What Academics Want:

Findings from the National Survey on Workplace Climate and Well-Being

By
Professor Peter Holland

Swinburne University of Technology

Dr Tse Leng Tham

Monash University

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Contextual Overview

> “It is simply very hard to be a super-person in every aspect; we are expected to write grant applications like a pro, supervise student projects and provide pastoral care, teach classes and innovate in teaching, while devising and designing effective research projects, executing projects, and writing these up professionally. Oh - and balance all those other service and administration tasks. Is there anything else they can want us to do? It feels like they want three or four distinct jobs out of each person and we are constantly 'split' between everything and unable to feel as though we have accomplished much anywhere in our job.”

> “Pressure to excel on multiple metrics - teaching, publishing, industry engagement, tender awards, leadership.”

The quotes above reflect the genesis of this research into Australian and New Zealand academics workplace well-being. As conversations at ANZAM reflect many of the themes we explore as we come together each year for our annual conference. We hope that in exploring these points and putting some research behind these issues, we at ANZAM can become more proactive in the debate around academic work across multiple levels.

This survey, firstly, sets out to provide a snapshot of the industry and, secondly, the opportunity for ANZAM, as the leading body for management scholars in these two countries, to gather information and identify key trend in this sector. Such information is useful in an environment of constant government review and efficiency drives within the higher education field. As one of the top exports for both countries, issues pertaining to well-being and climate of this workforce are particularly relevant.

A key feature in these discussions is the concerns regarding increased job insecurity, work intensification, and the impact of these issues on work-life balance and general well-being. Much of this may be a result of pressures and expectations on academics now in a globally-connected and increasingly competitive environment. It should be noted that preliminary findings show that academics are highly engaged and embedded in their occupation. However, taking the theme from Frost and Taylor's (1996) seminal book on academic careers, we picked up on several points linked to the notion inherent within the career and role of an academic. Specifically, this includes the opportunity to make mistakes and see the academic world from different vantage points. This implies time to learn and develop knowledge, skills, and, ability in the craft of academia. However, particularly for early career academics, this time appears to no longer exist. Rather than undertaking a PhD whilst learning the skills of the craft, these academics are expected to have publications in high-ranking journals and on-going research projects to compete for academic jobs. Indeed, with the ANZAM conference falling in December, it is increasingly seen as a default marketplace for jobs for these early carer researchers. For middle and late career academics, the traditional roles of supervision, professional service for journals and the university are juxtaposed with the ever-increasing demands of high-level publications and the need to be applying for dwindling external funding with the consequences of increased teaching loads and remedial performance management if these criteria are not met. This competitive climate developed in an era of managerialism can potentially tip the balance from privileged role to an overwhelming challenge, as work intensification increases the likelihood of declining psychological well-being as employees move from engagement to burnout.

Findings of this study into the workplace climate of academics highlight significant issues and trends emerging in the workplace. In an environment exacerbated by an ageing workforce (Bexley, James, & Arkoudis, 2011), there are signs of the potential problems for this labour market in the not-so distant future.

Significant issues that also come to light in this survey of climate and workplace well-being include job insecurity, high levels of employee silence, work intensification and an increasing disjuncture between senior management and the academic workforce. This paints a picture of workforce under increasing pressure. Whilst this study has been commissioned to highlight issues in the academic workplace, we acknowledge that further research and analysis needs to be undertaken to identify causal links between these key emergent trends.

Focus of the Study

This is a comprehensive survey carried out by ANZAM in collaboration with the Australian Consortium for Research on Employment and Work (ACREW) at Monash University on the academic profession in Australia and New Zealand. This study addresses the key indicators associated with workplace climate and well-being in this sector through a comprehensive national survey designed to explore the working conditions, well-being, and organisational and management practices that characterise the work environments of business school academics. In doing so, this study illuminates in greater detail individual issues within the academic profession. The study identifies aspects of the work environment, which require interventions to facilitate the retention of this key tertiary education workforce. As alluded to, the profession is facing increasingly challenging working conditions. Coupled with an ageing workforce, there is a growing need to provide detailed research and evidence as a catalyst and platform for intervention strategies to address issues facing the profession.

Summary of Findings

This report presents findings of a survey on business school academics conducted in 2017. The survey examined academics' workplace well-being (e.g., workload, burnout, engagement, work-life balance, occupational satisfaction, occupational embeddedness, and occupational turnover intentions) and workplace climate (e.g., participation and academic freedom, employee voice and silence, organisational practices, support at work, and trust). The results are set out in this report.

Workplace Well-Being

Workloads

Overwhelmingly, the majority of respondents reported intensification of workloads with regards to its quantity, intensity, and complexity. The key contributors of the reported high workloads included increase in administrative work responsibilities and mounting pressures to publish in top ranking journals. Respondents also reported that workload issues are exacerbated by the lack of provisions such as additional time or resources to shoulder added work tasks. Qualitative data also suggests that such intensification of work beyond an individual's capacity has also placed pressures on the quality of work, in particular, research. Indeed, fifty-seven percent of respondents[1] indicated that they often had more work than they could do well.

Change in Workloads

Overall, the survey identified that the majority of respondents felt that key aspects of their workloads have become worse over the last one to five years. Almost consistently, seventy percent of respondents reported that conditions surrounding service and administrative workloads, "publish or perish" pressures, and the need to work during non-work times such as evenings, weekends, and holidays have worsened over the past one to five years. Particularly, respondents have flagged that changes in the area of teaching (e.g., multiple modes of teaching including face-to-face, online or mixed; move

[1] Fifty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they had to do more work than they could do well at least 'once or twice per week' to 'several times per day'.

towards blended learning methods; quality of students) have also compounded the levels of complexity in an academic's work. Sentiments of respondents generally resonate with findings in the section above whereby support available to cope with such changes in workloads do not seem to be commensurate with these changes. As such, it is not surprising that respondents have indicated the encroachment of work into supposed non-work/recovery time (e.g., evenings, weekends, and holidays). Qualitative data suggests that such conditions are likely to exacerbate burnout and diminish opportunities for creative thinking and scholarship.

Burnout

Nearly sixty percent of respondents reported that they often or always felt worn out at the end of the working day and nearly forty percent indicated that they regularly felt burnt out because of their work. Respondents have demonstrated signs of reaching a tipping point wherein the impingement of work on their non-work and recovery time is worsening. Qualitative data also suggests that this is likely to overspill and negatively influence an individual's overall well-being and quality of life.

Engagement

Despite increasing workloads, the majority of respondents reported feeling engaged at their work. Sixty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they were often proud of their work and forty-four percent reported feeling immersed in their work every day. However, qualitative data signposted that chronic exposure to elevated workload and exhaustion, along with deteriorating aspects of workplace climate (e.g., increasing managerialism, employee silence, lack of training and developmental opportunities) may be contributing to higher levels of discontent and the erosion of engagement among academics. If such issues are left unaddressed, qualitative data indicates that they could potentially lead to higher turnover rates in this sector.

Work-life Balance

Broadly, at least forty percent of respondents consistently indicated they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the way in which they were able to reconcile demands from both work and personal/family domains. Forty-nine percent of respondents were discontented with the opportunities they had to perform both work and home-related duties sufficiently. Consistent with findings related to previous indicators, respondents expressed that having to cope with elevated workloads that surpass their capacities without additional support has negatively impacted their ability to maintain an adequate level of work-life balance.

Research Motivation

In terms of academics' motivation to conduct research, respondents reported being driven by both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of engaging in research. It is noted that a comparatively larger percentage of respondents indicated that they conducted research for intrinsic reasons such as pleasure and learning opportunities. Between eighty-two to eighty-nine percent of respondents reported that they found great pleasure in conducting and learning new things through research. Compared to such figures, a relatively smaller proportion of respondents (70%) indicated that they wanted to be recognised by peers for conducting sound research.

Occupational Satisfaction

Overall, more than half of the respondents indicated they were satisfied with their careers as academics. This was particularly so for the general success in the profession, progress made towards income and skill development goals. However, more than a third of respondents were discontented with their progress made towards their goals for advancement. Qualitative data suggests that the combination of performance goals with emphasis on the production of publications in highly-ranked journals within a restrictive list and a general increase in workloads have contributed to feelings of demotivation in this group as respondents report that career advancement opportunities, are perceived to be almost unattainable.

Occupational Embeddedness

When asked about individual perceptions on fit and link to the academic profession, along with potential sacrifices should one decide to leave academia, the majority of respondents indicated feeling attached (76%) and tightly connected (62%) to the profession. Nevertheless, only forty percent respondents reported that they were too caught up in the occupation to leave. Qualitative data suggests that respondents are connected to and do value the content of work and the network of professional colleagues..

Intentions to Leave the Occupation

This study found that around a quarter of respondents reported that they have considered leaving the academic profession and seek employment in a different profession. This is concerning as this represent intentions to *exit the academic profession* as opposed to leaving the current employing organisation. This is likely to signify a significant exodus of skilled and experienced staff. Particularly with an ageing academic workforce, where up to half of the workforce is aged 45 and above (Australia Government Department of Education and Training, 2016) and approximately half of the Australian academic workforce intend to retire, move overseas, or leave the higher education sector during this decade (Bexley et al., 2011). Such issues may pose significant challenges for the academic sector in the near future. We believe this is a finding that needs further investigation.

Workplace Climate

Change in Participation and Academic Freedom

In general, findings related to perceived opportunities to participate in decision-making for policies indicate that conditions have worsened over the five-year period. Particularly, such perceptions of opportunities appear to deteriorate with higher levels of management. For instance, forty-three percent of respondents felt that such changes in participatory decision-making at the departmental level have deteriorated, as compared to fifty percent at the faculty level and fifty-four percent at the institutional level. These results may paint a picture of a climate of diminishing participation and involvement of employees and a growing disconnect between employees and senior management. This may not be surprising given the lack of trust in senior management[2] and fear of negative repercussions for speaking up[3] found in this study. In terms of academic freedom, close to forty percent of respondents indicated an overall decline in the last five years, with only seventeen percent of respondents reporting improvements in this regard. Respondents have elaborated that the increasing corporatisation of universities and the growing culture of managerialism has altered the landscape of academia. More specifically, respondents have indicated that such changes have stifled creativity, innovation, and autonomy both in the areas of research and teaching, and have dampened the culture of scientific inquiry. Such issues identified in this report requires further analysis to establish linkages between key indicators.

Employee Voice and Silence

In an organisation, employee voice mechanisms are not only integral to the development of effective communication and the construction of cooperative workplace relations, but are contributors to greater employee performance too (Boxall & Purcell, 2016; Holland, Allen, & Cooper, 2013; Pyman, Holland, Teicher, & Cooper, 2010). At first glance, dialogues between senior

[2] Only twenty-six percent of respondents felt that they could trust senior management to be sincere in its attempts to consider employees' perspectives.
[3] Sixty percent of respondents indicated that they have remained silent in the workplace due to fear of negative consequences.

management and employees in the form of staff meetings seem to be a common voice mechanism present at workplaces as a large majority of respondents (83%) answered positively to this item. However, upon closer investigation, a comparatively smaller proportion of respondents have indicated that academics are involved in solving daily operational issues through the use of problem-solving teams with senior management. This may suggest that although there are overt efforts to foster conversations between management and employees, the actual *depth* and *active involvement* of employees in resolving daily operational issues, which are likely to have a pertinent impact on workplace well-being may be lacking in comparison. In fact, a large percentage of respondents reported that they remained silent at the workplace due to fear of negative consequences (60%) and disadvantages from voicing their opinions and concerns (59%), and perceptions of futility (69%). In the context of the lack of trust in senior management, such issues require further investigation.

Organisational Practices

Despite being a highly skilled sector of the workforce, there is an underlying concern with regards to training and development, career management, and job security. Of particular concern was the finding where fifty-two percent of respondents did not feel that their organisation had dedicated much effort or resources into providing training opportunities to equip employees to be competent in their job roles. Only 2% responded felt strongly that they have received adequate training to be proficient in their roles. Similarly, 2% of respondents were in strong agreement that their organisation had proactively located opportunities for the expansion of employees' knowledge and abilities. This may compound frustrations among academics as there is little support to help equip individuals with the elevating intensity and complexity of service, administrative, teaching, and research workloads, and performance requirements. Despite almost seventy percent of this survey's respondents being permanent and tenured employees, it was surprising that only twenty-eight percent felt that they were provided with adequate levels of job security.

Support at Work

An overview of this section indicates, there is a general perception of inadequate support and appreciation from management. Nearly forty percent of respondents were not in agreement that their organisation valued their contributions and fifty-six percent of respondents did not feel that their organisations cared about their well-being. However, smaller proportions of respondents harboured such sentiments towards their direct supervisors. For instance, only sixteen percent of respondents reported that their supervisors did not value their contributions at work. This may speak to the underscoring issues that may be contributing to the growing disjuncture between senior management and employees in this sector.

Trust in Senior Management and Direct Supervisor

Similar to the pattern of findings related to support at work, relatively less respondents reported having trust in senior management as compared to direct supervisors. For instance, a much higher proportion of respondents (63% e.g., ‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’) were confident that their supervisors will always treat them fairly as compared to senior management (26%, e.g., ‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’).

Methodology

The findings in this report are based on data from an online and paper-based survey conducted by ANZAM. The survey was publicised by ANZAM through emails to ANZAM members in 2017. Individual respondents were informed of the survey through an email bulletin seeking their participation, which also contained a hyperlink to the survey. The survey was also advertised to participants at the 2017 ANZAM annual conference in Melbourne. Potential respondents were advised that the survey was completely voluntary, anonymous, confidential, and independent, and that they were able to choose not to complete any of the individual questions. A total of 451 usable responses were received from business school academics currently working in Australia and New Zealand. All of the scales utilised in the survey had either been previously validated and published, or used in similar large-scale nationwide studies on academics. Quantitative analysis was carried out on SPSS 25 and the qualitative analysis was undertaken of the significant comments that were provided. These were themed under the major headings and relevant quotes were grouped together and the most common and relevant quotes were reflected in the report.

Respondent Demographics

On average, respondents were 50 years old (SD = 10.9) and the majority were female (52%) and had job roles that involved research, teaching, and administration work (63%). Typically, respondents had 16 years of occupational tenure (SD = 9.0) and worked in their current and primary employing organisation for an average of 10 years (SD = 7.9). A large majority of respondents worked in permanent full-time positions (69%) and just over half of the respondents were either in lecturer or senior lecturer positions (50%). Table 1a and 1b provide more detailed information in relation to the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1a: Demographic Information of Study Respondents

Age (Mean[4])	Total Sample
Years	50
Gender (%)	
Female	52
Male	48
Job Role (%)	
Research, teaching & administration	63
Research & teaching only	21
Research only	4
Teaching only	8
Other	4
Occupational Tenure (Mean)	
Years	16
Organisational Tenure (Mean)	
Years	10
Employment Status (%)	
Employed full-time on a limited or fixed-term agreement	17
Employed part-time on a limited or fixed-term agreement	7
Permanent full-time employee	69
Casual employment[5]	4
Other	3

[4] A mean is an average and is calculated by summing the responses of all the respondents and then dividing this total by the total number of respondents.
[5] Casual employment refers to working arrangements where employee only works when asked, with no guaranteed hours.

Table 1b: Demographic Information for Study Respondents (cont.)

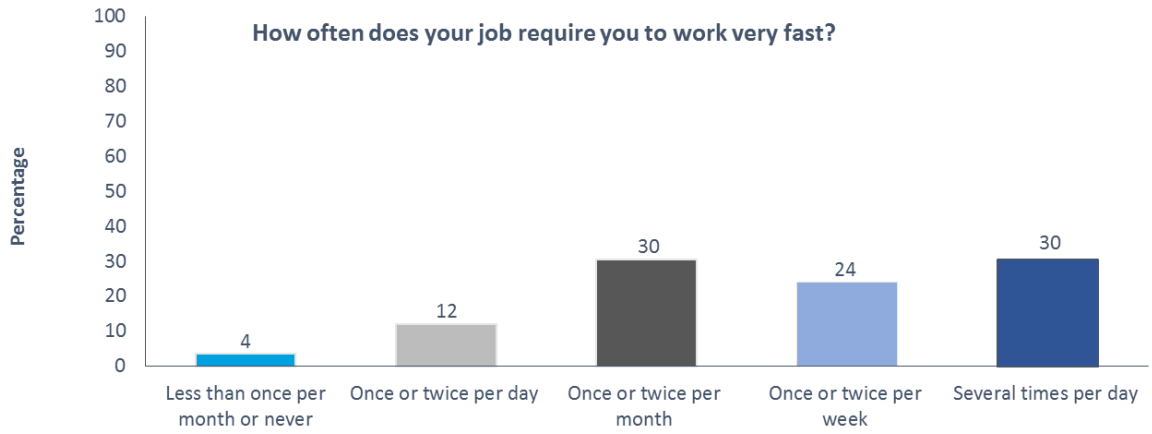
Job title (%)	
PhD student	4
Sessional lecturer	7
Permanent lecturer	20
Senior lecturer	30
Associate professor	11
Professor	19
Other	9
Department (%)	
Management	72
Marketing	8
Economics	2
Accounting & Finance	9
Other	9
Which country do you currently reside (%)	
Australia	82
New Zealand	17
Other	1

Workplace Well-Being

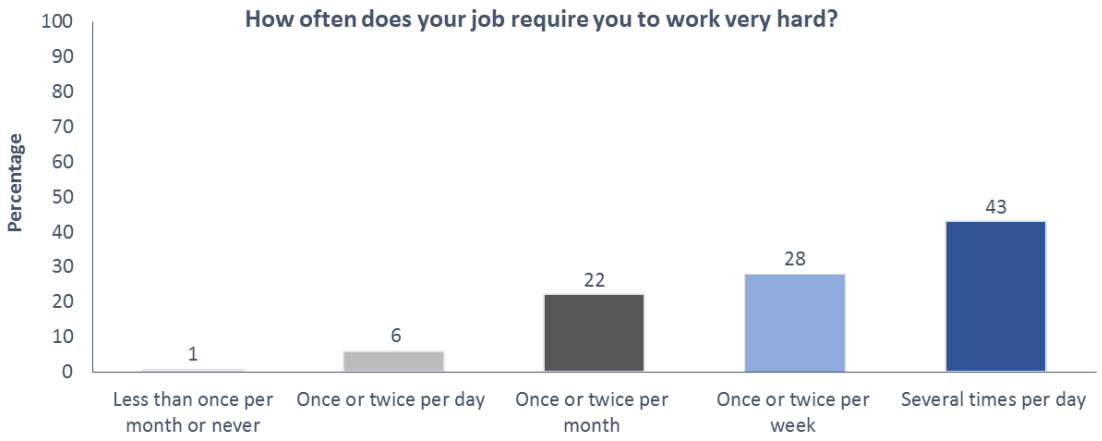
Workloads

This section of the survey asked respondents to report the intensity of their work in terms of pace and volume (Spector & Jex, 1998), by indicating how frequently their job required them to work very fast, very hard, with little time to get things done, and with a great deal to be done, and how often there was more work than could be done well. Respondents provided their answers to these items on a five-point scale (1 = never or 5 = several times per day).

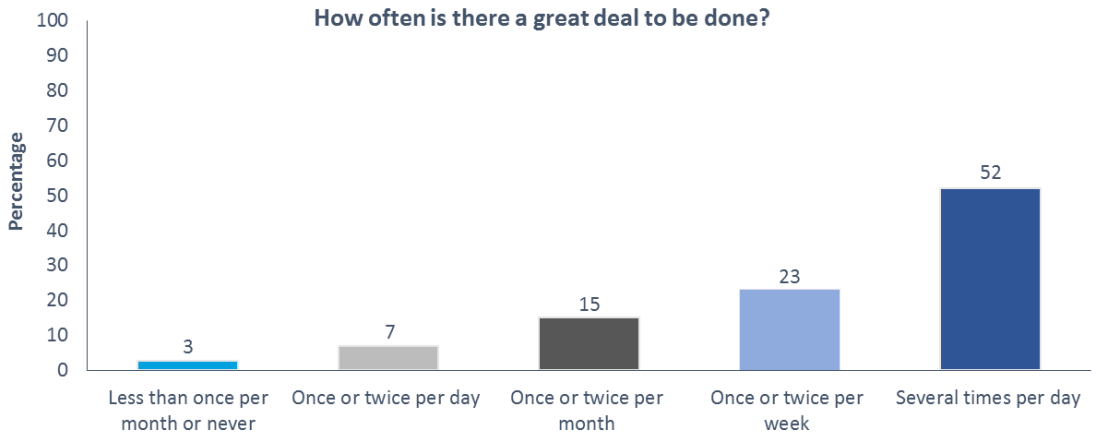
Overall, more than half of respondents reported often feeling that their jobs required them to work very fast, very hard, and left them feeling there is a great deal to be done, with little time to get things done, and have more to do than they can do well (e.g., 'once or twice per week' and 'several times per day'). With regard to the quantity and intensity of workload, fifty-two percent of respondents felt that there is a great deal to be done several times per day and forty-three percent felt that their job required them to work very hard several times per day. This has to be juxtaposed with the increased pressure to deliver work with quality when faced with increased quantity of workload.



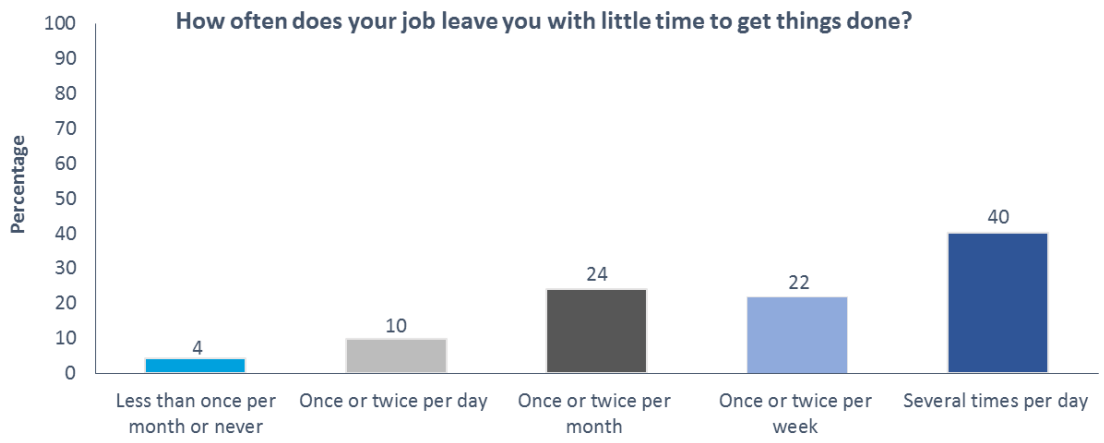
Fifty-four percent of respondents indicated that their job required them to work very fast at least once or twice per week to several times per day.



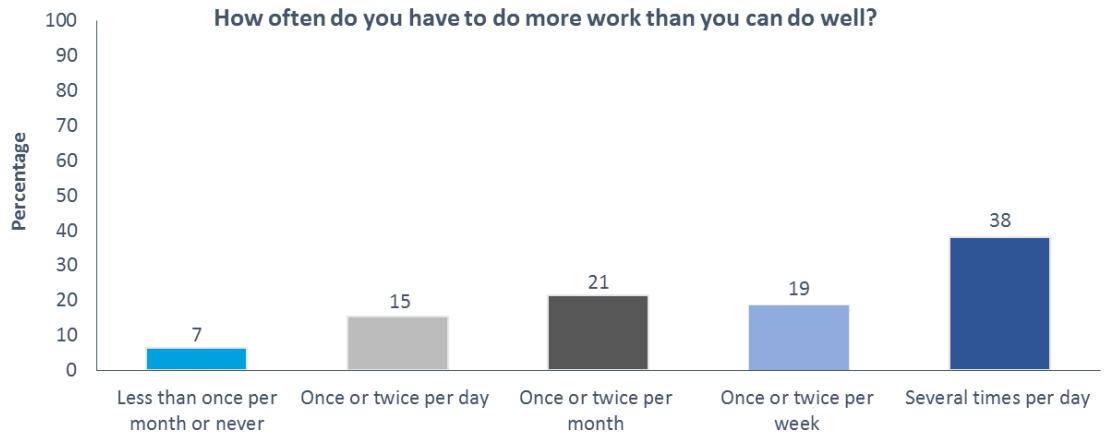
Seventy-one percent of respondents reported that their job often required them to work very hard (e.g., ‘once or twice per week’ and ‘several times per day’).



