

# Acknowledgement of Country

- The University of Queensland (UQ) acknowledges the Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands on which we meet.
- We pay our respects to their Ancestors and their descendants, who continue cultural and spiritual connections to Country.
- We recognise their valuable contributions to Australian and global society.





# Higher Degree by Research Well-being, Engagement, and Research Culture Project

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## **HDR WERC Team:**

Belinda Bern, Professor Annemaree Carroll, A/Professor Stacey Parker, Dr Marissa Edwards, Dr Tarli Young, Antje Martins, Professor Cath Haslam, Dr Sarah Bently, and Niamh Dawson.

# Why was this project initiated?

Australian HDR context

Factors of mental health & well-being

Research environment

# Survey Development Process

Survey Scoping (PRES, PREQ)

UQ Student-Staff Partnership

UQ Advisory Group

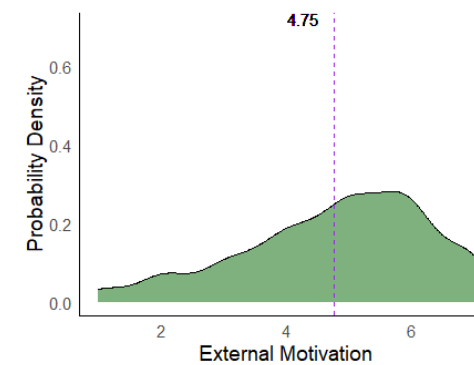
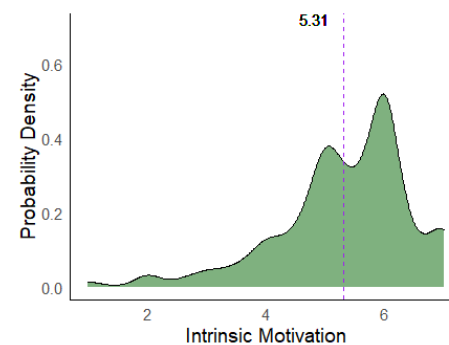
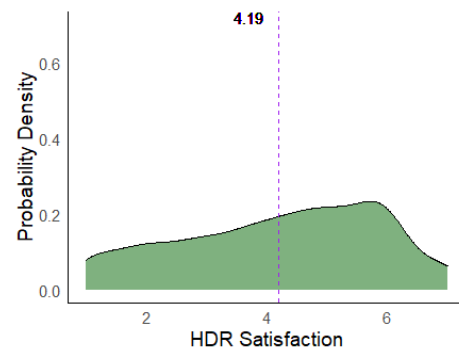
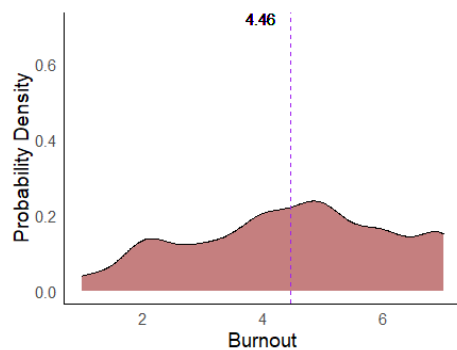
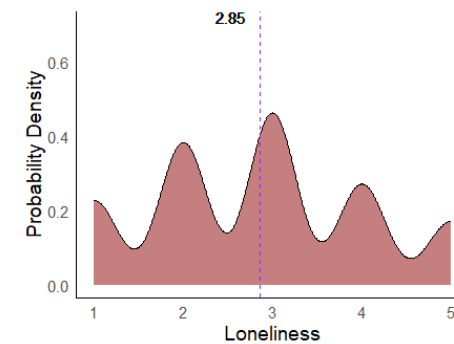
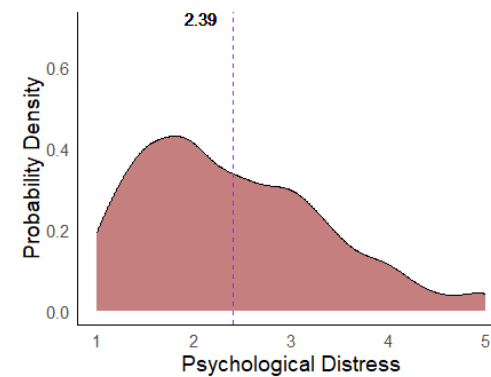
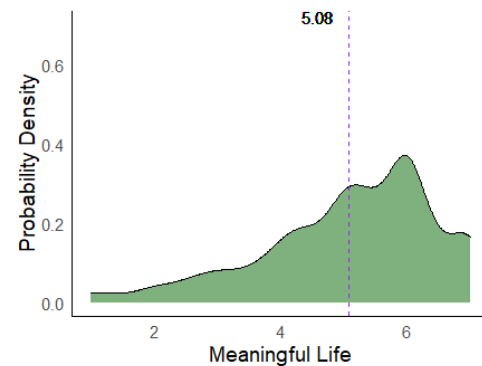
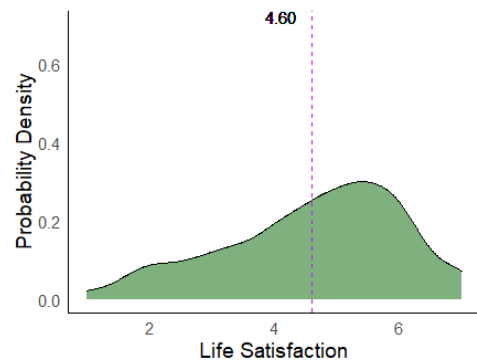
**Outcomes:** Mental health, well-being, and engagement

