



Suomen Rehtorit ry
Finlands Rektorer rf



UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI



Principal Barometer 2024

Katariina Salmela-Aro, Academy Professor, University of Helsinki

Minna Huutilainen, Professor, University of Helsinki

Antti Ikonen, President of the Finnish Association of Principals

24.1.2025

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The survey of principals' occupational well-being conducted since 2019 – A record number of respondents

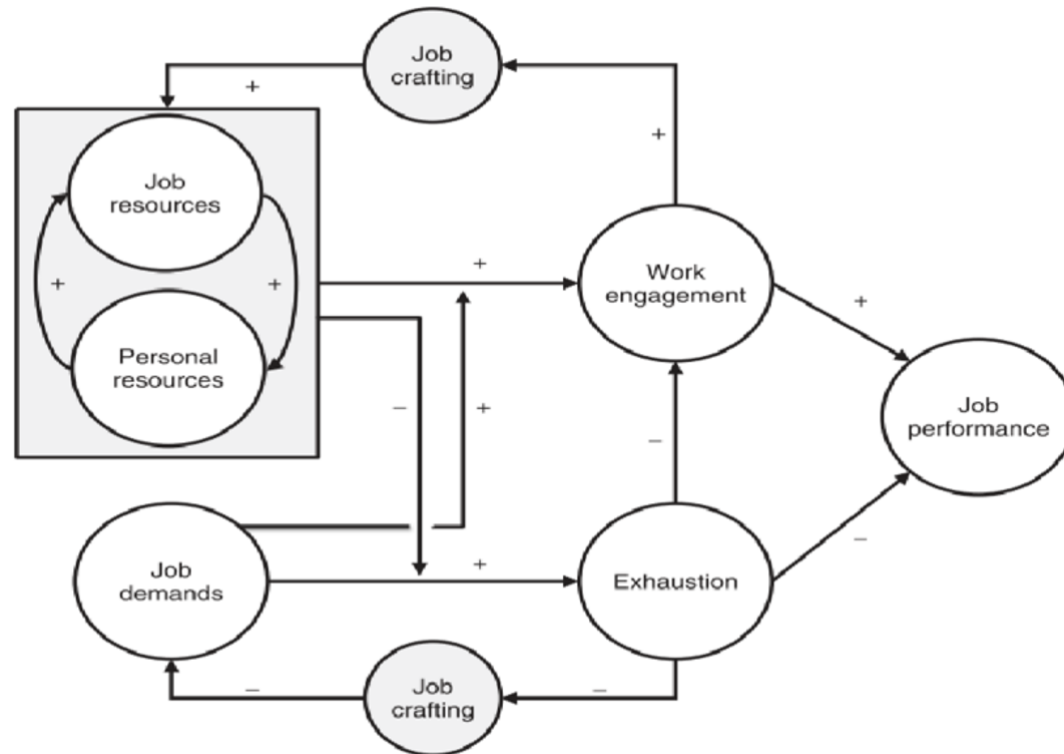
Participants



	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
N	531	644	541	698	526	782
Male	214	263	215	249	191	299
Female	317	380	297	445	335	478
Age (year)	53.6 ± 7.5	52.6 ± 7.7	52.2 ± 7.0	51.4 ± 7.0	52.2 ± 7.2	51.6 ± 7.35
Experience as a manager (year)	6.9 ± 6.8	7.2 ± 6.6	7.9 ± 7.0	8.2 ± 7.1	13.3 ± 8.2	8.00 ± 7.10
Position						
<u>Rehtori</u> (school principal)	372	462	364	330	396	521
<u>Vararehtori</u> (vice principal)	16	21	15	9	8	32
<u>Apulaisrehtori</u> (assistant principal)	76	72	66	59	69	133
<u>Varajohtaja</u> (vice leader)	2	1	5	3	1	6
Else	63	88	53	48	46	84

- A study on the occupational well-being of Finnish principals in collaboration with Suomen Rehtorit ry (Finnish Association of Principals)
- The data collection takes place annually in the spring
- Additionally, principals may participate in Firstbeat measurements to assess stress, sleep, physical activity, and recovery.
- The study is influenced by the international *Principal Health and Wellbeing* –research project