More than half (52%) of respondents felt that there is a great deal to be done at least several times per day. In total, a large majority of respondents (75%) felt that there was often a great deal to be done (e.g., ‘once or twice per week’ and ‘several times per day’).



Forty percent of respondents reported that at least several times per day, they felt that their jobs leave them with little time to get things done. The proportion of respondents reporting such sentiments with regards to workload at least once or twice per week rose to sixty-two percent.



Fifty-seven percent of respondents felt that they often have to do more work than they can do well (e.g., ‘once or twice per week’ and ‘several times per day’). As noted, in the context of an era of increased expectation in terms of quality teaching and publication, this is an issue that needs to be further explored.

Quotes from Respondents

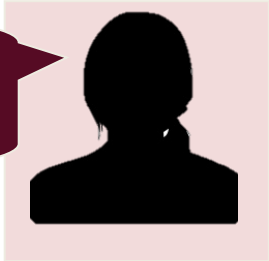
Qualitative data provided by respondents highlighted that the increase in administrative work responsibilities, pressures to publish in top ranking journals, combined with the increasing unrealistic expectations of academics to shoulder added work tasks without the provision of additional time or resources as a source of work intensification is a concern. This has contributed to increasing levels of exhaustion and has implications for the quality of work.

"Pace of organisational change is unsustainable. Changes pile up but there is no learning from anything or any opportunity to improve upon processes. It is exhausting and distracting. It prevents the development of good routines that help make space for research."

"The crucial issue where I work seems to be the impossible demands that are being placed on administrative staff, which in turn then flow onto academic staff. The sense of 'overwhelmness' is compounded by the remoteness of the senior management who are making the decisions re structure, technology systems etc and staffing levels that are the context for the impossible demands on staff."

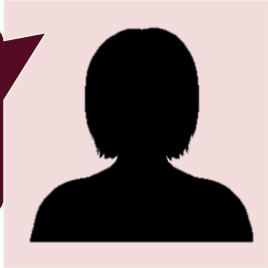
"Budget cuts, constant cost cutting measures, increasing academic workloads and no administrative support for even routine duties has led to an ever increasing work overload for academics."

“Workloads are becoming unmanageable at expense of quality and research...”



“The issue is shorter time to do the expected activities, high workload, poor quality students and higher expectations of the senior management without realising our constraints.”

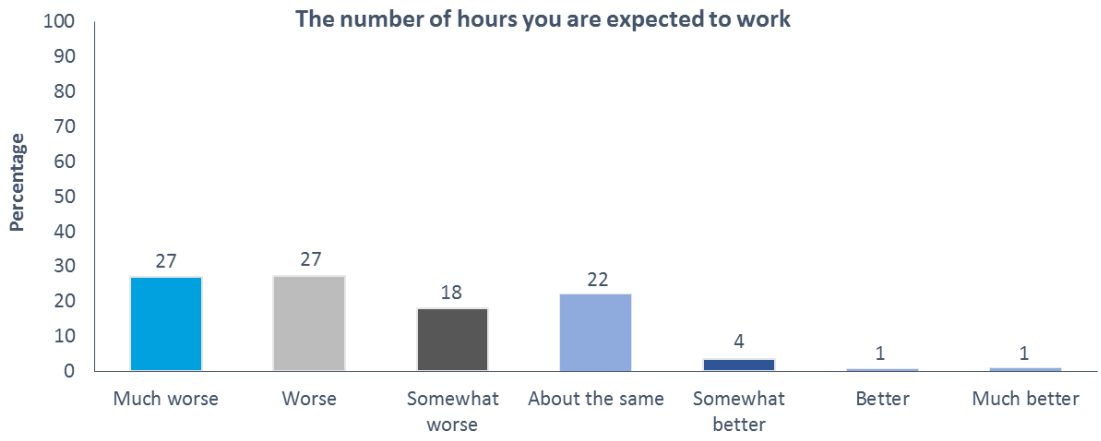
“The performance benchmarks are increasingly unrealistic and exceed the capacity of most people to deliver within a standard work week - this results in high levels of unpaid work being performed which in turn leads a further raising of the benchmark.”



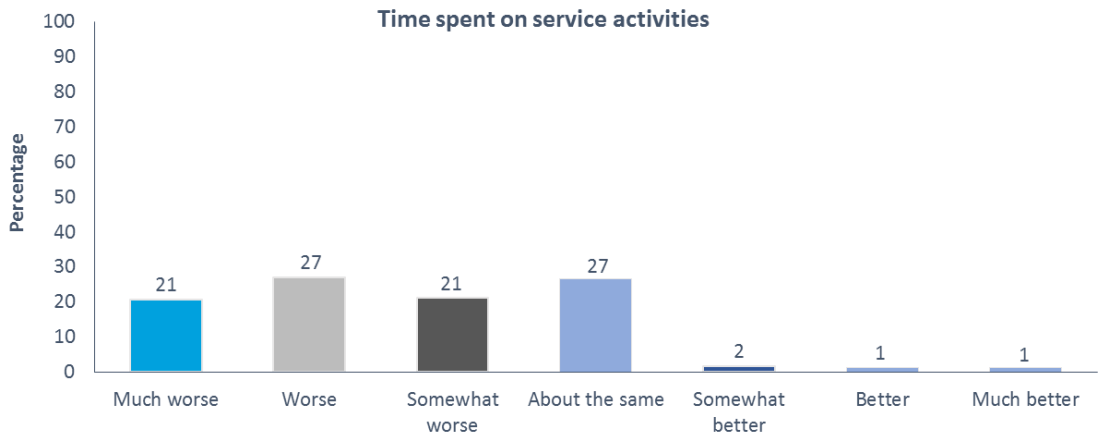
Change in Workloads

In addition to the measure of pace and volume of work, this survey also followed Bentley, McLeod, and Teo's (2014) approach to investigating workloads and intensification in the New Zealand academic sector. In this section of the survey, respondents were asked to think about whether task-related facets of their work that were likely to influence perceived workloads had changed for the better or worse over the last one to five years. Such work dimensions include class sizes, dealing with student plagiarism and cheating, 'publish or perish' pressures, and time spent on service work. As pointed out by Bentley et al. (2014), these aspects of work are likely to impact the time and energy required to achieve them, therefore, potentially adding to the overall perceived workload.

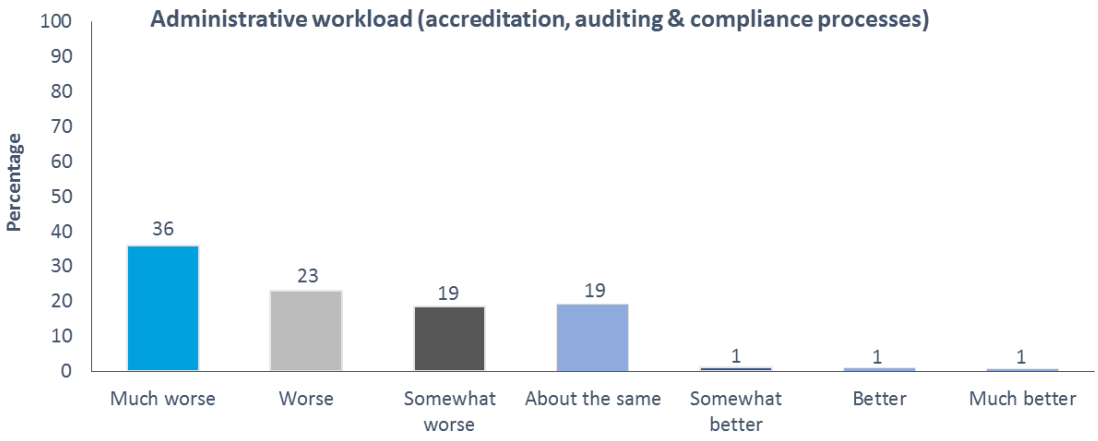
Bentley and colleagues (2014) found that the proportion of respondents indicating that things had become worse was far greater than those who reported that they had improved since joining the tertiary education sector in New Zealand. Similarly, findings of the ANZAM survey were revealed when respondents were asked to assess the improvement or deterioration of these indicators over the last five years. Particularly areas of concern include administrative workloads, "publish or perish" pressures, and the need to work during evenings, weekends, and holidays. For these indicators, the large majority of respondents (at least 70%) have indicated that such tasks and associated workloads have deteriorated (i.e., 'somewhat worse', 'worse', 'much worse') over the last one to five years.



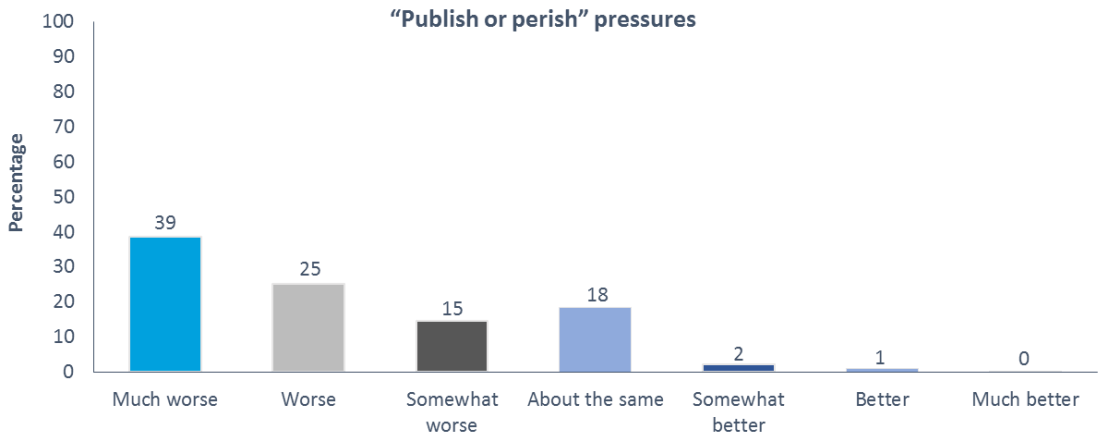
A large majority of respondents (72%) reported that the number of hours expected to work has deteriorated over the past one to five years.



Nearly seventy percent of respondents indicated that time spent on service activities has become more demanding (69%, e.g., ‘somewhat worse’, ‘worse’, and ‘much worse’) in the recent one to five years.

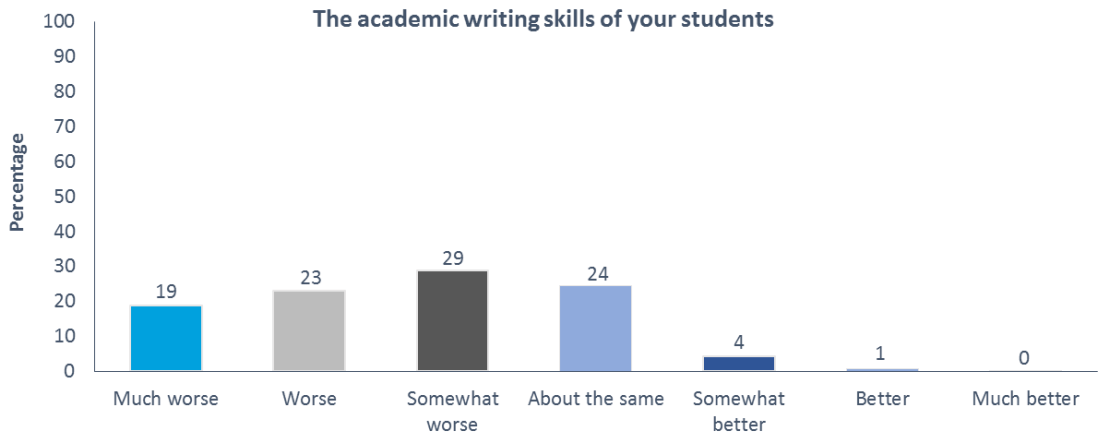


Resonating the findings of Bentley et al.'s (2014) study on New Zealand academics[6], seventy-eight percent of respondents (e.g., 'somewhat worse', 'worse', and 'much worse') reported that their administrative workloads involving accreditation, auditing, and compliance processes have worsened over the last one to five years, of which, more than a third of respondents indicated that these administrative aspects of their work have become much worse.

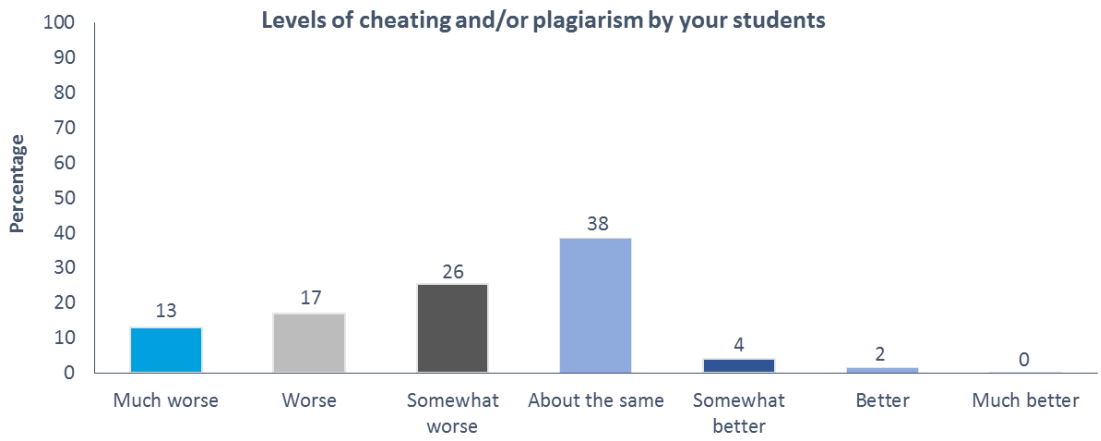


Almost eighty percent (79%, e.g., 'somewhat worse', 'worse', and 'much worse') of respondents reported that the "publish or perish" pressures have worsened in the last one to five years.

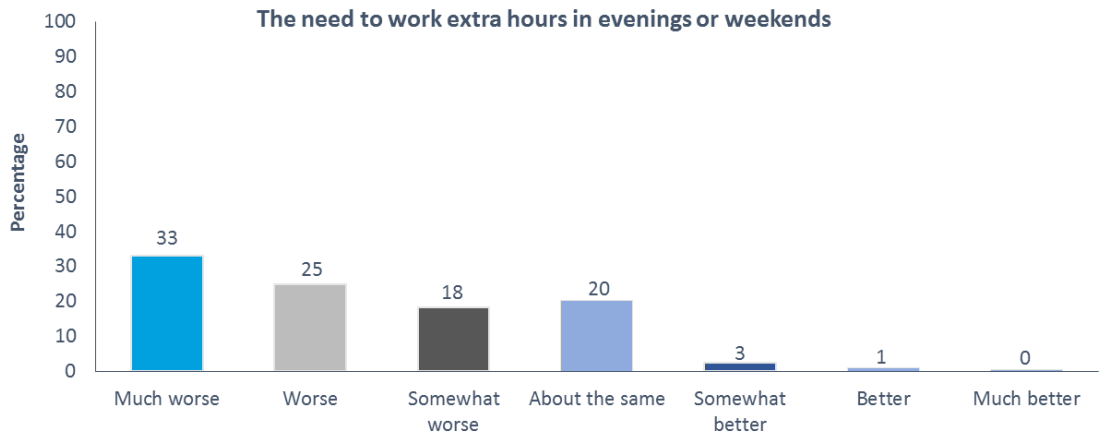
[6] Bentley et al. (2014) reported that seventy percent of respondents indicated that administrative workloads had become worse since they joined academia.



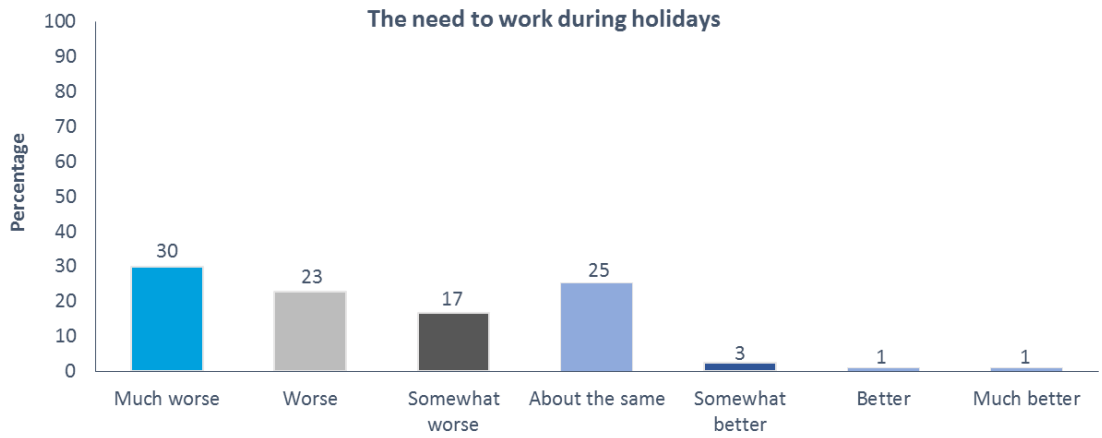
Specifically, work task dimensions related to teaching have worsened over the last five-year period. For instance, seventy-one percent of respondents (e.g., ‘somewhat worse’, ‘worse’, and ‘much worse’) felt that the academic writing skills of their students have deteriorated.



A little more than half (56%, e.g., ‘somewhat worse’, ‘worse’, and ‘much worse’) of respondents indicated that the levels of academic cheating amongst their students had worsened over the last one to five years.



Seventy-six percent of respondents (e.g., 'somewhat worse', 'worse', and 'much worse') reported that the encroachment of work into the evenings and weekends have become worse in the last one to five years.



A comparable proportion of respondents (70%, e.g., 'somewhat worse', 'worse', and 'much worse') also indicated that the need to work during holidays has worsened over the last one to five years.

Quotes from Respondents

Resonating with sentiments shared pertaining to the key drivers of work intensification explored in the earlier section; respondents have similarly reported that the increase in work intensification is largely driven by the mounting pressure to publish particularly in top-ranking journals and the increase in teaching, service, and administrative workloads. The paradox of

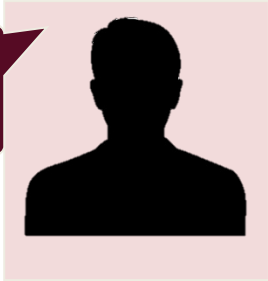
these findings in that increase in such workloads come at the same time where all academics are required to produce increasingly high quality research, based upon journal rankings. However, support available to cope such changes in workloads do not seem to commensurate with these changes. It is, therefore, not surprising that respondents indicate that they feel increased work pressures to meet these goals, with the overspill of work into supposed non-work/recovery time (e.g., evenings, weekend, and holidays). Qualitative data suggests that such pressures continue to compound the stress on academics, which, in turn, is likely to impact burnout and reduce opportunities for creative thinking.

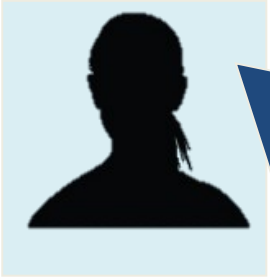
"Ridiculous focus on A and A journals and where we increasingly value what we can measure and not measuring what we value."*

"Increasing performance demands and pressure to publish in high quality journals with decreasing likelihood of success given the growth of these demands worldwide. Reduced likelihood of ARC grant success with falling success rates in the 1503 category. Quality of students is variable and decreased recognition that students are responsible for their own learning outcomes. All this makes life highly stressful!"

"Continuous threat of work intensification - requirement to take on admin roles now unsupported by admin staff."

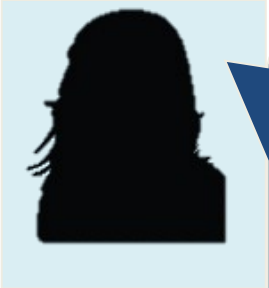
"The issue is shorter time to do expected activities, high workload, poor quality students and higher expectations of the senior management without realising our constraints."





"…staff (academic and professional/admin) are under increasing levels of stress. This has multiple sources but probably includes increasing bureaucratic controls, reporting and compliance (both internally and to the Fed Govt), work intensification with three semester years and compressed academic calendars, increasing expectations for research quality, quantity and now impact, and the increasing expectations regarding industry engagement. It seems to be a case of continually adding new things without taking unproductive or low value-add work away."

"The workload in terms of teaching load is excessive despite all my research, doctoral supervision and service contributions."

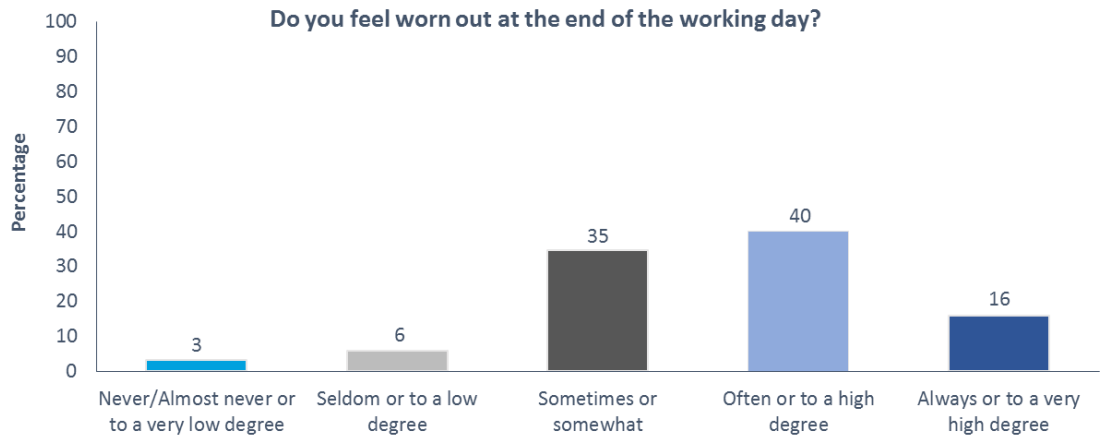


"Now they have to teach on multiple campuses, in multiple modes (face-to-face, online or mixed), and continually innovate their courses to align with blended learning trends (some of which students are very resistant of, e.g., flipped lectures). These challenges, combined with increased administrative requirements, have resulted in academics spending long hours on teaching duties; time which is not acknowledge by workload models."