**Predictors:** Enabling and constraining; individual and contextual

# UQ HDR WERC Project – Where are we at?

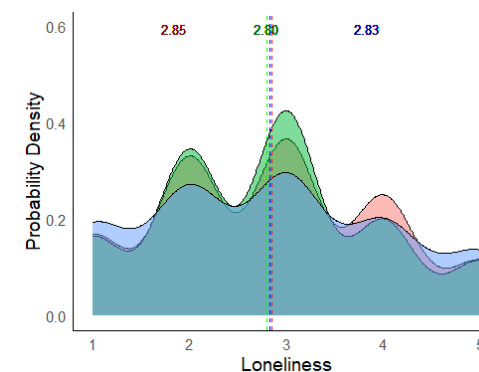
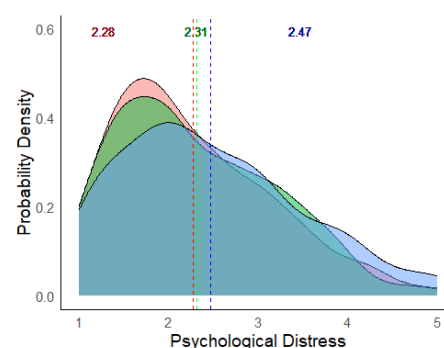
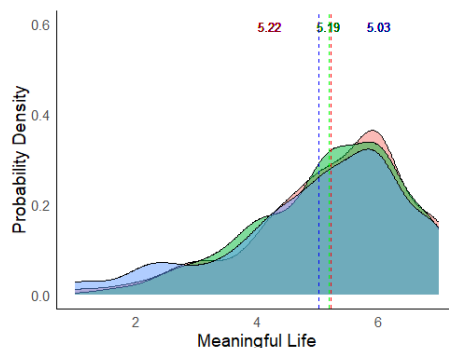
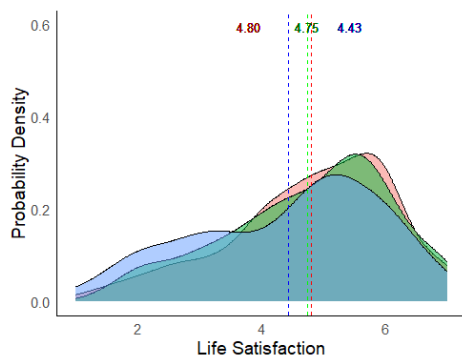
1. Pilot Study 2020 – Initial test of survey measures (WERC 1.0)
  2. Longitudinal Study 2021-2023 – Annual survey to better understand the journey (WERC 2.0)
  3. UQ HDR Well-being Committee 2022+ – team working on resources, policies, and procedures
- Webpage: <https://my.uq.edu.au/information-and-services/higher-degree-research/hdr-candidature-support/hdr-wellbeing-project>

# 2022 HDR Well-being & Engagement

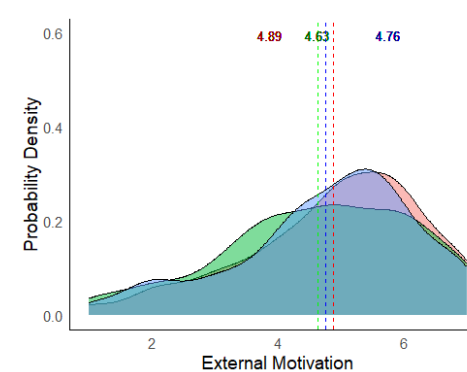
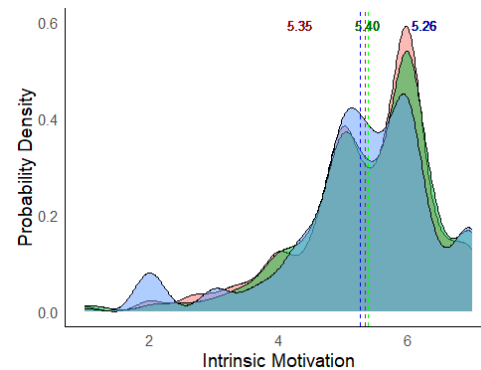
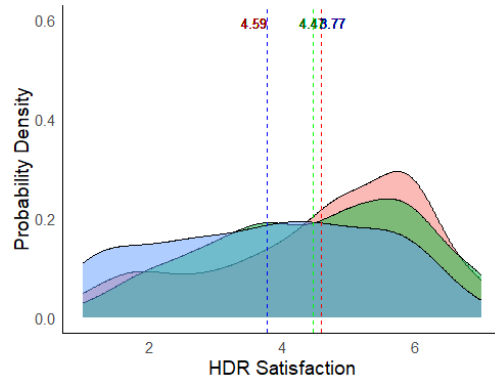
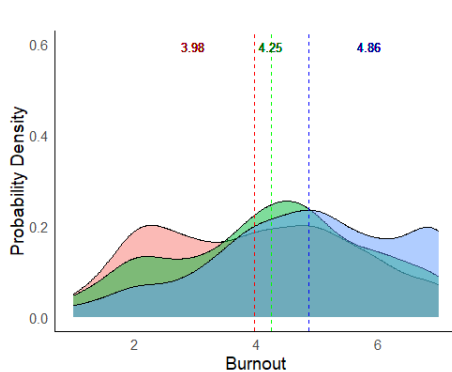


# 2022 Well-being & Engagement: Candidature Stage

- 1. First Year
- 2. Mid Candidature
- 3. Thesis Review



Life satisfaction and HDR satisfaction begin to decline between mid-candidature and the thesis review period.



