

Interactive Dashboard Use the arrow keys below or the sidebar to navigate

Data collected by the Psychosocial Safety Climate Global Observatory, University of South Australia Lead Investigators: Professor Kurt Lushington, Professor Maureen Dollard, Professor Arnold Bakker, Dr Amy Zadow, Dr Rachael Potter, Dr Ali Afsharian, Dr Silvia Pignata, Ms Amy Parkin, Ms Sophie Richter, Mr Daniel Neser Dashboard built by Daniel Neser

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# Introduction

This data-driven visual report is compiled to present four years (2020 - 2023) of surveys from Australian universities, revealing a picture of workplace climate for worker psychological health and wellbeing.

The report introduces and presents the key metrics by which individual and workplace conditions can be assessed. In many ways and metrics, the university sector is letting its staff down.

The study has analysed many aspects of working life for university staff, and this report features a detailed breakdown of responses per question. Unfortunately, individual university scores couldn't be included in the report.

Throughout the report, you're encouraged to interact with the filters and graphs. Use the bar at the top to navigate, and dropdown boxes to filter the graphs by selected demographics.





## Main Pages

Home I

Introduction

Highlighted Measures

PSC Summary

Exhaustion, Distress, Engagement

PSC and Staff Wellbeing

f Digital Factors

Work Pressure Overview University Group Summaries

Job Security

Contract

Items By Concern

PSC Flow De

emographics L

Demographics Blanks

Appendix

## Scales

Contract	PSC Flow	Demograph s Blanks		9	Initive ources	Colleague Digital Expectation	Creativity	Digital Boundaries	Digital Demands	Digital Overload	Digital Resources	Detachm	nent Ema Overl	Fma	ii volume	Email Work Importance	Emotional Demands	Emotional Exhaustion
Contract	PSC Flow	Demograph s Blanks				Empowering Leadership	Engagement	Harmonious Passion	HR Policy	Immersion	Innovation	Job Satisfact	Obses ion Passi		timising Demands	Optimising Job Resources	Physical Health	Playful Work Design
Contract	PSC Flow	Demograp hics Blanks	Procedural Justice	PSC 12	PSC (Schoo Level)	l evel)		Psychologic al Distress	Seeking Challenges	Self- Undermin	Student Digital Evaluation	Student Evaluation	Student Evaluation Continued	Supervisor Digital Expectation S	Team Psycholog al Safety	Dracciira	Work- Family	Work-Self Conflict

2020

2023

These are some of the main measures of psychological health and wellbeing used in the survey. The results here indicate a poor climate for worker psychological wellbeing, as well as poor outcomes for staff members.

For a more detailed summary and citation of each of these scales, use the links above to the scale summary pages. Benchmarks are listed in the appendix.



Psychosocial Safety Climate is the institutional climate for worker psychological health. A poor PSC score indicates individuals are at high risk of mental injury stemming from work conditions. Two thirds of respondents are at high risk or above, reflecting a generally terrible climate for mental health in the sector.

67.06%

2022

2021

High and Very High Risk

2020



Psychological Distress or the K10 scale asks about the frequency an individual suffers from the symptoms of psychological distress, including tiredness, nervousness and depressive symptoms. Over two in five are experiencing high or very high distress.

43.91%

High And Very High Distress

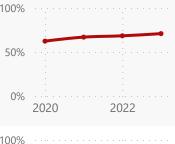
100% 50% 2020



**Emotional Exhaustion** is a subscale of the Burnout Assessment Tool and measures the emotional drain of work and conditions on the job. Two thirds of university staff are reporting conditions which place them in the exhaustion categories of high or very high.

66.28%

High and Very High Exhaustion

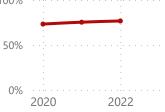




Work Pressure measures the strain an individual faces when on the job. It captures the speed, intensity and demands of tasks as part of the experience of working. The work pressure score is the average number of staff who gave an affirmative response, across the six questions asked. A more detailed breakdown is in the following pages.

74.84%

**Average Work Pressure** 



PSC Mean (Higher is Better)

**PSC Mean** 

20

2020

2021

2022

2023

staff wellbeing and outcomes.

Emotional exhaustion, psychological distress and engagement are three ways of measuring

A key takeaway from these charts is the increase in very high level exhaustion and decrease in the highest engagement levels over time.

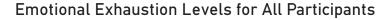
The figures titled "4-Wave Participants" are only those who completed the survey every year. It shows that, in their experience of working in the sector in the past 4 years, their conditions and outcomes have declined in emotional exhaustion and engagement.

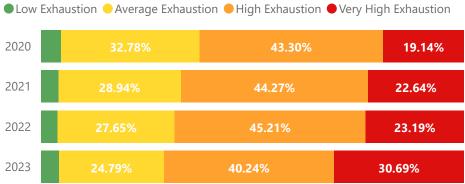
The questions asked in the **emotional exhaustion** scale relate directly to exhaustion related to work and working conditions. An example statement is "At the end of my working day, I feel mentally exhausted and drained."

While many factors may influence **psychological distress**, it is commonly associated with work conditions. The questions ask about an individual's experience of various symptoms of distress, including feelings of hopelessness,

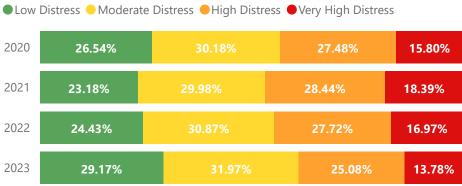
**Engagement** measures the extent to which workers are connected and energetic in their activities. An example item is "I am enthusiastic about my job". Scores relate to their average response on a 1 - 7 scale, where higher is more engaged.

Select a legend item to filter the other figures, to see the links between the concepts and levels.

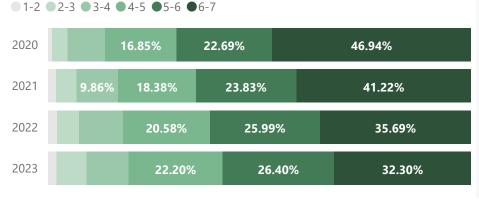




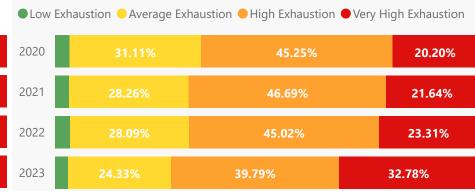
#### Psychological Distress Levels for All Participants



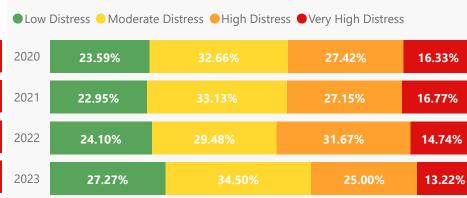
#### **Engagement for All Participants**



### Emotional Exhaustion Levels for 4-Wave Participants



#### Psychological Distress Levels for 4-Wave Participants



#### **Engagement for 4-Wave Participants**



Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC) is an important way of understanding and predicting wellbeing and work outcomes for staff in an organisation. These graphs generally show that those experiencing a higher PSC will have low levels of emotional exhaustion, lower psychological distress and higher engagement. While the general picture shows a decline of conditions across the 4 years, a better climate for worker wellbeing will make a big difference in outcomes.

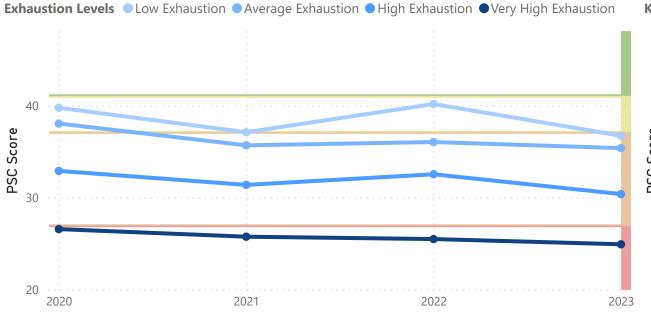
For example, for PSC at a medium level of risk in 2020 the average worker experiences low or average emotional exhaustion, whereas a very high risk PSC environment will result in an average experience of very high emotional exhaustion.

While the PSC scale is from 12-60, the x axis has been compressed (20-48) to show in more detail the distinction in benchmarks. Click a legend item to highlight.

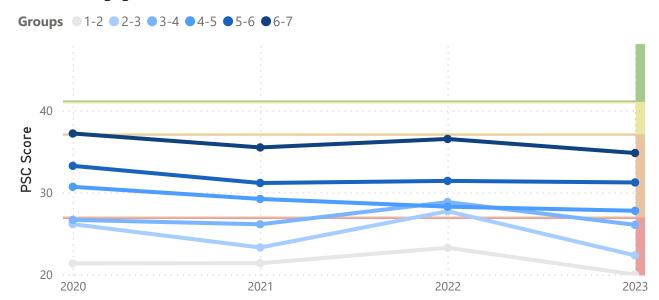
For a full breakdown of percentage responses, follow the link in

Note: the chart background indicates PSC risk level benchmarks, Low Medium High Very High

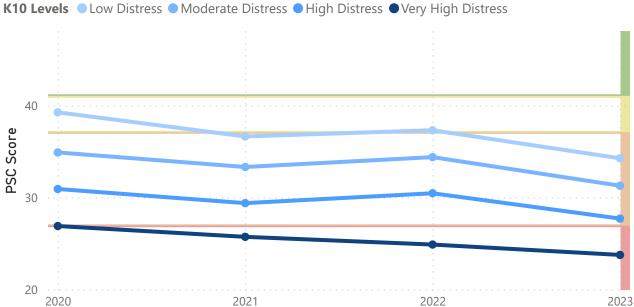
#### **PSC** and Emotional Exhaustion



#### PSC and Engagement 1 - 7



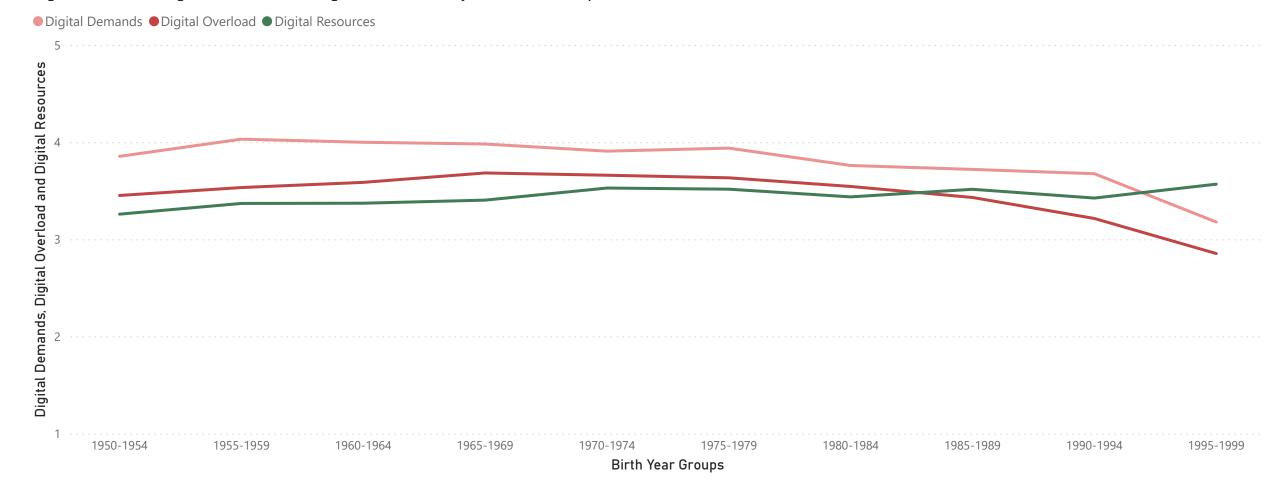
#### **PSC and Psychological Distress**



As universities become increasingly reliant on technology for work and teaching delivery, digital factors impacting wellbeing become increasingly important. The data reveals that older staff experience greater overload and demands and lower support and resources for digital technology.

For a full breakdown of percentage responses, follow the link in the navigation bar to the detailed page.

#### Digital Demands, Digital Overload and Digital Resources by Birth Year Groups



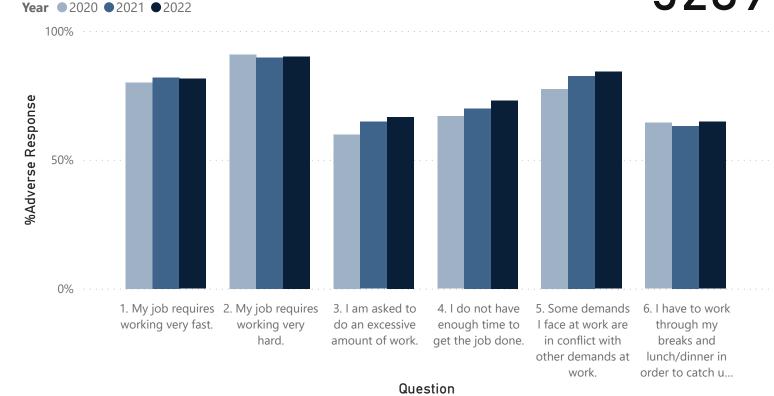
The responses to questions on work pressure in the sector are damning. The responses here have been aggregated to percentage agree. The results show that regardless of year or demographics, university staff find themselves feeling significant work pressure. Work intensity is especially high, with 9 in 10 staff members agree they are made to work very hard and 8 in 10 are made to work very fast.

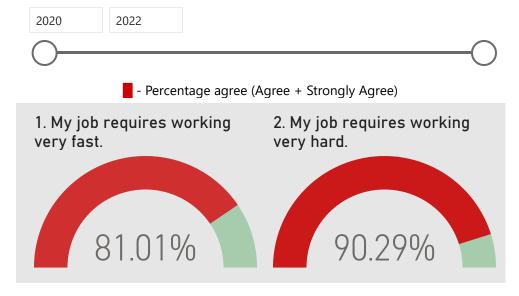
The story is worse for women and academic staff. Out of the 1413 female academic staff surveyed across three waves, 97% reported being required to work very hard.

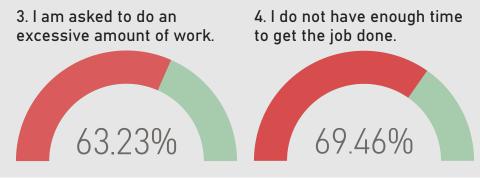
For a full breakdown of percentage responses, follow the link in the navigation bar to the detailed page.

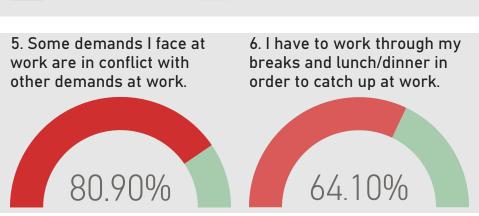
Respondents

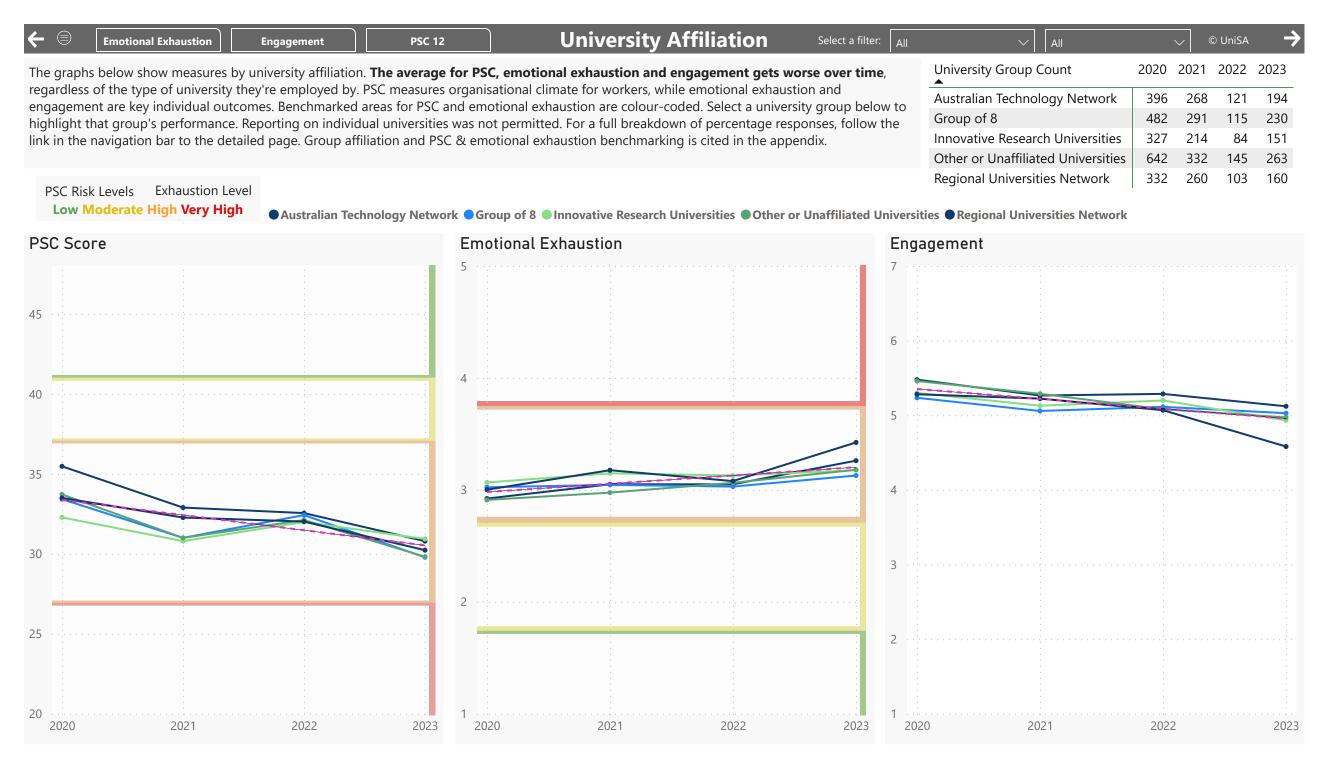
%Adverse Response by Question and Year 5289