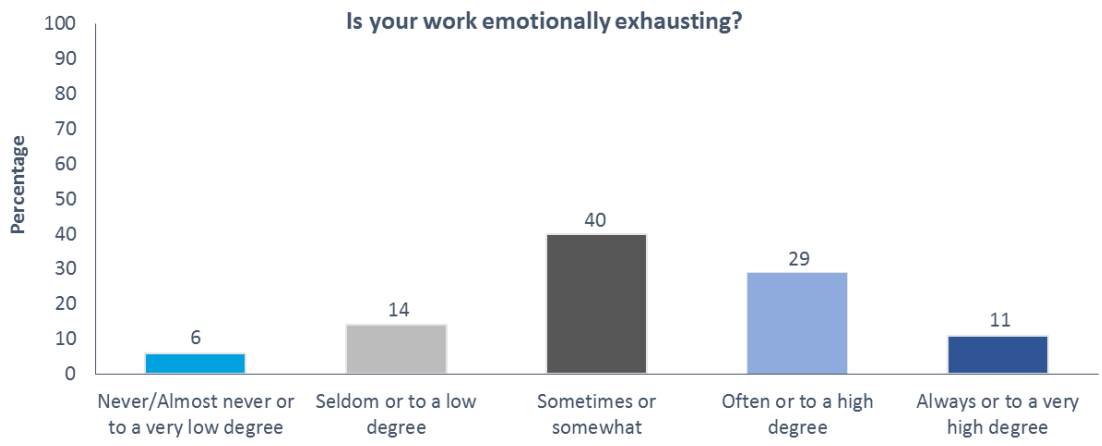
Burnout

Burnout has been conceptualised as a condition where an individual feels overextended and depleted of their emotional, mental, and physical resources as a result of the work that they are engaged in (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001; Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2009). Such states are often precursors to feelings of overload, which may lead to cognitive and emotive detachment from work (Barkhuizen, Rothmann, & van de Vijver, 2014). Specifically, the risk of experiencing burnout has been found to be prevalent in professional fields including education (Bejerot, 2005; Bilge, 2006). Research has indicated that academics are faced with growing job demands such as work pressure, workloads, and increasing roles academics have to fulfil that compounds the complexity of academic work (Kinman, 2001; Lease, 1999; McClenehan, Giles, & Mallett, 2007). Performing these tasks in an environment with increasing resource limitations (i.e., insufficient job resources) have been found to negatively impact levels of stress (Daly & Dee, 2006; Gillespie, Walsh, Wineld, Dua, & Stough, 2001; Kinman & Jones, 2003) and in turn, exacerbate levels of burnout among academics (Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Houston, Meyer, & Paweao, 2006). Indeed, studying a sample of academics, Barkhuizen et al. (2014) found that job demands in terms of work overload contributed to burnout. In this study, burnout was measured using the work burnout scale from the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI; Kristensen, Borritz, Villadsen, & Kristensen et al., 2005). Respondents recorded their responses on a five-point scale ranging from 1 = never or to a very low degree to 5 = always or to a very high degree.

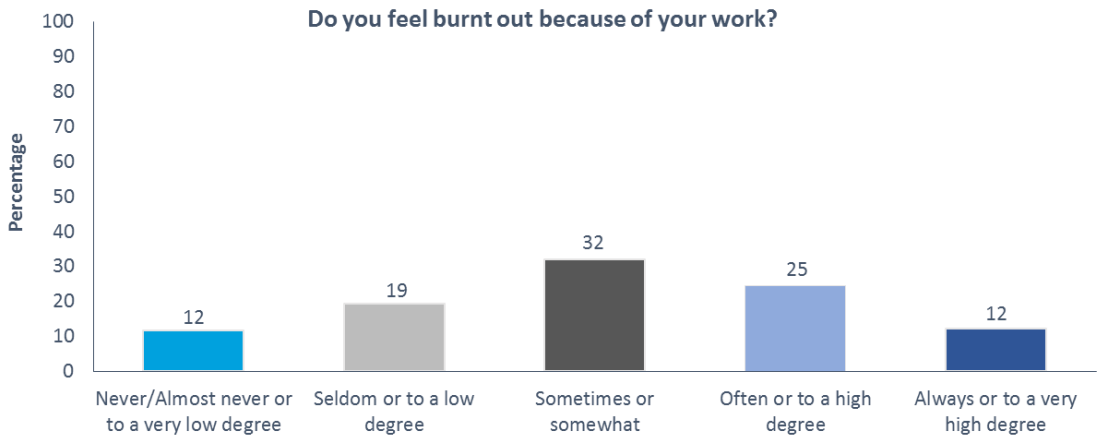
Given the presented findings of previous studies on academics and the reports of increasing work intensification, it is not surprising that almost sixty percent of respondents in this study indicated that they often or always felt worn out at the end of the working day and close to forty percent indicated that they regularly felt burnt out because of their work.



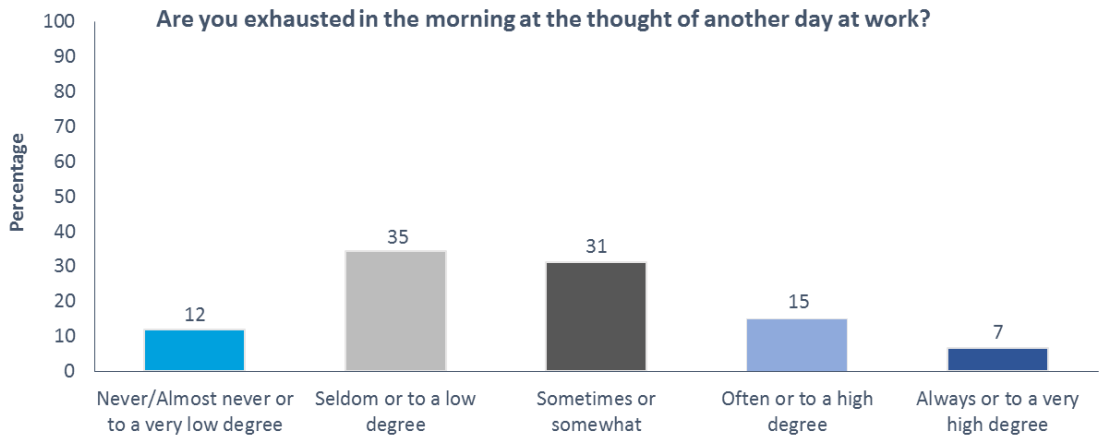
More than half of respondents (56%) indicated that they are often or always worn out at the end of the working day, with only nine percent reporting that they either almost never or seldom experienced such conditions.



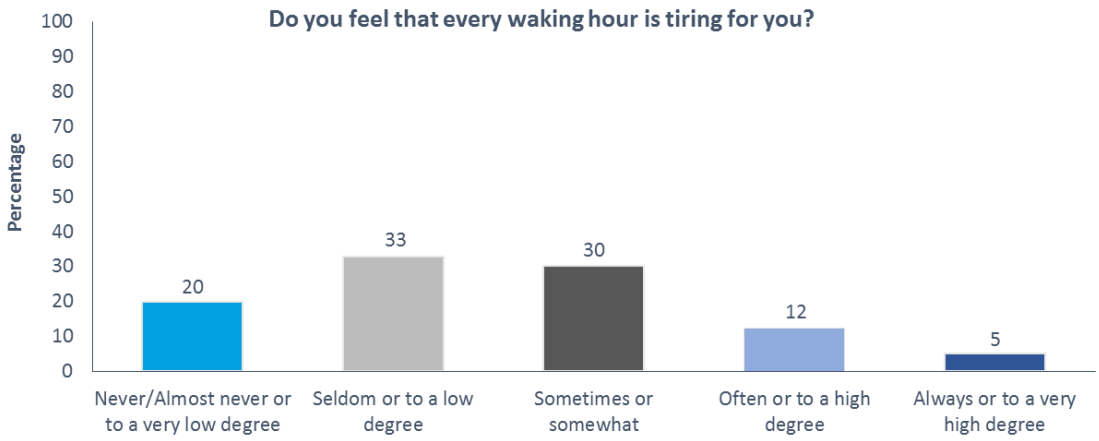
Forty percent of respondents felt that they often or always found their work to be emotionally exhausting.



Similar to patterns of findings for the first two indicators of burnout, more than a third (37%) of respondents reported often or always feeling burnt out because of work.



Comparatively, a smaller proportion of respondents (e.g., 22%) reported feeling exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work.

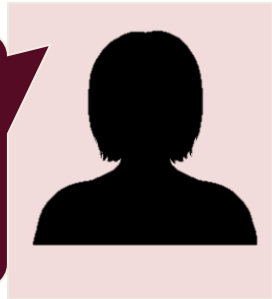


Similarly, only seventeen percent of respondents indicated that they often and always felt that every waking hour is tiring.

Quotes from Respondents

Qualitative responses echo findings of previous research where academics find the combination of increasing pressures and complexity of work and insufficient support and job resources are contributing to higher levels of stress, exhaustion, and burnout. Individuals indicated that work intensification has increased to a point wherein work impinges on their non-work and recovery time, which in turn, is said to not only exacerbate the experiences of burnout, but may even overspill to negatively impact an individual's overall quality of life.

"The pressure to publish in A and A journals is huge, but equally as bad is the constant push to get funding. I spend most of my time networking, chasing up leads, writing funding proposals - on top of teaching, admin and occasionally, writing an article. The constant pressure is wearing me down...this is having a huge, negative impact on my life."*

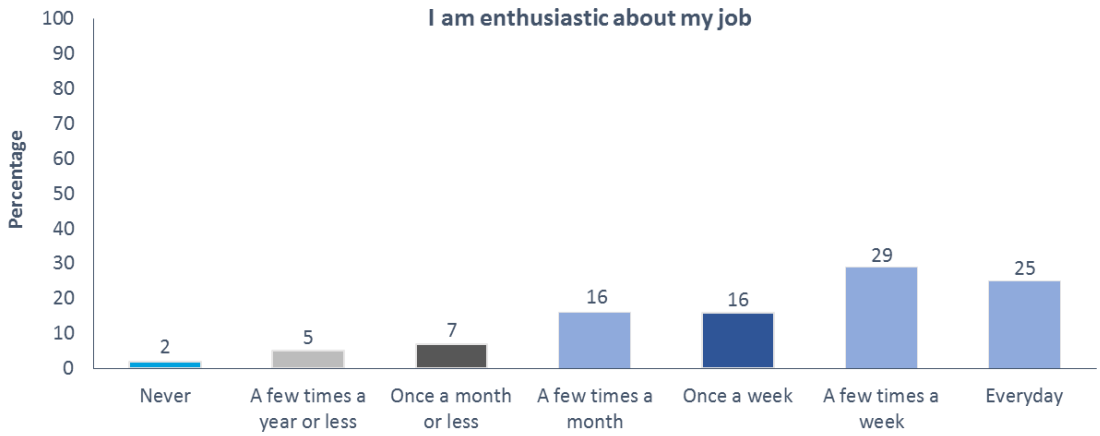


"Academia is changing, there are more pressures to perform… At the same time there is less support and more admin and teaching (marking) work. Research doesn't happen at a specific time in a year, but throughout the whole year, and this is not recognised/supported. Hence it is more challenging to balance the teaching and admin on one hand, and research on the other hand. This requires extra work after hours or on weekends. Juggling so many different things at the same time leads to ***anxiety****,* ***insomnia****,* ***stress****,* ***burnout****, or* ***decision to cut corners****…Another worry is that there is* ***no downtime****. Even when I take annual leave, I still have to mark or respond to students' emails, or do some admin work. Being able to completely switch off is becoming more and more impossible"*

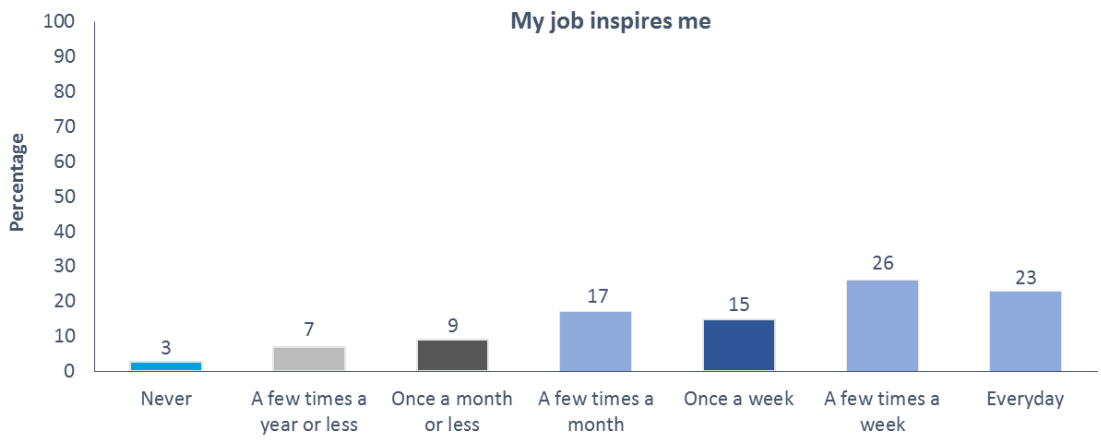
Engagement

Broadly, Schaufeli and Salanova (2008) define engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigor, dedication, and absorption in the work itself (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2008). Accordingly, respondents were asked several questions on three aspects of how they experience their work. These characteristics are: vigor - whether work is considered to be stimulating and energetic; dedication - if work is a significant and meaningful pursuit, and absorption - where work is found to be captivating. Responses were recorded on a seven-point scale (0 = never, 6 = everyday).

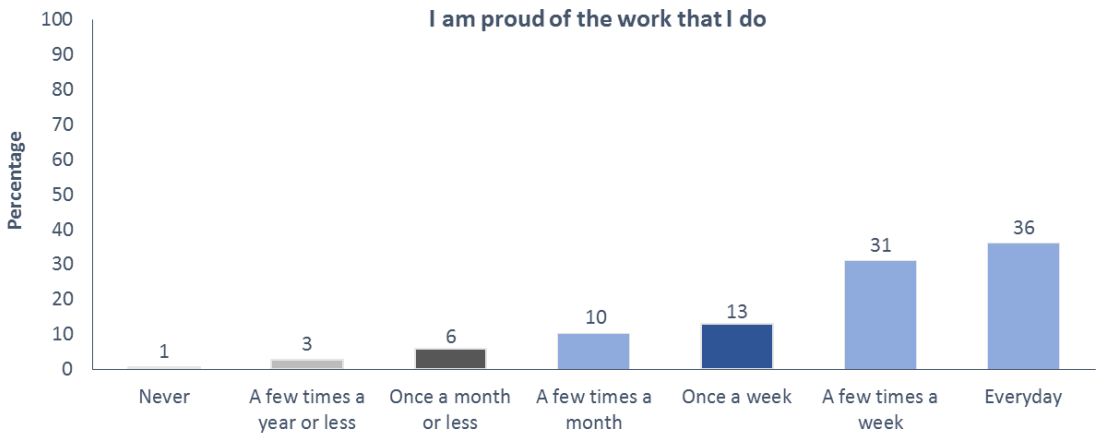
Consistent with previous research findings (e.g., Kinman, 2001; Winter, Taylor, & Sarros, 2000), despite reports of increasing workloads, respondents in this study reported being highly engaged and passionate in their work. In fact, research has noted that academics who find their jobs meaningful tend to experience burnout less (Bilge, 2006). Further longitudinal research is required around the degree to which intrinsic job satisfaction can buffer enduring work intensification and experiences of burnout. This is particularly pertinent given the increasing levels of work intensification reported in this study and the ageing profile of academia.



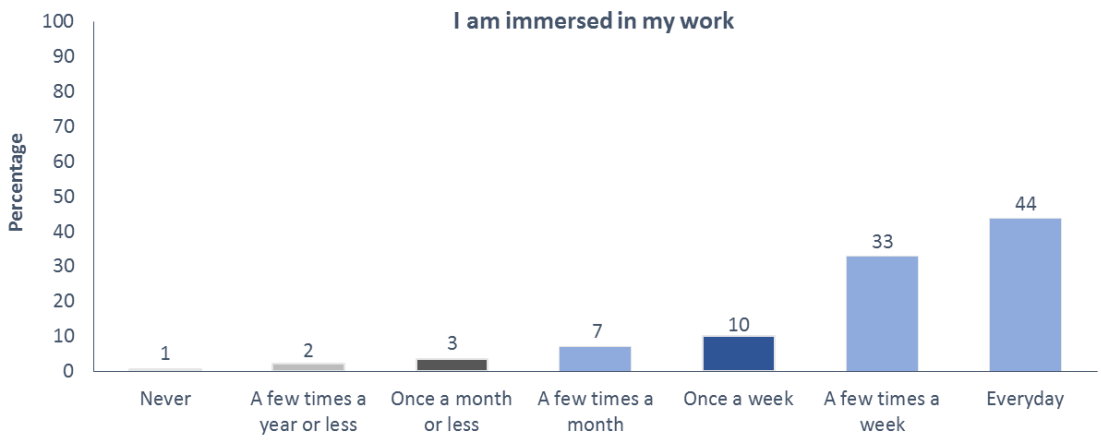
Over half of the respondents (54%, e.g., ‘a few times a week’ and ‘everyday’) reported being often enthusiastic about their jobs. A quarter of respondents reported having such enthusiasm every day.



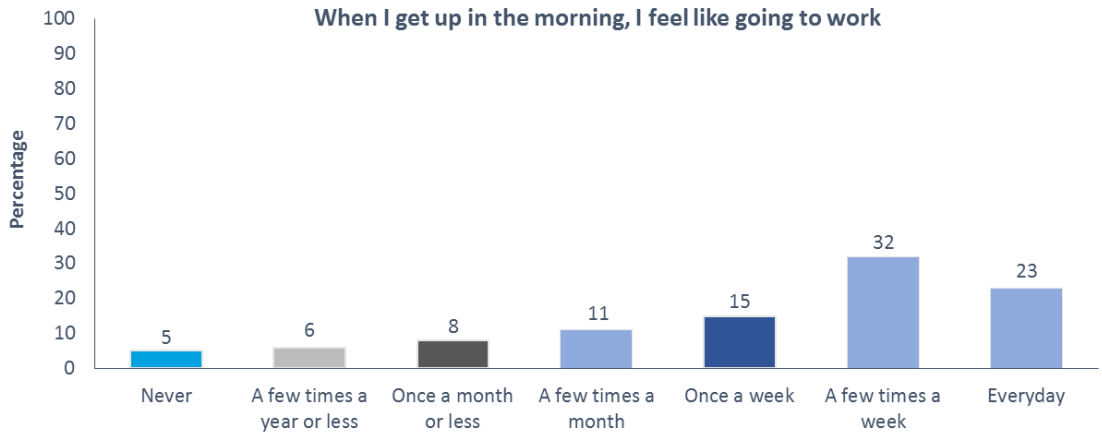
Close to half of the respondents (49%, e.g., ‘a few times a week’ and ‘everyday’) indicated that they often felt that their jobs were inspirational.



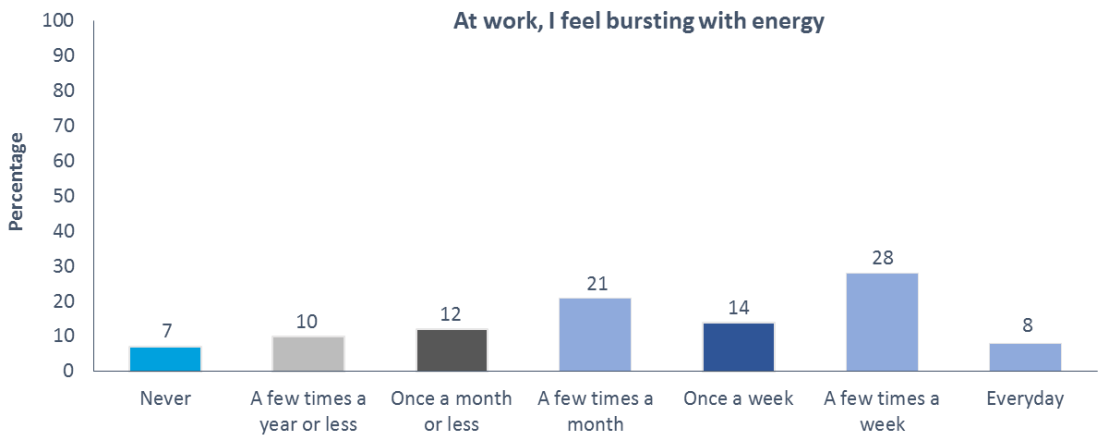
Two-thirds of the respondents were often (67%, e.g., ‘a few times a week’ and ‘everyday’) proud of their jobs. Close to forty percent reported feeling such pride everyday in their work.



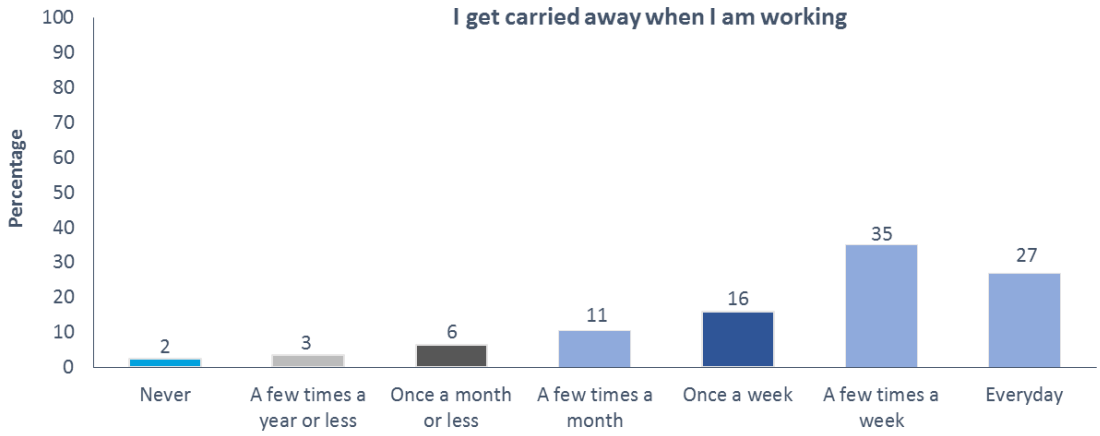
A large majority of respondents (77%) indicated often (e.g., ‘a few times a week’ and ‘everyday’) feeling immersed in their work. Approaching half (44%) reported being engrossed in their work everyday.



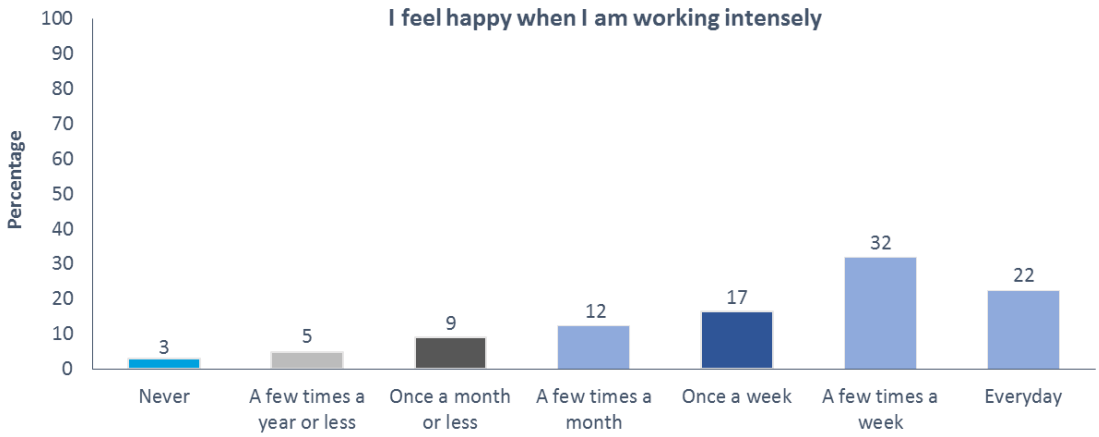
Majority of respondents often (55%, e.g., ‘a few times a week’ and ‘everyday’) felt like going to work when they got up in the morning.



Thirty-six percent of respondents reported they were bursting with energy at least a few times a week to everyday at work. Eight percent of respondents reported feeling like this everyday. A longitudinal perspective would be interesting in tracking levels of workload and the impact it has on the encroachment of work into recovery and non-work time of academics.



More than half of respondents (62%) reported that they often (e.g., ‘a few times a week’ and ‘everyday’) got carried away when they were working (i.e., being overly engrossed, excited or involved with work).