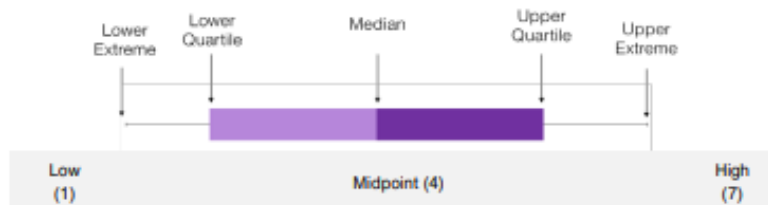
Psychological distress and burnout also show a significant increase between these milestones.

# UQ WERC Survey Report

The University of Queensland

Total HDR Responses: 1139

Response Rate: 24%



## Progress & Career

|                            | Low (1) | Midpoint (4) | High (7) | Mean score for 2021 | Mean score for 2022 | Strength of relationship with WELL-BEING | Strength of relationship with ENGAGEMENT |
|----------------------------|---------|--------------|----------|---------------------|---------------------|--|--|
| HDR autonomy               |         |              |          | 5.38                | 5.41                | .39                                      | .29                                      |
| Research competence        |         |              |          | 4.96                | 5.00                | .47                                      | .33                                      |
| HDR completion confidence  |         |              |          | 5.39                | 5.43                | .46                                      | .36                                      |
| Intent to stay in academia |         |              |          | 4.36                | 4.30                | .33                                      | .33                                      |
| Future employment security |         |              |          | 4.91                | 4.96                | .51                                      | .38                                      |
| Future employment distress |         |              |          | 4.14                | 4.12                | -.57                                     | -.14                                     |
| Imposter Syndrome          |         |              |          | 4.27                | 4.22                | -.40                                     | -.09                                     |

## Support

|                                |  |  |  |      |      |     |     |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|------|------|-----|-----|
| External social support        |  |  |  | 5.77 | 5.73 | .42 | .22 |
| HDR peer support               |  |  |  | 4.89 | 4.92 | .20 | .29 |
| Principal advisor support      |  |  |  | 5.76 | 5.85 | .34 | .38 |
| Additional advisor(s) support  |  |  |  | 5.55 | 5.07 | .33 | .24 |
| UQ policies support research   |  |  |  | 5.00 | 4.54 | .40 | .35 |
| UQ policies support well-being |  |  |  | 4.36 | 3.89 | .37 | .36 |
| Formal UQ Support              |  |  |  | 4.38 | 4.24 | .46 | .40 |
| Financial support              |  |  |  | 4.45 | 3.76 | .42 | .25 |

## Balance

|                         |  |  |  |      |      |      |      |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|------|------|------|------|
| HDR-Life conflict       |  |  |  | 4.49 | 4.39 | -.57 | -.27 |
| Unwinding from HDR life |  |  |  | 3.95 | 3.96 | .53  | .45  |
| HDR-Life integration    |  |  |  | 5.44 | 5.47 | -.23 | -.09 |
| Balance reflects values |  |  |  | 4.66 | 4.73 | .45  | .26  |

## Research Culture

|                             |  |  |  |      |      |      |      |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|------|------|------|------|
| Belongingness               |  |  |  | 4.68 | 4.65 | .45  | .46  |
| Individual value/Uniqueness |  |  |  | 4.75 | 4.72 | .40  | .40  |
| Social identity             |  |  |  | 4.91 | 4.89 | .39  | .45  |
| Group incompatibility       |  |  |  | 3.48 | 3.37 | -.46 | -.28 |
| Promote HDR-life balance    |  |  |  | 3.87 | 3.92 | .44  | .36  |
| Seminar participation       |  |  |  | 5.54 | 5.50 | .15  | .18  |
| Excellence/innovation       |  |  |  | 4.85 | 4.55 | .28  | .36  |
| Collaboration/integrity     |  |  |  | 5.16 | 5.11 | .41  | .40  |
| Pressure to publish         |  |  |  | 4.62 | 4.58 | -.44 | -.16 |

