Well-being of EKA Researchers and Academic Staff

Methodology and Survey Questionnaire

Methodology

The methodology for EKA's Well-being Survey was developed by Assistant Professor Jelena Budanceva of EKA University of Applied Sciences as part of her PhD research. It integrates established theoretical models and measurement approaches within a modular questionnaire addressing burnout symptoms, work organisation and productivity, job resources and demands, and health-supporting practices.

The conceptual framework draws on Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, which explains stress in terms of threatened or actual resource loss and insufficient resource replenishment following investment (Hobfoll, 1989). Resources are considered at personal, social, organisational and temporal/energetic levels. Their operationalisation combines selected and adapted items from psychosocial work-environment and self-efficacy measures with author-developed questions on overload, decision pressure, stakeholder complexity and organisational conditions enabling access to support, information and recovery.

Burnout symptoms are assessed using the 12-item Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT-12), covering exhaustion, mental distance, cognitive impairment and emotional impairment. The short form was developed through content and Rasch analyses, retaining the four-dimensional structure while reducing response burden (Hadžibajramović et al., 2022). The work organisation and productivity component draws on the Leadership Productivity Model and Leadership Productivity Survey, focusing on goal orientation, support and time optimisation (Desjardins, 2012).

Health-supporting practices are informed by Health-Oriented Leadership (HoL), distinguishing care for one's own health (SelfCare) from care for others' health (StaffCare) (Franke et al., 2014). The adapted block draws on behaviour-focused applications by Kaluza et al. (2021) and Klug et al. (2022), addressing recovery, workload boundaries, recognition of strain and supportive working practices. Brief items on health awareness and values retain the broader health orientation without reproducing the full HoL instrument.

Five-point response formats assess frequency and agreement. The design brings individual experiences together with organisational conditions to support the identification of overload risks, recovery needs and priorities for institutional support.

The wording of Well-Being Survey used at EKA University of Applied Sciences is adapted to the academic work context.

Questionnaire

The purpose of this survey is to assess signs of burnout, work organisation, available resources and health-supporting working habits, in order to identify improvements needed in the working environment and institutional support. The survey is intended for research, academic and administrative staff.

When answering, think about your current work at the university, including research, teaching, supervising student work and your other duties. If you undertake research, academic and administrative work, assess them together. Tick one response in each table row. Pay attention to the scale: some sections ask about frequency, while others ask about your level of agreement.

Participation is voluntary and anonymous. Results will be reported only in aggregate form. Do not include information in open responses that could identify you or anyone else. There are no right or wrong answers: your experience is what matters. Completing the survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes.

Consent to participate

I have read the information above and voluntarily agree to participate in the survey.

☐ Yes, I agree ☐ No, I do not agree

If you do not agree, please do not continue with the survey.

Participant information

Your professional activities at EKA (tick all that apply):

☐ Research ☐ Academic work ☐ Administrative work

Length of service at the university (tick one response):

☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 1-3 years ☐ 4-7 years ☐ 8-15 years ☐ More than 15 years

Age: _____ years

Gender: ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Other / prefer not to say

Burnout

The following statements concern how you experience your work and how you feel at work. Indicate how often each statement applies to you in your current work situation.

1-Never; 2-Rarely; 3-Sometimes; 4-Often; 5-Always; or 0-Cannot answer / No answer

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	0
1	At work, I feel mentally exhausted.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	After a day at work, I find it difficult to recover my energy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	0
3	At work, I feel physically exhausted.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	I struggle to find any enthusiasm for my work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	I feel a strong aversion to my work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	I am cynical about what my work means to others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	At work, I have trouble staying focused.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	I find it difficult to concentrate while working.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9	At work, I make mistakes because my mind is on other things.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	At work, I feel unable to control my emotions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11	I do not recognise myself in the way I react emotionally at work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12	At work, I may overreact without realising it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Previous experience of burnout

Have you experienced burnout before?

☐ Definitely not ☐ Not sure ☐ Yes, once ☐ Yes, several times

Which of your personal practices and/or forms of support provided by EKA have helped you prevent or cope with burnout at work?

_____

_____

_____

Work organisation and productivity

Indicate how often each statement describes your current research and/or academic work. Assess collaboration with colleagues and students in relation to your duties.