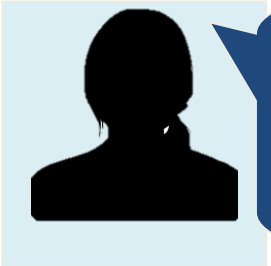


A little more than half (54%, e.g., 'a few times a week' and 'everyday') of respondents were often happy when they were working intensely.

Quotes from Respondents

Respondents have reported being highly passionate about their jobs. However, quotes suggest that deteriorating aspects of workplace climate (e.g., increasing managerialism, cost-cutting measures etc.) have contributed to signs of exhaustion, burnout, and discontent among academics. This, once again, is a signal to potentially higher turnover rates in this sector should working conditions remain unchanged. This also raises the need for further in-depth research of these factors.

"…increasing work overload for academics…I am fed up and ready to leave academia despite the fact that I love the work and enjoy seeing the students develop…it is a great shame…this has greatly reduced the quality of working life and job satisfaction for me."

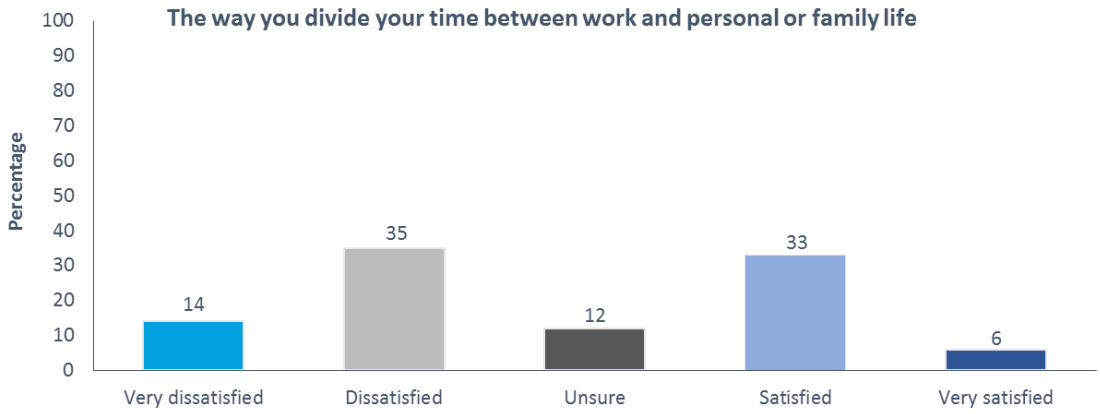


"I love my work, but hate my job - an old expression, but one that more and more characterises how I feel about university life these days - depressing managerialism, cost-cutting, obsessive focus on rankings…all things that take the joy out of both teaching and research on the bad days."

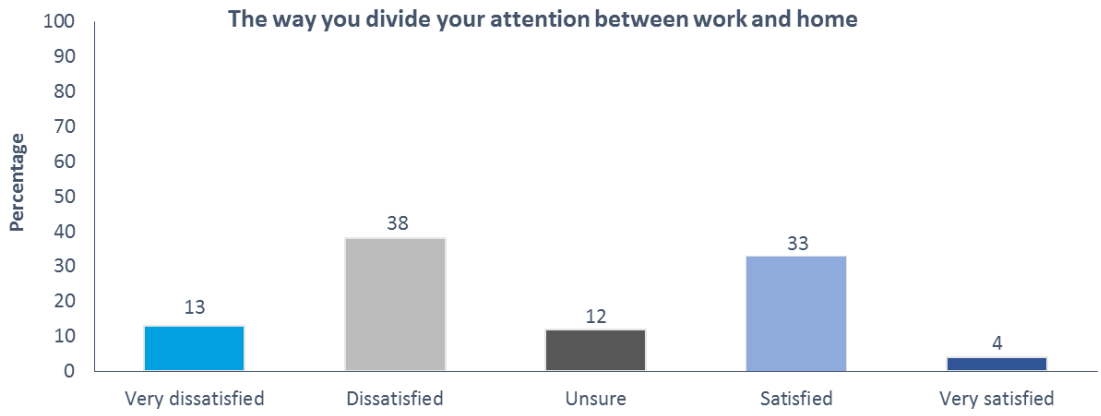
Work-life Balance

In order to capture an overall assessment of satisfaction with work-life balance, respondents were asked to indicate, on a scale from 1 = very dissatisfied to 5 = very satisfied, their level of satisfaction with the degree they are able to integrate the demands of work and personal/family roles and the extent to which their personal resources are adequate in meeting both work and non-work demands.

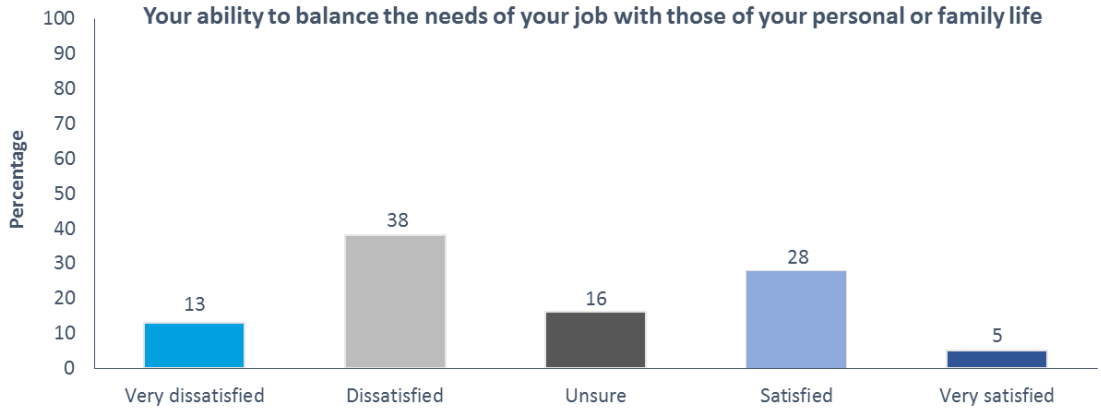
Overall, half of the respondents consistently reported that they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the way in which they were able to reconcile both work and personal/family demands (across the majority of indicators).



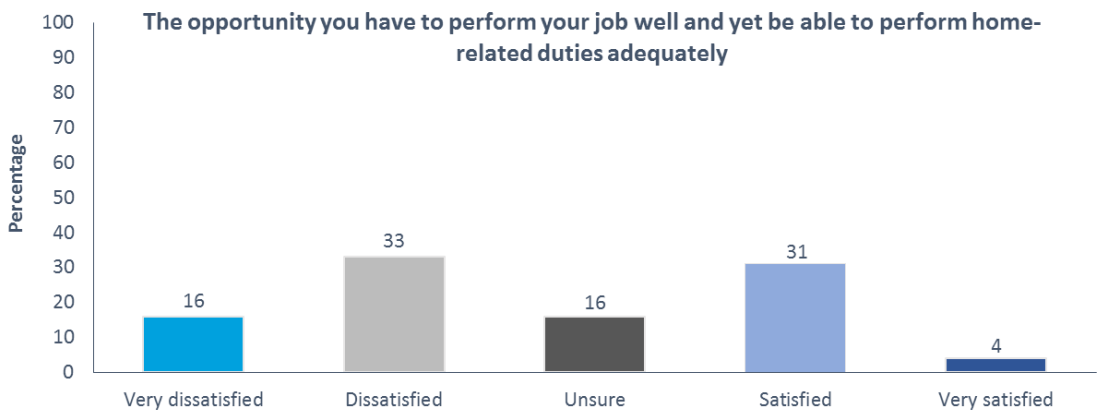
Close to half of respondents (49%) indicated they were dissatisfied and very dissatisfied with the way in which they were able to divide time between work and personal/family life.



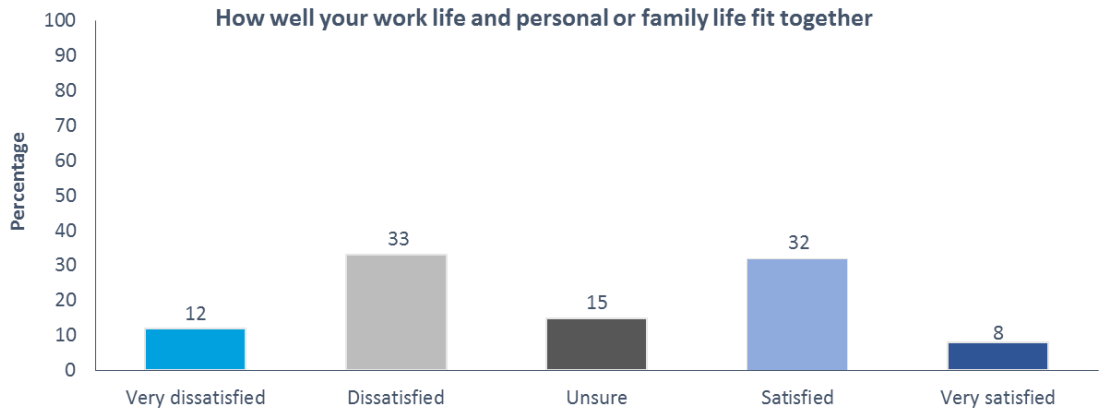
A similar proportion of respondents (51%) were dissatisfied and very dissatisfied with the way in which they divided their attention between work and home.



Over fifty percent of respondents (51%) were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their ability to balance demands from work and from their personal or family domains.



Forty-nine percent of respondents (e.g., 'dissatisfied' and 'very dissatisfied') were unhappy with their perceived opportunity to be able to perform well in their jobs and duties at home adequately. More than fifteen percent of respondents reported being very dissatisfied.

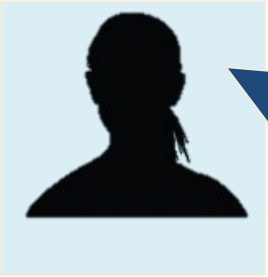


Given the dissatisfaction level of respondents with the other work-life balance indicators, it is not surprising that forty-five percent of respondents (e.g., 'dissatisfied' and 'very dissatisfied') were discontented with the extent to which their work and personal/family life fit together.

Quotes from Respondents

Qualitative data suggests that increasing workloads and complexity of different job roles required of an academic (i.e., obtaining funding, research, teaching, service etc.) without the provision of adequate support have placed increasing pressures on academics, as important factors in this increasing pressure on academics' work-life balance. Again, this suggests a need for further research.

"A serious shortage of academic staffs…online teaching just added to the workload without compensation and turning you into a 24/7 lecturer causing major interference in work-life balance."



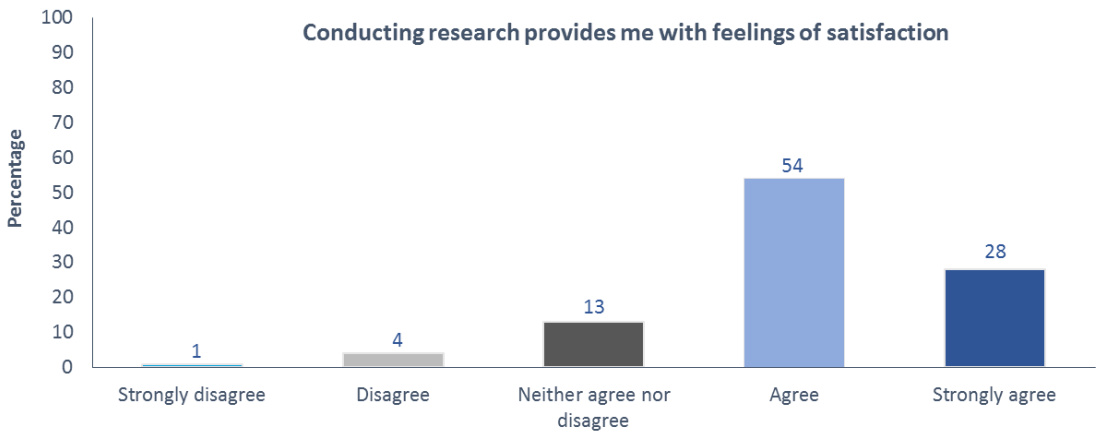
"There are no chances of advancement or promotion and the workload is so drastic that it is often difficult to manage other work where there is potential for career progression as well as home and family commitments."

"More and more administrative burdens and less time for research and family time"

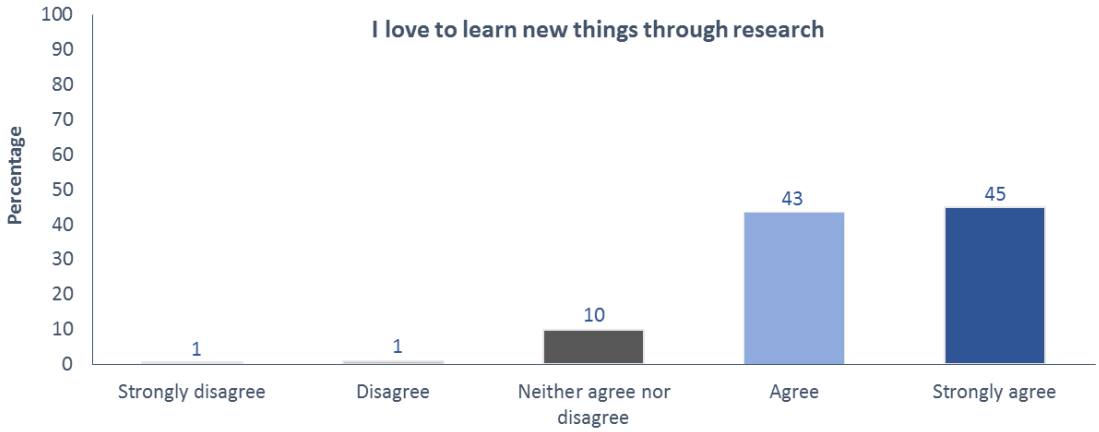
Research Motivation

The concept of research motivation can be described as being grounded in the constructs of achievement motivation (Roe, 1953) and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000). As defined by Deemer, Martens, and Buboltz (2010), achievement motivation adheres to a hierarchical structure in which approach-avoidance motives signify individual dispositional proclivities that impact more proximal goal pursuits. This, in turn, leads to fear of failure or 'failure avoidance'. This encompasses negative emotions associated with research and inhibited research behaviour. The second facet of research motivation is self-determination theory (Desi & Ryan, 1985, 2000), which includes intrinsic and extrinsic reward.

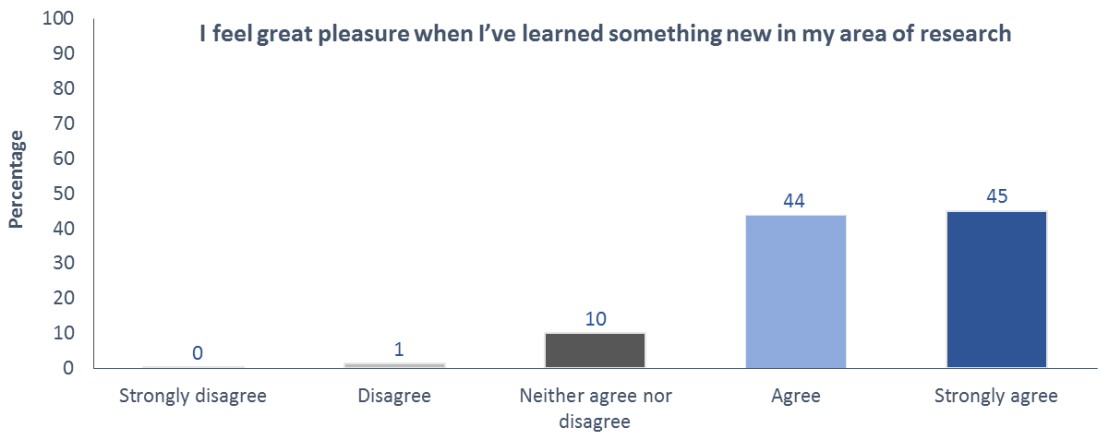
This survey asks respondents several questions that investigate academics' motivation to conduct research in accordance with three aspects: 1) intrinsic reward (e.g., "Conducting research provides me with the feelings of satisfaction"), 2) failure avoidance (e.g., "I sometimes want to give up when my research is not proceeding as I would like"), and 3) extrinsic reward (e.g., "I want to be recognised by my colleagues for conducting sound research"). Respondents used a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to answer all of these items. Overall, respondents were motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of engaging in research. Comparatively, a larger proportion of respondents reported that they conducted research for intrinsic rewards such as pleasure and learning opportunities. For instance, between eighty-two to eighty-nine percent of respondents reported that they found great pleasure in conducting and learning new things from research (intrinsic). Comparatively a smaller proportion of respondents (70%) expressed that they sought external recognition from colleagues for conducting research (external).



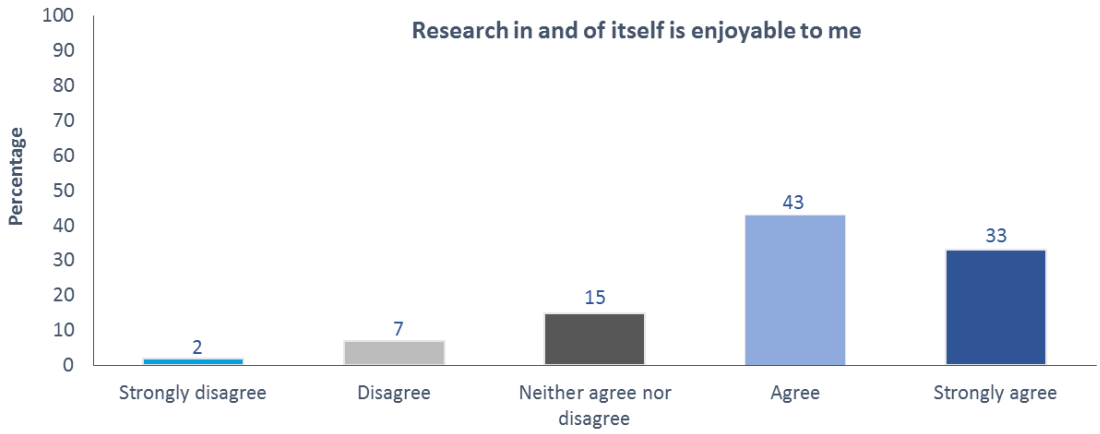
A large majority of respondents (82%, e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') felt that conducting research gave them feelings of satisfaction.



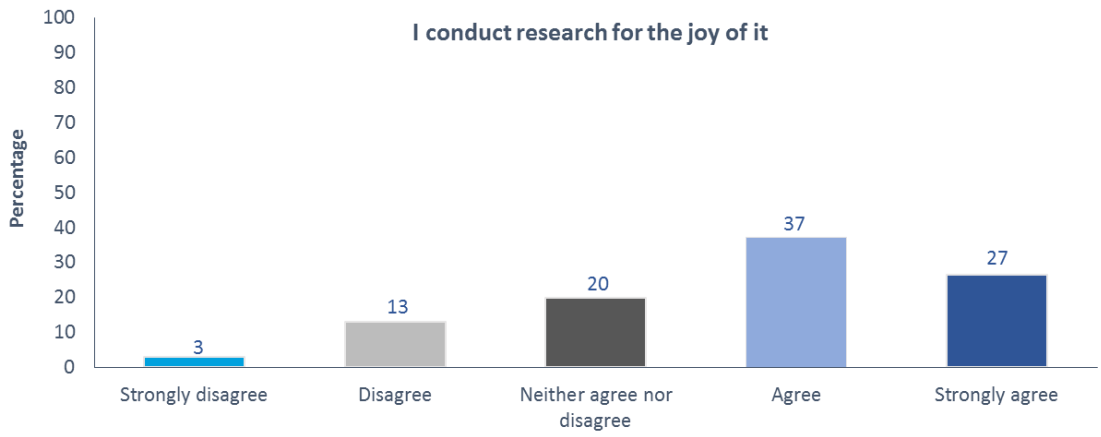
Overwhelmingly, almost ninety percent of respondents (88%, e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') reported loving to learn new things through research.



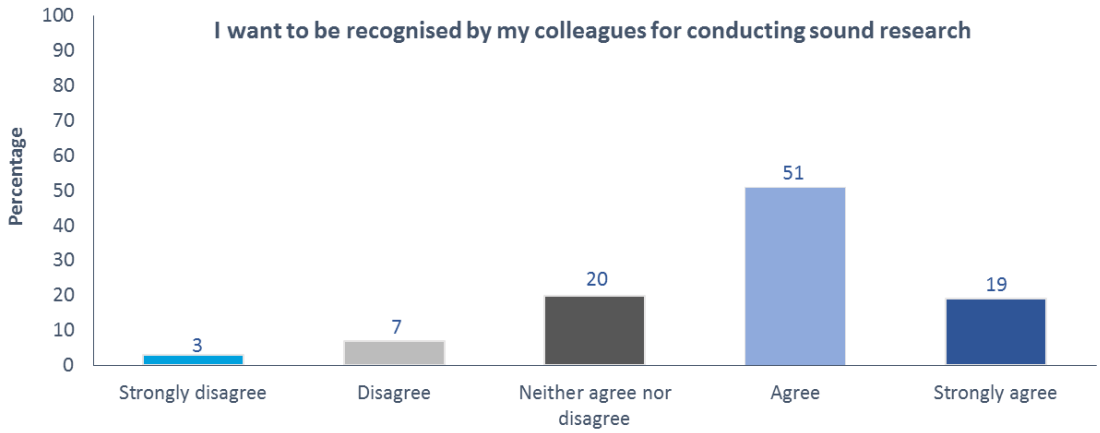
Similarly, a large majority (89%, e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') of respondents indicated that they felt great pleasure when they were able to learn something new in their areas of research.



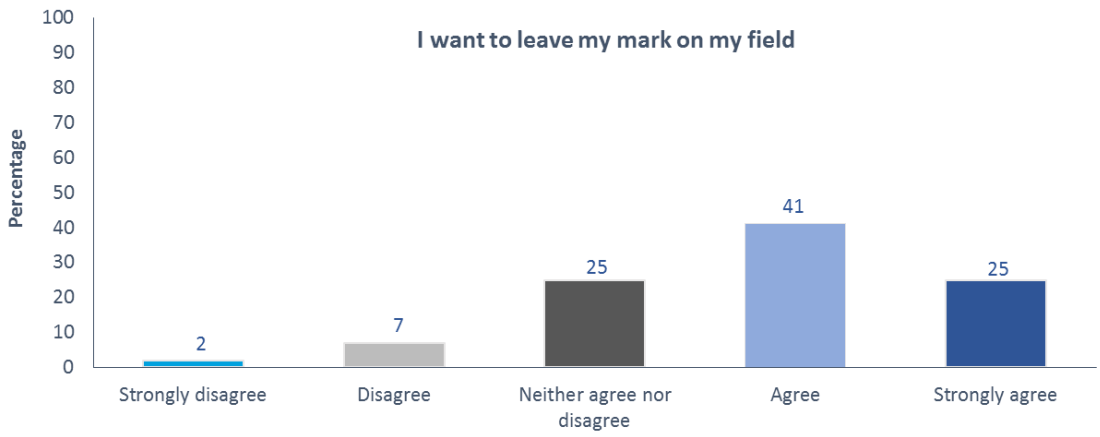
Seventy-six percent of respondents (e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') indicated that they found research in and of itself to be enjoyable. Again, these points towards intrinsic satisfaction respondents get from conducting research.