<sup>4</sup> red bars represent a negative relationship

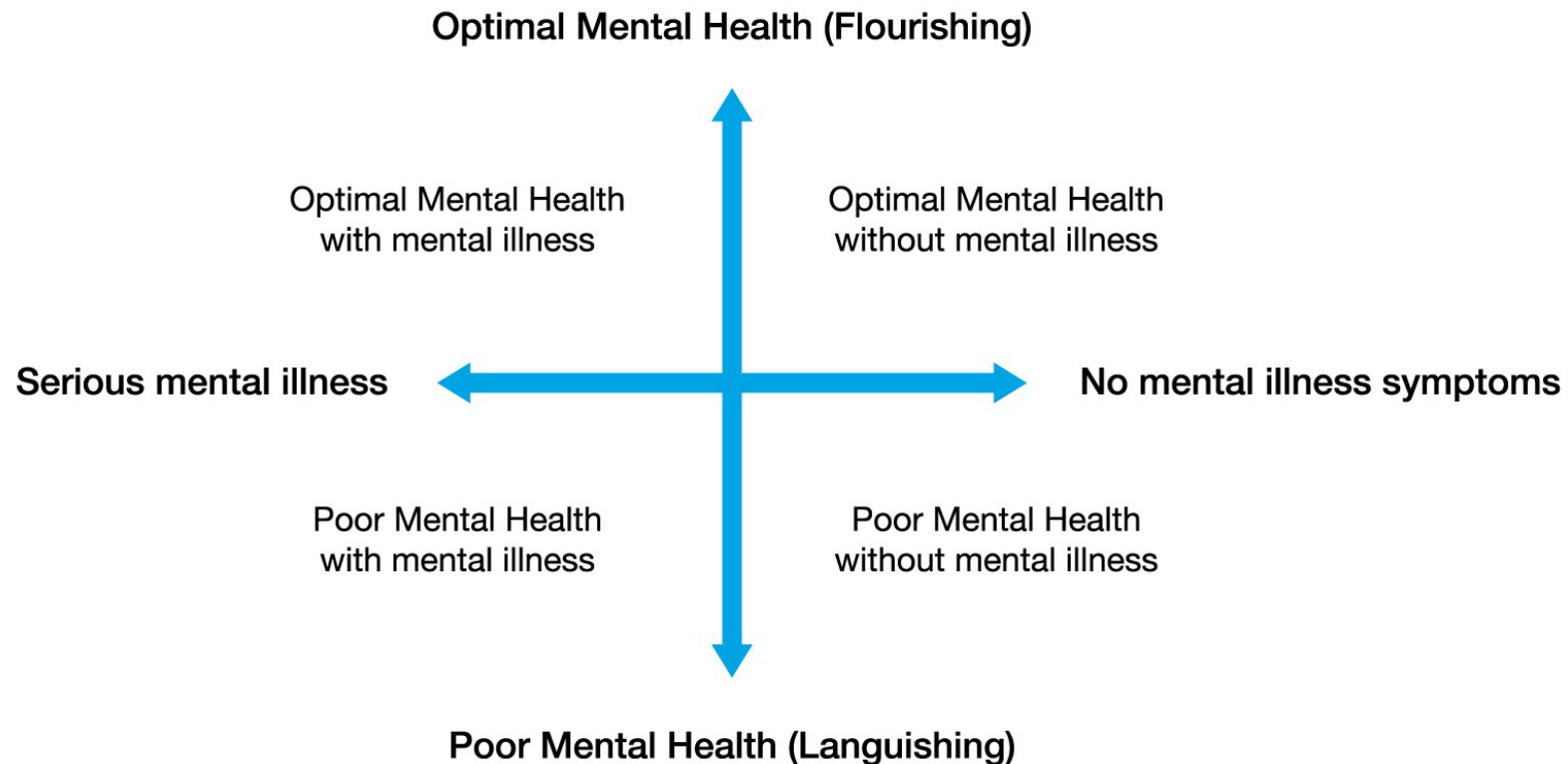




# Profiles of HDR Well-being

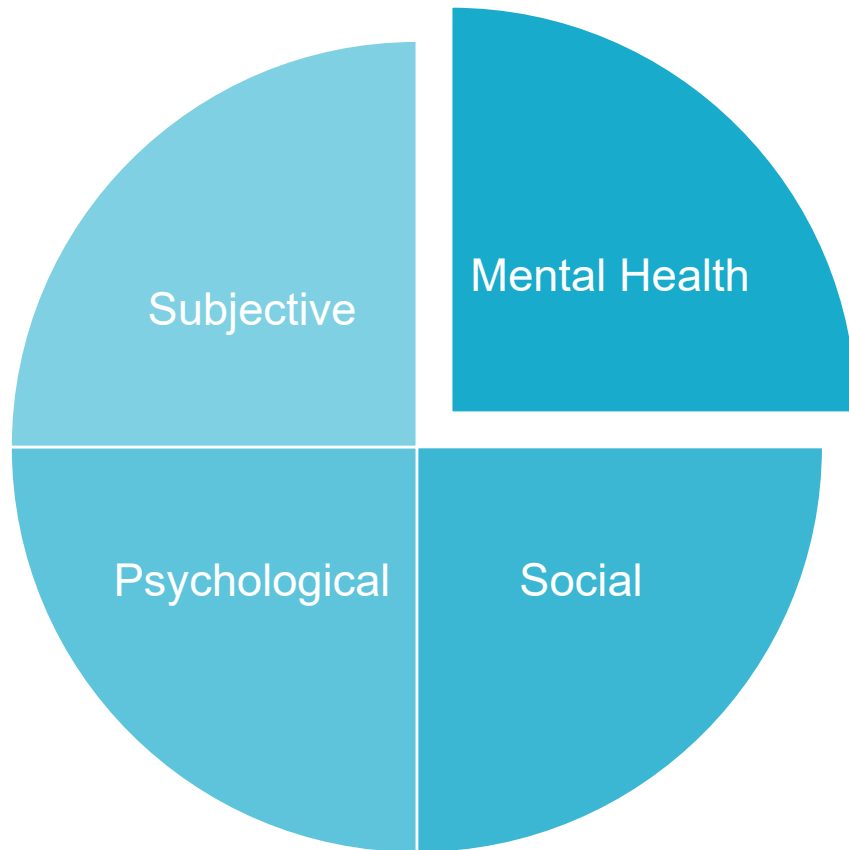
Re-analysis of our pilot data to understand patterns of well-being and mental health using a person-centred approach