Theoretical background: Job demands and resources model

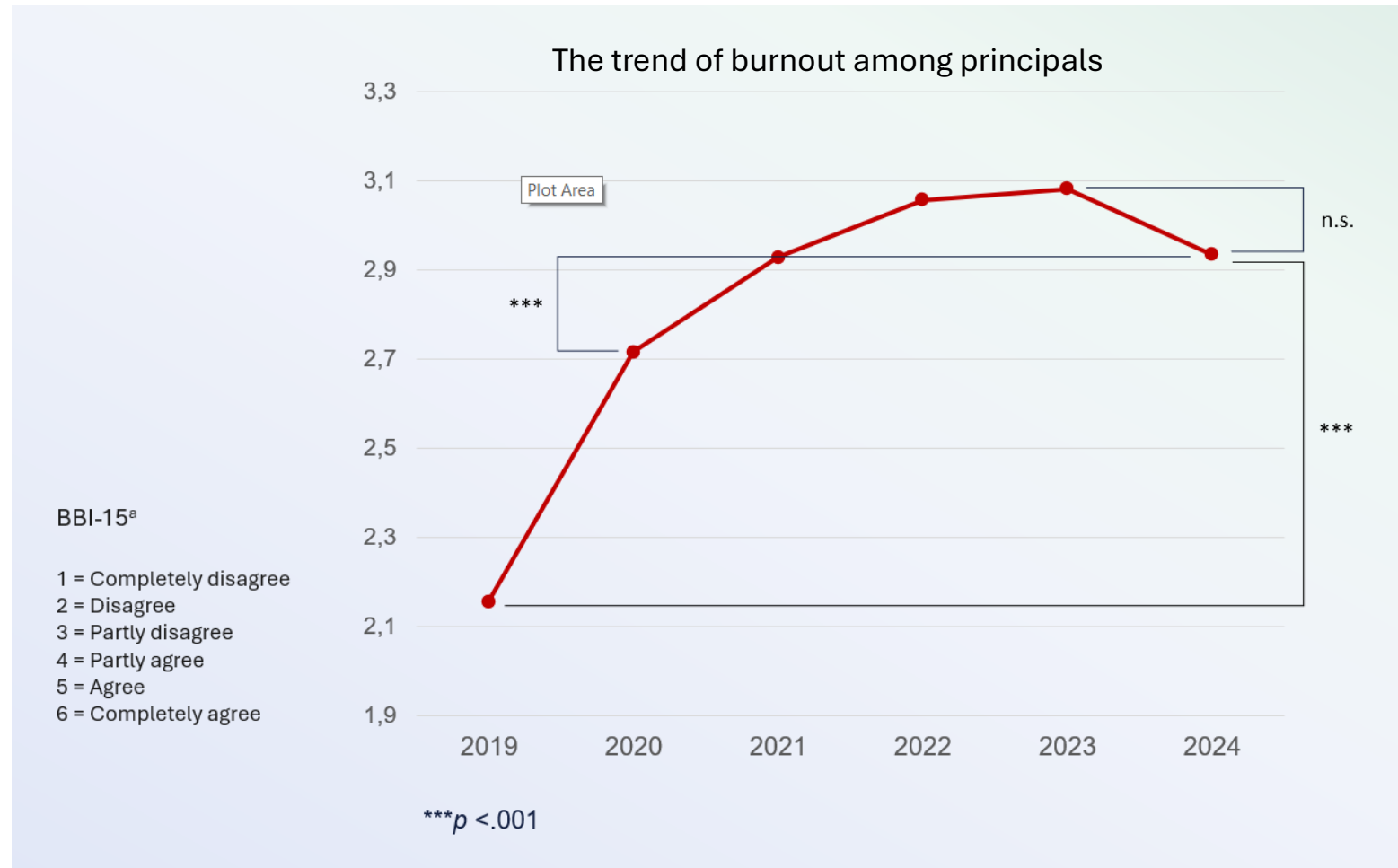


(Bakker & Demerouti, 2014)

Key propositions:

- *Occupational wellbeing* can be categorized into work engagement and work burnout
- *Job characteristics* can be categorized into job demands and resources.
→ Job characteristics are key determinants of occupational well-being, which, in turn, impacts on job performance.
- **The motivational process:**
Job/personal resources → work engagement
- **The health impairment process:**
Job demands → exhaustion
- Personal resources and long-term reserves
- Job crafting plays a significant role in occupational well-being

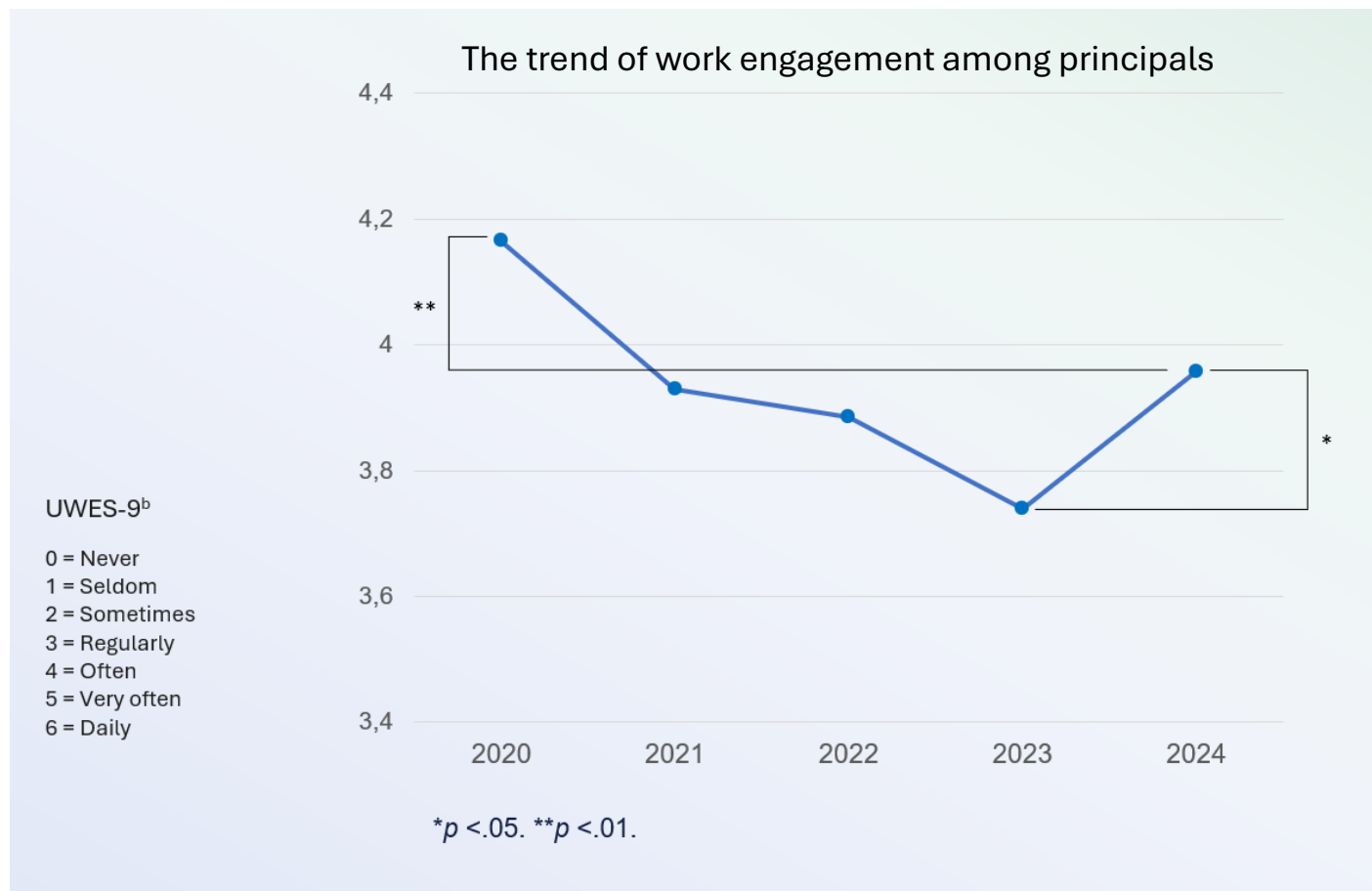
Finally, light at the end of the tunnel – Burnout is declining ...