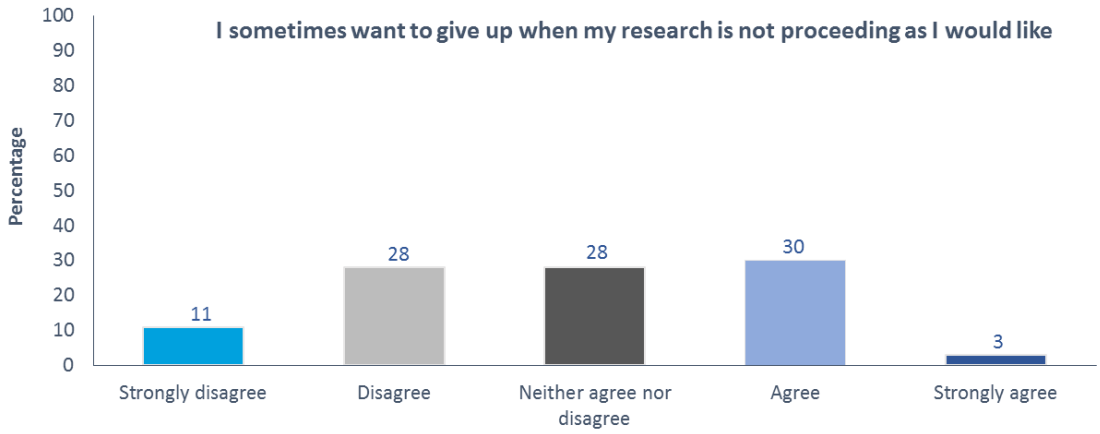
Although a large majority of respondents find intrinsic satisfaction in conducting research (more than 80%), when asked if they conducted research for the joy of it, this declined to sixty-four percent. This would require further research but this could be linked to the increase in external pressures to publish in top-ranking journals as reported in earlier sections and work intensification.



Seventy percent of respondents (e.g., ‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’) either agreed or strongly agreed that they desire recognition from colleagues for conducting sound research.



Sixty-six percent of respondents (66%, e.g., ‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’) indicated that they wanted to leave their mark on their field of research.

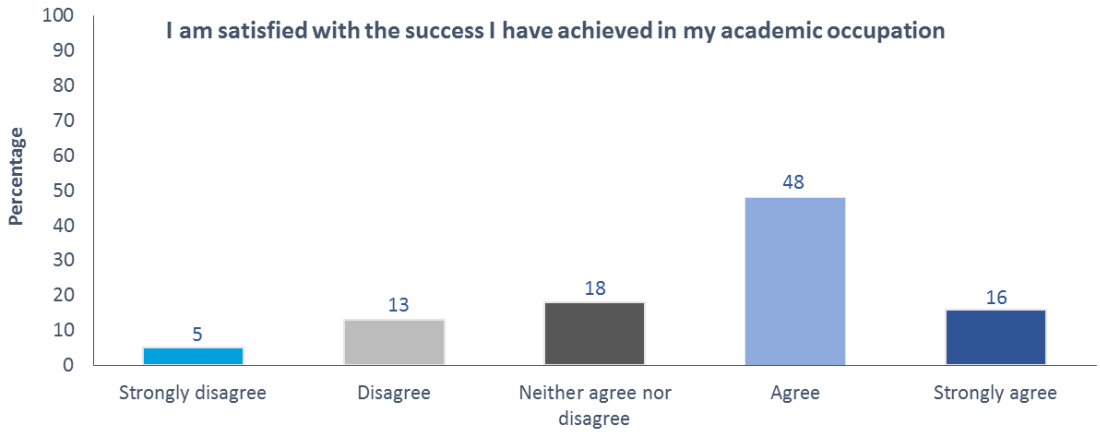


Only a third (33%, e.g., ‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’) of respondents reported wanting to give up when their research was not proceeding as they had liked.

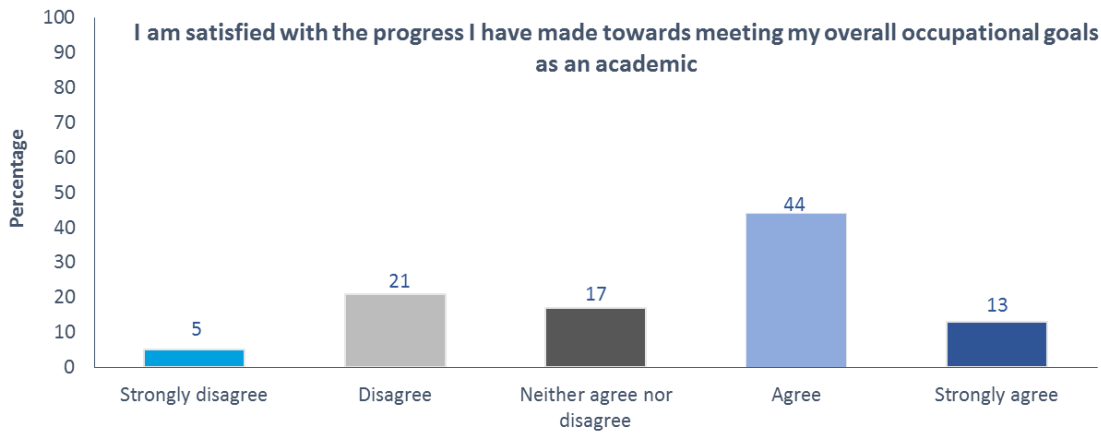
Occupational Satisfaction

The five items in this section of the survey were designed to encourage respondents to reflect on how satisfied they were with the achievements and progress they had made so far as an academic. Respondents used a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to answer all of these items.

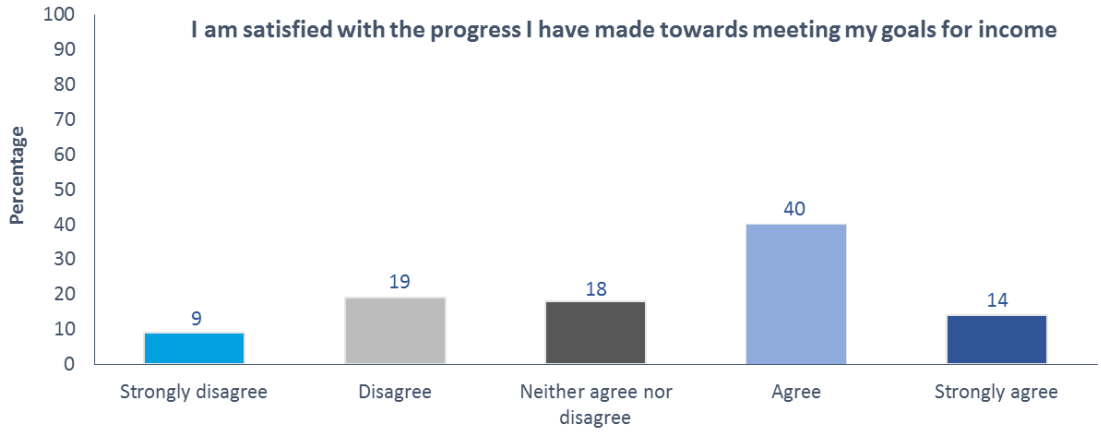
Overall, the majority of respondents reported being satisfied with the general success they have achieved in academia (64%) and with their progress made towards income (54%) and skill development goals (53%). However, it is interesting to note that thirty-six percent of respondents were dissatisfied with their progress made towards their advancement goals in academia.



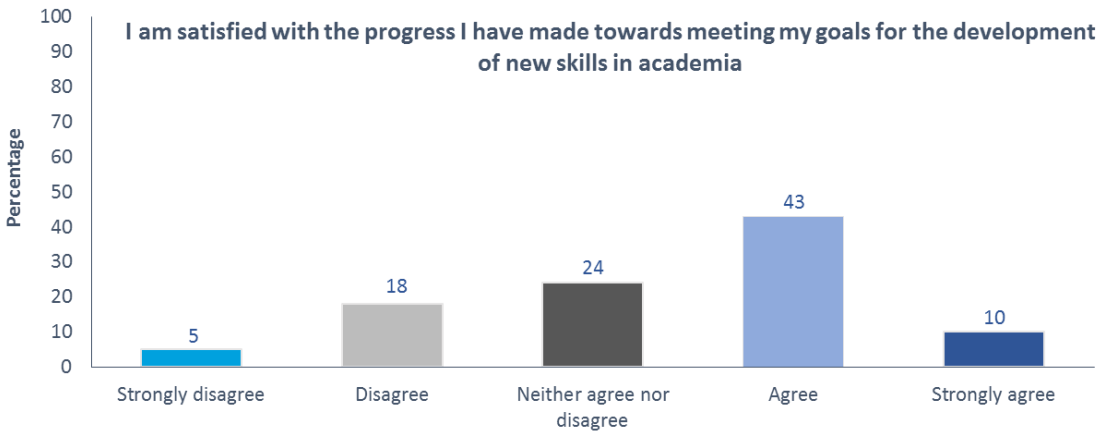
Sixty-four percent of respondents were satisfied (e.g., ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’) with the success they have achieved as an academic.



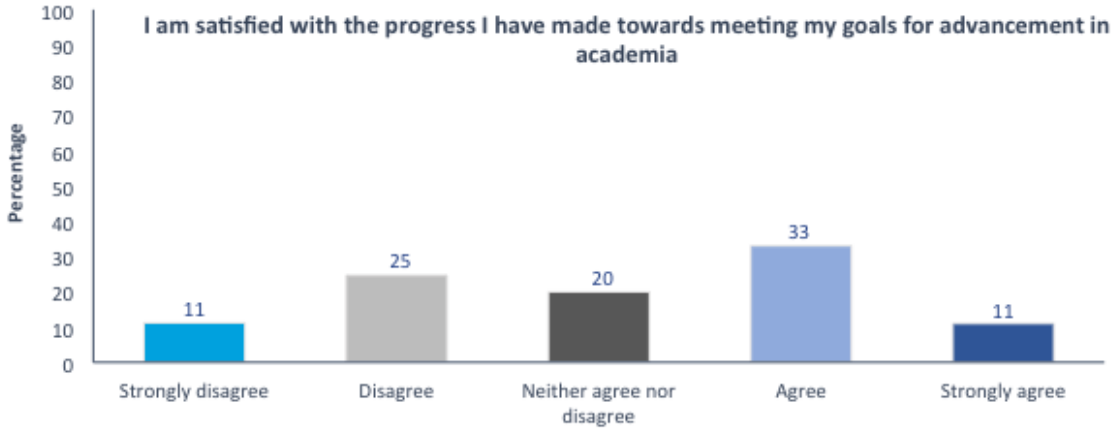
More than half of respondents were satisfied (57%, e.g., 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed') with their progress they have made towards their overall occupational goals as an academic.



Fifty-four percent of respondents were satisfied (e.g., 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed') with their progress they have made towards their goals for income in academia.



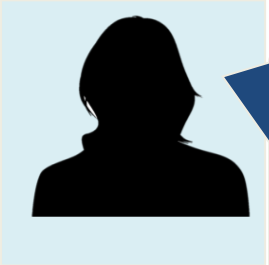
Similar to the pattern of findings for the previous occupational satisfaction indicators, fifty-three percent of respondents were satisfied with their progress made towards their skill developmental goals in academia.



Around a third of respondents were dissatisfied (36%, e.g., ‘disagreed’ and ‘strongly disagreed’) with their progress made towards meeting their advancement goals in academia.

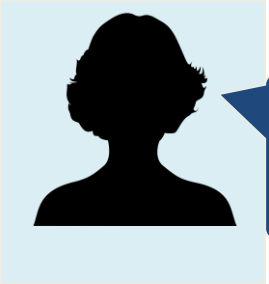
Quotes from Respondents

Whilst some respondents expressed satisfaction with their careers as academics, others have also reported feelings of general disillusionment with their jobs and to a certain extent, the entire profession. Particularly, respondents pointed out their dissatisfaction with intensification of pace, volume, and complexity of work without appropriate compensation and their increasing concerns with performance targets focused on the production of publication in highly-ranked journals.



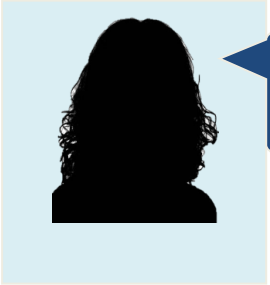
"Performance goals are unrealistic and counter-productive. In my faculty we are now using ERA and ABDC rankings so restrictively (i.e., A and A only) that publications are often not directed at the most appropriate journal. Changes to measurements (i.e., switching between lists) are made and applied retrospectively. This is demoralising and demeaning"*

"The issue of promotion is also a major problem in our university. The 'bar' has risen significantly for everyone and in my view, unrealistically, for entry level positions but also L to SL; SL to A/P; and A/P to Professor. Extremely competent, very hard working academics with appropriately strong track records for promotion are being knocked back year after year, with significant repercussions for morale. I am grateful on a daily basis that I became an academic and moved through the ranks in a less hostile era. Moving from L to SL, which at our university is a faculty-controlled decision, has also become extremely delayed. Even when agreed goals have been achieved, there can be a delay of up to a year before it is approved. As if it wasn't hard enough for early career academics..."



"There are no chances of advancement or promotion and the workload is so drastic that it is often difficult to manage other work where there is potential for career progression as well as home and family commitments."

"Long long hours + unrelenting pressure to publish more and more and more means everyone I know feels like a failure, because of the unreasonable expectations being placed on us."



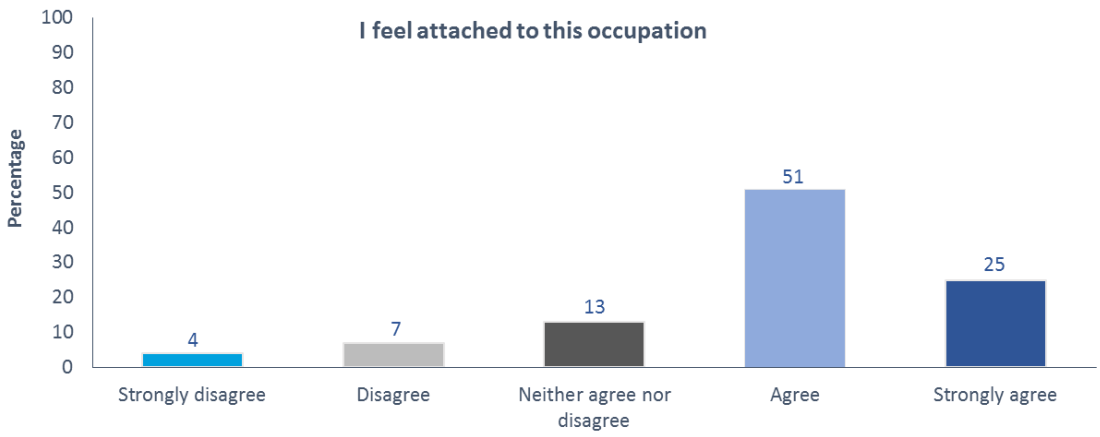
"Reward systems; bias towards research performance; unequal sharing of workloads favouring those who are research active which exacerbates the inequity..."

"The workload of academics doing admin work is increasing… less admin personnel and we do more admin work for no increase in our salaries."

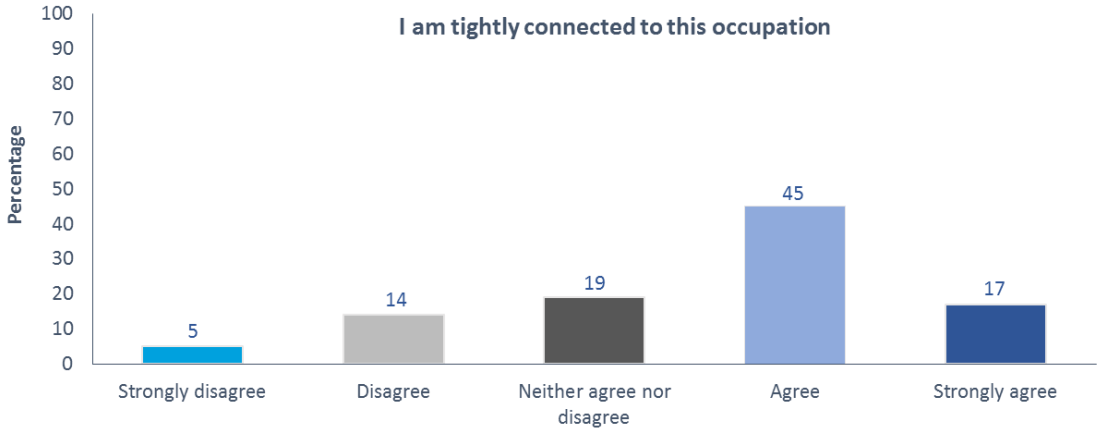
Occupational Embeddedness

In this section, five items were used to investigate the extent to which respondents were enmeshed or embedded in their occupations. Extrapolating Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablynski, and Erez's (2001) conceptualisation of job embeddedness, occupational embeddedness is understood to encompass fits, links, and sacrifices that keep people in their existing occupations (Ng & Feldman, 2013). Fit refers to the degree to which individual's abilities are congruent with the requirements of their current occupation and individual's interests match rewards offered by their occupations. Links is the extent to which individuals are tied to other people or activities in the occupation such as friendships with professional colleagues. And lastly, sacrifice refers to what an individual would have to forgo should they leave their current occupation (Mitchell et al., 2001; Ng & Feldman, 2013).

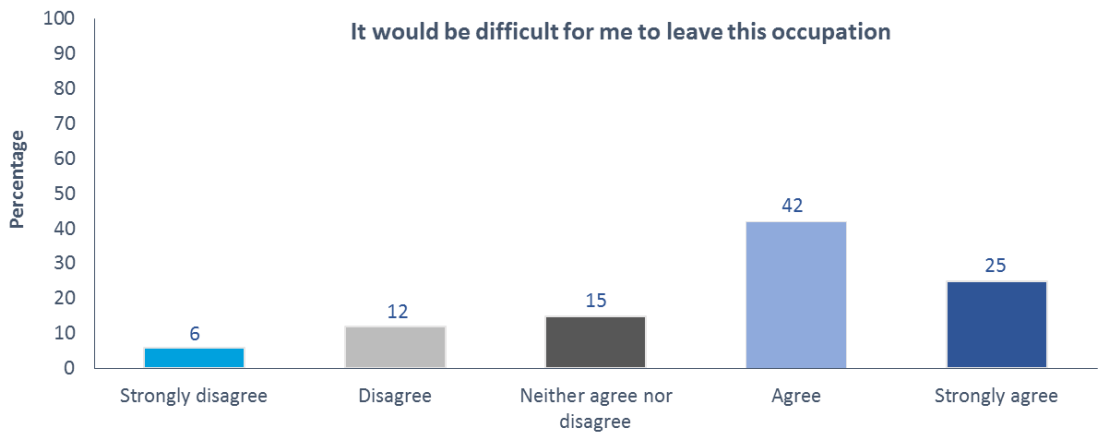
Overall, the results on the occupational embeddedness indicators are mixed. Although the majority of respondents (62% to 76% 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') indicated feeling attached and tightly connected to academia, comparatively smaller proportions of respondents (31% to 40% 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') felt that they were too caught up and simply could not leave academia. In other words, whilst respondents demonstrated relatively high 'fit' and 'links' to the occupation, this did not necessarily mean that respondents found the option of leaving academia difficult. This is particularly evident given twenty-five of respondents have reported considering leaving the field of academia. This is an area which would benefit from further in-depth research.



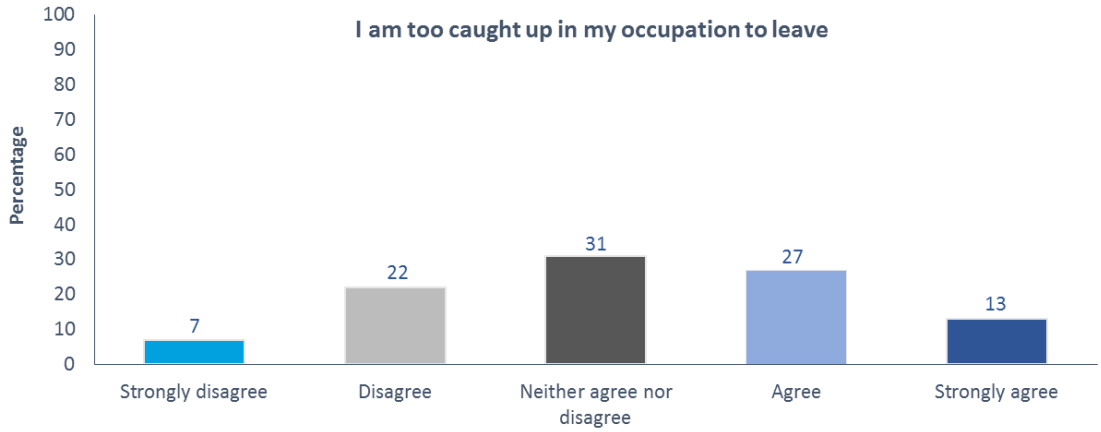
A large majority of respondents (76%, e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') reported feeling attached to academia.



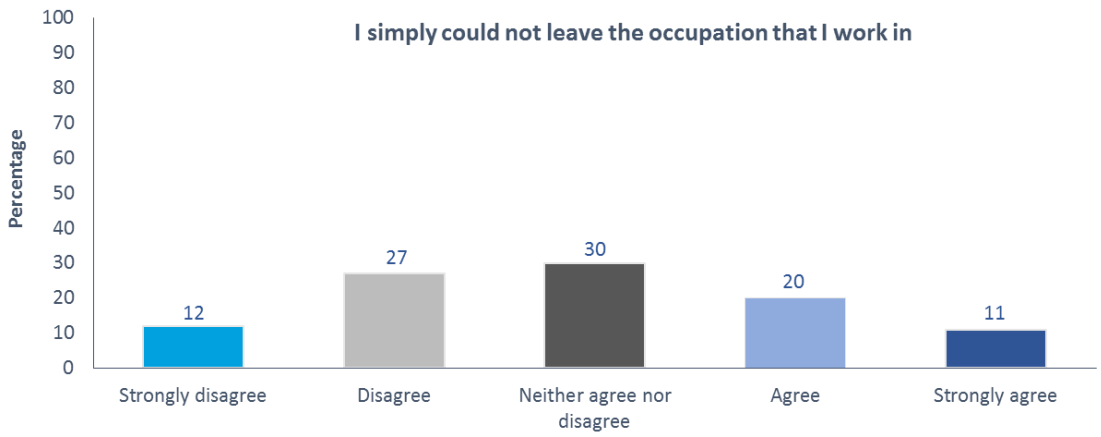
Similarly, over sixty precent of respondents (62%, e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') indicated that they felt tightly connected to academia.



Sixty-seven percent of respondents (e.g., ‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’) indicated that it would be difficult for them to leave academia.



Forty percent of respondents (i.e., ‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’) reported being too caught up in their occupation to leave.



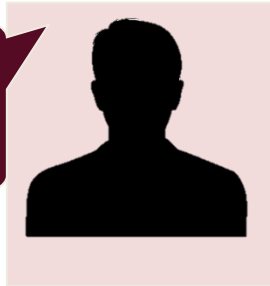
Over thirty percent of respondents (31%, e.g., ‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’) reported that they simply could not leave academia.

Quotes from respondents

“I am not financially tied to this job that I will allow it to consume me and negatively affect my family life. If it gets too depressing, I will leave. Life is for living, not for stressing.”

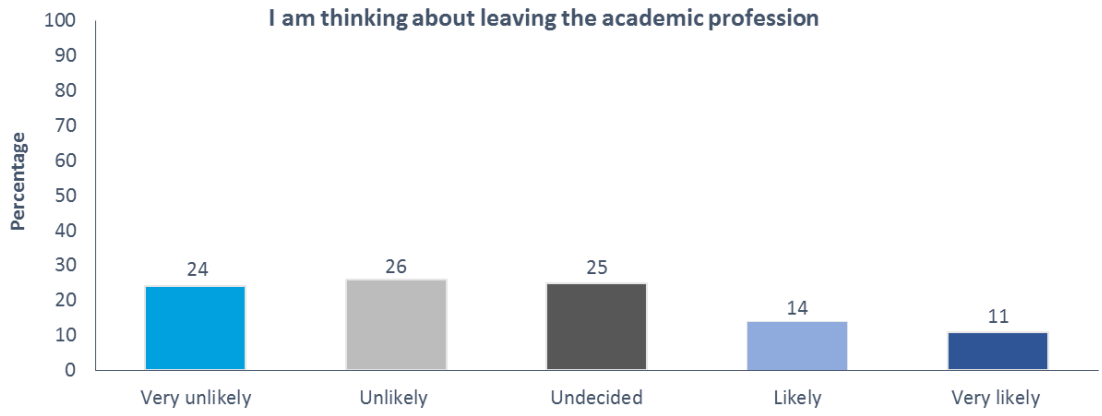
“I am fed up and ready to leave academia despite the fact that I love the work and enjoy seeing the students develop.”