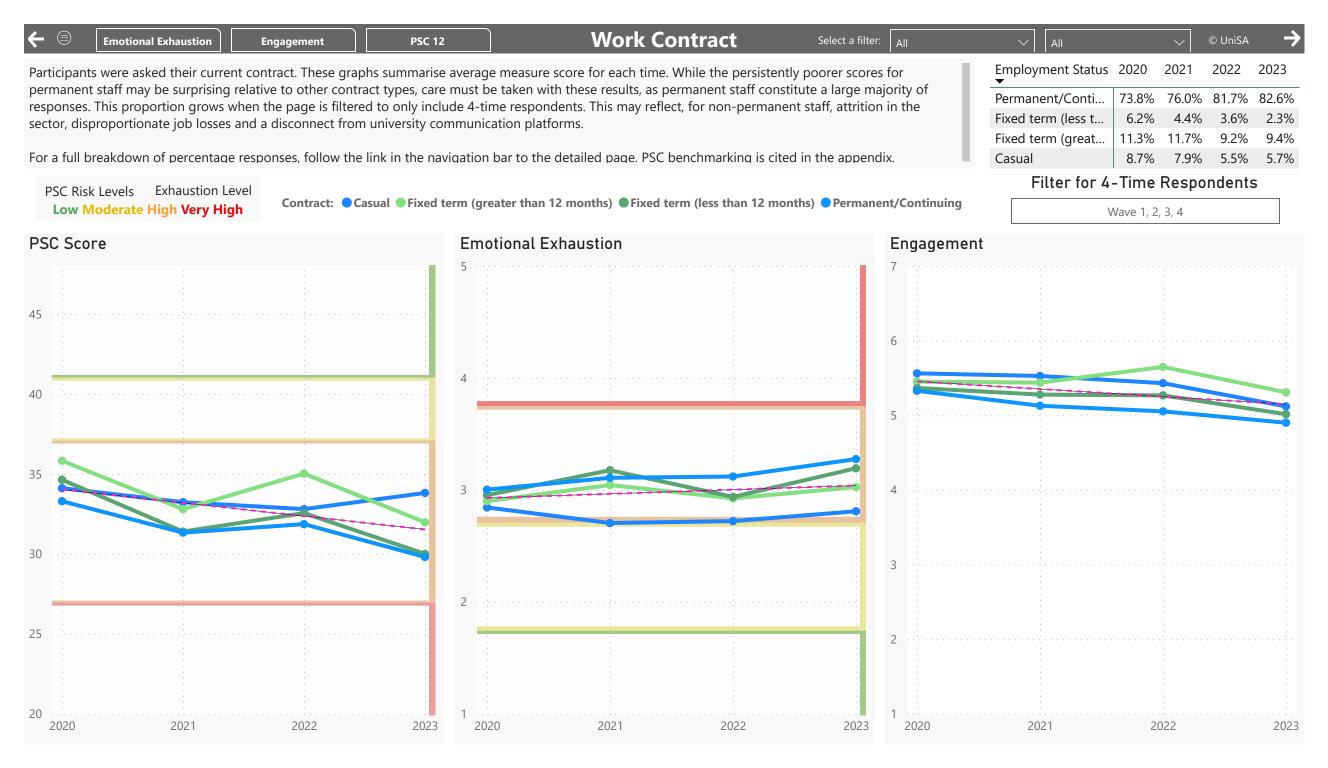


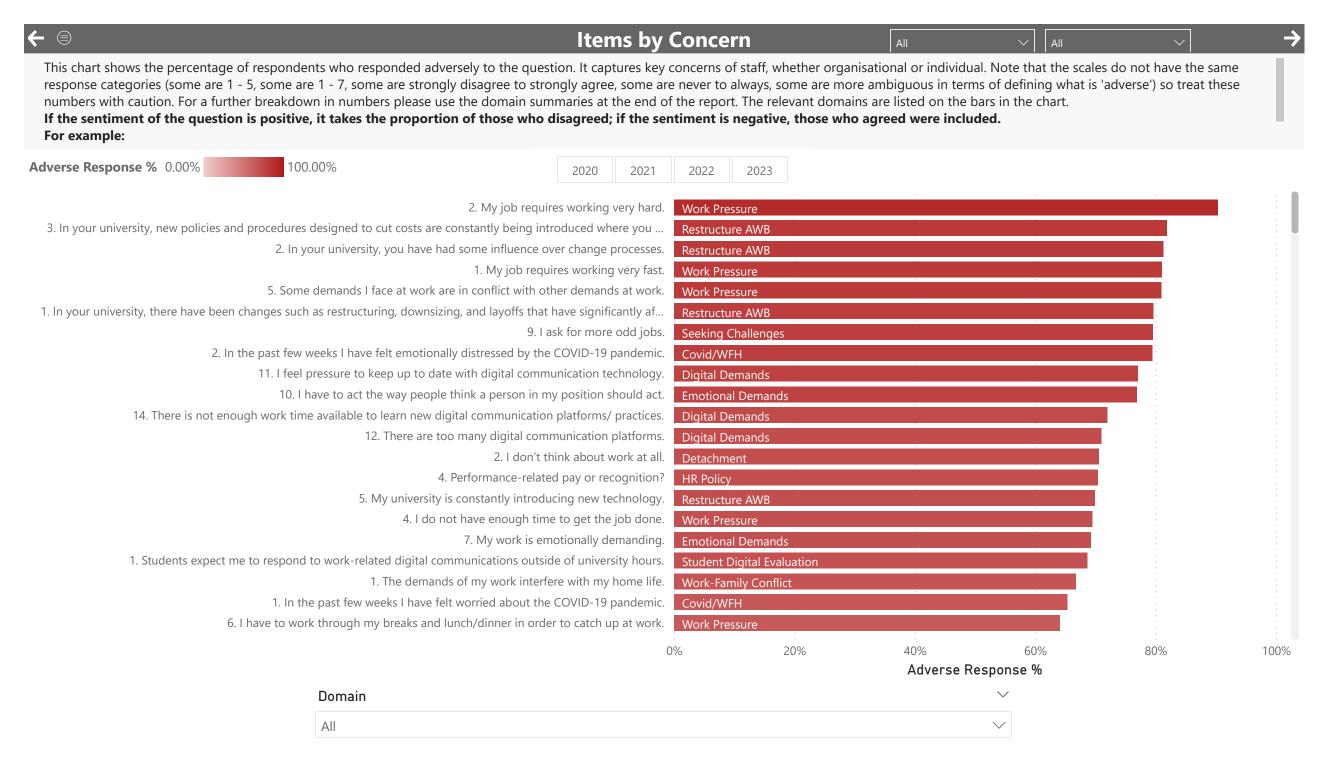




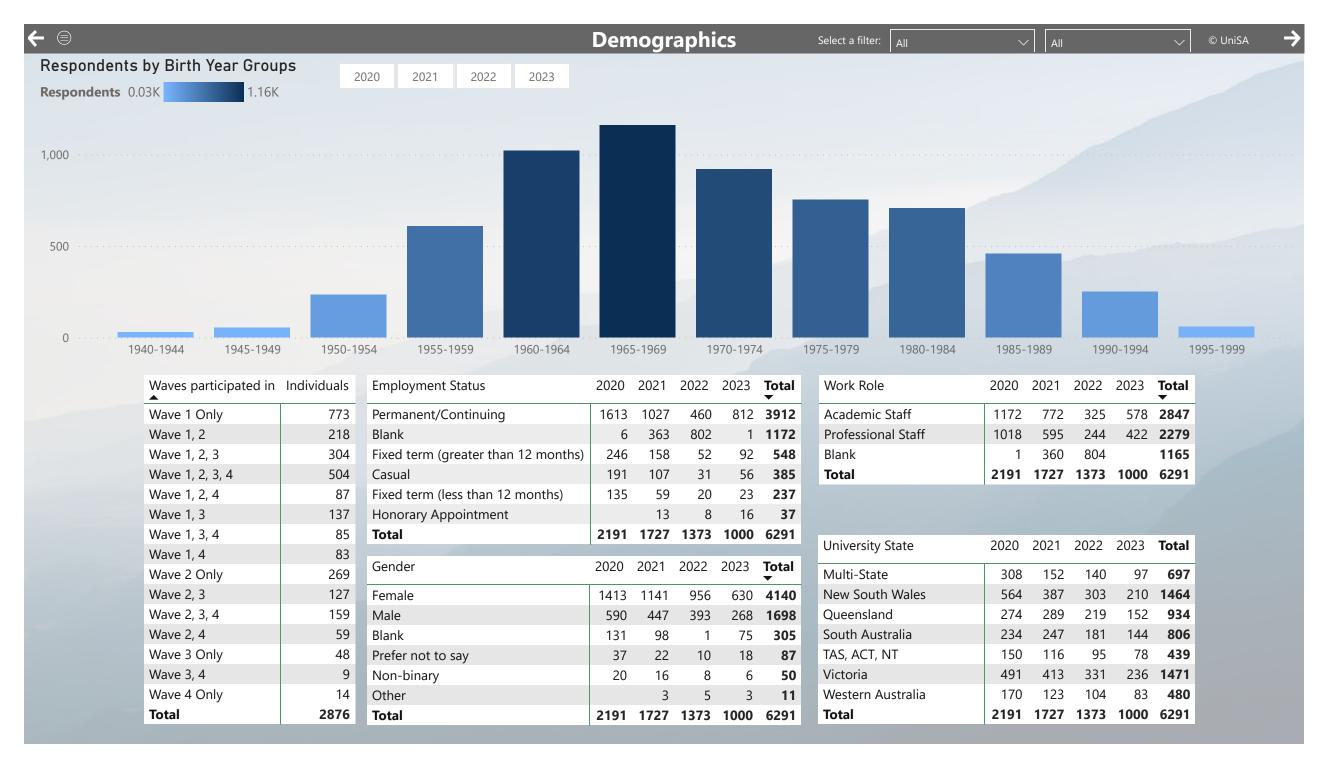


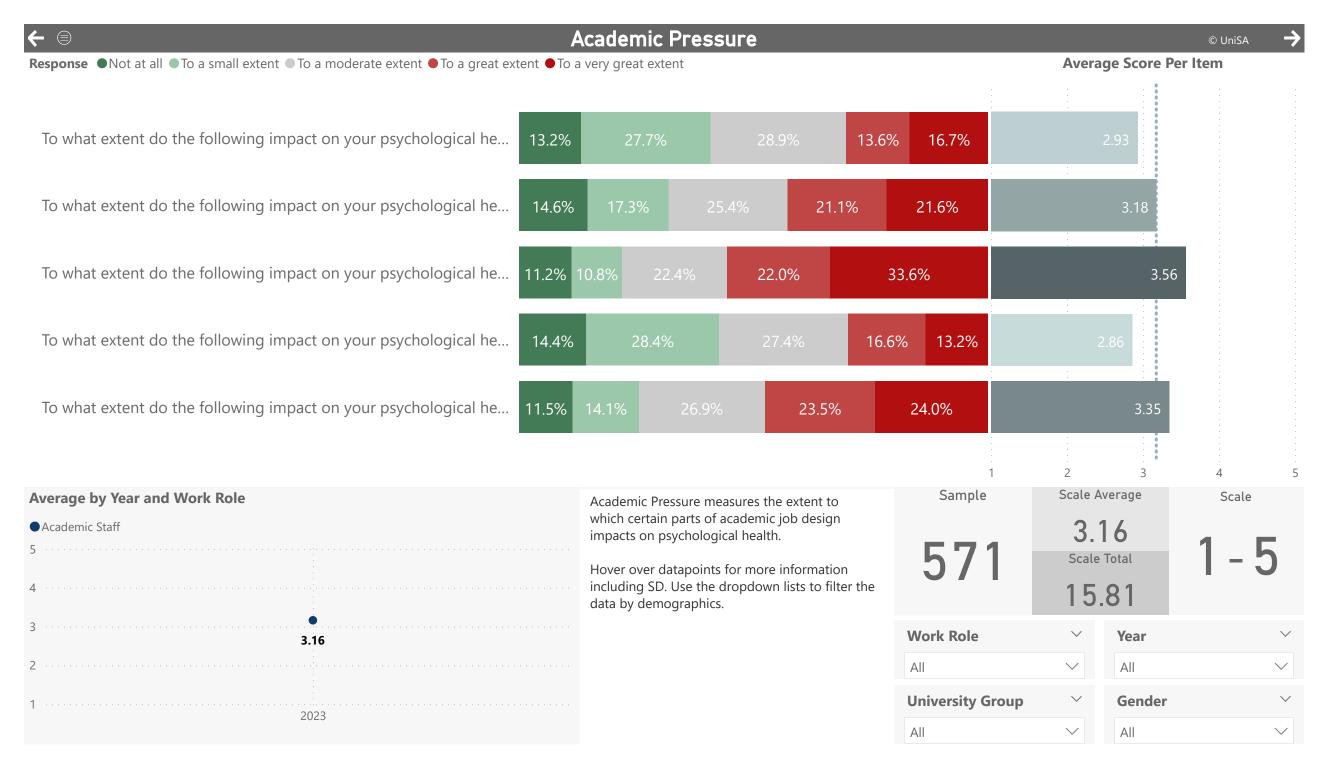


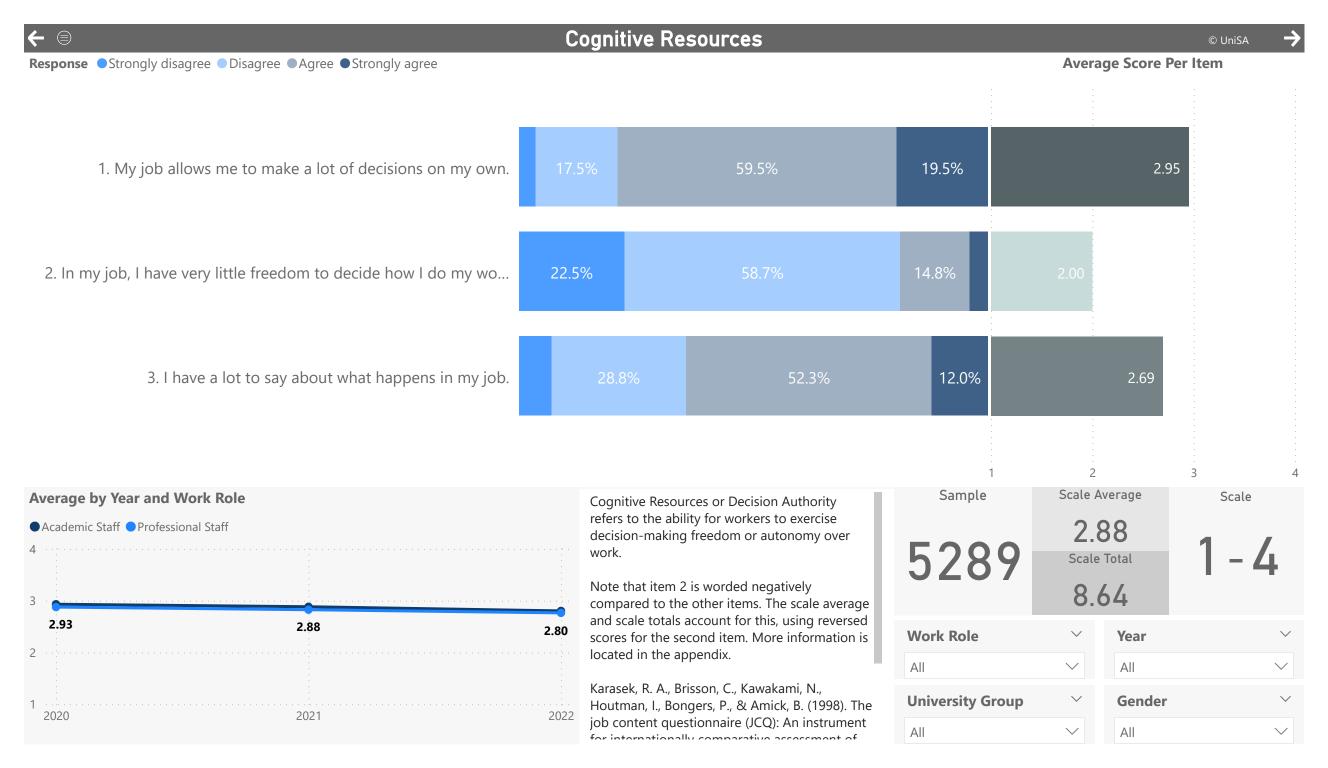