- Burnout increased in 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It increased thereafter and reached its peak in 2023.
- In 2024, the increase in burnout ceased, and signs of recovery began to appear.
- Many of the job demands have now begun to decrease (slide 8) and job resources have begun to increase (slides 9-10).
- Finding one's work meaningful provided the strongest protection against burnout (slide 11). The blurring of boundaries between work and leisure time posed a risk for burnout .

^aNäätänen, P., Aro, A., Matthiesen, S. & Salmela-Aro, K. (2003). Bergen Burnout Indicator-15. Edita. Y-axis: The mean score of the overall BBI-15 at each time point.

... and principals are regaining work engagement



- Work engagement decreased in response to the pandemic, reaching its lowest level in 2023. Finally, in 2024 it began to increase.
- The job resource that explained the most variance in work engagement was meaningfulness of work, followed by possibility for development, task variation, and role clarity (slide 11).

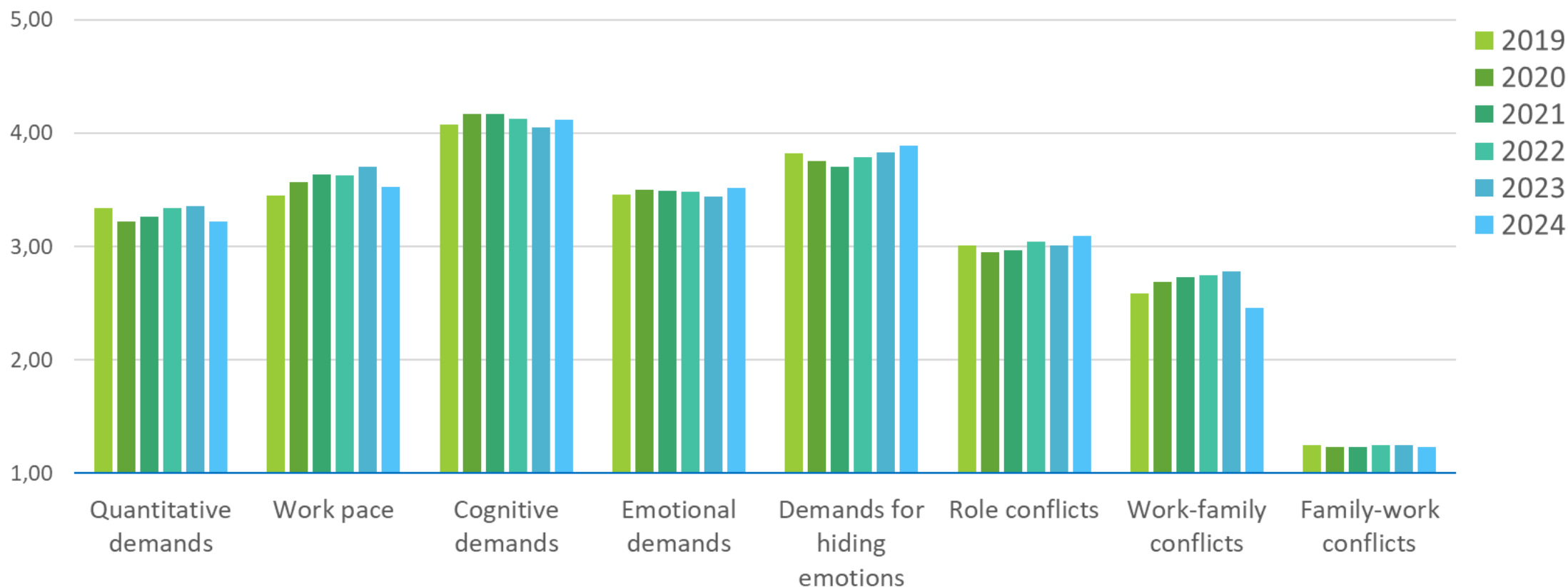
^bSchaufeli, W. & Bakker, A. (2004). UWES. Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. Preliminary manual. Y-axis: The mean score of the overall UWES-9 at each time point.