“We try to retain among ourselves what we value about the work - discussion, debate, real quality (not just what some list deems so), collegiality. If it wasn't for them, I would have been long gone.”

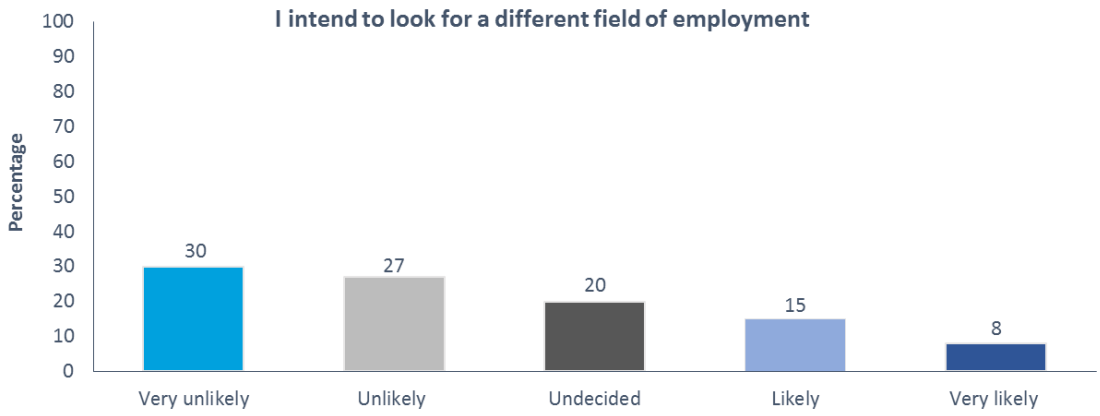


Occupational Turnover Intention

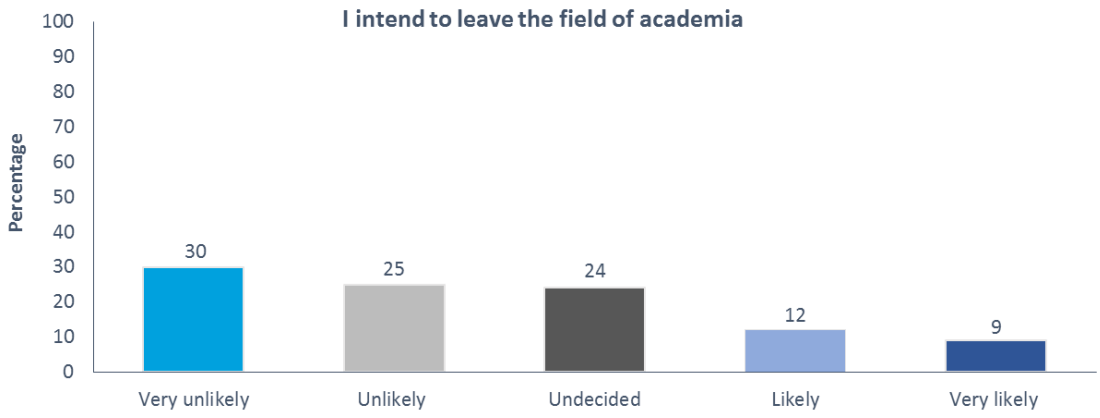
Three items were used to assess the likelihood that respondents would leave academia. Responses were captured on a five-point scale (1 = very unlikely to 5 = very likely) to answer these items. Overall, a quarter of respondents expressed that they were thinking about leaving the academic profession. Considering this with the findings on workload intensification, burnout, poor work-life balance, this should not be considered surprising but potentially reversible. As noted, with an ageing workforce, natural attrition combined with relatively high levels of occupational turnover intention may exacerbate the potential problem of a shortage of experienced and skilled academics. Again, this is an area which requires further research.



Twenty-five percent of respondents (e.g., 'likely' and 'very likely') indicated they had thought about leaving the academic profession. Thirty-one percent of these respondents are above 56 years old.



Twenty-three percent of respondents reported that they were either likely or very likely to look for work in different professions.



Twenty-one percent of respondents (e.g., 'likely' and 'very likely') have expressed intentions to leave the field of academia.

Quotes from Respondents

Qualitative data provided by respondents indicate that issues with workloads, unfavourable working conditions, and job security may be push factors in the consideration of exiting the profession. Findings of ineffective voice mechanisms, high employee silence and apparent disconnect between senior management and employees may be exacerbating the key issues contributing to unfavourable working conditions and pushing academics to a tipping point where perceptions of futility may be pushing academics to consider leaving the occupation entirely. These issues identified should be further investigated in relation to links with occupational turnover intentions.

"The overload of added paperwork that is preventing teachers from teaching, and from improving their teaching. The removal of local admin support and assistance with the general everyday paperwork has led to this point. The constant added paperwork from Quality that is only about Audit purposes and NEVER about how we can deliver our teaching better. I would like to spend more time improving the product that I deliver, and less time fixing computers or writing reports on what is wrong with our system, or completing surveys on the same. ***Nothing changes. Unless you quit****."*

"Increasing effort is met with increasing expectations. My colleagues and I have worked hard to meet the increasing demands of our Faculty in the last 5 years and the response from senior management has been to increase expectations. We are at ***saturation point****. We have watched people who make a substantial contribution have to leave because they have not been able to meet increasing publication expectations."*

*"So much of the joy of teaching and research has been removed by an institutional context that treats teaching and research as a mass production process. Mostly the **context is soul destroying** and I'm **not sure how much longer I can sustain myself** in this context."*

*"The workload in terms of teaching load is excessive despite all my research, doctoral supervision and service contributions. **I am fed up and ready to leave academia** despite the fact that I love the work and enjoy seeing the students develop. It is a great shame but I can only see the university system getting worse."*

"Overall free falling of status and working conditions, overload, I would not advise any student to pursue an academic career in Australia. Considering turning into a casual status to be free, would be better off to 'gig' Unis than in permanent position without the hassle of management!"

Workplace Climate

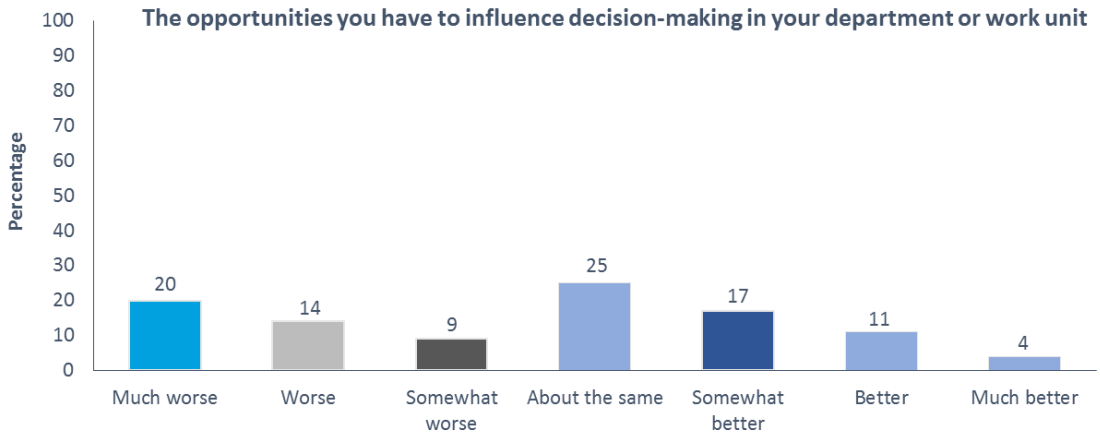
Change in Participation and Academic Freedom

In an era of increasing managerialism (Arnold, Flaherty, Voss, & Mowen, 2009; Brown, Cron, & Slocum, 1998), workforce studies on academia (e.g., Bentley et al., 2014) have increasingly recognised the importance of understanding perceptions of autonomy and academic freedom –arguably the core tenets of the profession (Bentley et al., 2014; Teichler, Arimoto, & Cummings, 2013). This is particularly salient in the contemporary context where there is a shift in emphasis on creating 'world class universities'. This has created pressures that may undermine innovation, creative thinking, and the ways in which academics craft their work. Academic freedom is understood as the liberty to pursue knowledge rather than being prescribed what they ought to 'deliver' (Teichler, 2015). This includes teaching content or delivery methods, research topic choices and publication avenues, and the freedom to act as critical thinkers and challengers of status quo (Bentley et al., 2014; Teichler, 2013).

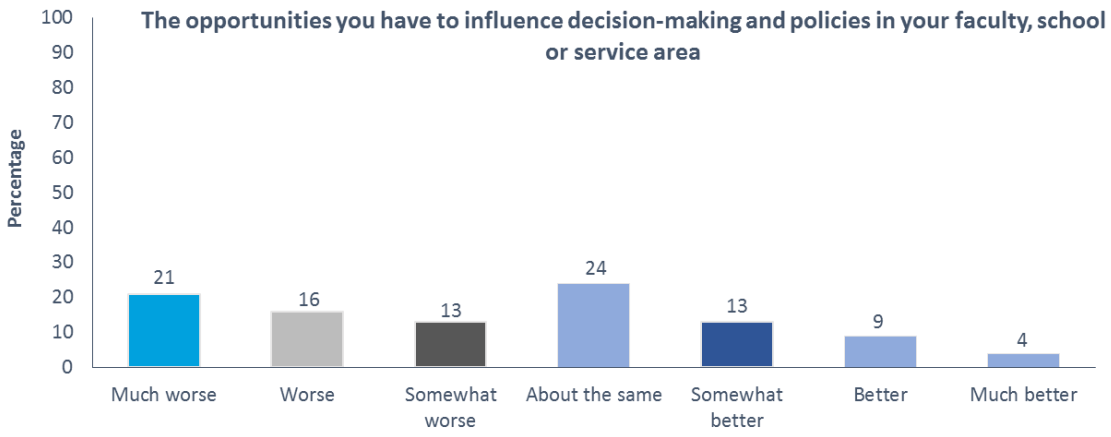
Accordingly, this current study adopted Bentley et al.'s (2014) measure of change in participation and academic freedom. Respondents were asked about their perceptions of whether their opportunities to participate in decision-making and their perceptions of whether academic freedom have improved or worsened over the last one to five years. Responses were captured on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 = much worse to 7 = much better.

Consistent with findings of Bentley et al.'s (2014) survey of academics in New Zealand, the majority of respondents indicated that conditions have deteriorated across all indicators. Specifically, perceived opportunities to influence decision-making and policies (e.g., 'somewhat worse', 'worse', and 'much worse') at the departmental (43%), faculty (50%), and institutional (54%) levels were reported to have deteriorated over the past one to five years. The interesting point here is such perceptions of opportunities appear

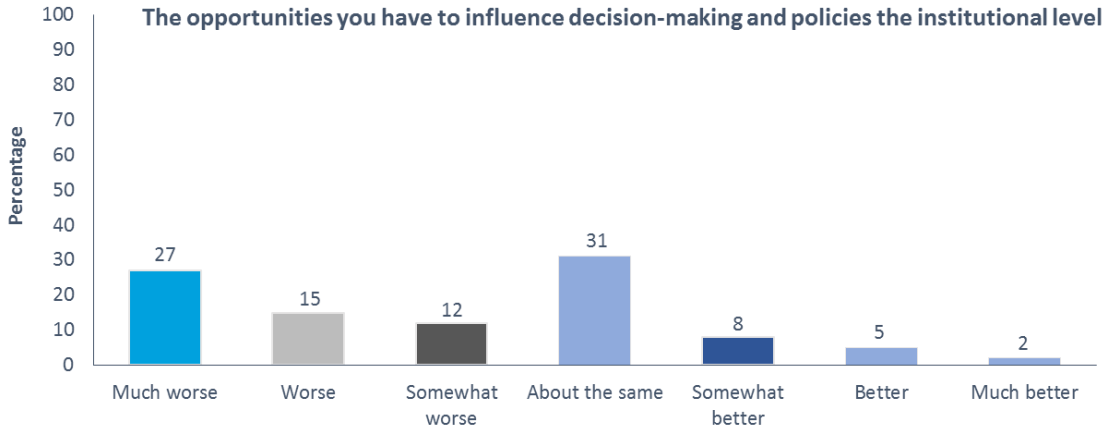
to diminish with the levels of management. This could imply increasing distance between the workplace and senior management. Such findings may also paint a picture of the current climate of participation and involvement in academia. Results also indicate an overall decline in level of autonomy in research and teaching over the last one to five years, with between thirty-two to forty-four percent of respondents indicating this. Similarly, close to forty percent of respondents indicated that the amount of academic freedom they possessed has worsened over the past one to five years. Jones, Gavin, and Woodhouse (2000) have stressed the interconnectedness of academic freedom and academia's role as critic and conscience of society. In essence, academic freedom necessitates an environment that fosters creativity, radical ideas, and criticisms of the status quo. Similarly, the opportunity to be a critic and conscience of society also requires conditions of academic freedom. Therefore, it may not be surprising that a similar proportion of respondents have also reported that their opportunity to act as a critic and conscience has worsened over this one to five year period.



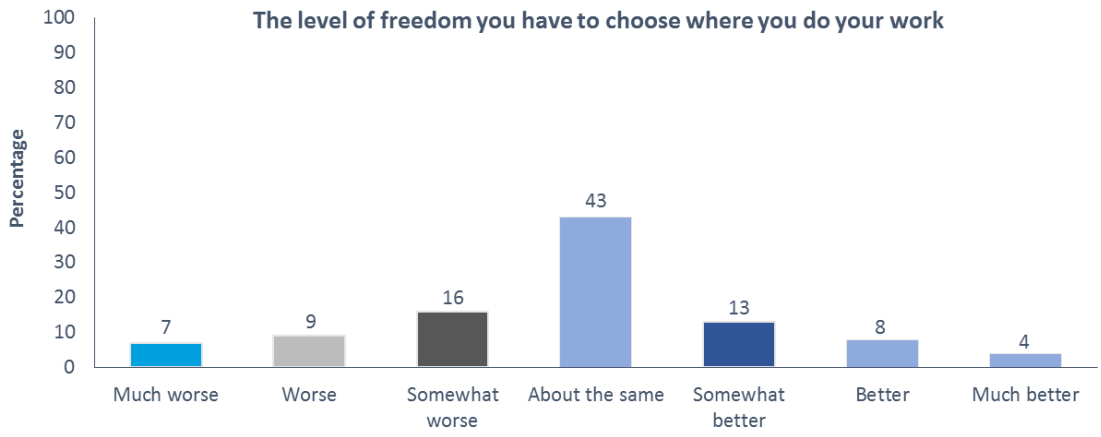
More than forty percent of the respondents (43%) indicated that the opportunities they had to influence decision-making in their department or work unit have worsened over the last one to five years.



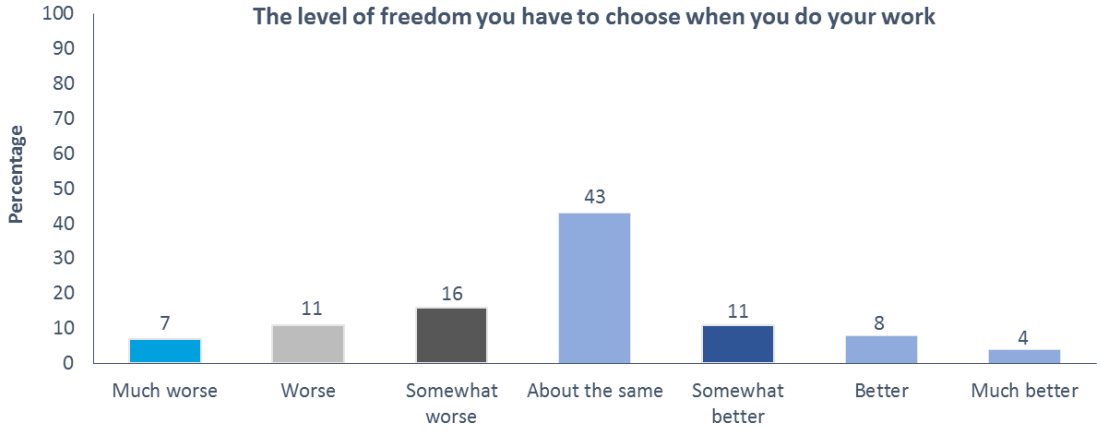
Half of the respondents reported that opportunities they had to influence decision-making and policies in their faculty, school or service area have deteriorated over the last one to five years.



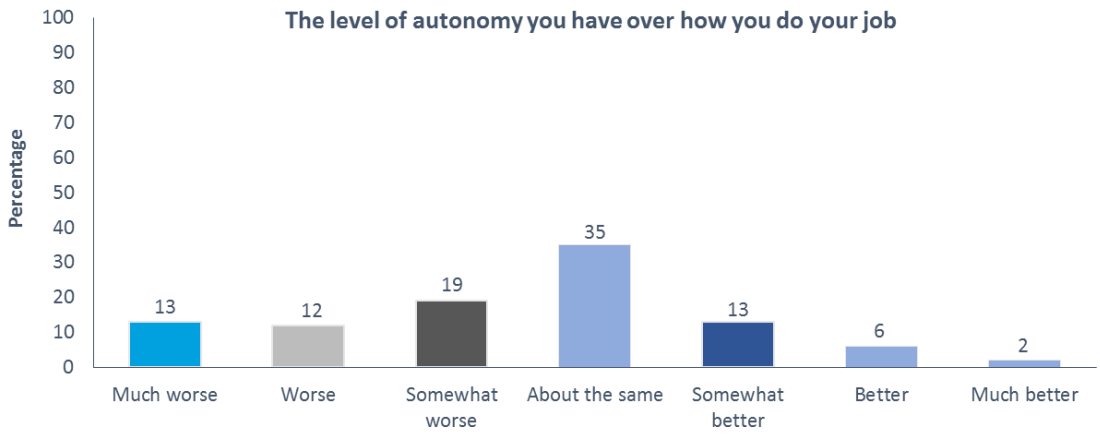
Fifty-four percent of respondents felt that the chances they had to influence decision-making and policies at the institutional level have worsened over the past one to five years. An interesting point to note is that the proportion of respondents who reported such potential influence over decision-making has become 'much worse' progressively in relation to higher levels of management. This issue may also be related to the perceived deterioration in employee voice and high proportions of fear of retribution and/or futility in voicing concerns. As such, we suggest that more in-depth investigation into the relationships between these issues identified is required.



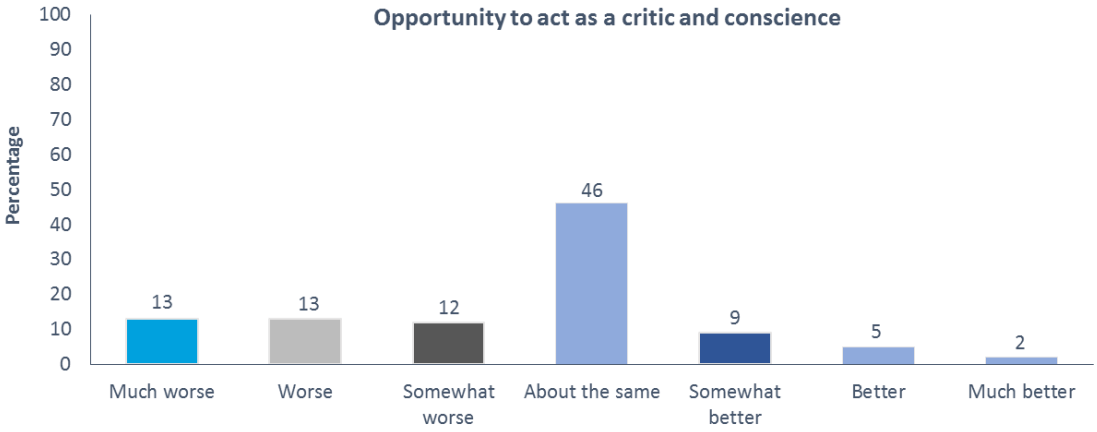
Thirty-two percent of respondents felt that the level of freedom they had to choose where they completed their work has worsened while twenty-three percent of respondents felt it has improved.



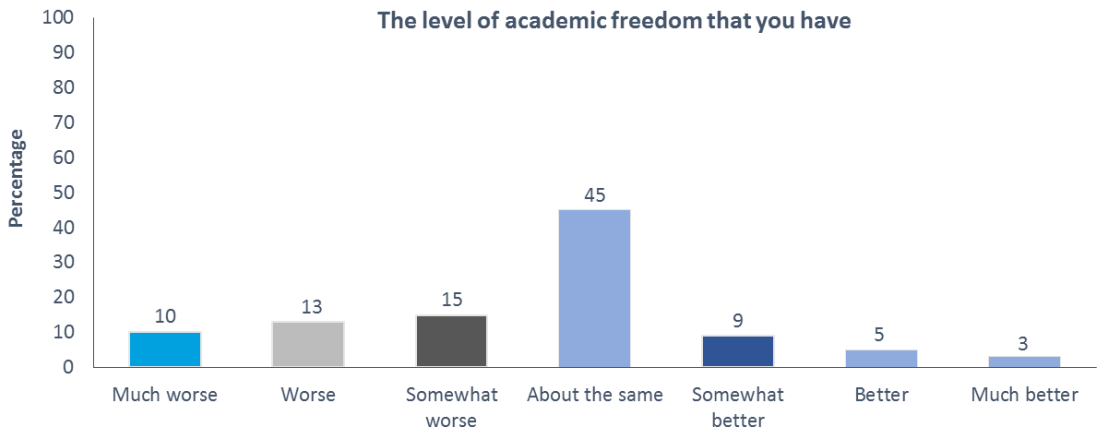
Thirty-four percent of respondents felt that the level of freedom they had to choose when they completed their work has worsened, while twenty-three percent of respondents felt it has improved.



Comparative to the other indicators of freedom and autonomy in carrying out work, a higher proportion of respondents (44%) reported that the level of their job autonomy has deteriorated. Only twenty-one percent of respondents felt that conditions in this regard have improved over the last one to five years.



Close to half respondents (46%) believed this had not changes although a significant percentage (38%), indicated that their opportunity to act as a critic and conscience has deteriorated over the last one to five years. Only sixteen percent of respondents reported that these conditions have improved.



Similar to the above indicator, nearly half (45%) indicated no change. Although thirty-eight percent of respondents reported that the amount of academic freedom they possessed has worsened over the past one to five years. This was more than double (17%) respondents who felt that their level of academic freedom has improved.

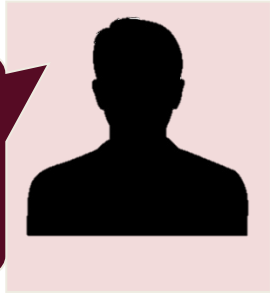
Quotes from Respondents

The quantitative findings were reflected in responses that highlighted the worsening in academic freedom in teaching, research, and speaking out. The underlying theme that emerged in the qualitative data is the corporatisation of universities and the perceived impact it has had on academic's occupational and job satisfaction, which are integral factors in retention decisions.

Teaching

"I don't think the incompetent cultures of most universities will change as the kinds of people who are in management positions are not interested in things changing, unless that change directly serves their career… Teaching people who have paid so much money and you know it is not going to make any difference to their career is very disheartening, especially when you don't have the freedom re curriculum and connections with industry."