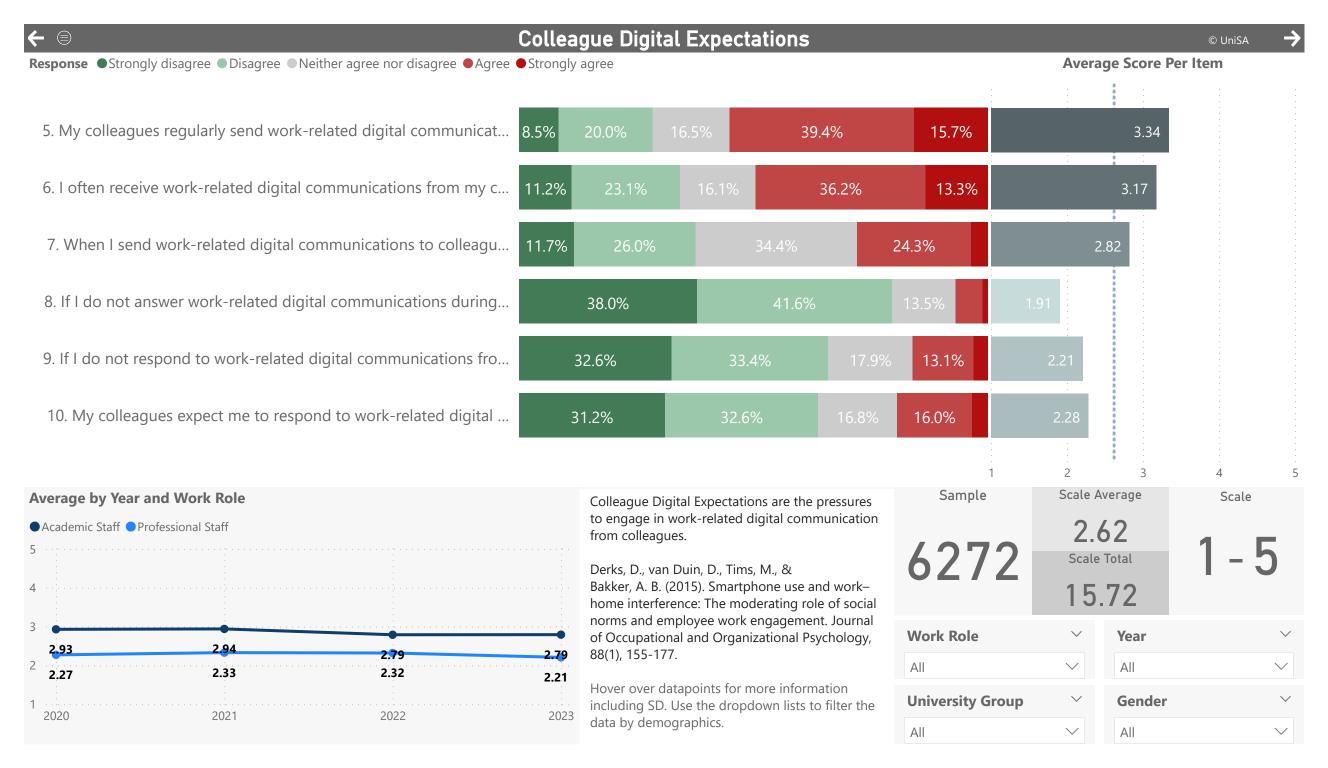


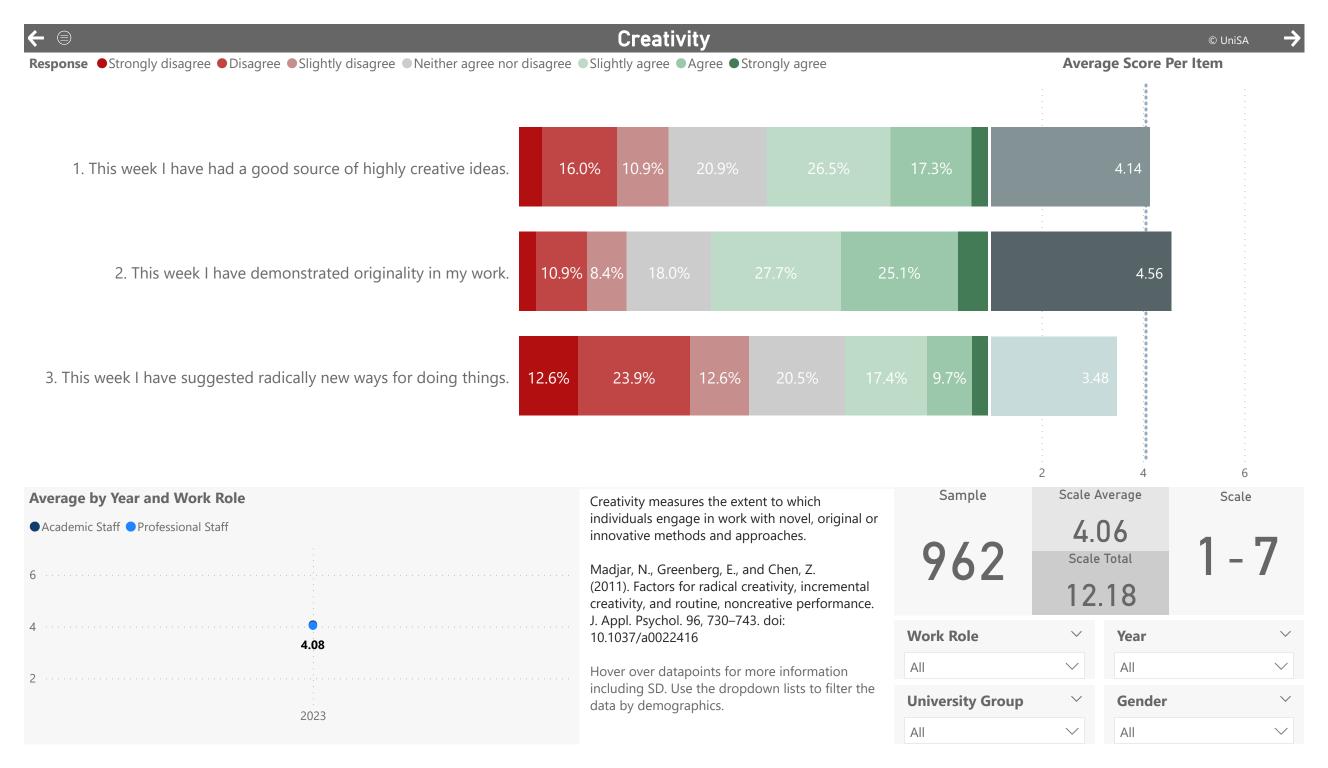


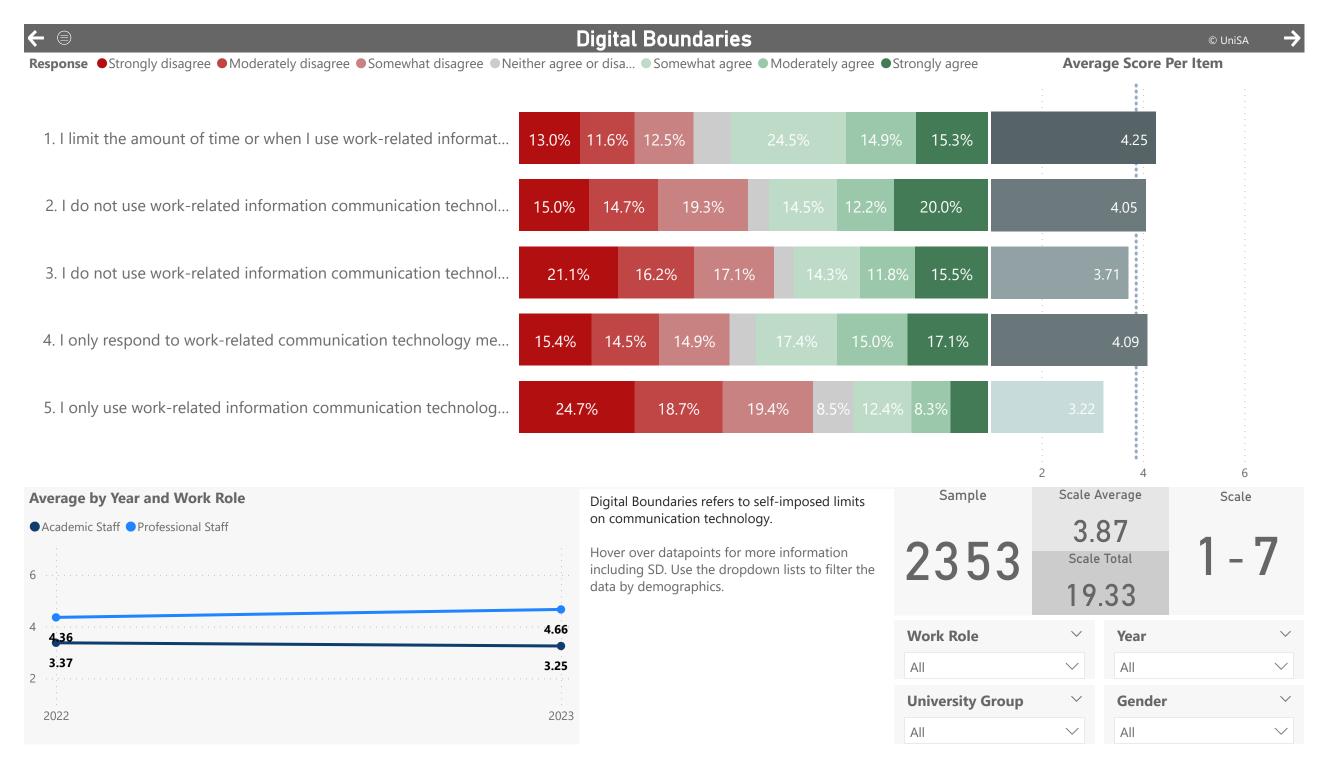


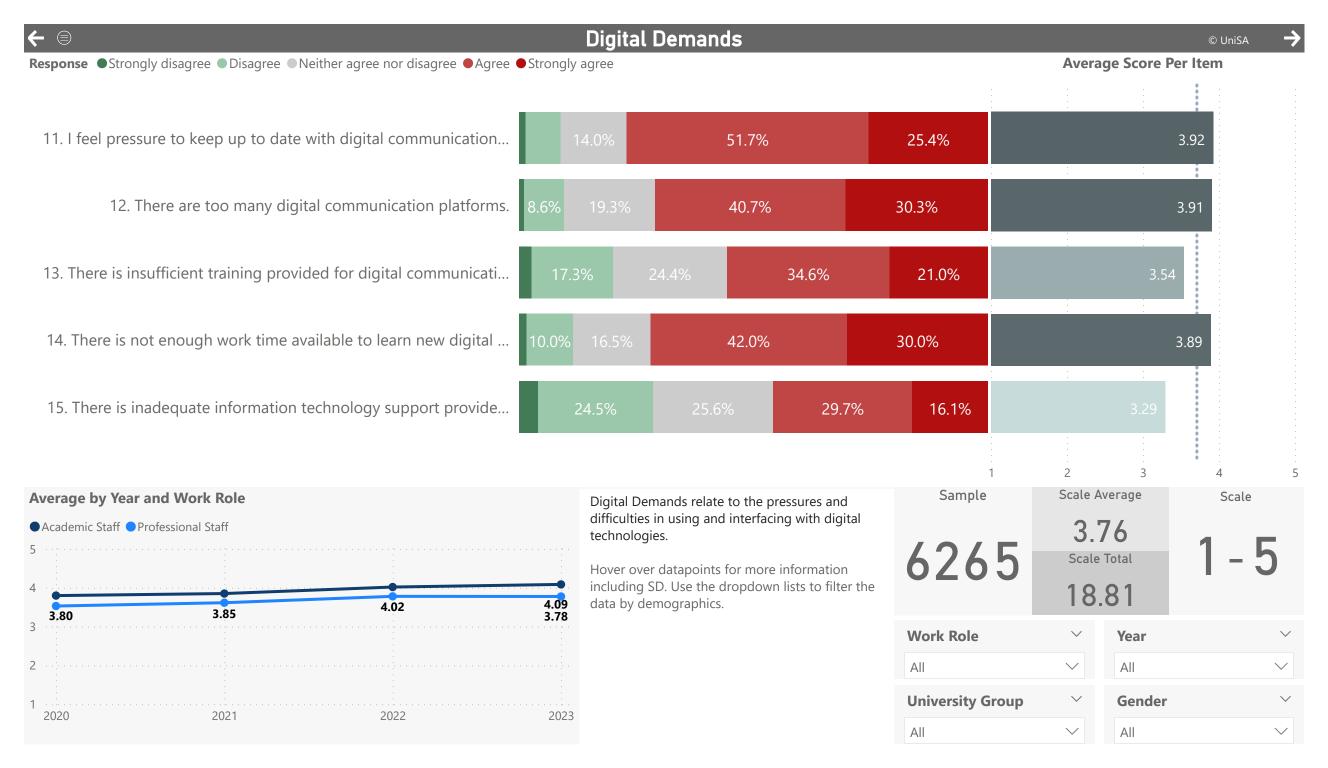


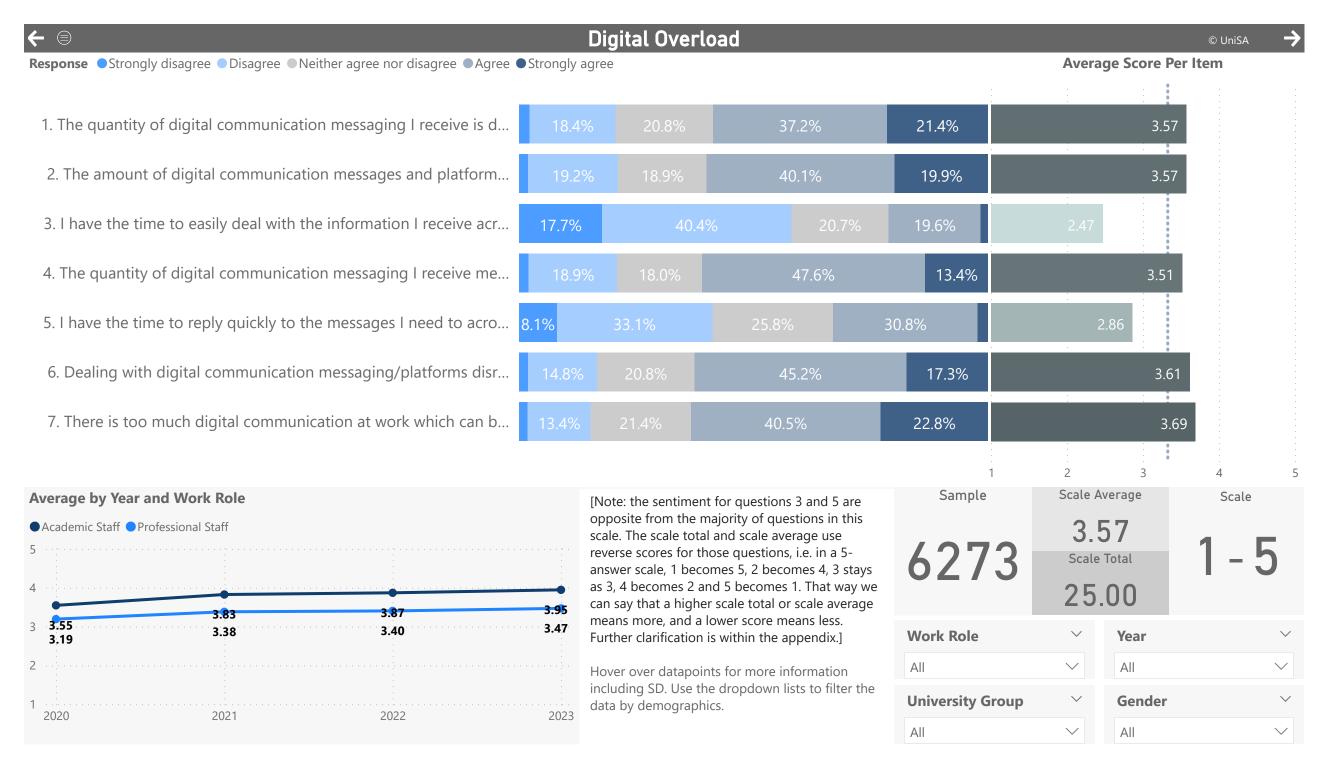