Three work engagement and burnout profiles: engaged, normative, and burned out

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
"Engaged" (%)	47	38	35	34	28	29
"Normative" (%)	35	42	46	43	42	46
"Burned out" (%)	18	20	19	23	30	25

- Three groups of principals were identified from the data: “engaged”, “burned out” and “normative” (i.e. a mean level of the investigated population, indicating moderate work engagement and burnout)
- In response to the pandemic, the proportion of principals in the “engaged” group declined, while the proportion in the “burned out” group increased.
- In 2024, the proportion of principals in the “engaged” group began to increase, but it is still less than one-third of the proportion of principals in this group prior to the pandemic → Recovery is very slow, and the “shadow of the COVID-19 crisis is long”
- In 2024, the proportion of “burned out” began to decreased

Job and personal demands



In 2024, quantitative demands, work pace, and work-family conflicts slightly reduced compared to the previous year, whereas cognitive and emotional demands increased.

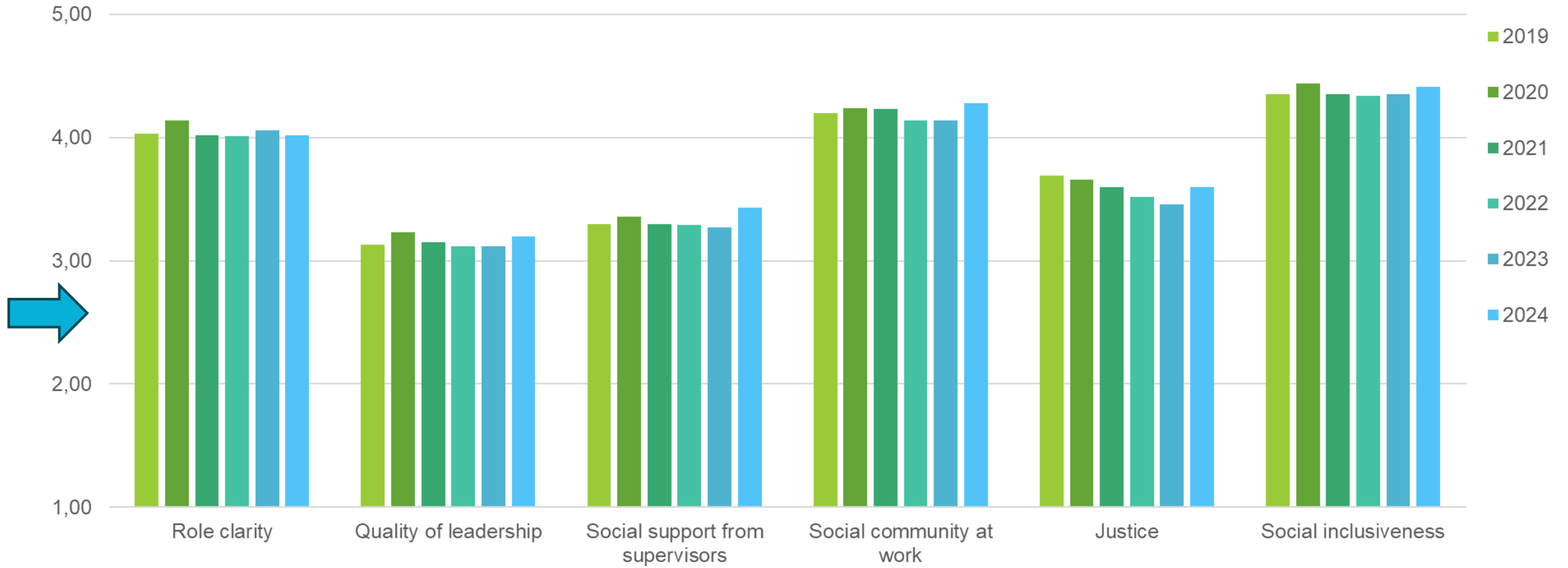
Job and personal resources...