"We all want to do the best possible teaching for our students. I particularly take a great deal of personal responsibility for their education and professional development, but each and every time I try to change things like curriculum content (in pre-req) courses, it hits the wall of "too hard, no $$, no staff"."



Research

"The university has an outdated approach to transparency which denies the university (& staff) the creativity and innovation that is facilitated by the free flow of opinion and information."

"The higher education system is now suffering from this and remains at serious risk of becoming broken. This is particularly the case for the loss of what should be a vibrant culture of scientific inquiry, sharing of knowledge and willingness to innovate. This culture is now at serious risk from managerialism."

“The extent to which we have to "partner or perish" and how much we are expected to compromise our research integrity to seek commercial funding and the inherent desire for bias that comes with that…There is little space for critical analysis on these issues. I have been called into my managers office and told not to teach in this area, or speak to the media. Academic freedom is a thing of the past.”

“The increasing emphasis on bringing in external monies (e.g. from industry) can have a negative impact on research independence and publication outcomes.”

Employee Voice

Employee voice arrangements are a key means of employee involvement and participation and have been found to enhance employee performance (Boxall & Purcell, 2016; Holland, Cooper, Pyman, & Teicher, 2012; Pyman et al., 2010). This section of the survey contained items which asked respondents to indicate what processes were provided to facilitate employee voice regarding their opinions and having input in and receiving information about the operations in their organisation. Overall, the most common forms of communication and involvement identified by respondents were staff meetings and newsletters.

A large majority (83%) of respondents indicated that there are dialogues in terms of staff meetings between senior management and employees However, when drilling down further, we find that a comparatively smaller proportion of those surveyed have responded positively to several other employee voice mechanisms. This includes ‘open door’ policies (52%), team briefings (56%), and interestingly, the use of work-groups or problem-solving teams of management and staff in dealing with operational issues was under fifty percent (45%). As such, the majority of respondents indicated that problem-solving teams between management and staff dealing with daily operational matters were not used in their organisation. This may suggest that whilst there is a large proportion of academics indicating that there are conversations between management and employees, the actual *active involvement* of employees in solving daily issues likely to be pertinent to academics’ workplace well-being may be comparatively less evident. Such findings may be particularly relevant given evidence that procedural fairness (which encompasses elements of employee voice) functions as a job resource that is integral for the well-being of Australian academics and a buffer on psychological strain (Boyd, Bakker, Pignata, Winefield, Gillespie, & Stough, 2010). Further research investigating the inter-relationships between these issues is required.

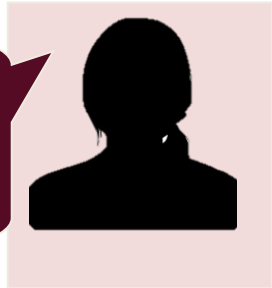
Table 2: Employee Voice Mechanisms

	Total Sample %
Staff meetings between senior management and employees	
Yes	83
'Open door' policy so employees can tell senior management about problems with their supervisors	
Yes	52
Team briefings (devote time specifically to workplace concerns)	
Yes	56
Work group or problem-solving teams made up of managers and workers to resolve specific operational issues	
Yes	45
Workplace newsletter	
Yes	73
Survey of employees' views and opinions	
Yes	60

Quotes from Respondents

"We have lost our voice - likely we will next lose people who want a voice."

"Centralised top down decision making where 'consultation' equals senior management telling staff what to do, coupled with continually changing and increasingly unrealistic research performance expectations."

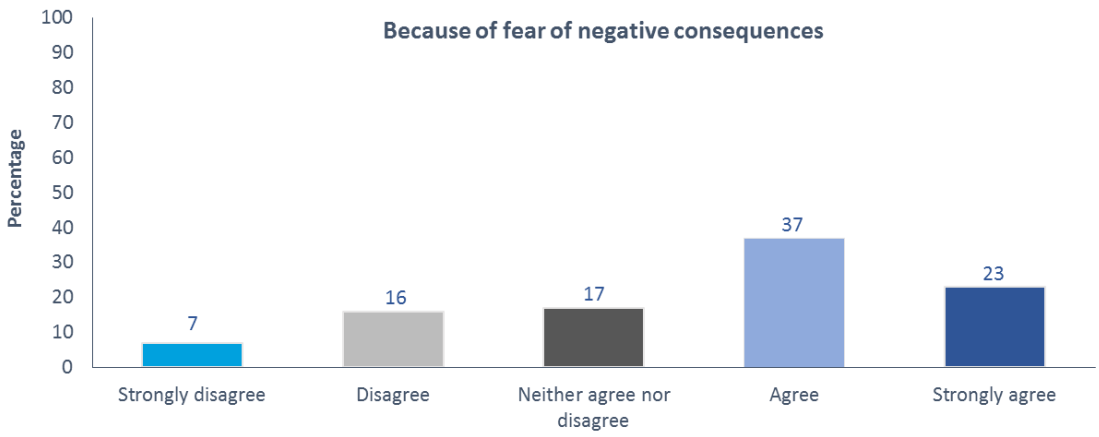


Employee Silence

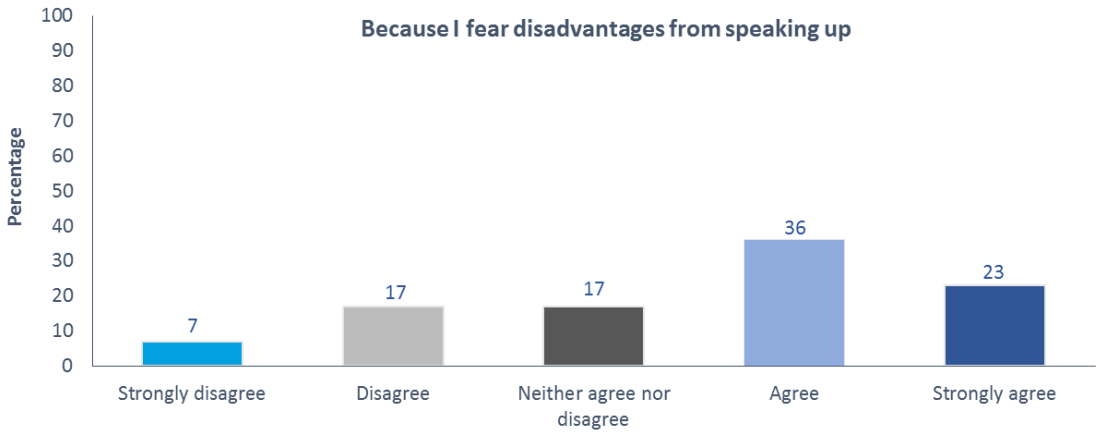
Employee silence can be defined as a collective phenomenon where employees withhold their opinions and concerns regarding improvements or problems (Morrison & Milliken, 2000). These sentiments are supported from an individual perspective by Pinder and Harlos (2001), who add the contention that silence is about the suppression of information often to people who can affect change.

Using Knoll and van Dick's (2013) six-item measure of employee silence (quiescent and acquiescent silence[7]), respondents were prompted to think about instances when they were concerned about something unfair at work and remained silent and the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the reasons for doing so. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Overall, a considerable proportion of respondents reported that they had remained silent because of the perceived futility of speaking up (69% agreed and strongly agreed). Whilst close to a quarter of respondents felt that they could speak up without fearing negative repercussions, sixty percent of the respondents remained silent as they feared the negative consequences of doing so. The perceived ability to speak up to line managers showed more positive results, however, nearly forty percent of respondents still reported that they remained silent because of reservations that their line managers were not likely to be sympathetic of their concerns.

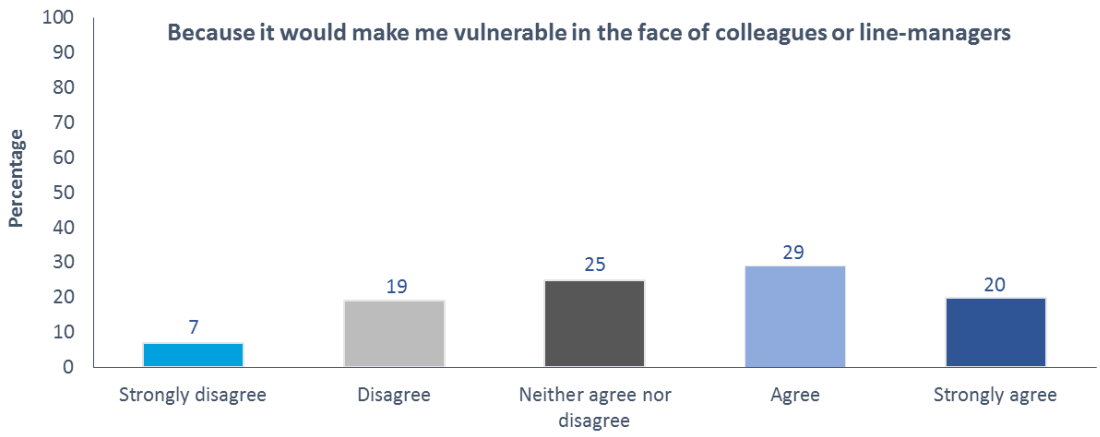
[7] Quiescent silence refers to the active withholding of information due to fear of retribution. Acquiescent silence represents disengaged behaviour.



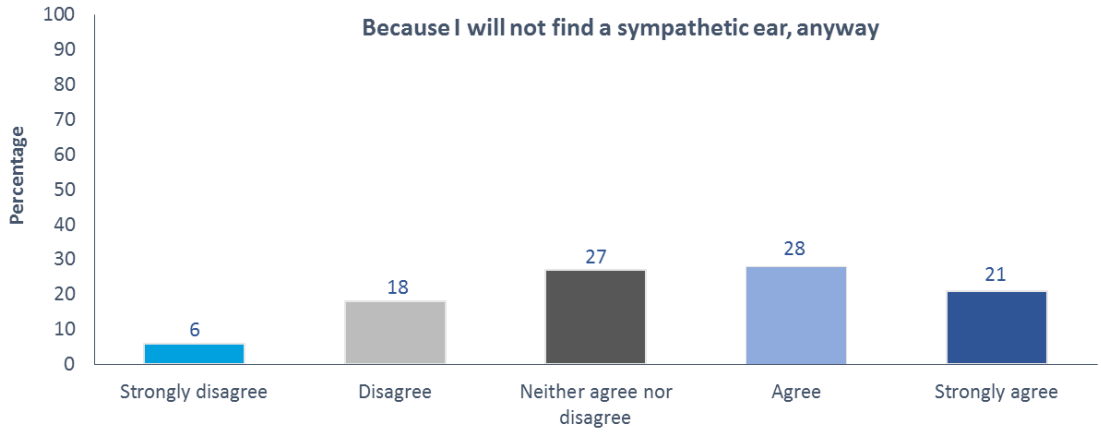
Sixty percent of respondents (e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') reported that they remained silent because they were afraid of negative consequences. Nearly one in every four respondent (e.g., 'strongly agreed') indicated strong sentiments towards this indicator.



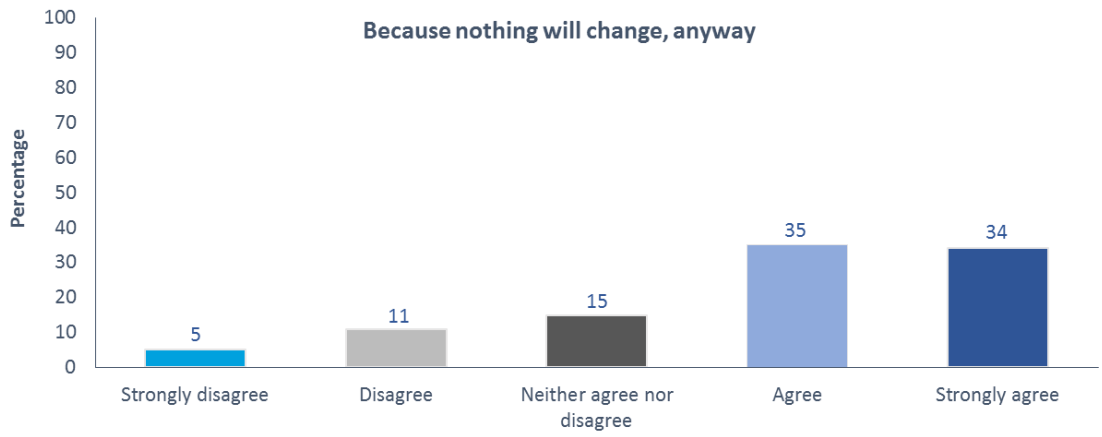
Nearly sixty percent of the respondents (e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') felt that they have remained silent because they feared disadvantages associated with speaking up. Again, nearly one quarter of respondents (23%, e.g., 'strongly agreed) felt strongly that this was the case.



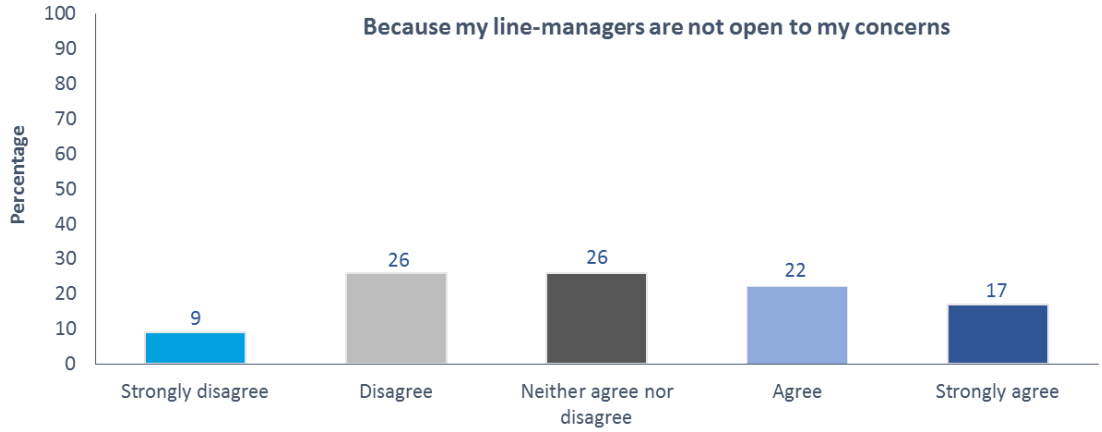
Similarly, nearly half (49%) of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they remained silent at work as they felt that it would open themselves up to vulnerability in the face of their colleagues or line managers.



Close to half of respondents (49%, e.g., ‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’) felt that they were unlikely to find a sympathetic ear and have decided to remain silent at work.



Almost seventy percent of respondents (69%, e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') reported having had a sense of futility in speaking up and as such, have decided to remain silent at work.

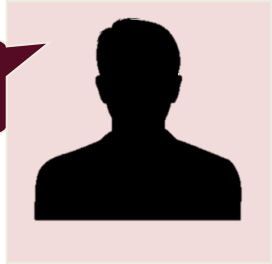


Relative to the other indicators of employee silence, a smaller proportion of respondents (39%, e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') indicated that their decision to remain silent was attributable to the lack of concern from their line managers or supervisors.

Quotes from Respondents

"I found there was no way to report bullying by my immediate supervisor at my university workplace. The senior managers didn't want to know. That issue caused me so much stress and affected my work and personal life."

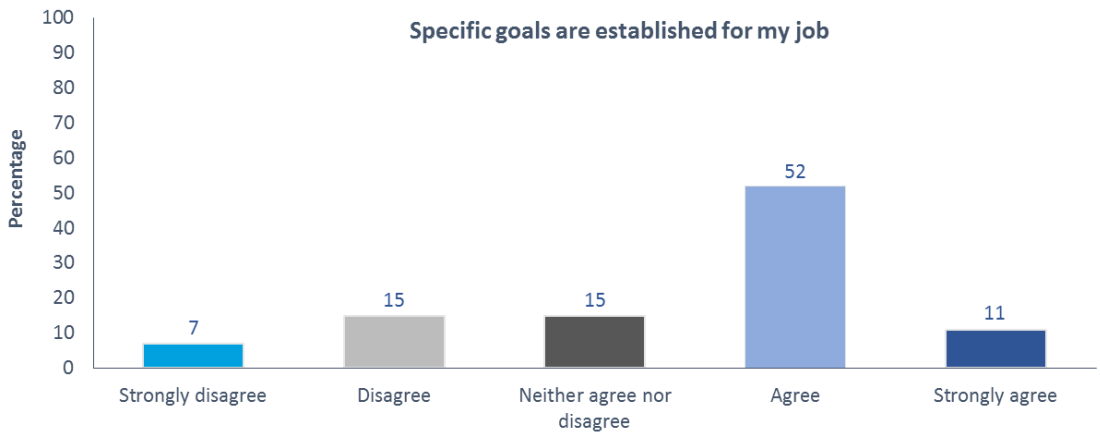
"Management dictates what we should do. We are all scared of losing our job if we tell truths."



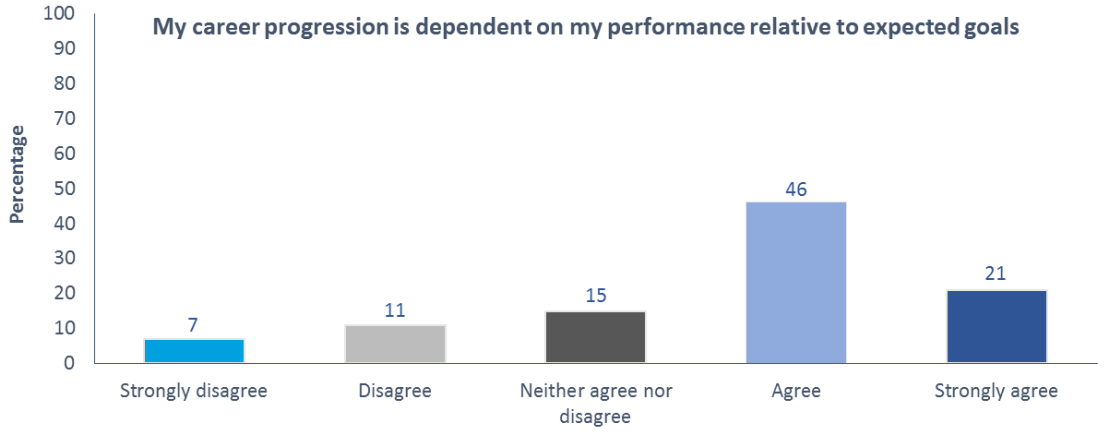
Organisational Practices

In this section of the survey, respondents were asked their perceptions of several aspects of human resource management practices at their organisation. These include job goal specificity, career progression based on meritocracy, and employee involvement in decision-making processes pertaining to issues impacting them (Searle et al., 2011). Respondents used a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to answer all of these items.

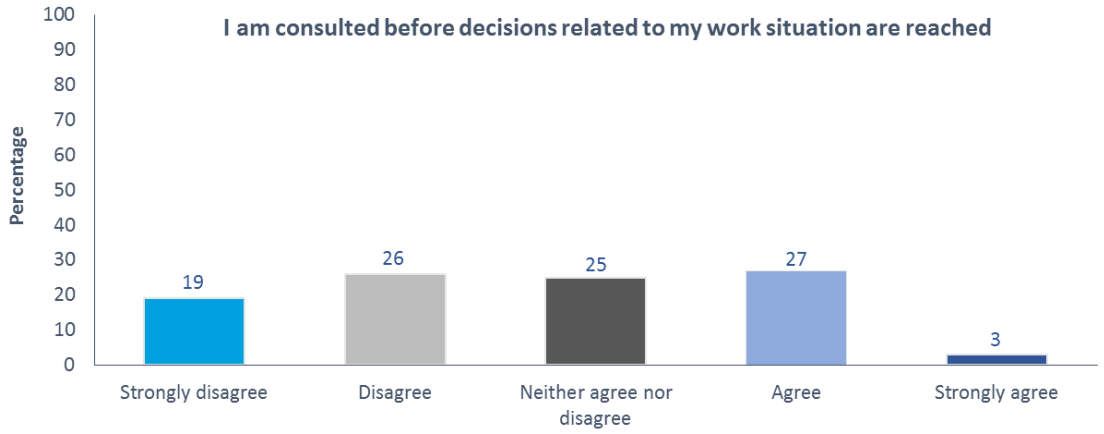
Key issues emerging from this section were that goals and structures in terms of what expectation were for employees were clearly outlined. However, perceptions of inadequate training and career management did emerge. For a highly skilled workforce, these are significant issues in the short, medium, and long term for the human resource management of this sector.



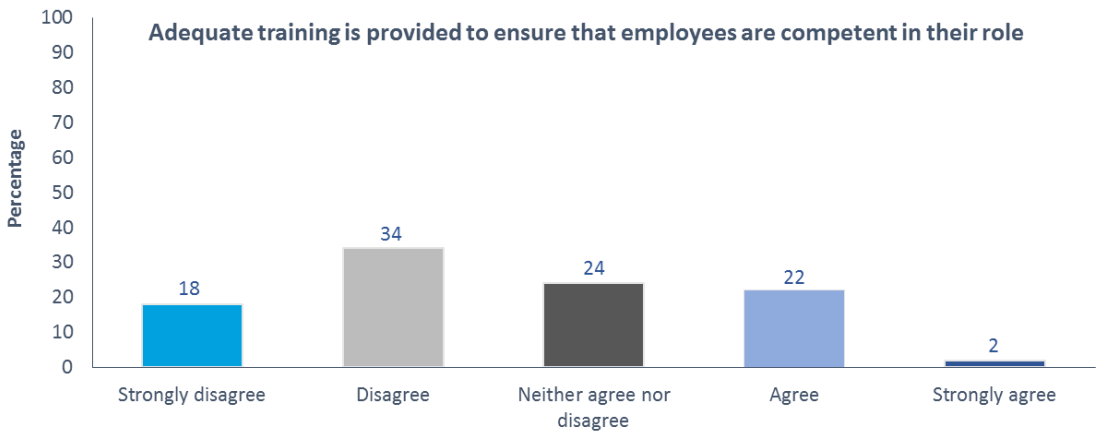
Majority of the respondents (63%, e.g., ‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’) indicated that respective organisations tended to establish specific goals for their jobs.



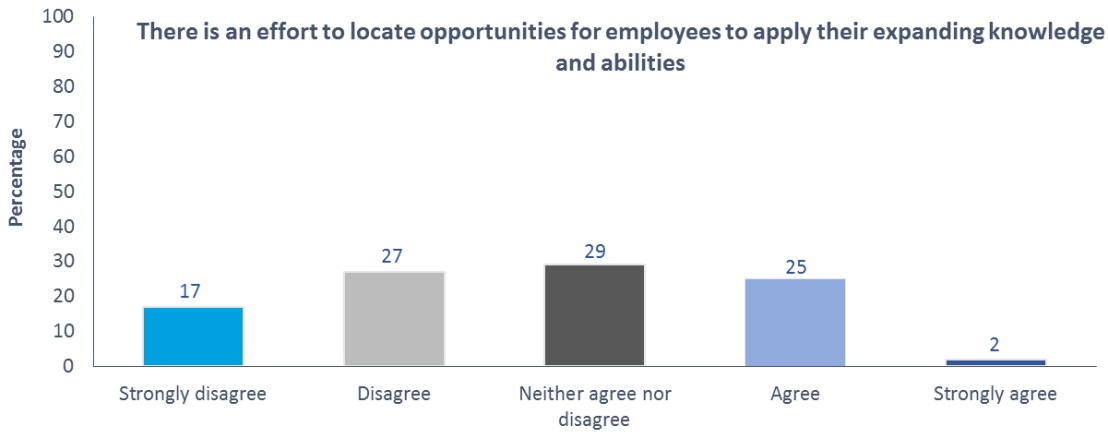
Sixty-seven percent of respondents (e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') acknowledged that there was a relationship between their performance and expected goals.