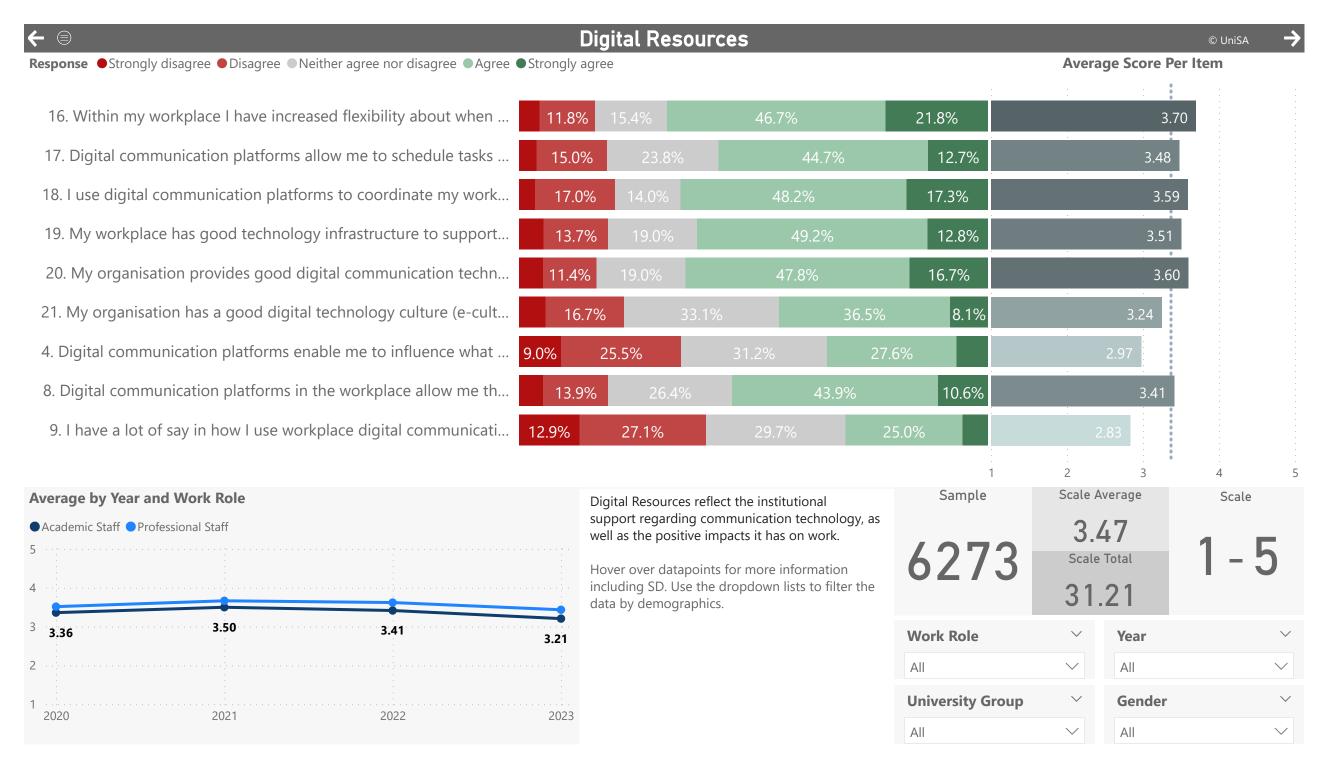


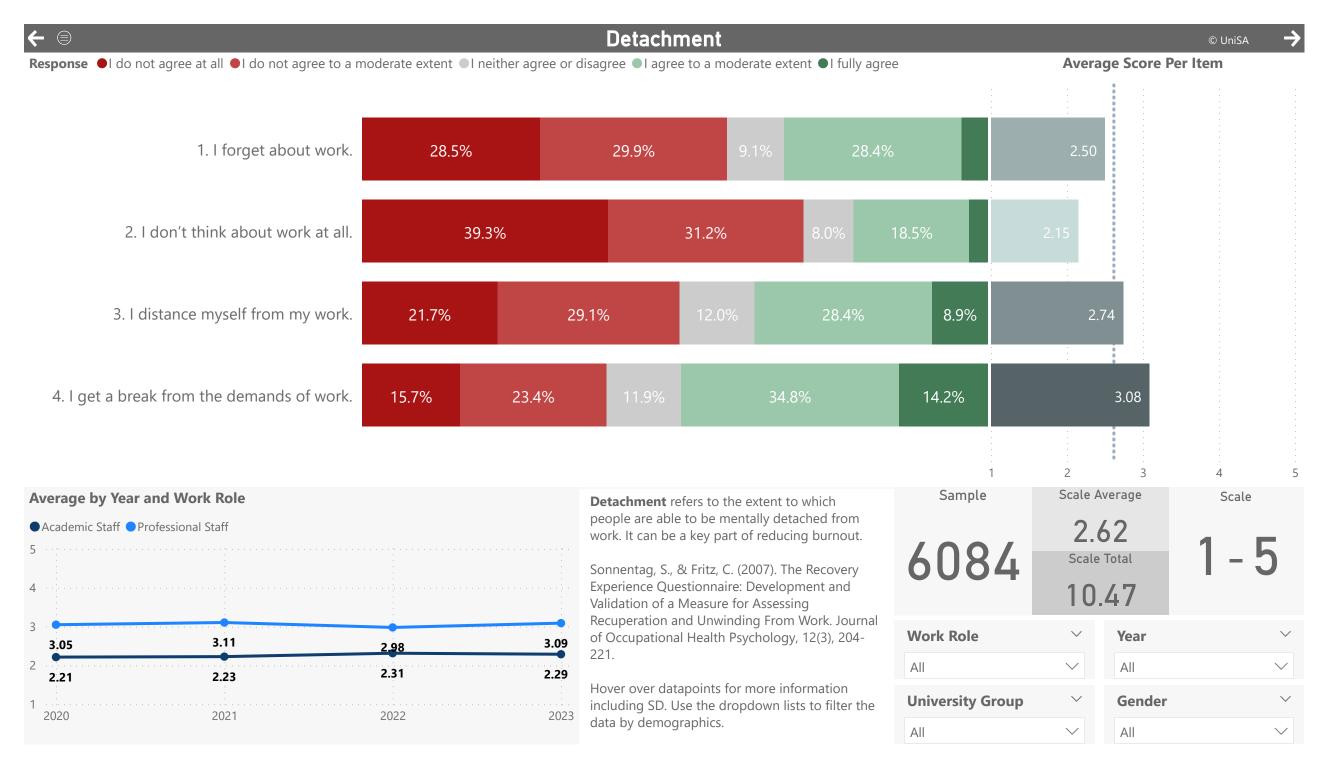


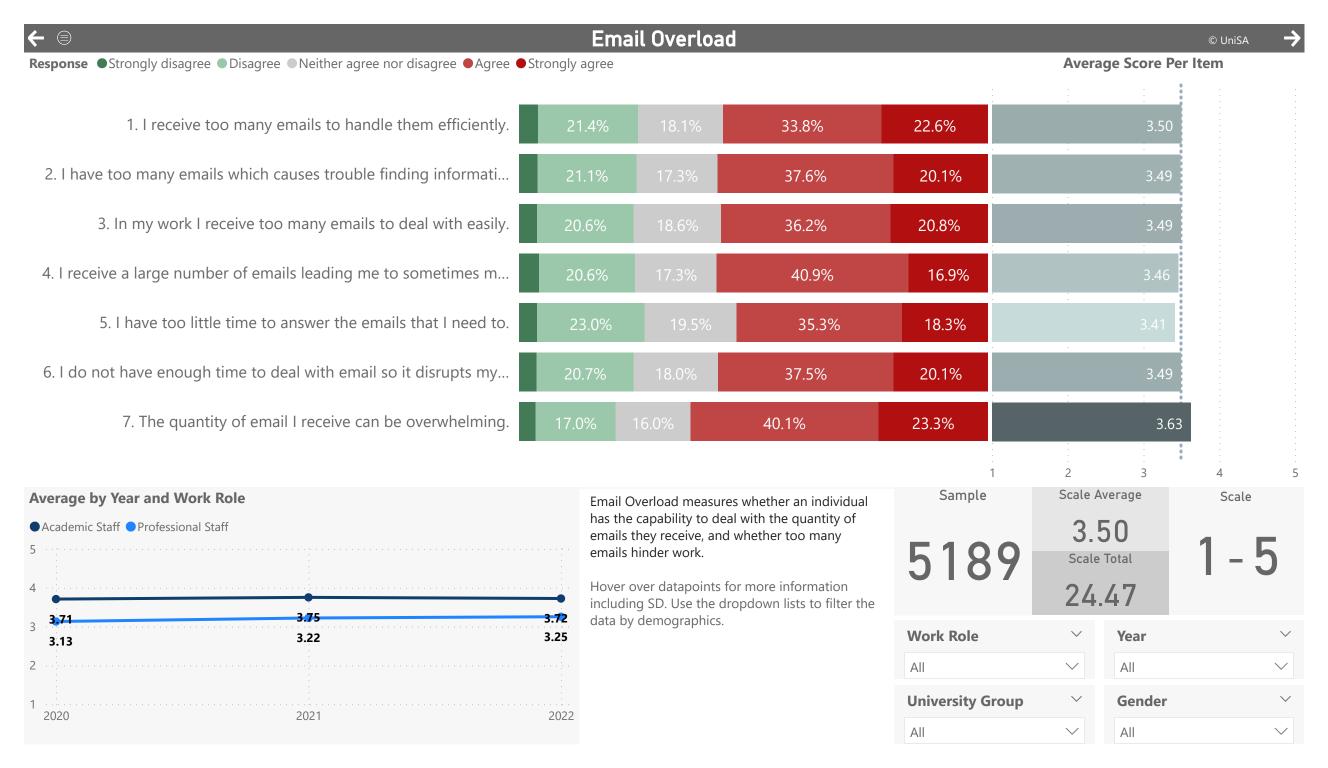


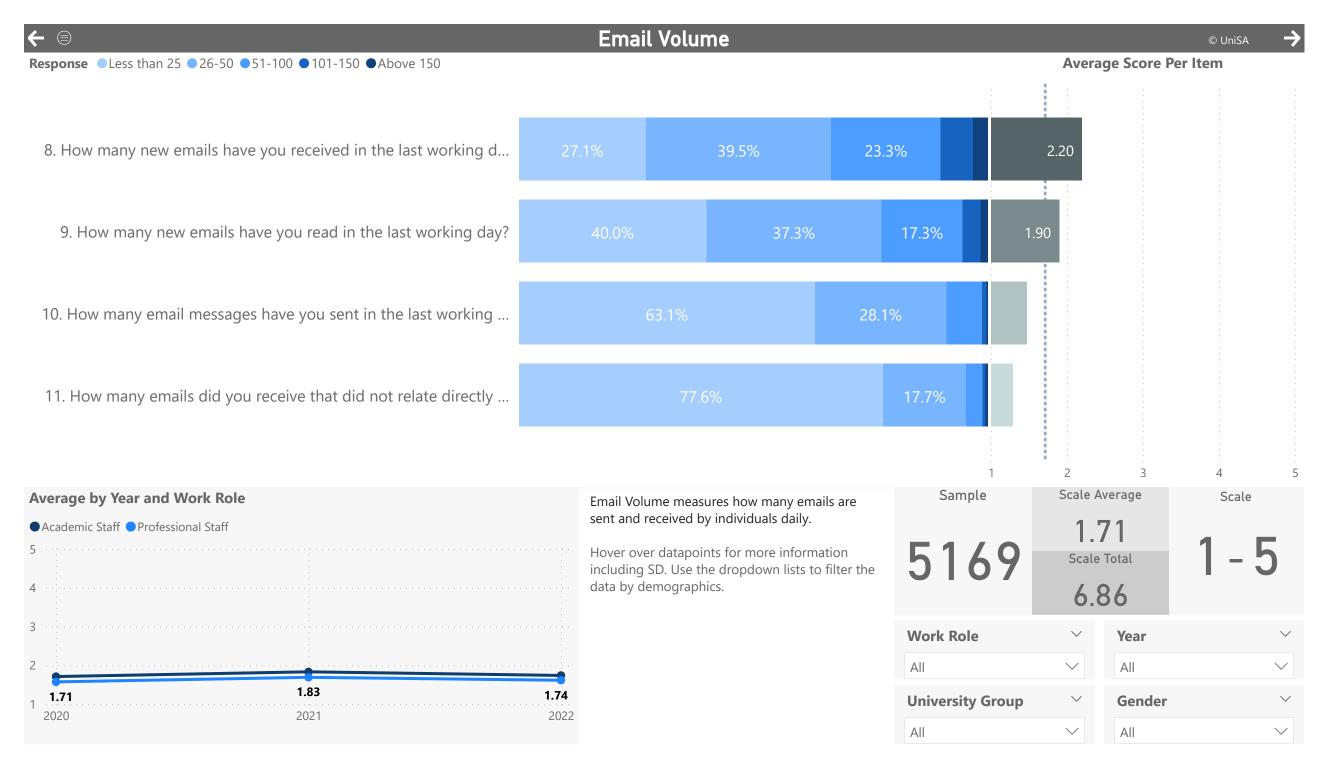


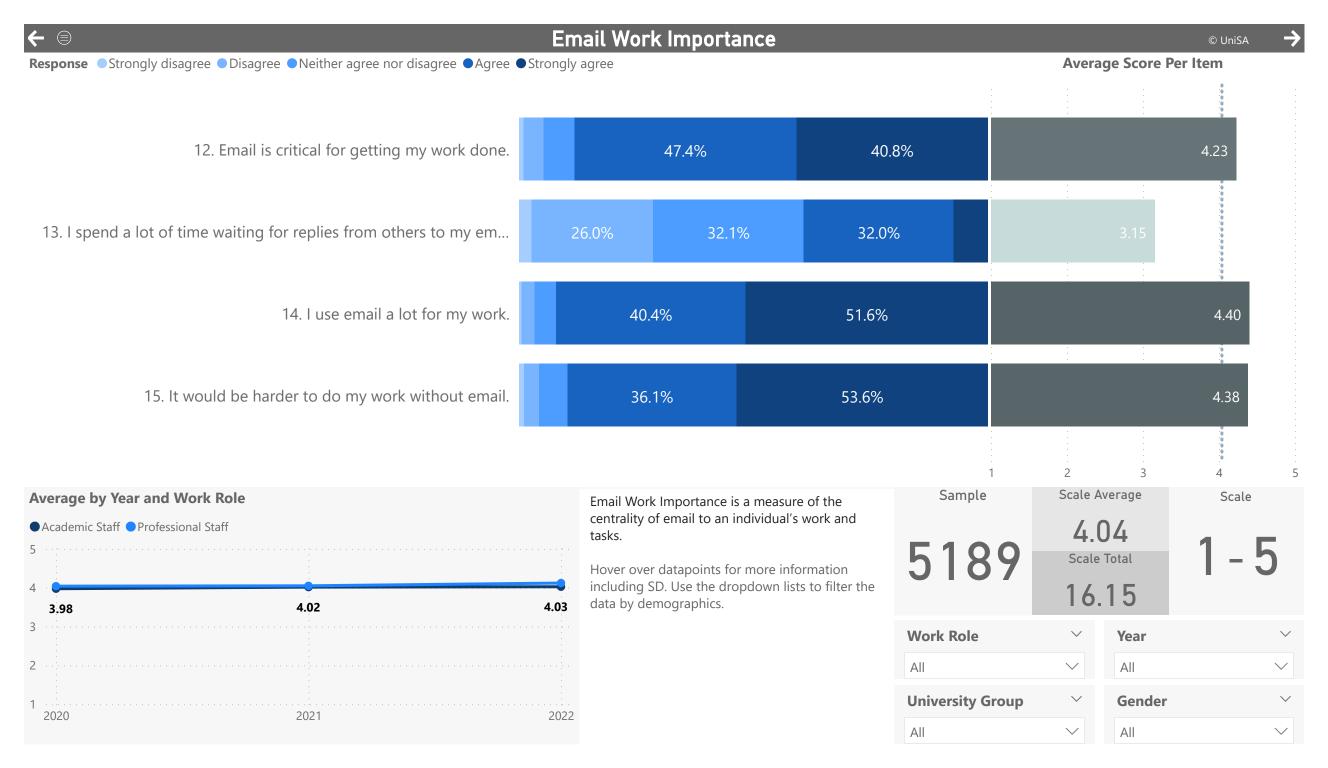