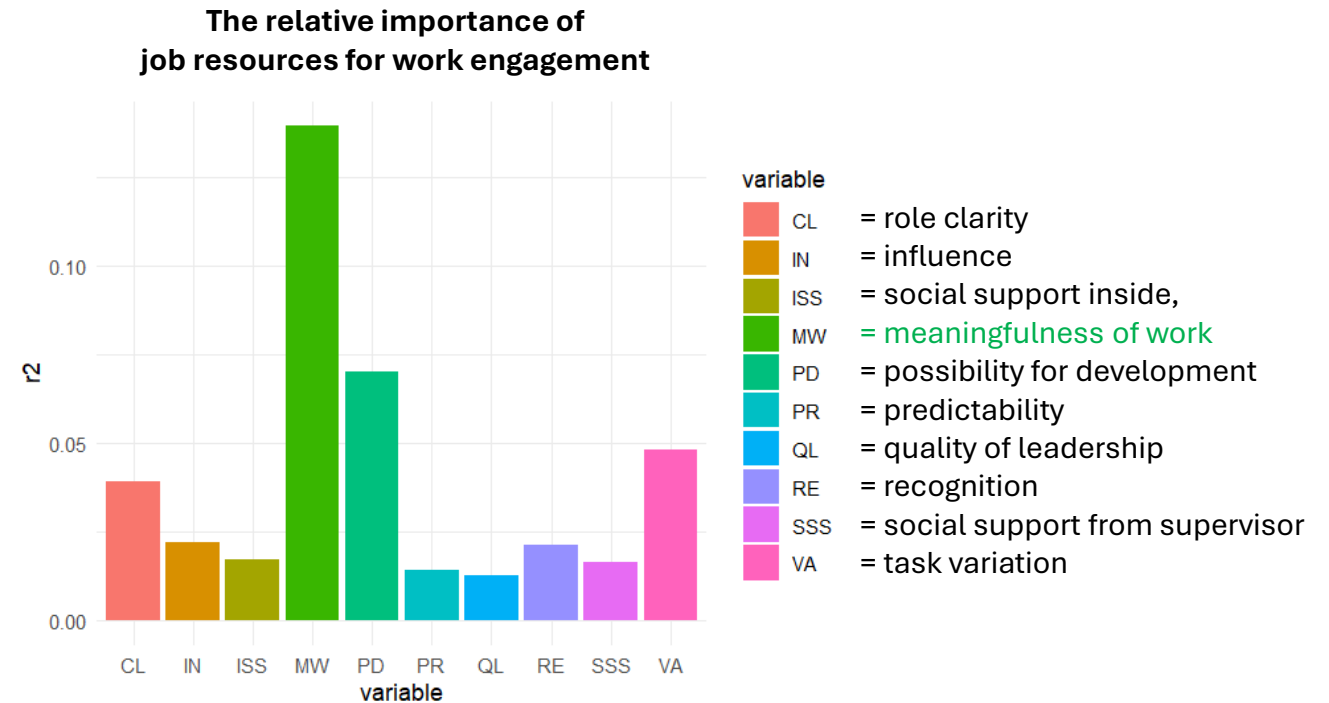
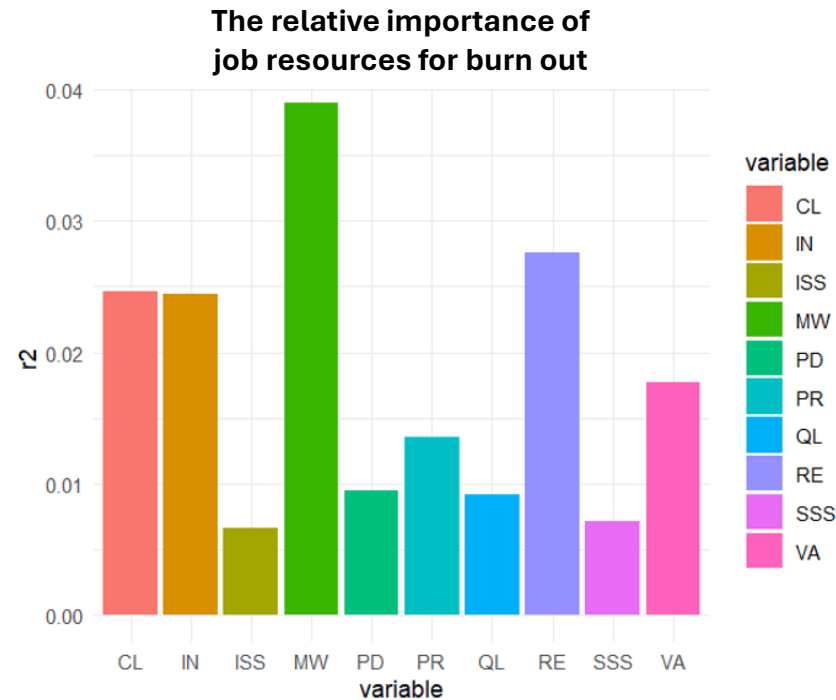
To be continued...

In 2024, most job resources increased compared to the previous year (not commitment to the workplace).

...social resources increased 2024



Meaningfulness of work – the most important job resource



- Among job resources, finding one’s work meaningful provided the strongest protection against burnout, followed by recognition, role clarity, and influence (table on the left).
- Meaningfulness of work explained the most variance in work engagement, followed by possibilities for development, task variation, and role clarity (table on the right).

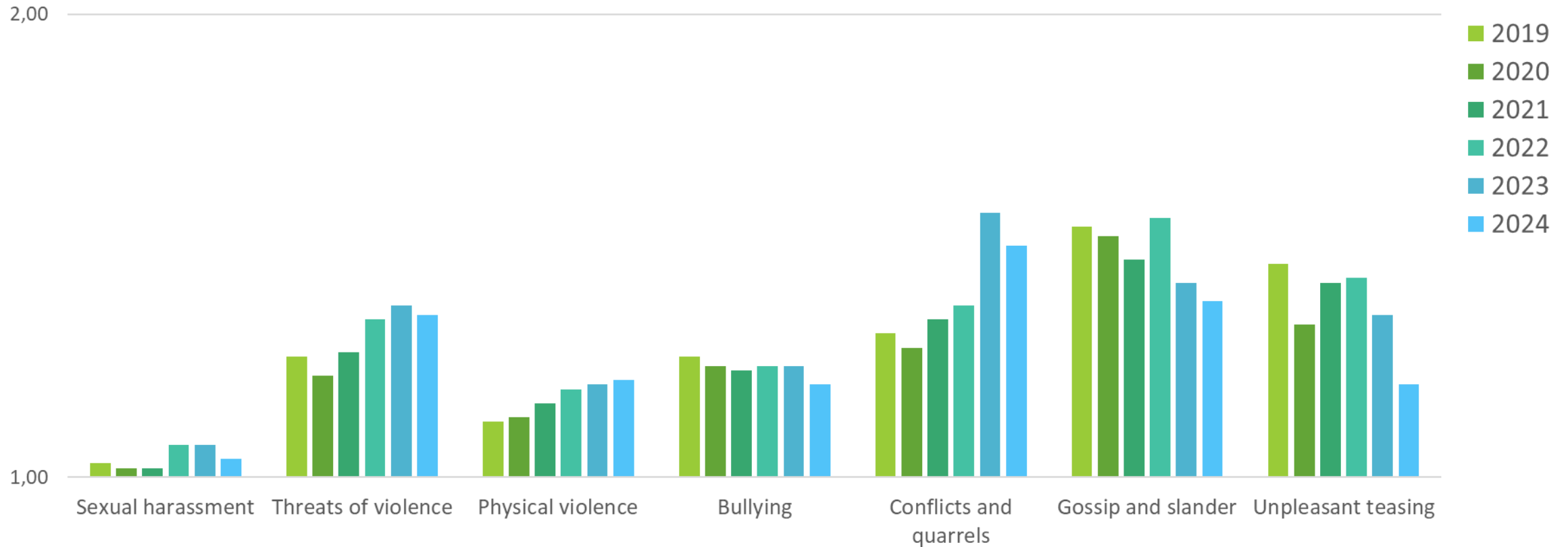
Violence experienced by principals is low