Only a third of respondents (30%, e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') reported that they were consulted before decisions concerning their work situation were reached. Similar negative patterns were found in employee voice where fifty-five percent of employees indicated that there was no cooperation between management and staff in solving daily operational issues.

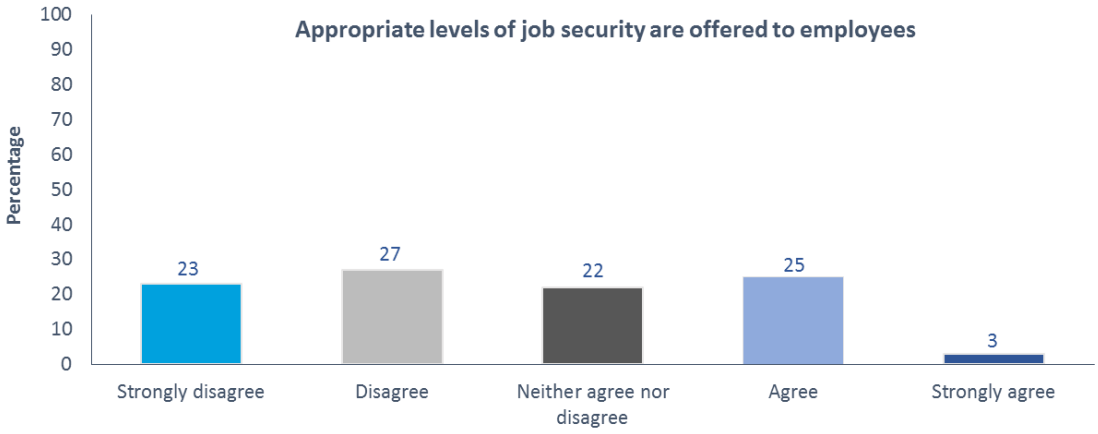


Despite being a highly skilled sector of the workforce, with clear outline of goals, there is an underlying concern that majority of respondents (52%, e.g., 'disagreed' and 'strongly disagreed') did not feel that they are given opportunities to develop themselves to be competent in their roles. Only 2% of respondents felt strongly that they have received adequate training to perform competently.

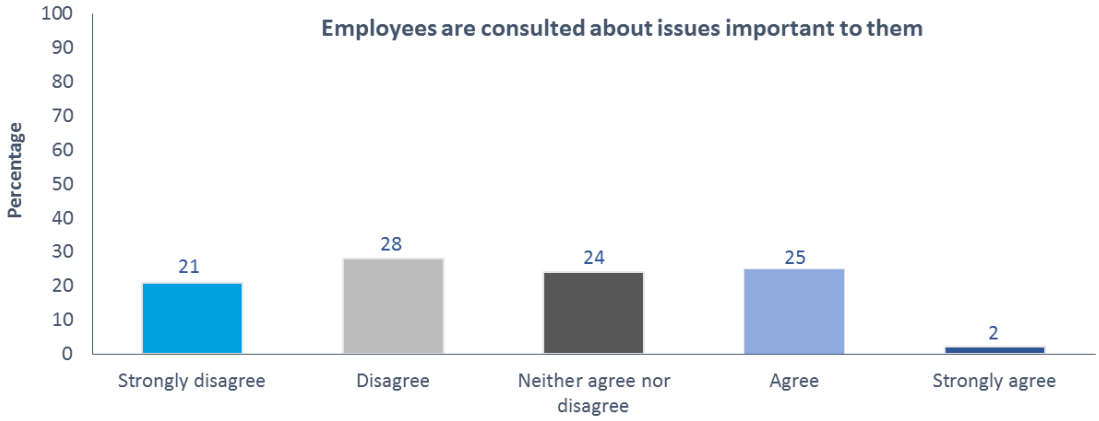


Reinforcing the above statements, forty-four percent (e.g., 'disagreed' and 'strongly disagreed') of respondents reported that there were no efforts on their organisation's part to develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Only 2% of respondents felt that their organisations proactively sought opportunities to help develop their knowledge and abilities. From a strategic HRM perspective, such lack of planning should be a concern for senior

management if this is representative across the whole sector. Noting the high skills and competitive nature of the global education environment, this is a concern for the future retention of these highly skilled workers who can seek employment in other countries. This is an area that would benefit from further investigation.



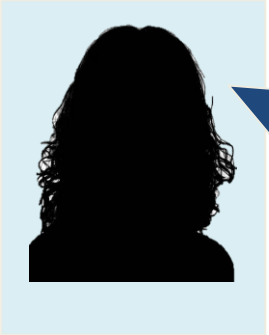
Although sixty-nine percent of respondents were permanent and tenured employees, only twenty-eight percent (e.g., ‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’) believed they had appropriate levels of job security.



Only twenty-seven percent of respondents (e.g., ‘agreed’ and ‘strongly agreed’) indicated that they were adequately consulted with on issues pertinent to them. This may not be surprising given that more than half of respondents reported the absence of problem-solving groups involving employees and managers regarding voice.

Quotes from Respondents

Respondents qualitative responses indicated discontent regarding expectation around finding funding and research output. Respondents also highlighted issues of poor job security and support for training, development, and career management.



"There is pressure to bring in research funding, publish and produce output however this is not reflected in the pay scale offered to the staff member, or their contract stability."

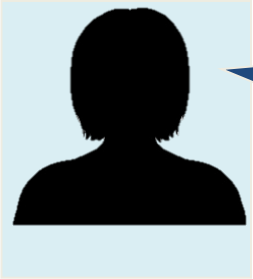
"I've been told that even if I get tenure, if I don't publish and bring in adequate funding, I'll be made redundant. This is having a huge, negative impact on my life."

"I bust a gut to try to do my best. I get great student feedback and no recognition - just to have it noticed is all I need. We've worked it out – you pretty much earn more at the Coles checkout. Sessionals experience under-employment and are part of the precarious gig economy."

"Excessive, poorly managed ***change and increasingly precarious employmen****t."*

“Involvement in developing and reviewing the university's strategy is weak.”

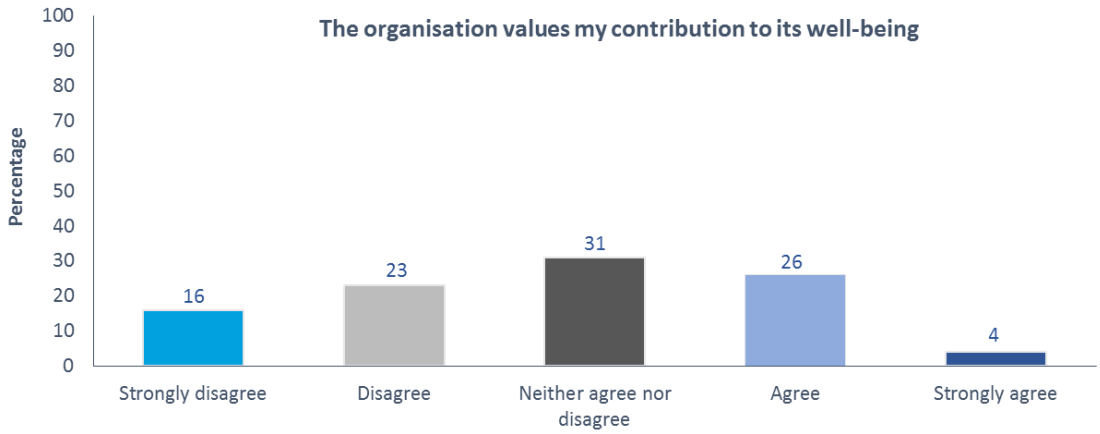
“As people move into leadership positions, how to develop skills and outcomes in that area.”



“Training in systems relied on personal initiative..”

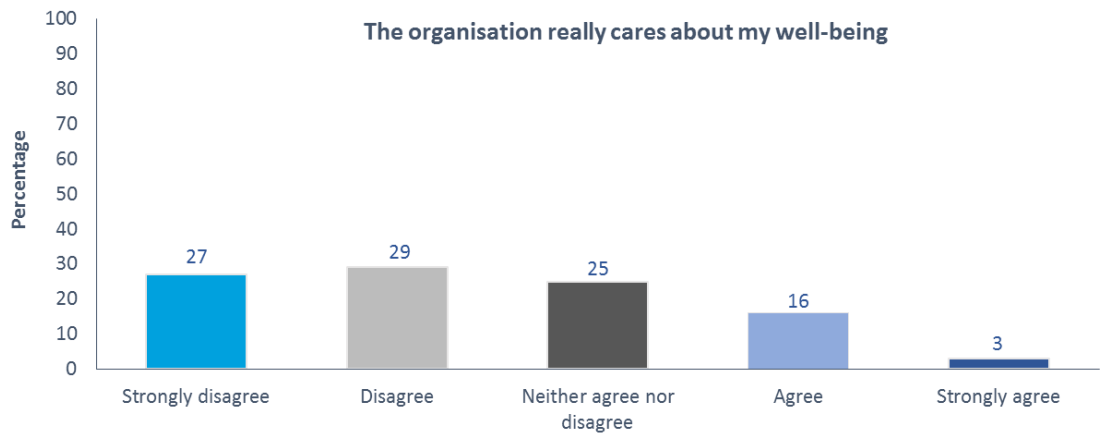
Support at Work

A total of twelve items were used to assess the extent to which respondents felt they received support from their employing organisation and supervisors. Respondents used a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to answer these items. The following graphs depict the responses for several representative items. Overall, a considerable amount of respondents felt that they did not receive support at work from their respective organisations. However, a comparatively smaller percentage of respondents reported such negative sentiments with regards to support from supervisors.

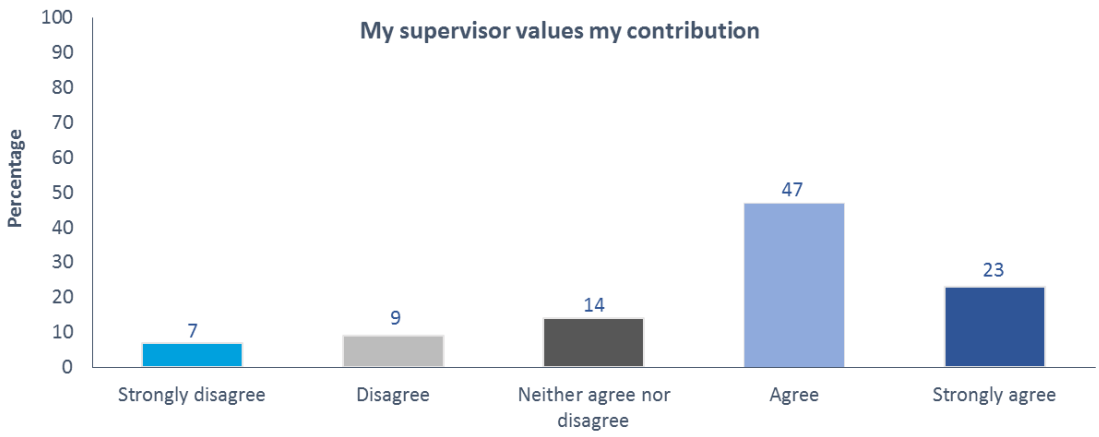


Only thirty percent (e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') of respondents believed that their contributions were valued by their organisation. This may not be surprising considering the low levels of perceived organisational support for training and developmental opportunities, and high levels of job insecurity. Relationships between these issues require more in-depth investigation.

Only twenty-one percent (e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') of the respondents felt that their respective organisations have taken their goals and values into consideration. This is in line with issues identified earlier with the lack of depth in employee voice, the lack of consultation with employees on issues that are important to them and particularly, the support for work-life balance.

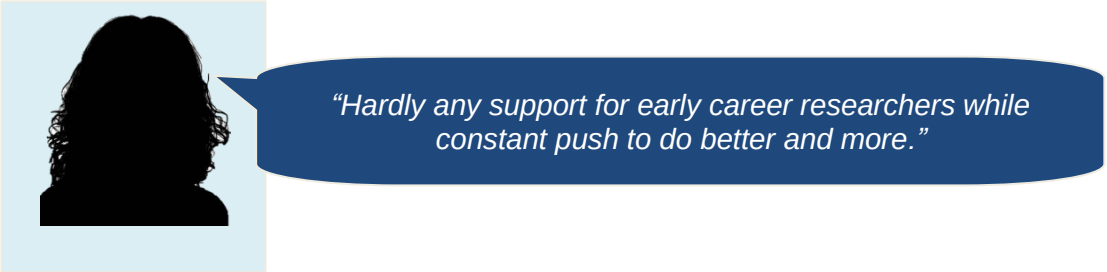


Only nineteen percent (e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') of respondents felt that their organisations cared about their well-being.



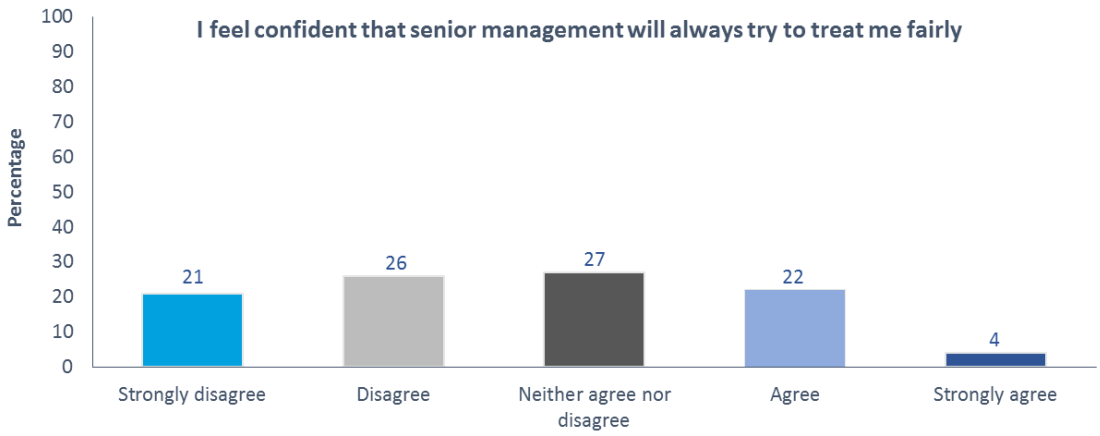
A positive aspect in workplace support and climate came from the discovery that a large percentage (70%, e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') of respondents felt that their supervisors valued their contribution as opposed to their employing organisations (30%, e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed').

Quotes from Respondents

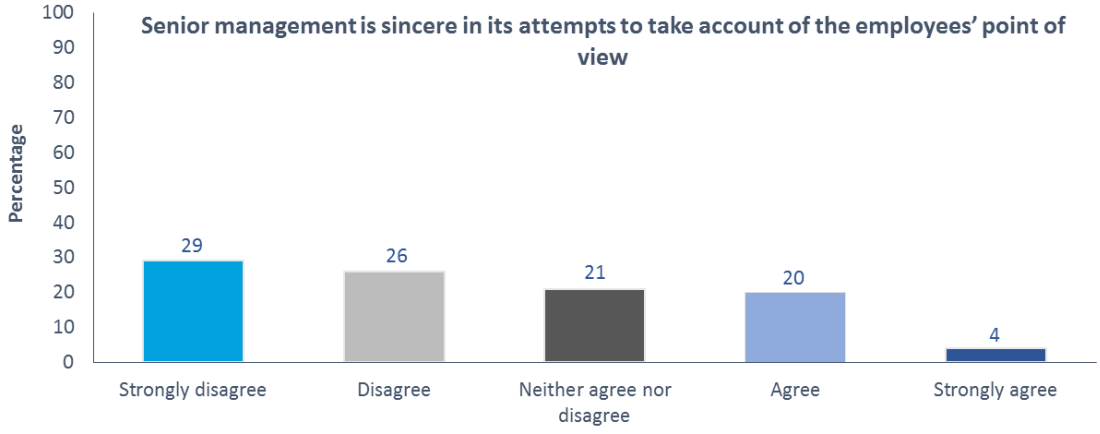


Trust in Senior Management and Direct Supervisor

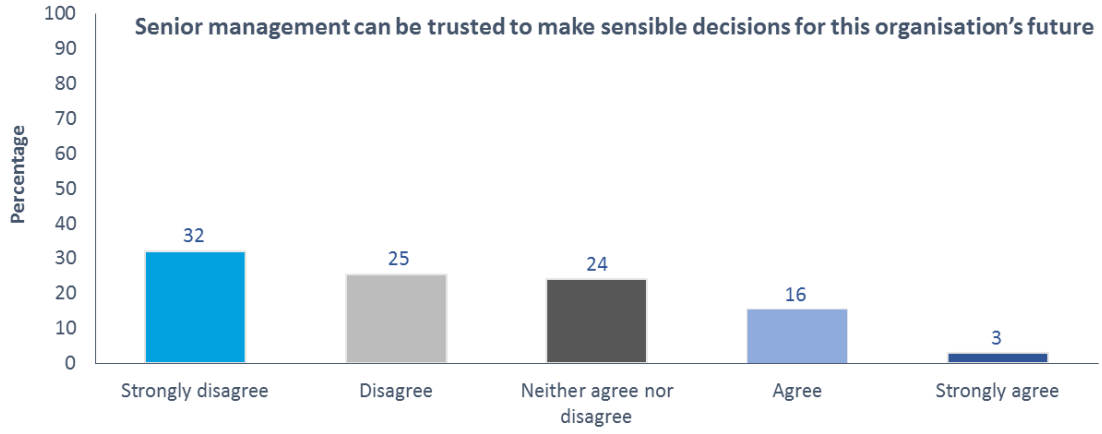
Given the recognition that trust is an integral factor in influencing organisational success, organisational stability and to employee well-being (Cook & Wall; 1980; Tyler & Kramer, 1996; Shaw, 1997), this survey sought to explore the perceived levels of trust academics have in both senior management and direct supervisors. Adapting Cook and Wall's (1980) trust measure, this section of the survey asked respondents several questions regarding employees' trust in senior management and direct supervisors.



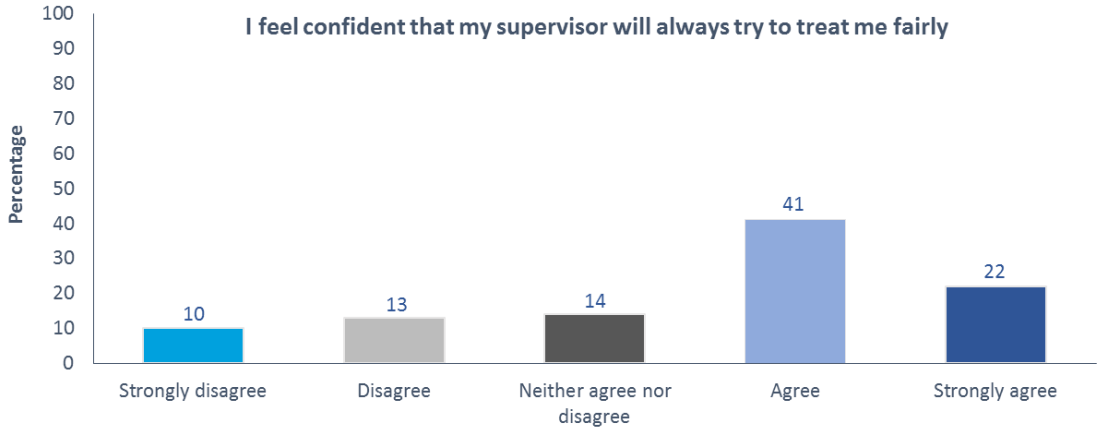
Only a little over a quarter of respondents (26%, e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') indicated that they had confidence in senior management to always treat them fairly. This lack of perceived equity builds into an already apparent disconnect between senior management and academics.



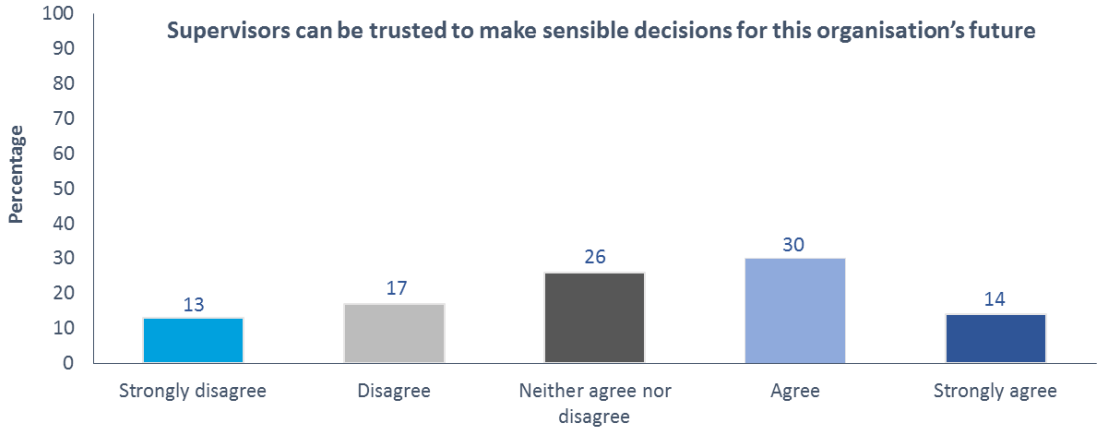
As above, a similar proportion of respondents (24%,) indicated that senior management is genuine in taking into account employees' point of view. Against a significant majority (55%) who disagree.



A further decline in the relationship between senior management and employees is evident here as only nineteen percent felt that senior management could be trusted to make sensible decisions for the organisation's future.



In stark comparison to indicators related to senior management, a much higher proportion of respondents (63% vs. 26% senior management, e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') were confident that their supervisors will always treat them fairly.



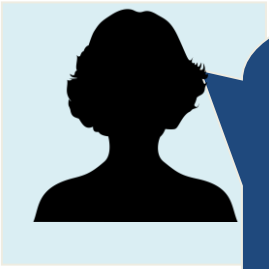
Comparatively, forty-four percent of respondents (e.g., 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed') felt supervisors could be trusted to make sensible decisions for the organisations future (vs. 19% when asked about senior managers).

Quotes from Respondents

"My experience is that my immediate managers are OK. Senior management is problematic, spending money on increasing staff in their area on salaries well above EB scales and there is no way to challenge it as the University Council is made up of business people who are on higher salaries again."

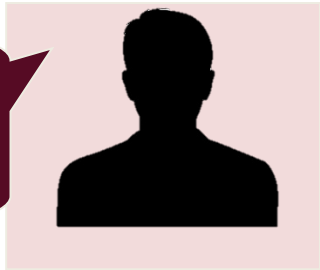
"There is a growing perception of a university sector-wide assault by senior management on academics work conditions."

"The sense of 'overwhelmness' is compounded by the remoteness of the senior management who are making the decisions re structure, technology systems etc and staffing levels that are the context for the impossible demands on staff."



"I have never remained silent when I feel that something is wrong and always speak up. Sadly this is not the case for many of my peers who seem genuinely scared to speak up. The problem with universities and higher education as it is currently operating is that it has shifted from a collegial model to an executive one. Administrators run the system and try to apply the same managerial approaches that work in conventional businesses, but don't work in a knowledge-intensive, academic community system."

"The pressure … from senior management is the primary source of stress…Colleagues and my direct supervisor provide wonderful support but the institutional context of tertiary ed at this time is a nightmare.



Conclusion

The focus of this study was to identify issues and trends from mainly management academics in Australian and New Zealand. The report here is about providing an overview of the issues. However, it is acknowledged that key findings here should be interpreted in light of several limitations including the cross-sectional and single-source nature of the data. More detailed research will be required to explore causal links and unpack the findings. The focus of the report is to provide members with information and a voice on major issues of workplace climate and well-being as well as evidence to continue the debate.

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