1-Never; 2-Rarely; 3-Sometimes; 4-Often; 5-Always; or 0-Cannot answer / No answer

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	0
13	I set clear work goals for my area of responsibility and main tasks.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14	I set clear deadlines and priorities for completing important tasks.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15	When priorities or assigned tasks change, I clarify the changes with those involved before taking action.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16	I can carry out my work tasks independently and responsibly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17	I assess whether the results of completed work meet the expected standards and goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18	I respond to important work-related requests within a reasonable time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19	I ensure that the information needed to achieve work goals is available in good time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20	When mistakes occur in shared work or student work, I promptly provide constructive feedback or guidance on correcting them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21	When colleagues or students achieve good results, I promptly provide positive feedback or recognition.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	0
22	I notice when I or the people I work with need support with tasks or competence development, and I take action to obtain it or help them find it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23	When planning task deadlines, I consider my availability, the university's priorities and the demands of other tasks.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24	I plan meetings and collaborative activities to make efficient use of available working time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
25	I prepare for meetings and work discussions and participate in them purposefully and efficiently.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
26	I assess progress and achievements in my area of responsibility.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
27	I actively develop my professional skills in research and/or academic work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
28	Within my area of competence, I support the professional and career development of colleagues and/or students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
29	I connect my day-to-day work with the value it creates for the university, students and society.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
30	I retain sufficient autonomy to plan my main work tasks independently and carry them out responsibly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
31	I set challenging but realistic work goals that develop my professional competences.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Job resources and demands

Indicate how strongly you agree with the statements about your current work situation at the university.

1-Strongly disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Neutral; 4-Agree; 5-Strongly agree; or 0-Cannot answer / No answer

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	0
32	I feel able to deal effectively with difficult or unexpected problems in my work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
33	Even under pressure, I usually believe that I can find practical solutions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
34	I have at least one trusted person at work with whom I can openly discuss difficult work-related issues.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
35	When work demands become excessive, I can rely on practical support from my immediate supervisor, colleagues or other support staff at the university.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
36	My responsibilities and authority are sufficiently clear for me to make and implement the decisions needed for my work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
37	I receive sufficiently reliable information in good time to carry out my work effectively.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
38	I have enough time in reserve to address important work-related issues without constantly "putting out fires".	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
39	I have real opportunities to recover my energy during and after work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
40	My job requires me to deal with too many important tasks at the same time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
41	I am forced to respond to urgent issues before I can complete work that is important in the long term.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
42	I have to make important work-related decisions based on incomplete information.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	0
43	Incorrect decisions have significant consequences in my work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
44	I regularly face conflicting expectations from different stakeholders, such as students, colleagues, management or cooperation partners.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
45	Much of my energy at work is spent balancing the competing demands of different stakeholders.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
46	At work, I have to display confidence, calmness or a positive attitude even when I do not actually feel that way.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
47	Regulating my emotions for work consumes a large part of my energy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
48	The university clearly defines which issues require my personal involvement and which should be addressed by other colleagues or units.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
49	Meetings and collaborative processes at the university are organised to protect researchers' and academic staff members' time and attention.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
50	The university provides sufficient support for day-to-day work to prevent chronic overload.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
51	I have sufficient administrative or coordination support to focus on the most important research and/or academic tasks.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
52	Information systems and reporting procedures provide me with the information needed for clear and purposeful action.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
53	The university has effective procedures for identifying and addressing overload among researchers and academic staff in good time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Health-supporting working habits

Indicate how strongly you agree with each statement about caring for your health and working with colleagues in ways that protect health. Assess your actions in relation to your opportunities and responsibilities.

1-Strongly disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Neutral; 4-Agree; 5-Strongly agree; or 0-Cannot answer / No answer

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	0
54	I consciously protect my recovery time during and after work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
55	I pay attention to early signs that work is negatively affecting my health.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
56	I organise my workload to maintain my mental and physical readiness for research and/or academic work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
57	I set boundaries when work demands begin to threaten my health or recovery.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
58	I take specific steps to maintain my energy and concentration at work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
59	I notice when colleagues I work with show signs of strain, fatigue or overload.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
60	Within my area of competence, I help address health-related strain in collaboration with colleagues before it becomes a serious problem.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
61	I support colleagues in organising their work in ways that protect their health.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
62	In my collaboration with colleagues, I promote recovery, breaks and sustainable working habits.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
63	I help create opportunities to discuss health- and workload-related issues openly with colleagues.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	0
64	When making work-related decisions, I consciously assess their impact on my own health and that of my colleagues.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
65	I believe that protecting health and maintaining a sustainable workload are essential to high-quality research and academic work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Suggestions for improving the working environment

Which improvements in work organisation or support at the university would most enhance your well-being and help reduce overload?

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Thank you for participating in the survey! Your responses will help improve the working environment for researchers and academic staff at EKA.

References

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