# What is Well-being? Dual Continuum Model



(Westerhof & Keyes, 2010; CACUSS & Canadian Mental Health Association, 2013)

# What is Well-being? Dimensional Well-being Models



- Are there meaningful well-being profiles within our PhD cohort?
  - To what extent do these profiles explain education and career experiences?
  - Can study of these profiles inform how we best support our PhD cohorts?
- 
- **Subjective Well-being:** Life satisfaction (+ve)
  - **Psychological Well-being:** Meaning in life (+ve)
  - **Social Well-being:** Loneliness (-ve)
  - **Mental Health:** Psychological distress (-ve)

# Respondents (2020 Pilot Study)

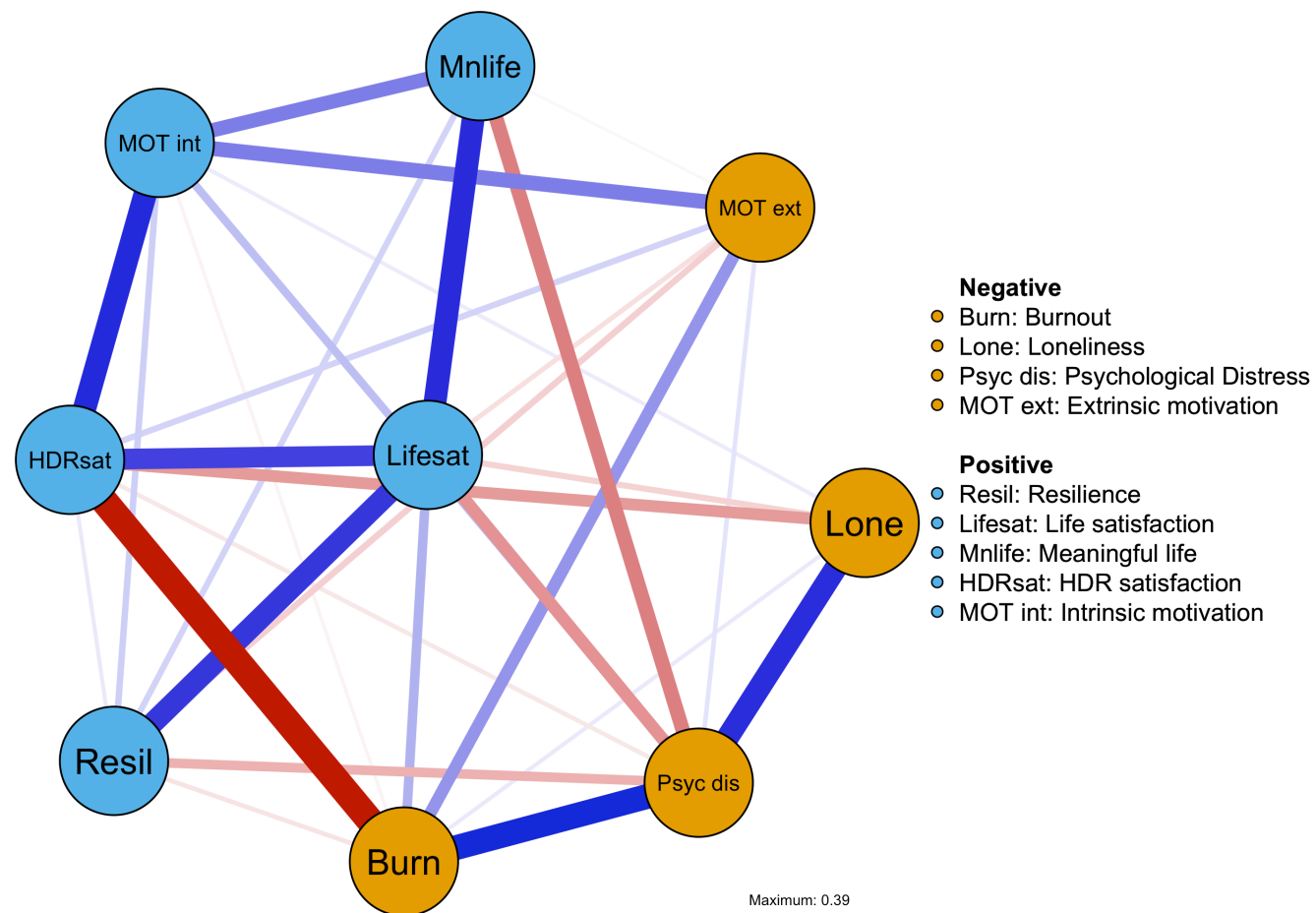
## Representativeness of survey respondents