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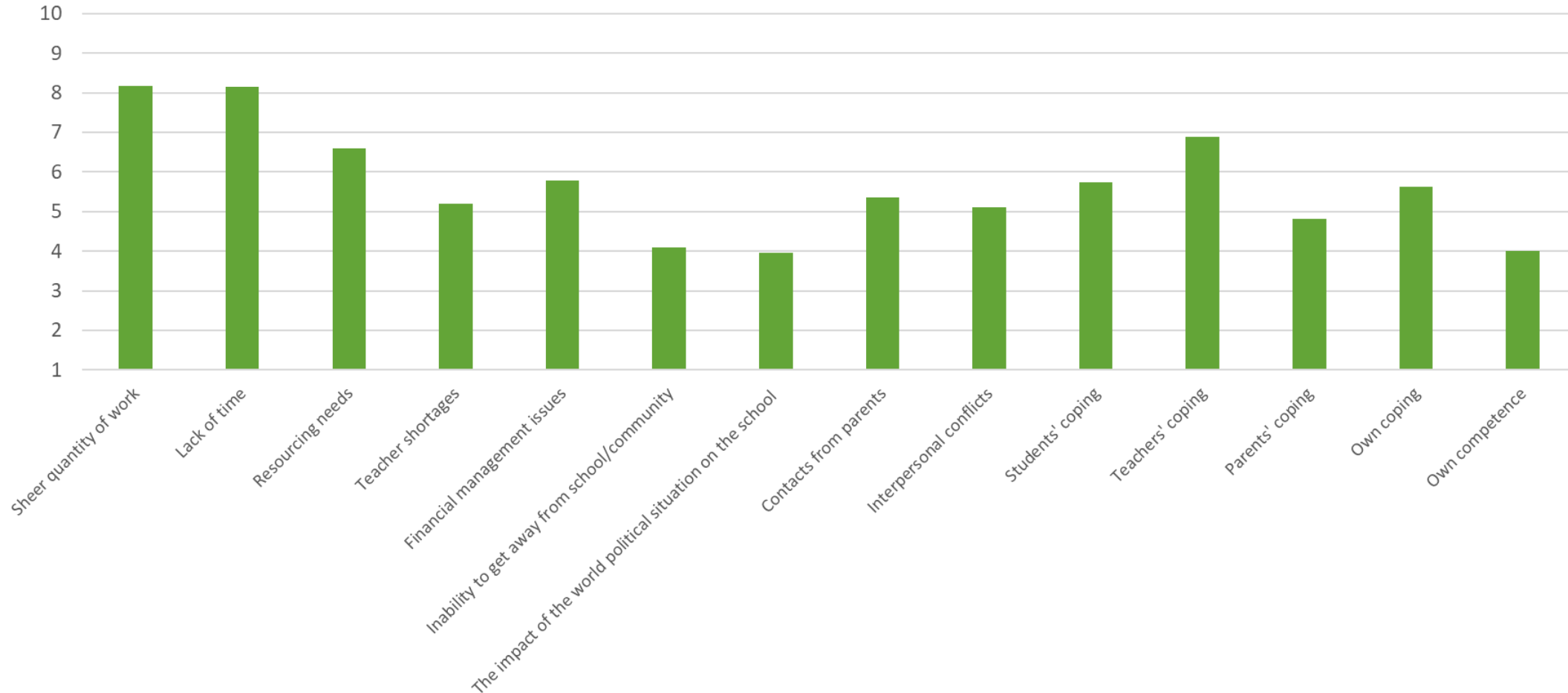
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In 2024, most violence-related problems reduced, with the exception of physical violence, which is still slightly increasing.

(Response options: 1 = never, 2 = a few times per year, 3 = monthly, 4 = weekly, 5 = daily)