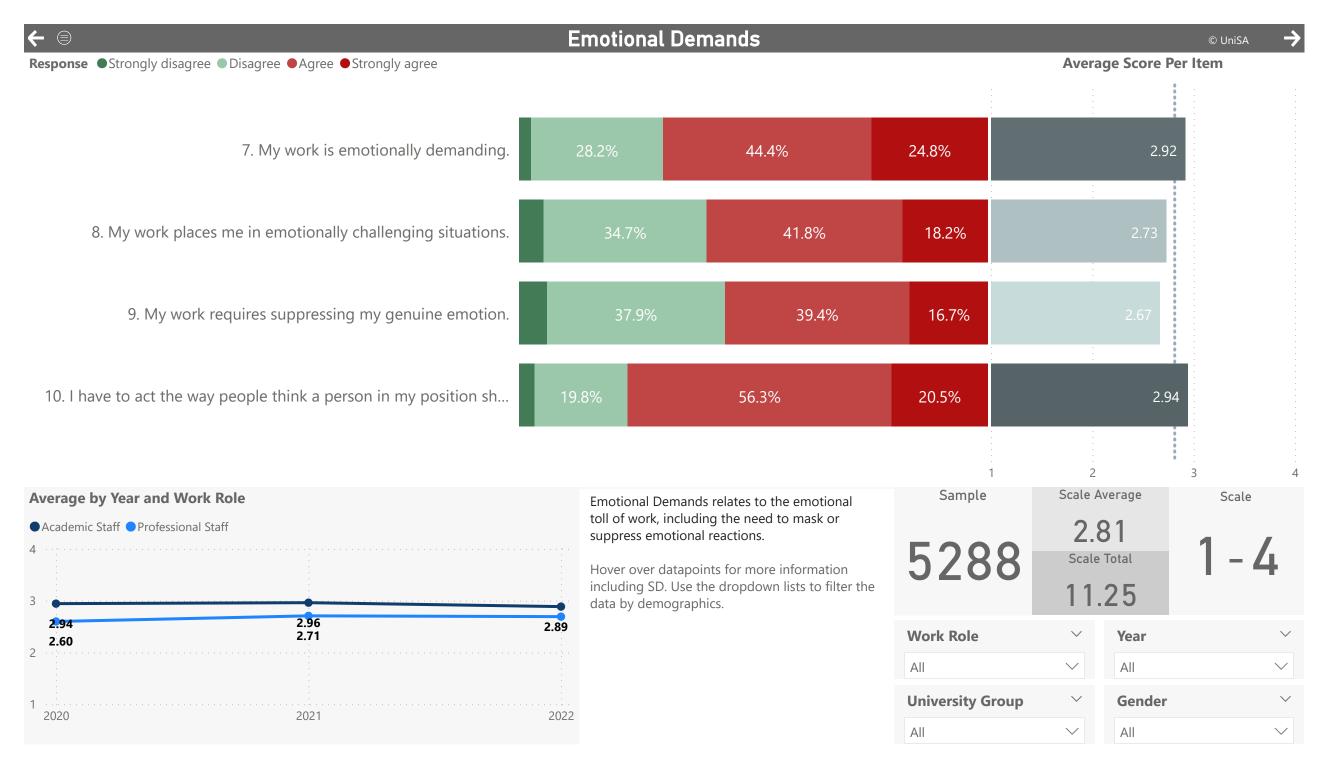


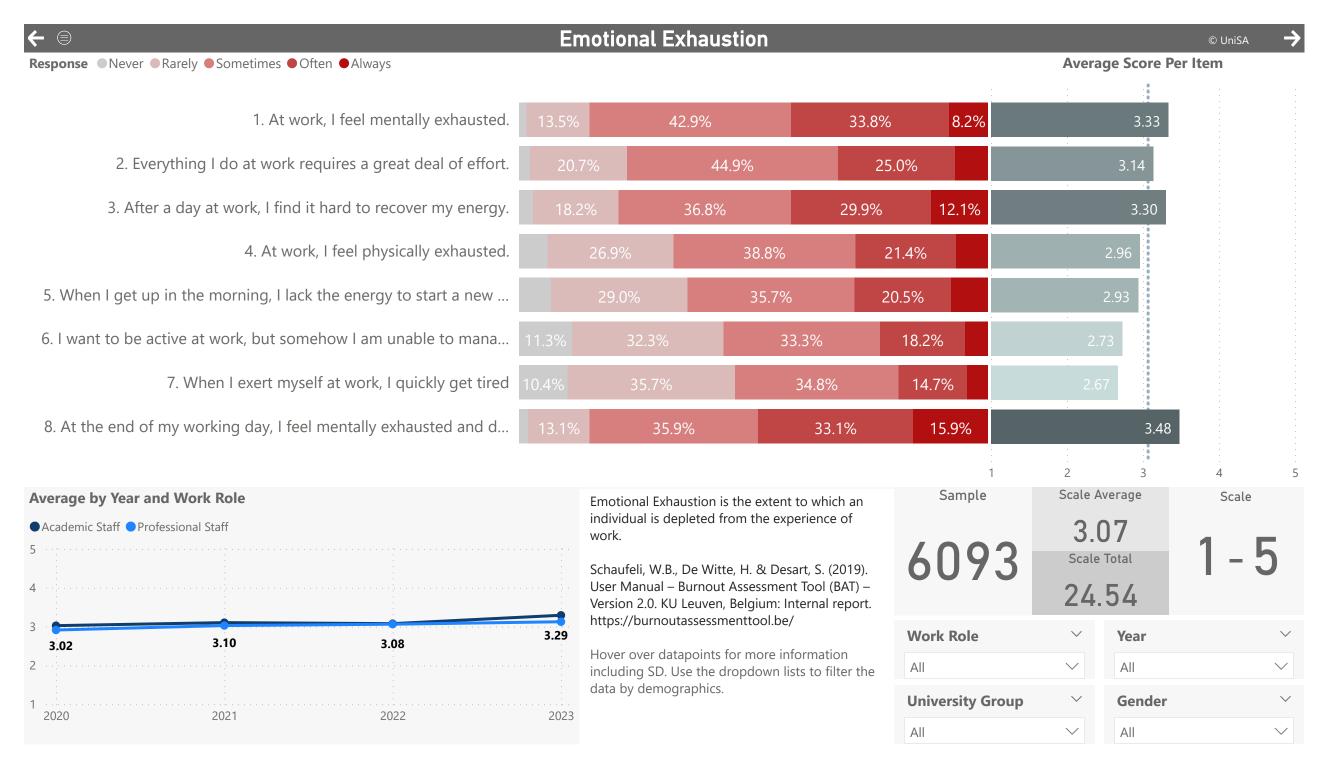


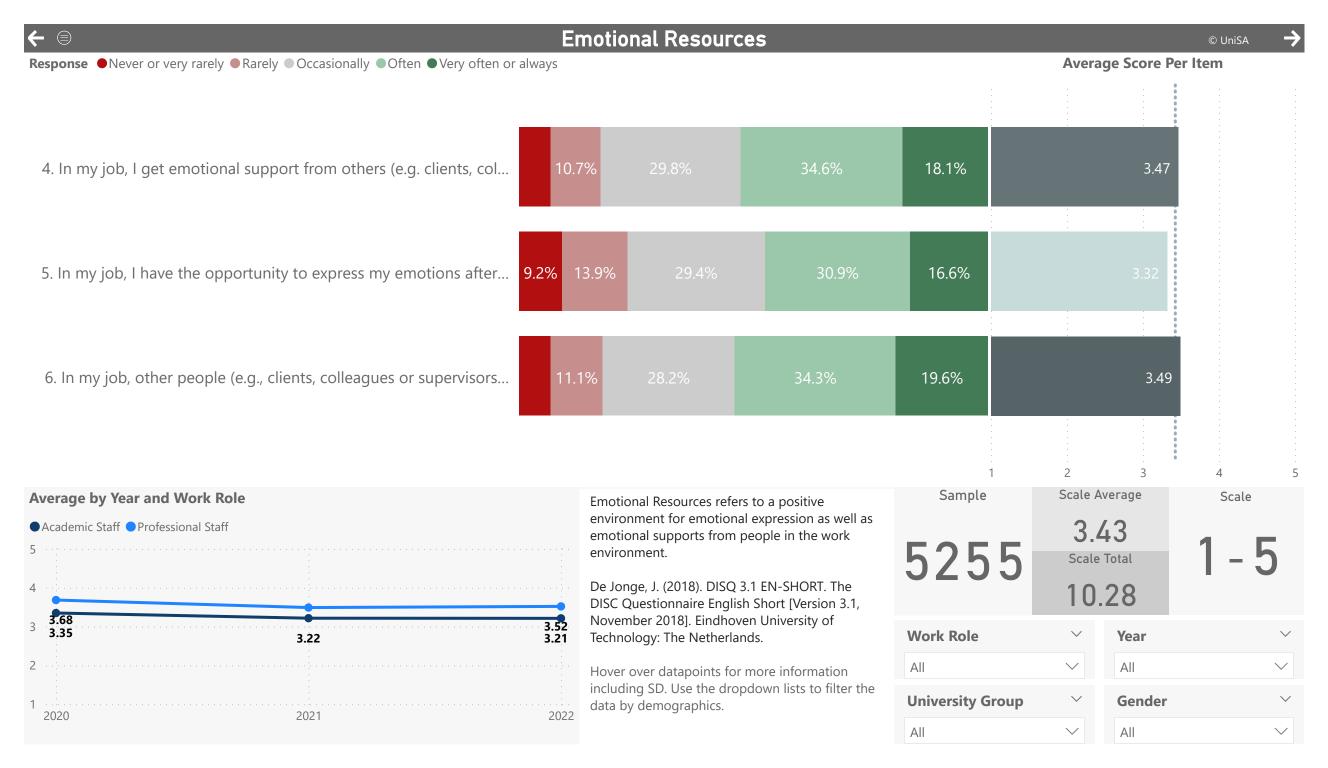


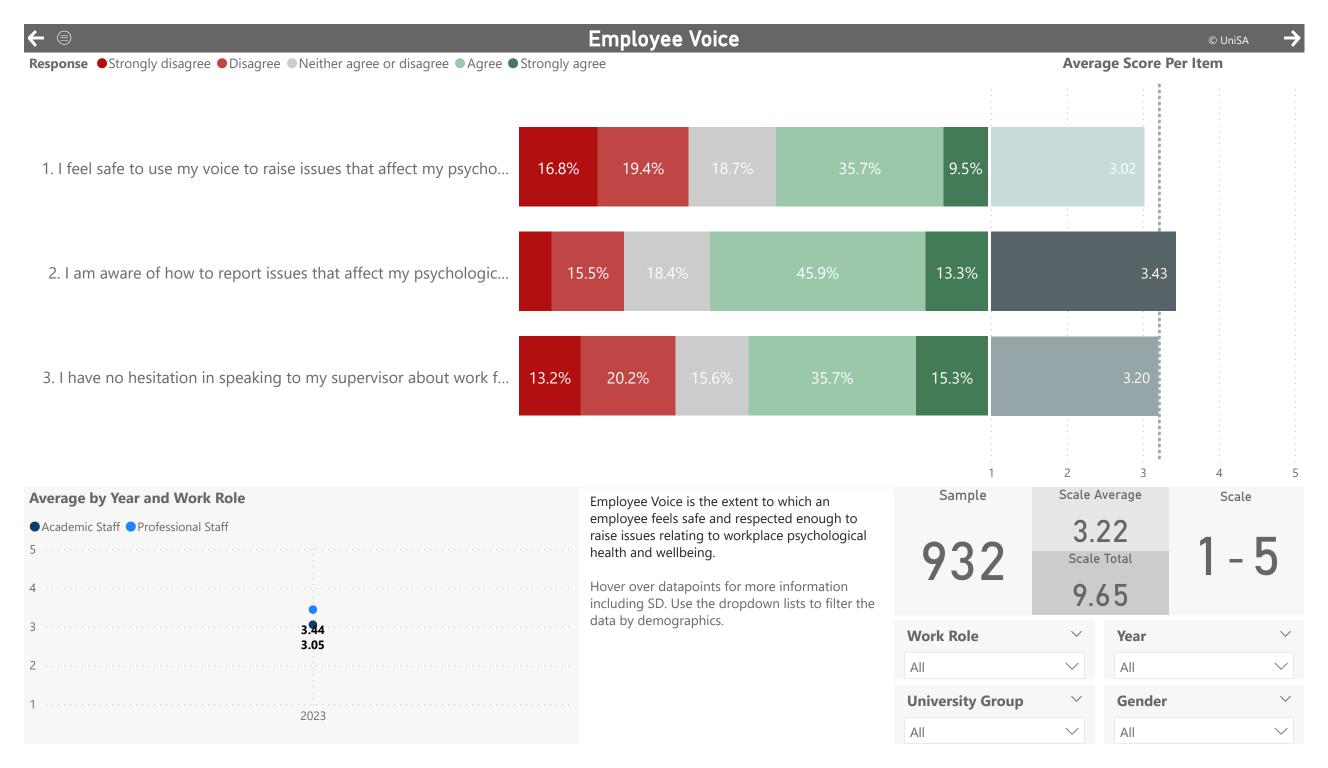


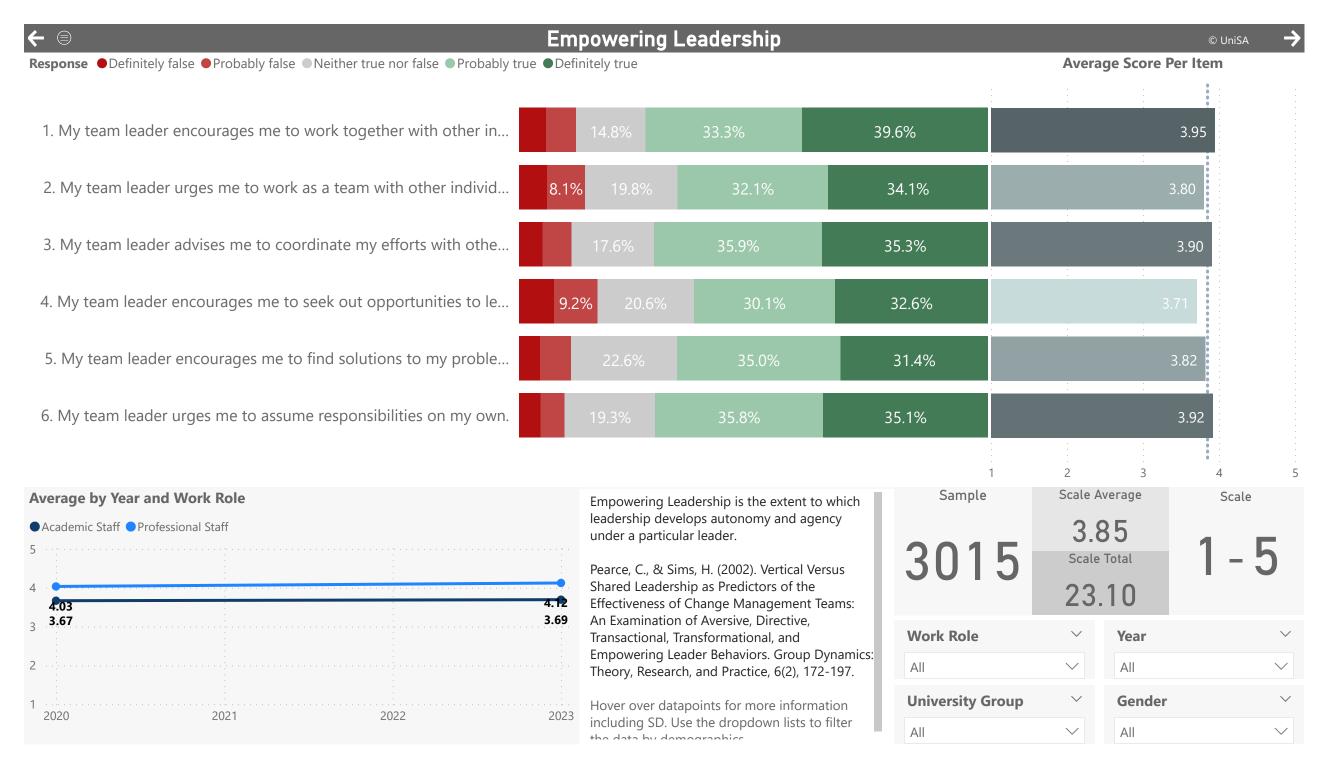


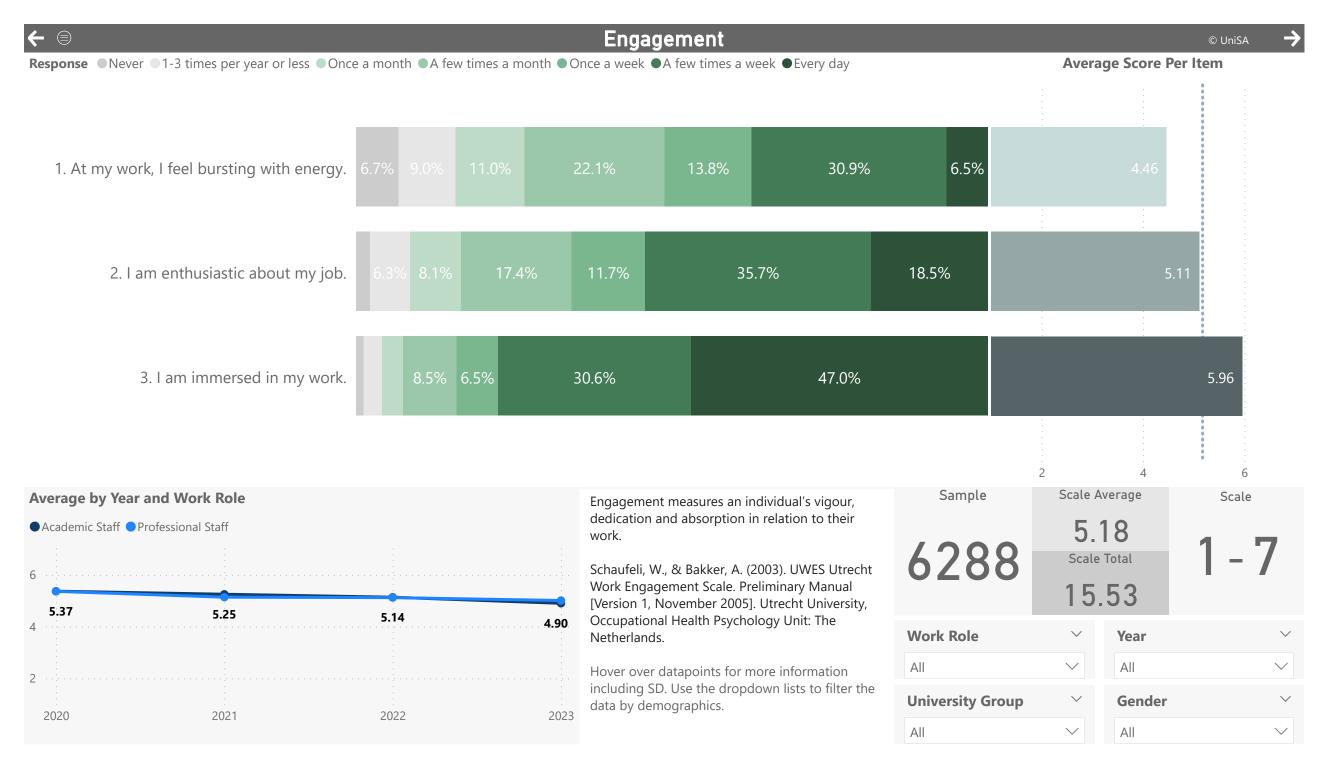