Total survey responses = 746

# Results: 2020 Pilot Study – Network Analysis

Wellbeing & Engagement network



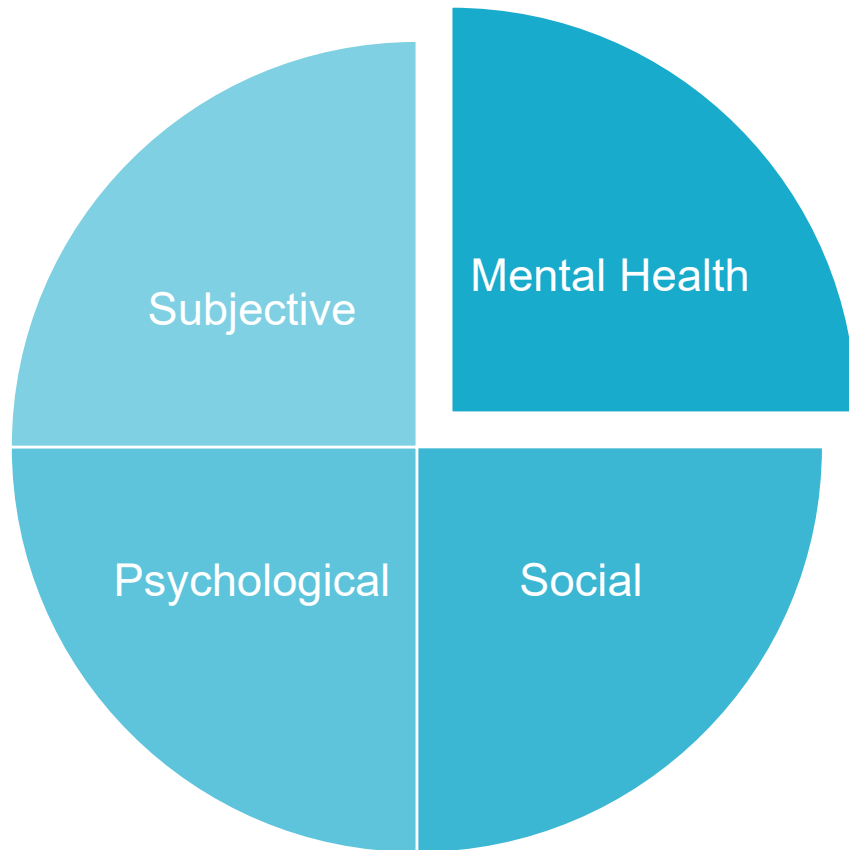
Psychological distress, HDR satisfaction and life satisfaction have the strongest connection within the network of well-being and engagement.

Psychological distress is linked to greater HDR burnout and loneliness, and lower life satisfaction and meaningful life.

Life satisfaction is associated with greater HDR satisfaction, resilience, and meaningful life.

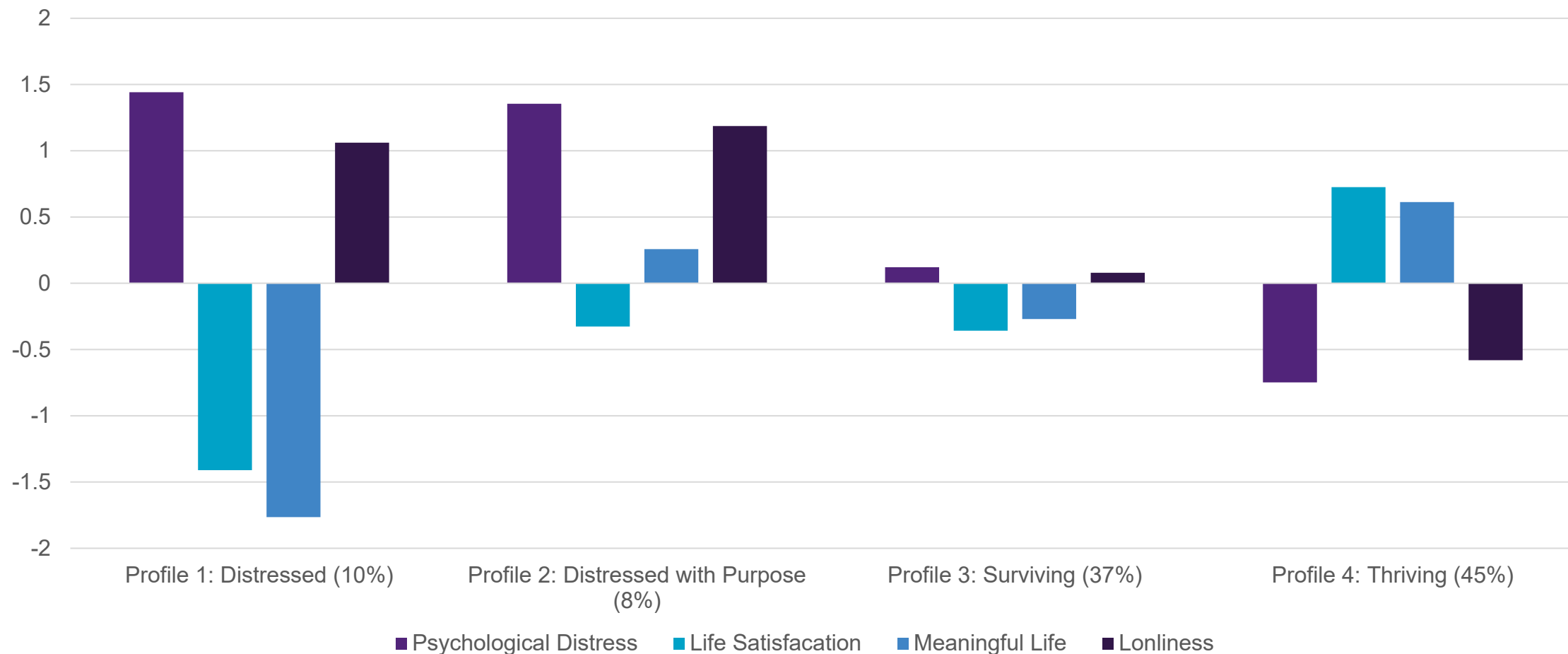
HDR satisfaction is linked to lower loneliness and HDR burnout, and higher intrinsic motivation and life satisfaction.