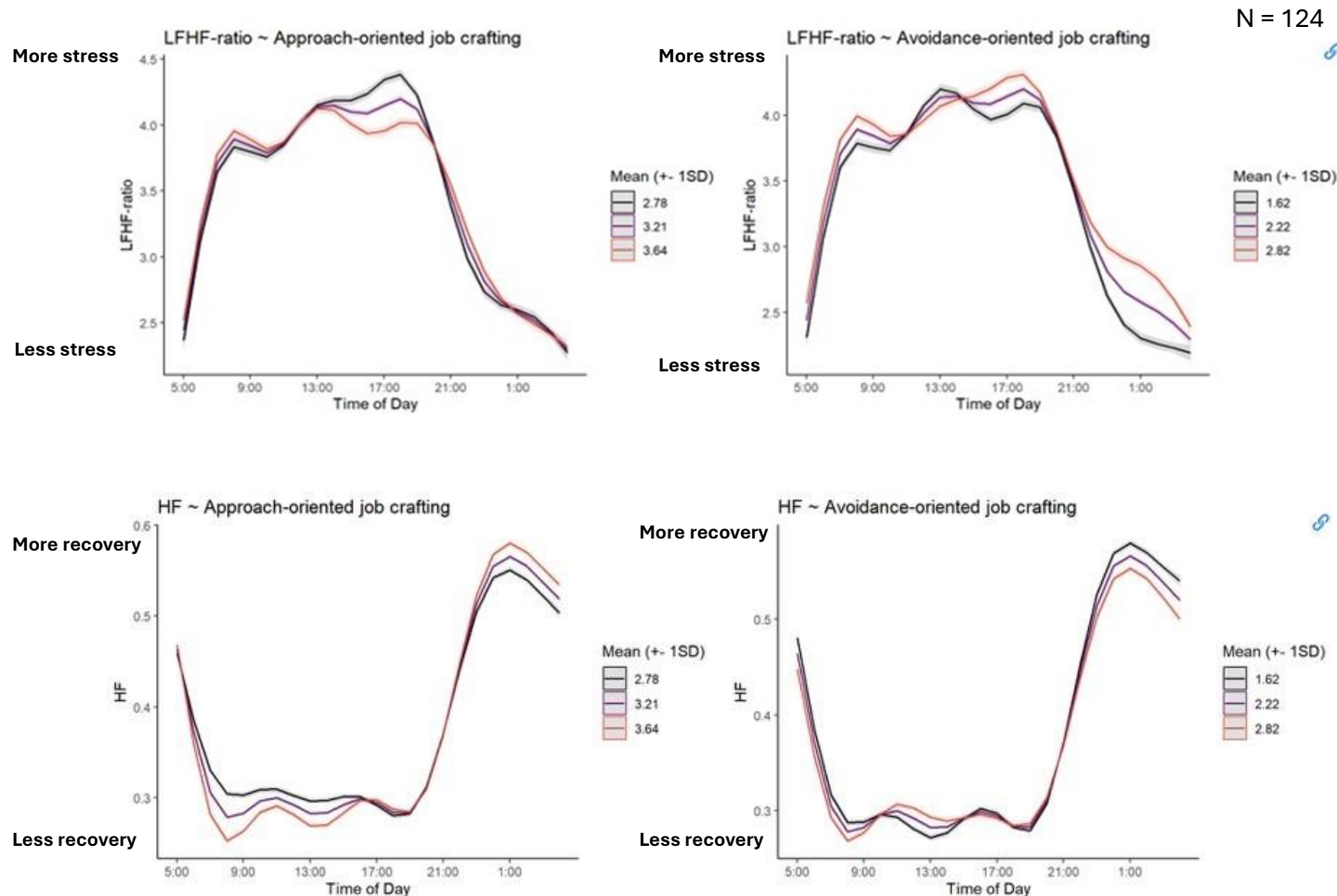
Sources of stress experienced by principals



The most salient stress sources were sheer quantity of work and lack of time, followed by teachers' coping, and resourcing needs.

(Response options: 1 = a minor source of stress — 10 = a major source of stress)

Job crafting, stress, and recovery from work



Approach-job crafters

Approach job crafters, who proactively tried to increase job resources and job challenges, experienced slightly higher stress levels in the morning, lower stress levels from afternoon to evening, and higher relaxation levels at night.

Avoidance-job crafters

Avoidance job crafters, who proactively avoid confronting hindering job demands*, experienced higher stress levels in the morning, in the afternoon, and at night.

