one tenth (11.4%) of the entire population.
- However, in the municipalities of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area and in many large cities, the proportions are higher:
 - In Espoo 84,000 (25.9%)
 - In Helsinki 147,000 (21.2%)
 - In Vantaa 76,000 (29.9%)
 - In Tampere 31,000 (12.0%)
- For example, about half (52%) of the entire foreign-language population in the country lives in these localities. Correspondingly, the majority of many foreign-language groups live in these localities:
 - Of Arabic-speaking 27,000 (60.5%)
 - Of English-speaking 23,000 (58.7%)
 - Of Chinese-speaking 13,000 (63.8%)
 - Of Farsi-speaking 15,000 (60.7%)
 - Of Ukrainian-speaking 10,000 (20.9%)
 - Of Russian-speaking 47,000 (46.3%)
- These 6 language groups account for 43% of all foreign-language speakers at the national level (40% in these areas).

Appendix: population figures

	Arabic	English	Chinese	Farsi	Ukraine	Russia	Other	Total foreign l.	Total population	% foreign l.
Espoo	6 472	5 971	4 909	4 188	2 459	11 327	48 899	84 225	325 716	25,9
Helsinki	11 736	11 072	5 224	5 081	3 188	21 540	89 641	147 482	694 392	21,2
Vantaa	6 349	3 476	1 663	2 764	2 748	10 804	47 879	75 683	252 956	29,9
Tampere	2 647	2 432	1 164	2 565	1 360	3 813	17 506	31 487	263 337	12,0
All areas	27 204	22 951	12 960	14 598	9 755	47 484	203 925	338 877	1 536 401	22,1
Total country	44 956	39 100	20 320	24 047	46 696	102 618	368 655	646 392	5 652 881	11,4

Source: Statistic Finland (2025)