# What is HDR Well-being?

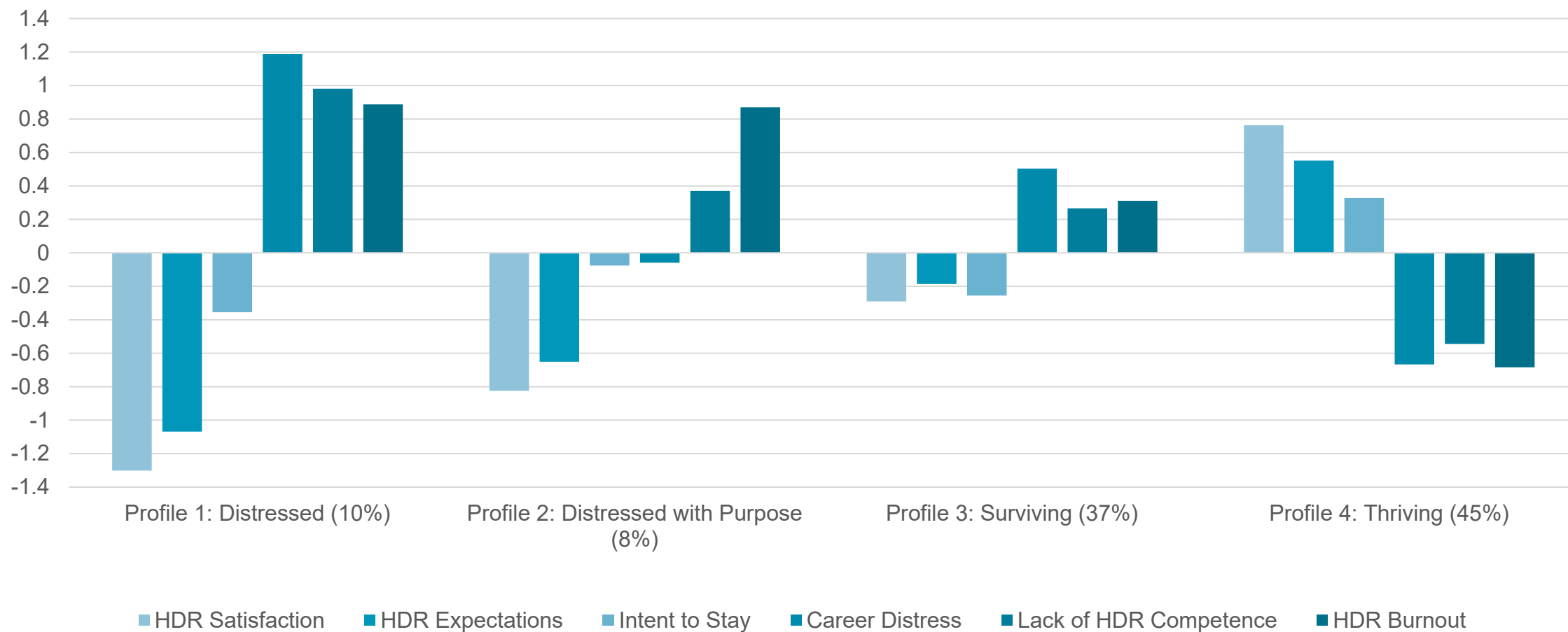


- **Subjective Well-being:** Life satisfaction (+ve)
- **Psychological Well-being:** Meaning in life (+ve)
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# Results: PhD Well-being Profiles (N = 672)