*Hindering job demands: Tasks that impede goal achievement

Off-job crafting, work related stress, and recovery

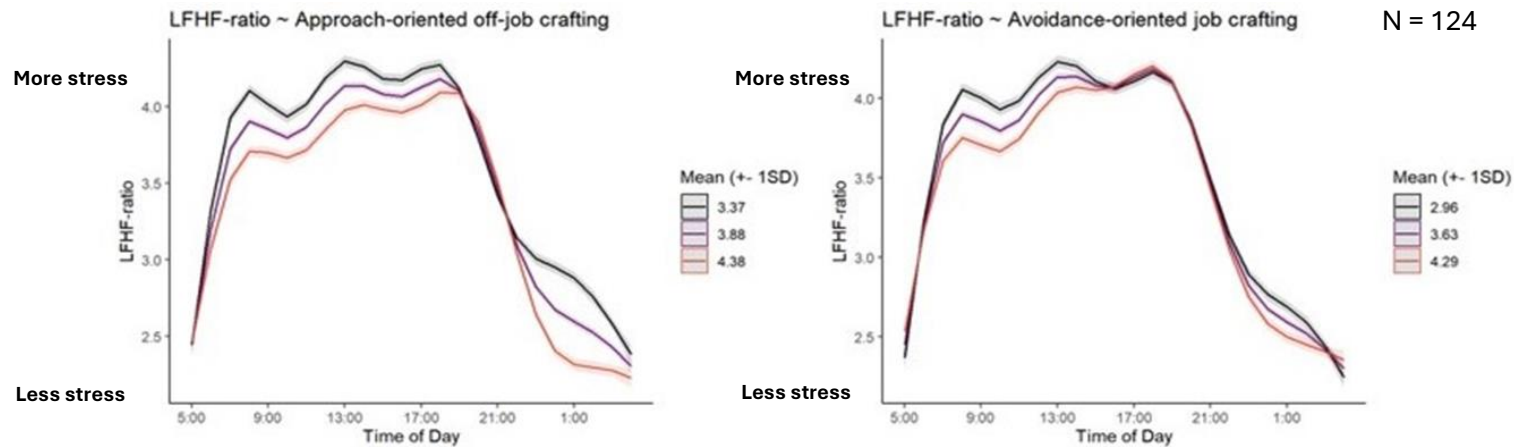
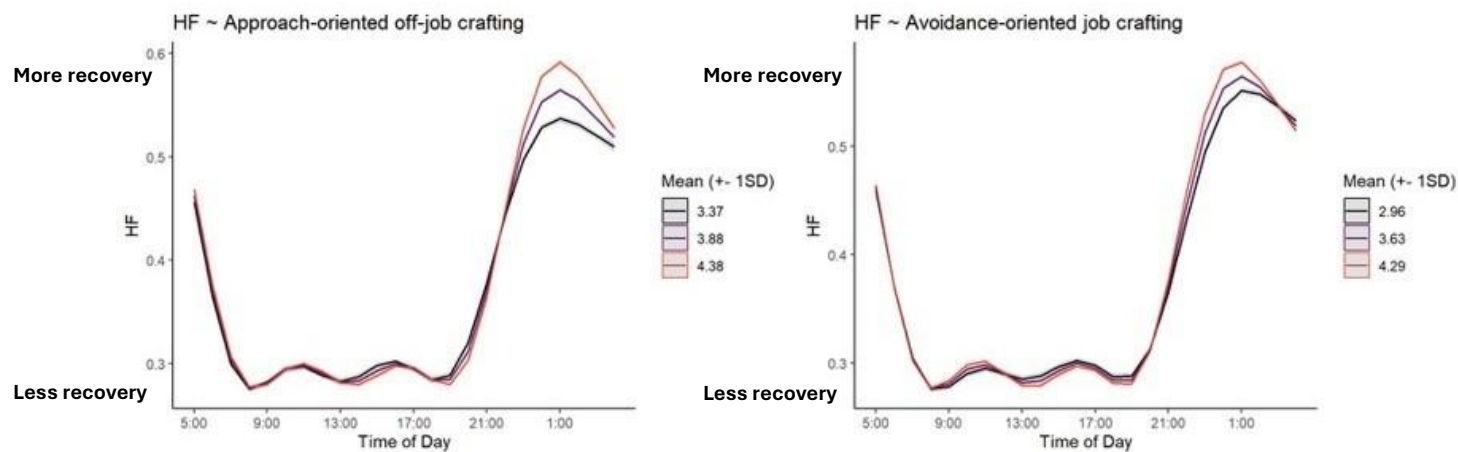


Figure 1: Predicted values of LFHF-ratio conditional on job crafting behaviour



Off-job crafters experienced lower stress levels during working hours and at night, and higher relaxation levels at night.

Summary of results

- **Burnout is declining, and principals are regaining work engagement**
 - The proportion of “burned out” (25%) decreased, while the proportions of “normative” (46%) and “engaged”(29%) began to moderately increase
 - The quantitative job demands, work pace, and work-family conflicts slightly reduced compared to the previous year
 - The main sources of stress were still the sheer quantity of work and lack of time
 - Cognitive and emotional job demands increased
 - Most job and personal resources increased
 - Violence experienced by principals was low, and most violence-related problems reduced
- **There is a need for new leadership support and structures in schools**
 - The greatest training needs: Leadership of school community well-being, crisis leadership, self-management, and socio-emotional skills training
- **Job and off-job crafting is important for well-being**
 - Work-related stress is reduced when leisure time is tailored to suit one’s well-being needs

Recommendations

Training Programs

- ➔ Develop job and off-job crafting skills, resilience building, and self-care strategies.

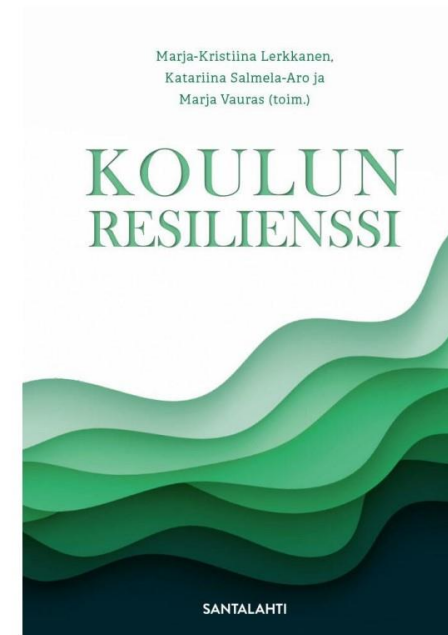
Policy Support

- ➔ Enable flexibility in job design to meet personal and institutional needs.

Continuous Development

- ➔ Provide ongoing professional development and well-being support for principals.

Will be released in spring 2025:



Pre-order link:

www.santalahtikustannus.fi/koulunresilienssiarakentamassa



More information:



Katariina Salmela-Aro, Academy Professor, University of Helsinki, katariina.salmela-aro@helsinki.fi, p. 050-4155283

Minna Huotilainen, Professor, University of Helsinki, minna.huotilainen@helsinki.fi, p. 040-5608304

Antti Ikonen, President of the Finnish Association of Principals, antti.ikonen@surefire.fi, p. 050-5490071

Iira Hartikainen, Communications and Interaction Specialist, University of Jyväskylä / EDUCA Flagship, iira.j.hartikainen@jyu.fi, p. 050-5204652

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