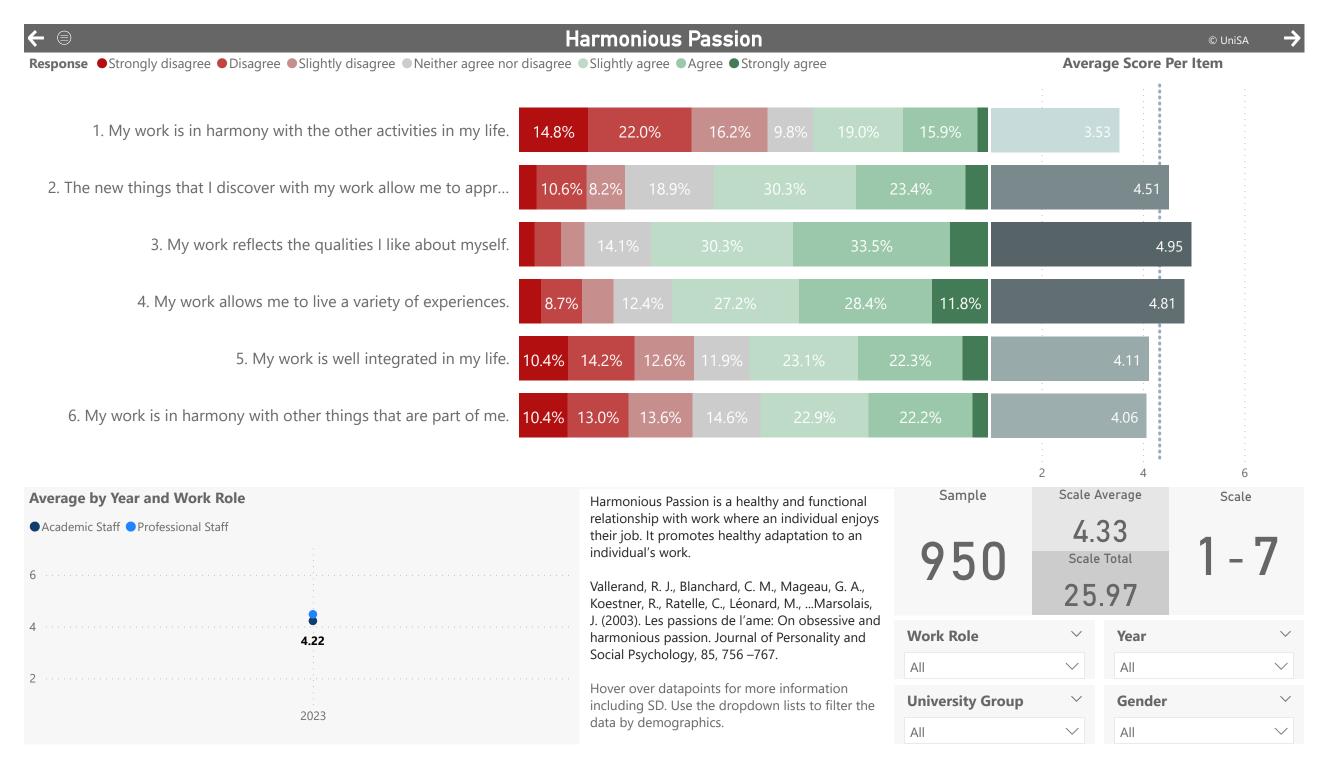


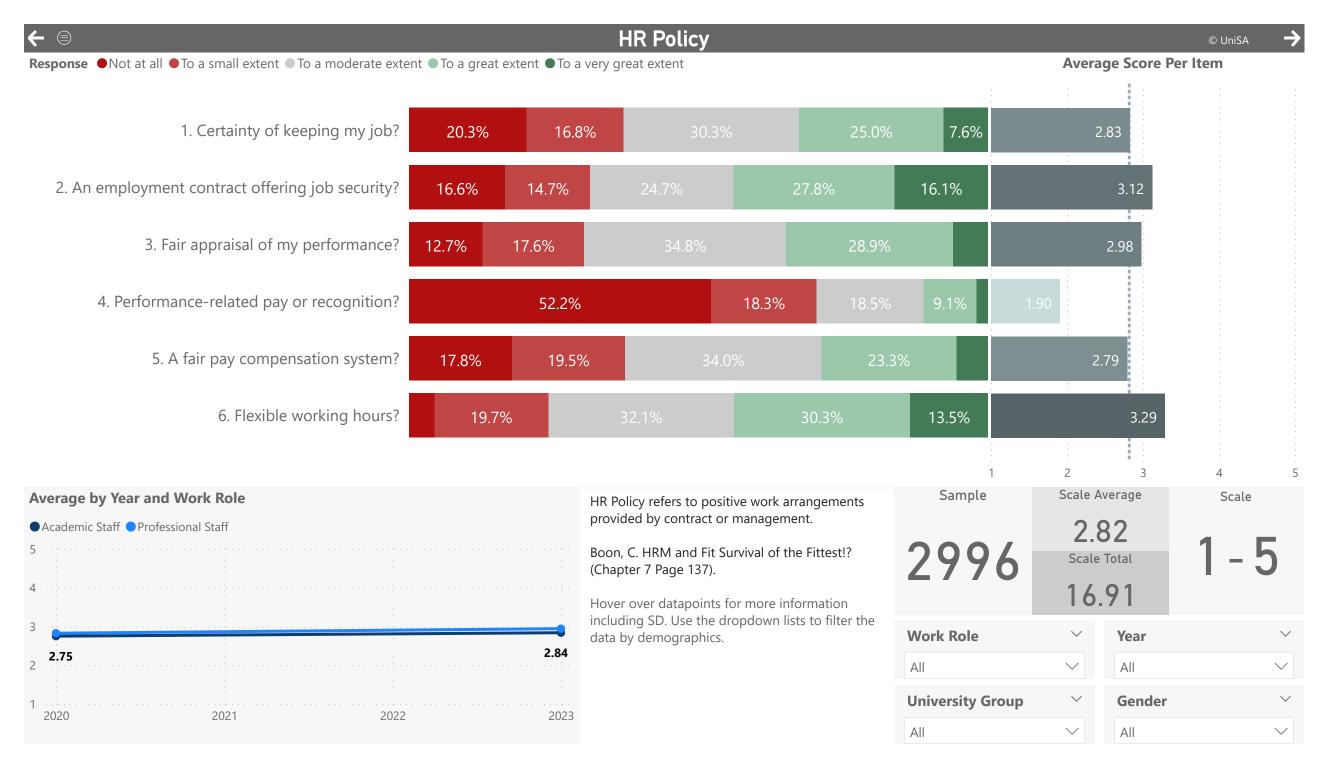


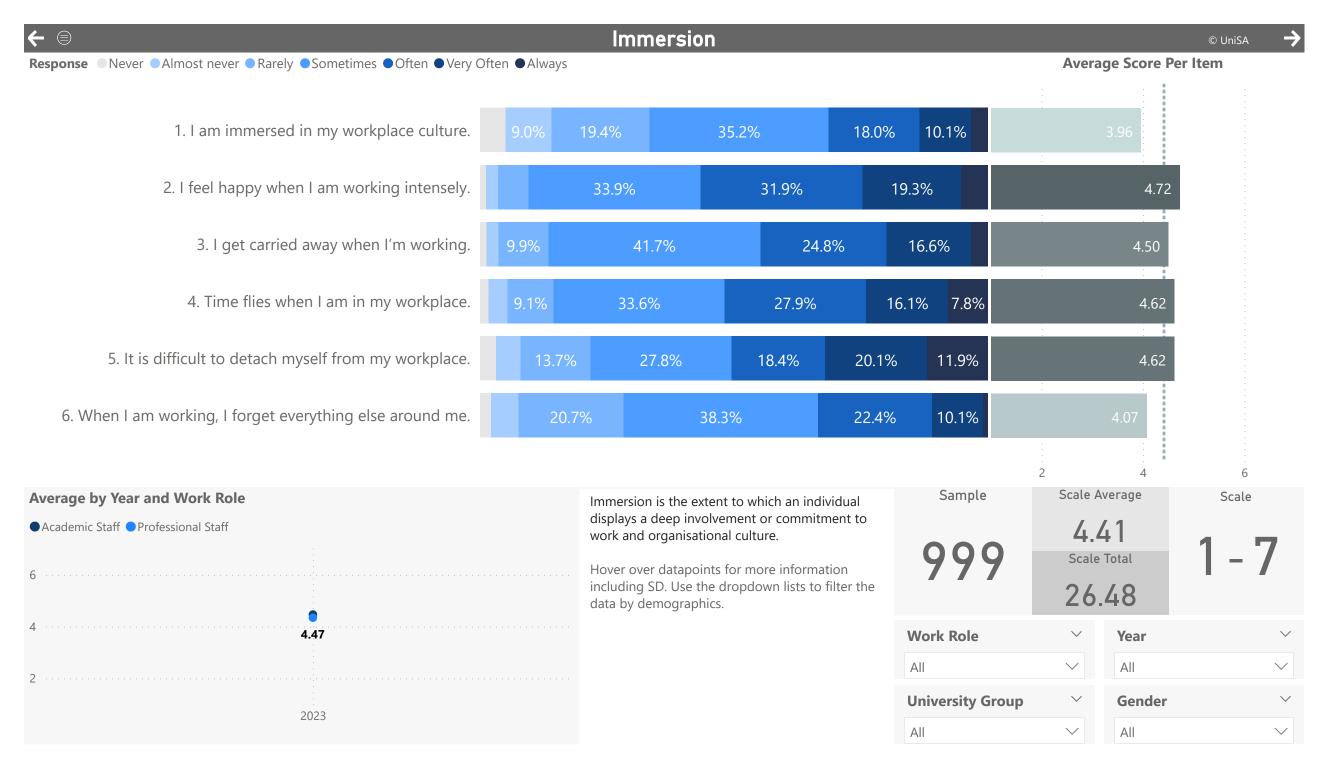


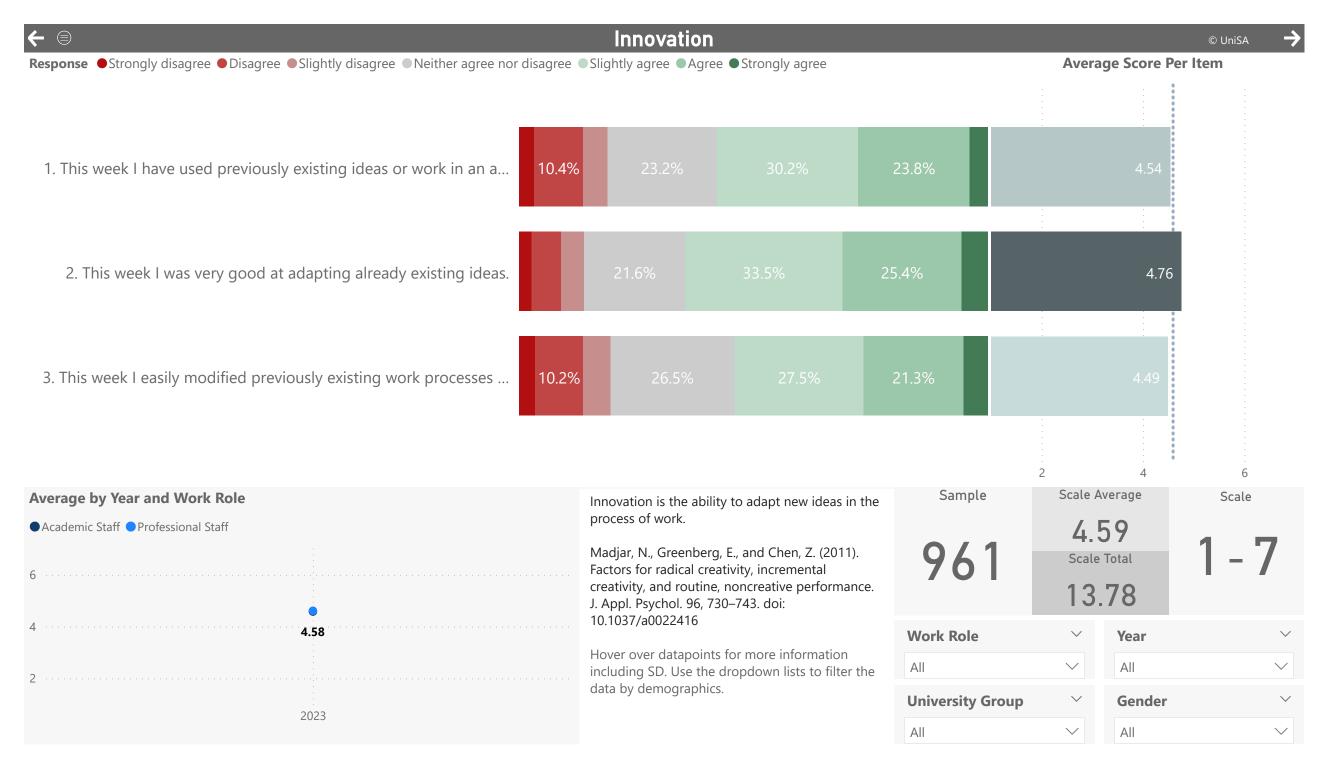


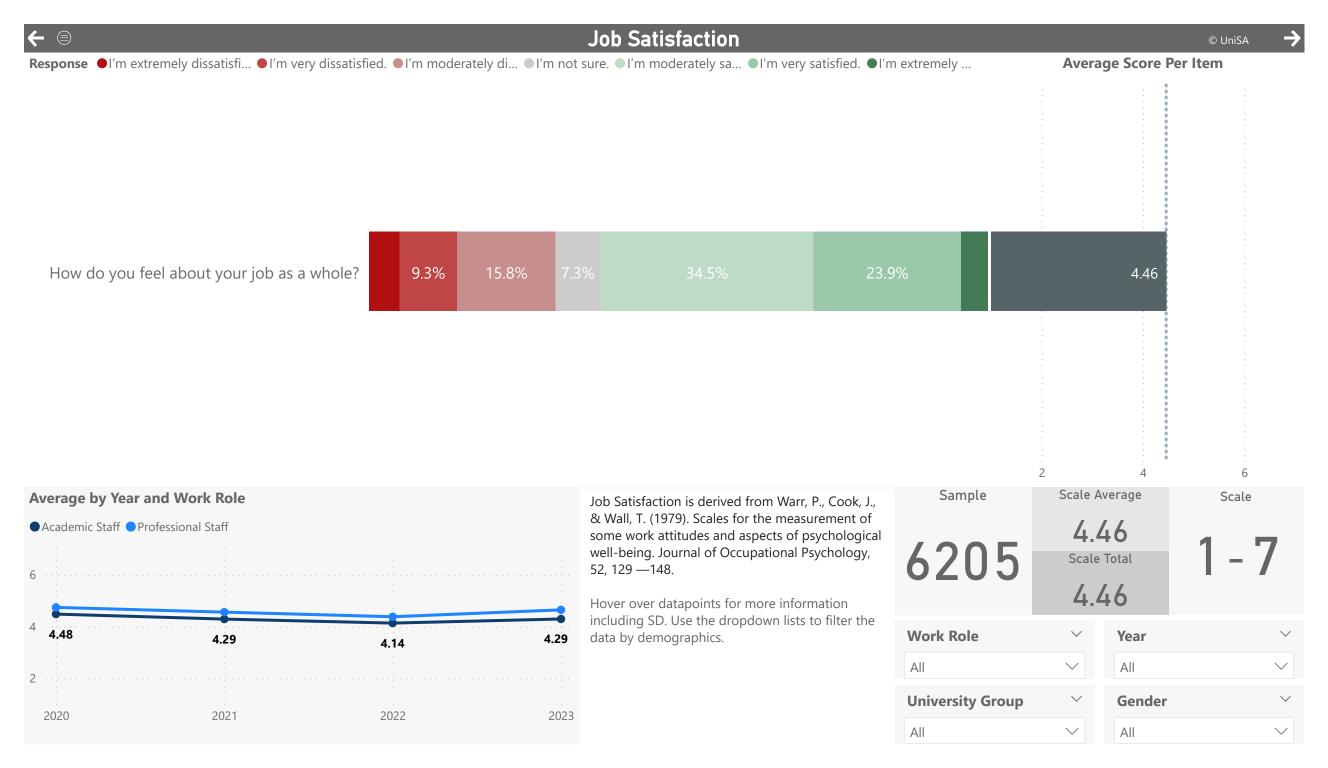