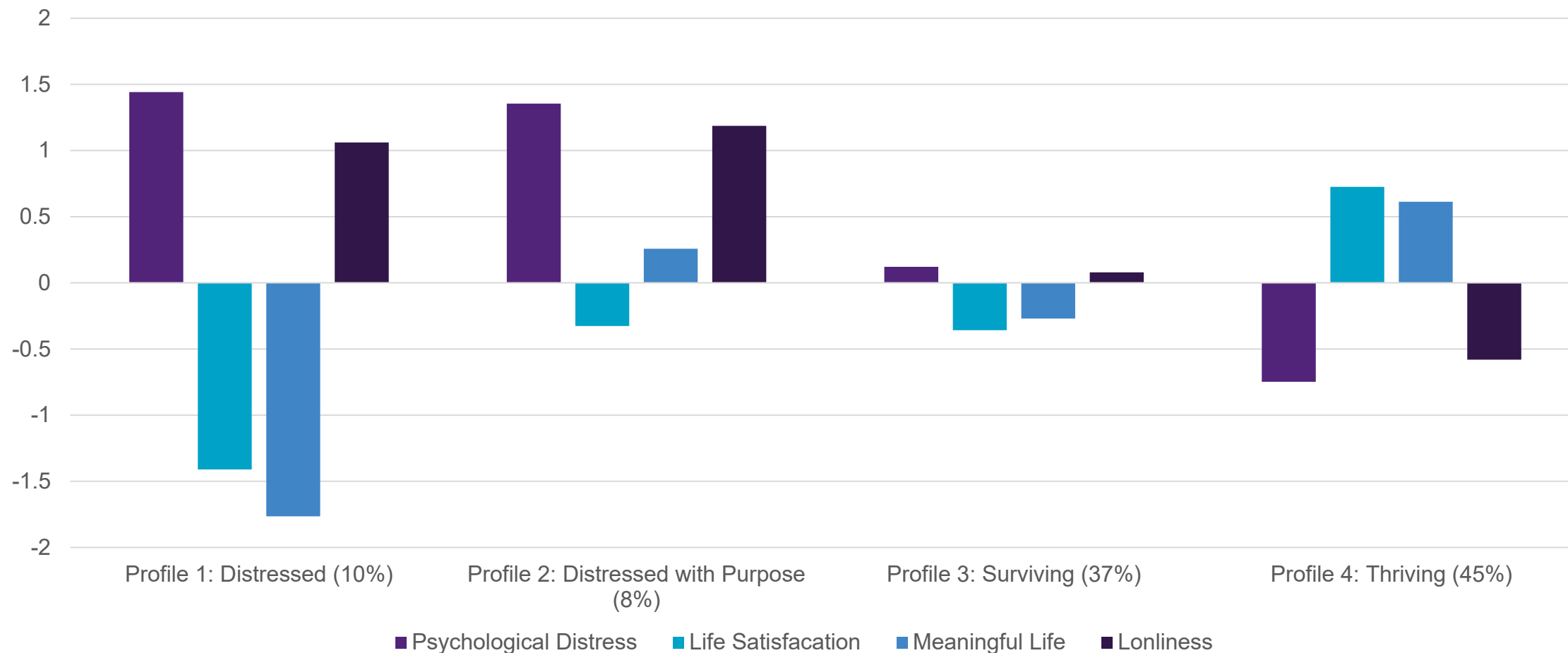


# Results: PhD Well-being Profiles & Ed/Career Experiences





# Reminder: PhD Well-being Profiles (N = 672)



# Predictors of PhD Well-being Profiles: Resources

## 1. Competence of principle advisor

### *Principle advisor style:*

2. Leadership (e.g., gives me clear guidance)
3. Autonomy Supportive (e.g., allows me to make my own decisions)
4. Strict (e.g., is quick to criticize me)
5. Quality of relationship with peers

- If **PA a more effective leader**, more likely to exhibit a *Thriving* profile over *Distressed* or *Distressed with Purpose* profiles, and a *Surviving* profile over or *Distressed with Purpose* profile.
- If **PA more autonomy supportive**, more likely to exhibit a *Thriving* profile over *Distressed* or *Surviving* profiles, and a *Distressed with Purpose* profile over a *Distressed* profile.
- If **PA more strict**, more likely to exhibit a *Distressed* or *Distressed with Purpose* profile over a *Thriving* profile.
- If better **quality relationships with peers**, more likely to exhibit a *Thriving* profile over *Distressed*, *Distressed with Purpose*, or *Surviving* profiles, and a *Surviving* profile over *Distressed* or *Distressed with Purpose* profiles.

# Predictors of PhD Well-being Profiles: Research Context

## ***Felt Inclusion:***

- 1. Sense of Belonging**
- 2. Value of Uniqueness**
- 3. Work Segmentation**
- 4. Publication Pressure**

**These items were asked in relation to their local unit (i.e., enrolling school, institute, or center).**

- If greater ***sense of belonging***, more likely to exhibit a *Thriving* profile over *Distressed* or *Distressed with Purpose* or *Surviving* profile.
- If greater ***work segmentation***, more likely to exhibit a *Thriving* profile over *Distressed* or *Surviving* profiles.
- If greater ***pressure to publish***, more likely to exhibit a *Distressed* profile over *Distressed with Purpose* or *Thriving* profile, and a more *Surviving* over a *Thriving* profile.

# What does it all mean?

- **Summary:**
  - Profile analysis suggests about 45% of our HDRs are *thriving*.
  - Others range from *surviving* to *distressed*, with an interesting *distressed with purpose* profile.
  - Negative educational and career experiences for all, except those who are *thriving*.
  - Range of predictors can explain profile membership, including peer support, supervisor style, and research culture.
- **Implications:**
  - There are things we can do!
  - Don't discount the broader context! The research culture within units and the support available via advisor/s and peers does have an impact.
- **Limitation:** Cross-sectional, pilot data. Our longitudinal study will address this.

# What next for HDR WERC?

1. **Now:** Final wave of longitudinal study open – please complete the survey if you can.
2. **Late 2023 – Early 2024:** Analysis and reporting on 2023 data, to inform our recommendations and implementation.
3. **2024:** Analysis of the longitudinal data to understand the HDR journey at UQ.
4. **2024:** Re-envisioning of the HDR WERC survey and data collection process (WERC 3.0).

# HDR WERC Research Team



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Niamh Dawson



Dr Marissa Edwards



Professor Catherine Haslam



Antje Martins



Dr Tarli Young



Associate Professor Stacey Parker





THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA

CREATE CHANGE

# Thank you

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