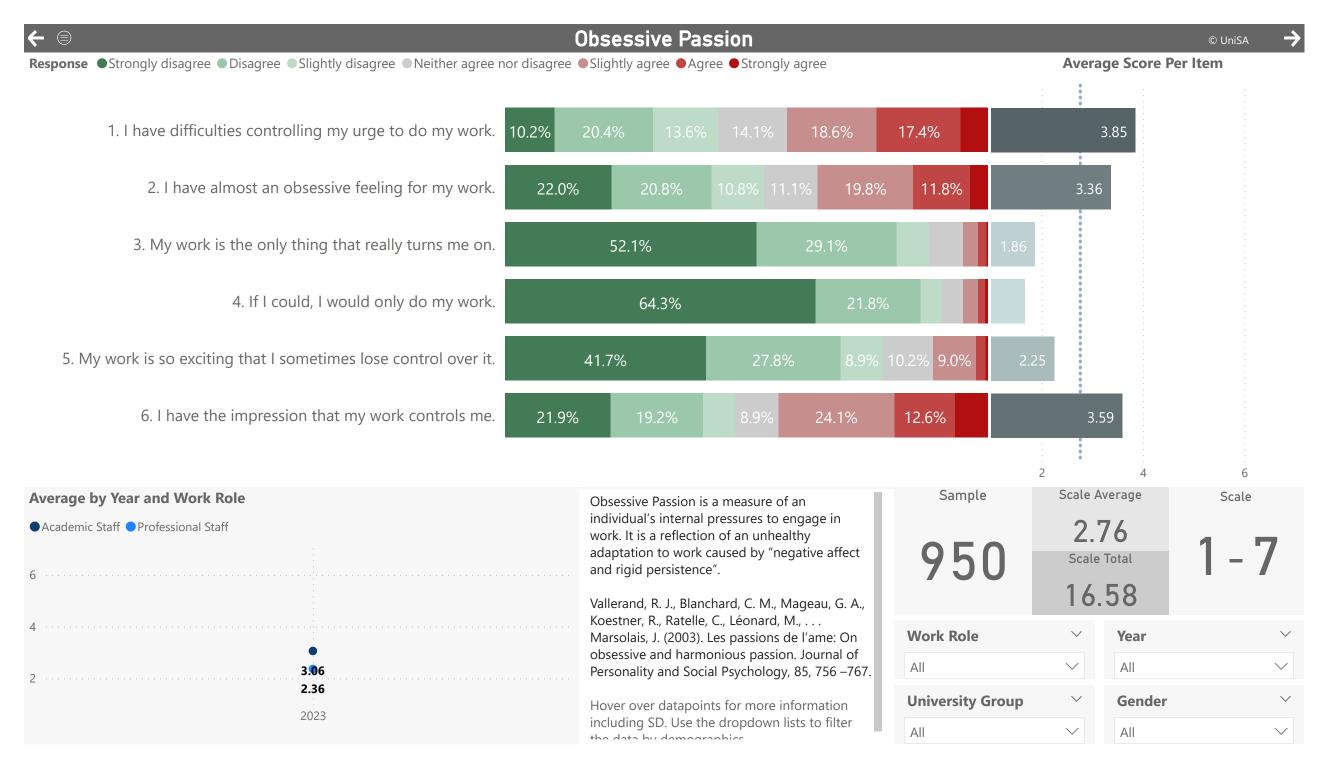


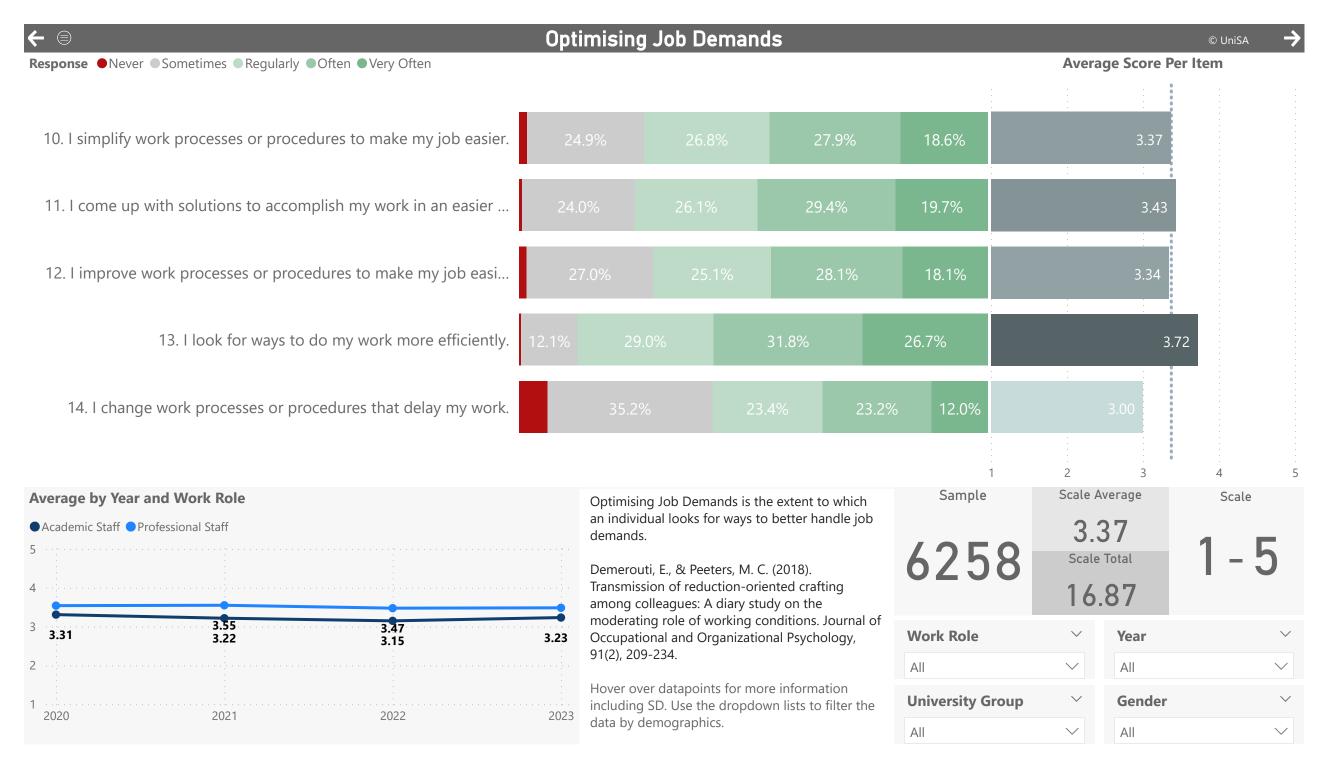


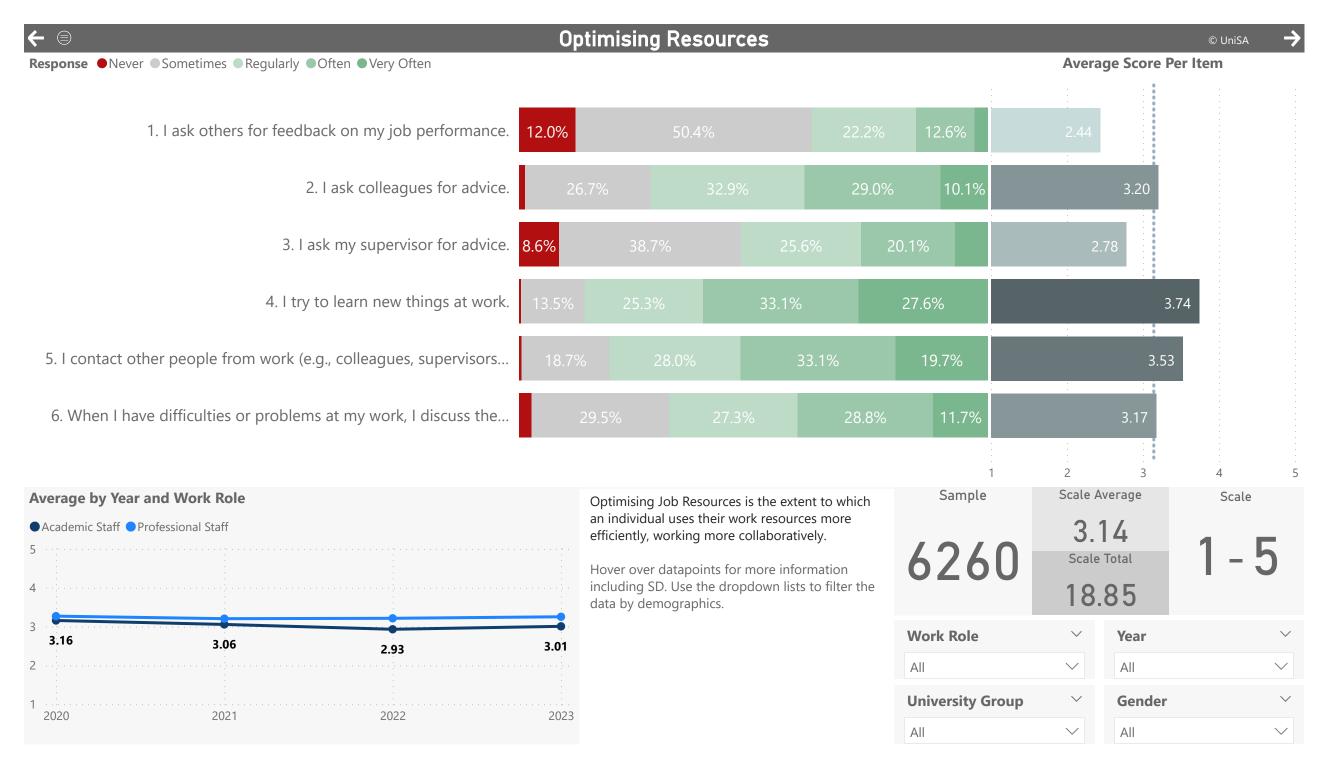


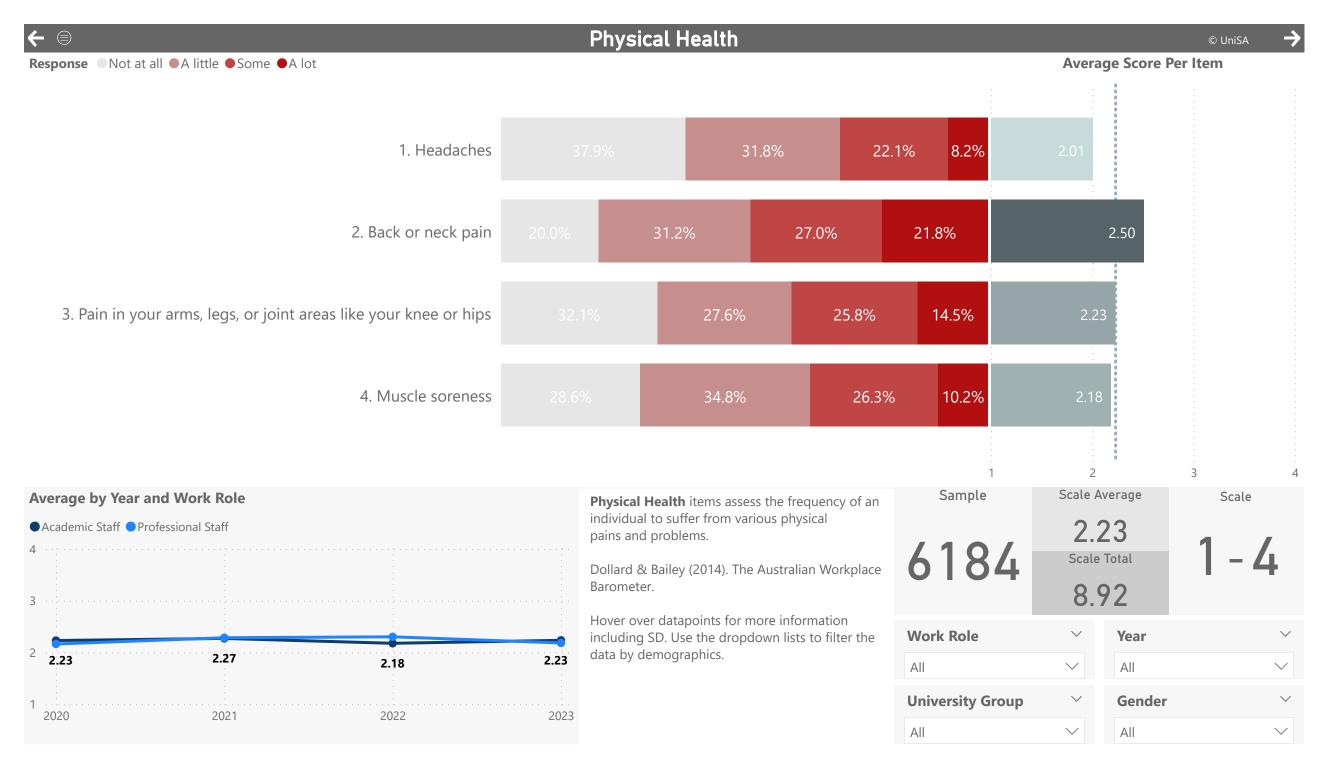


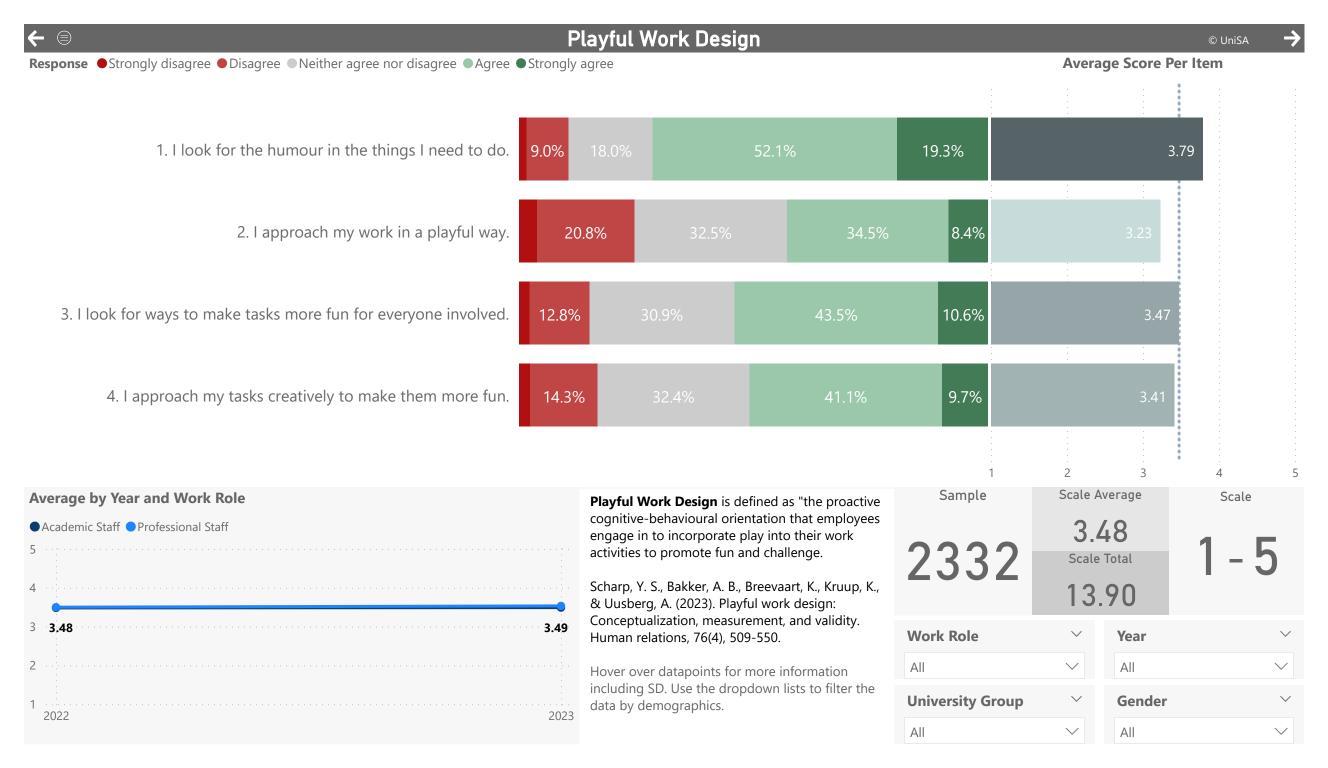


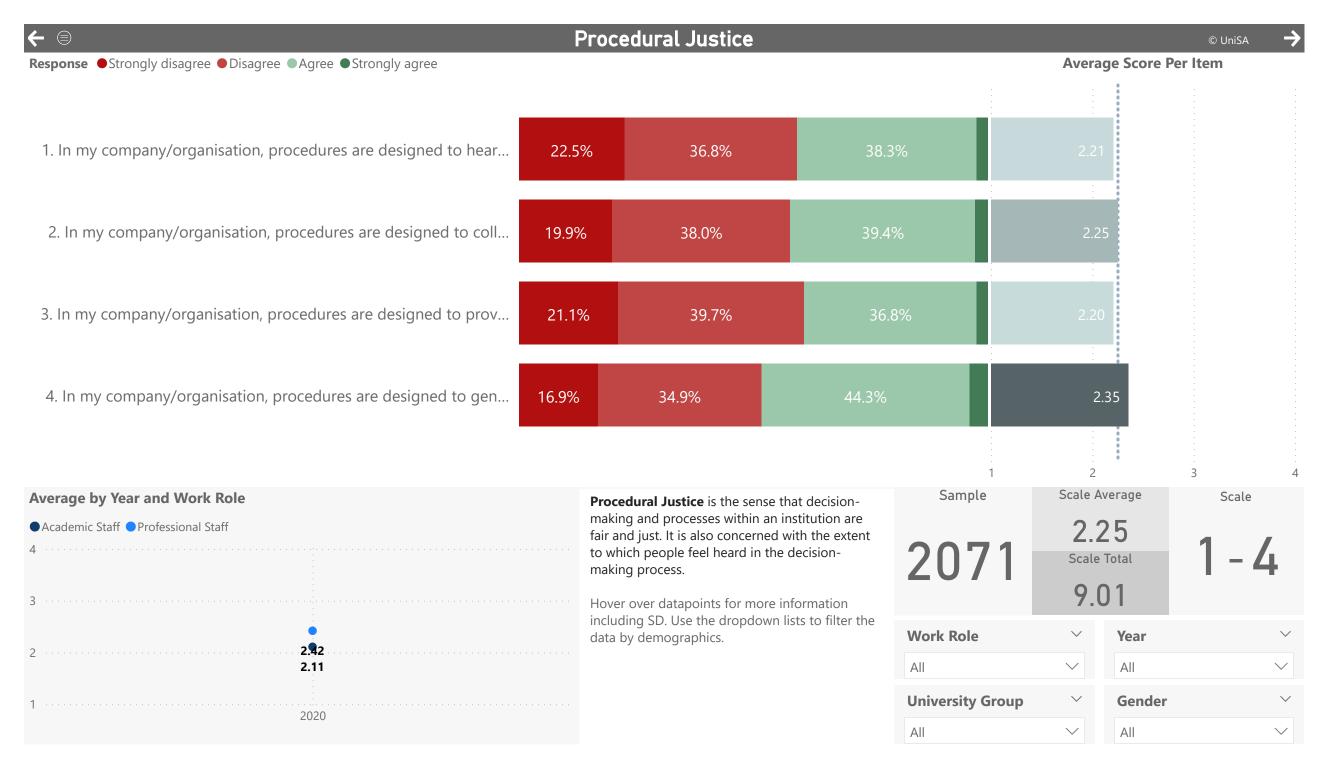


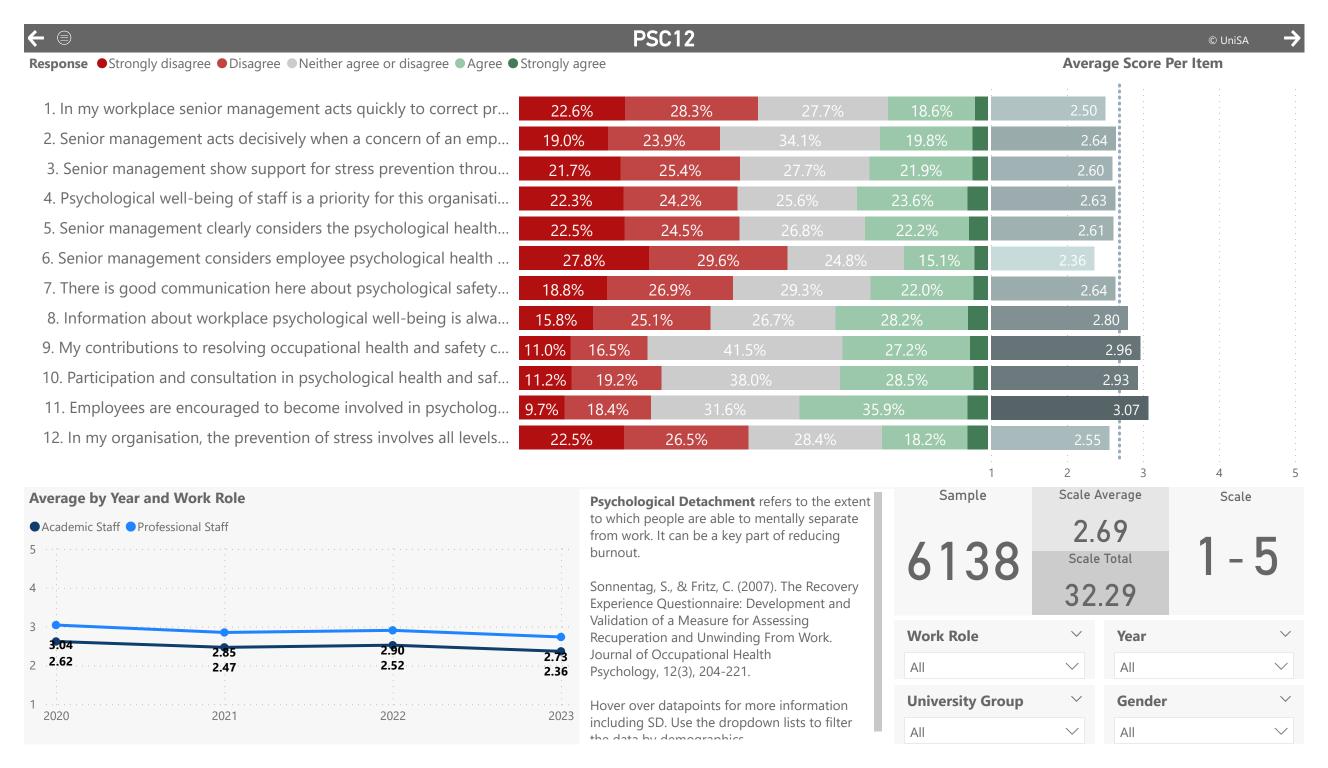


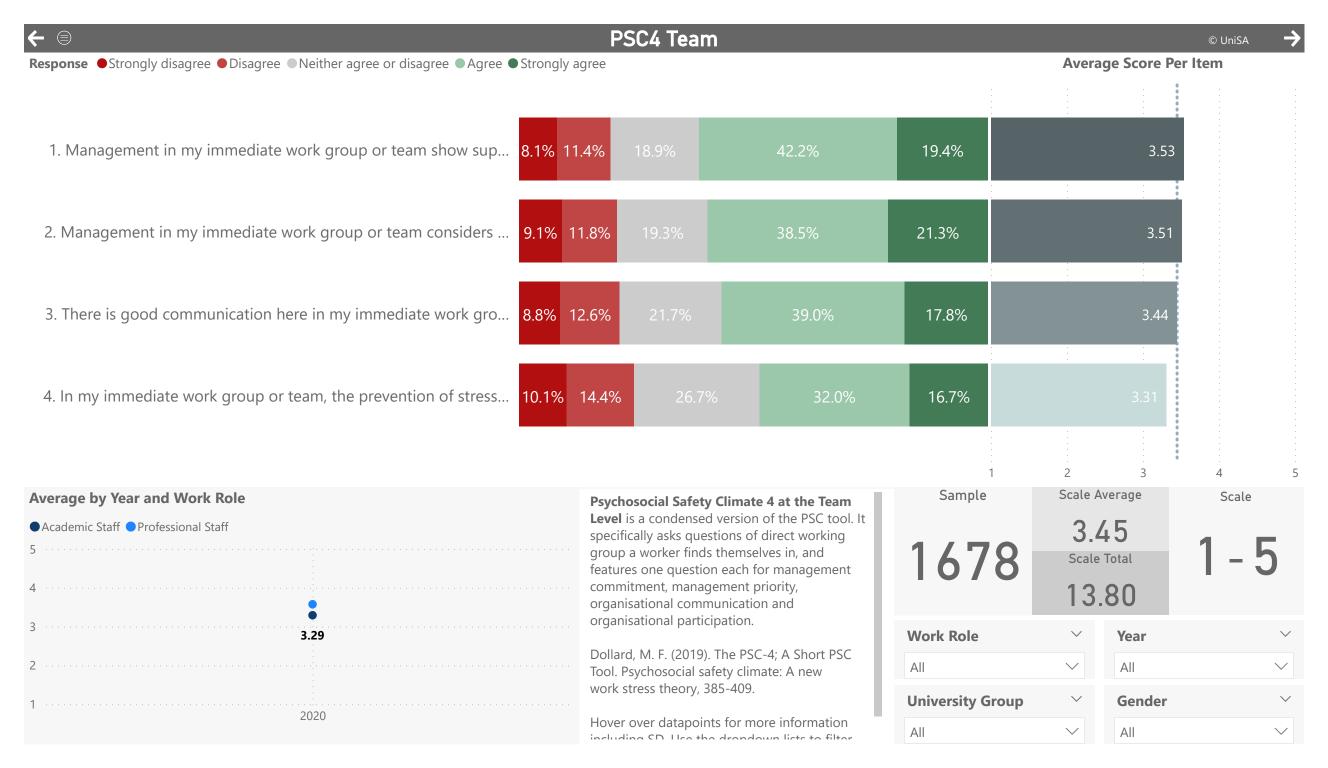


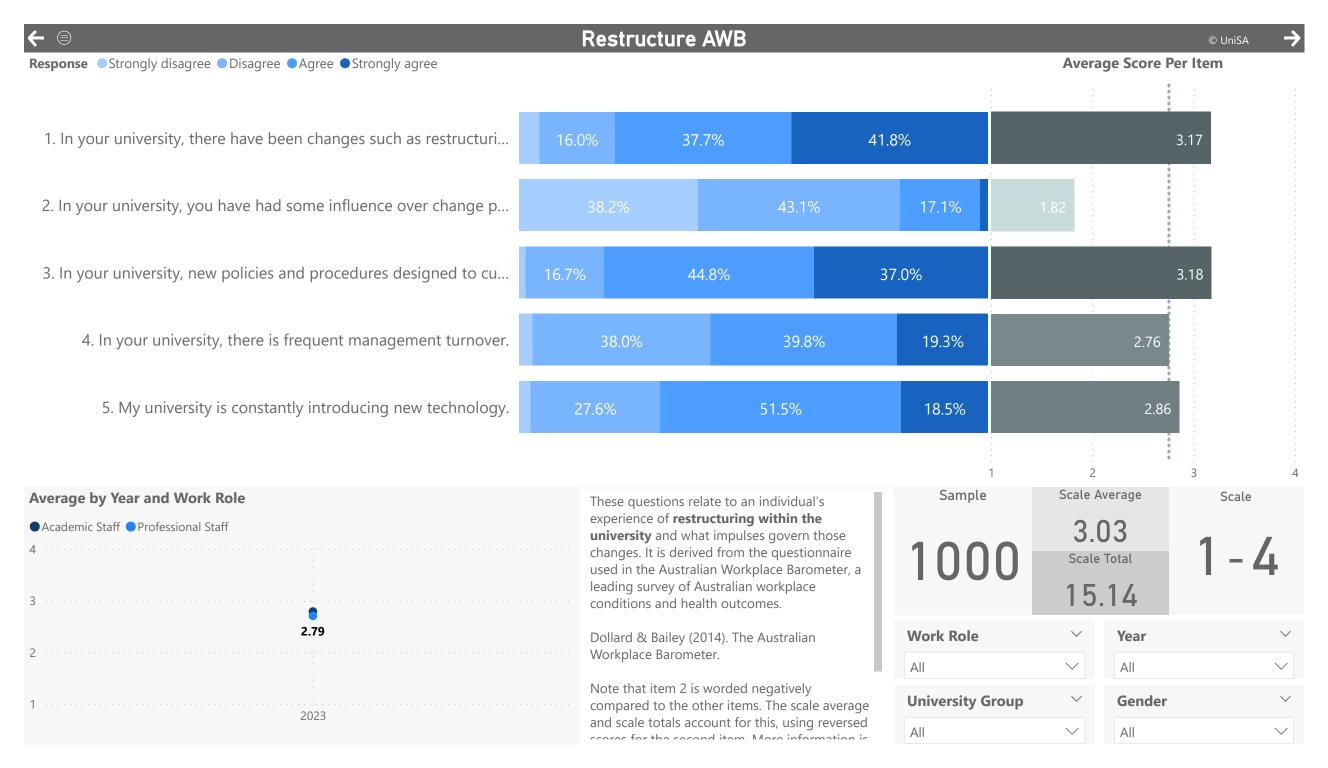


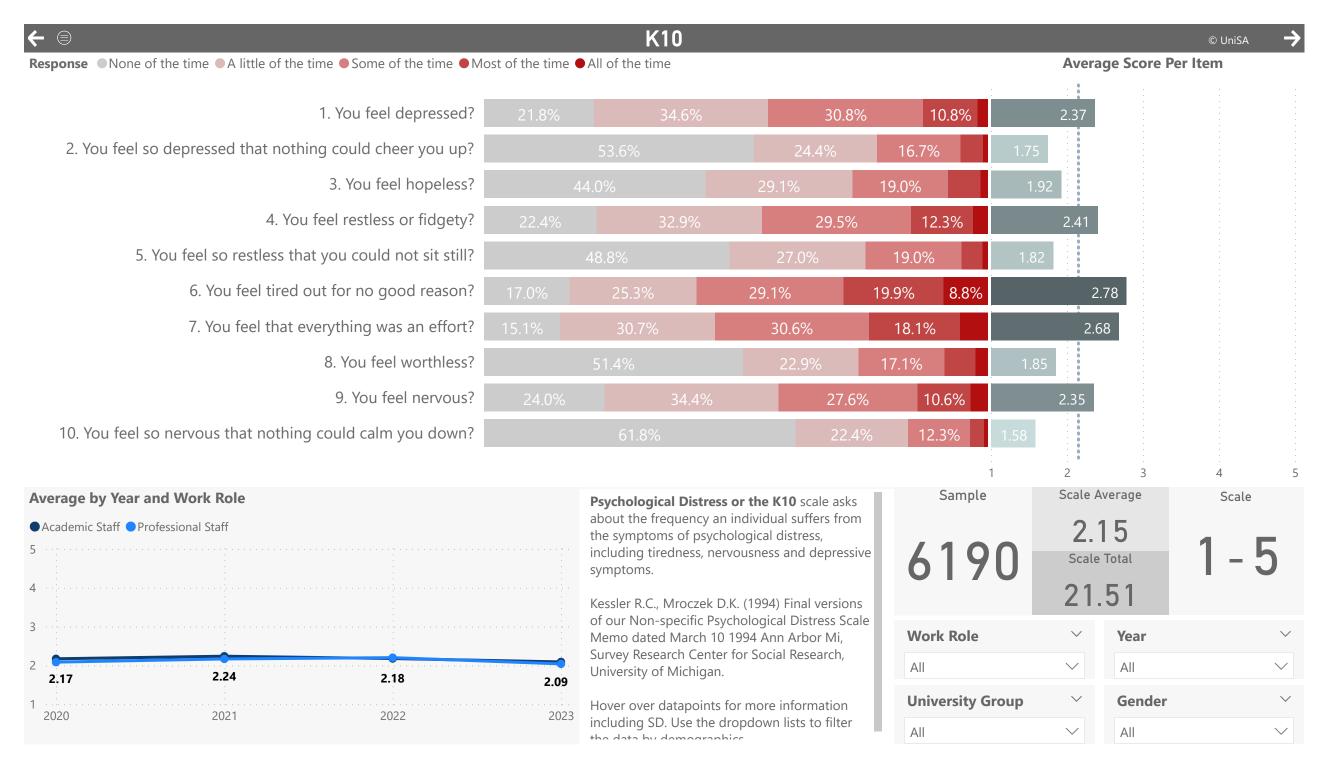


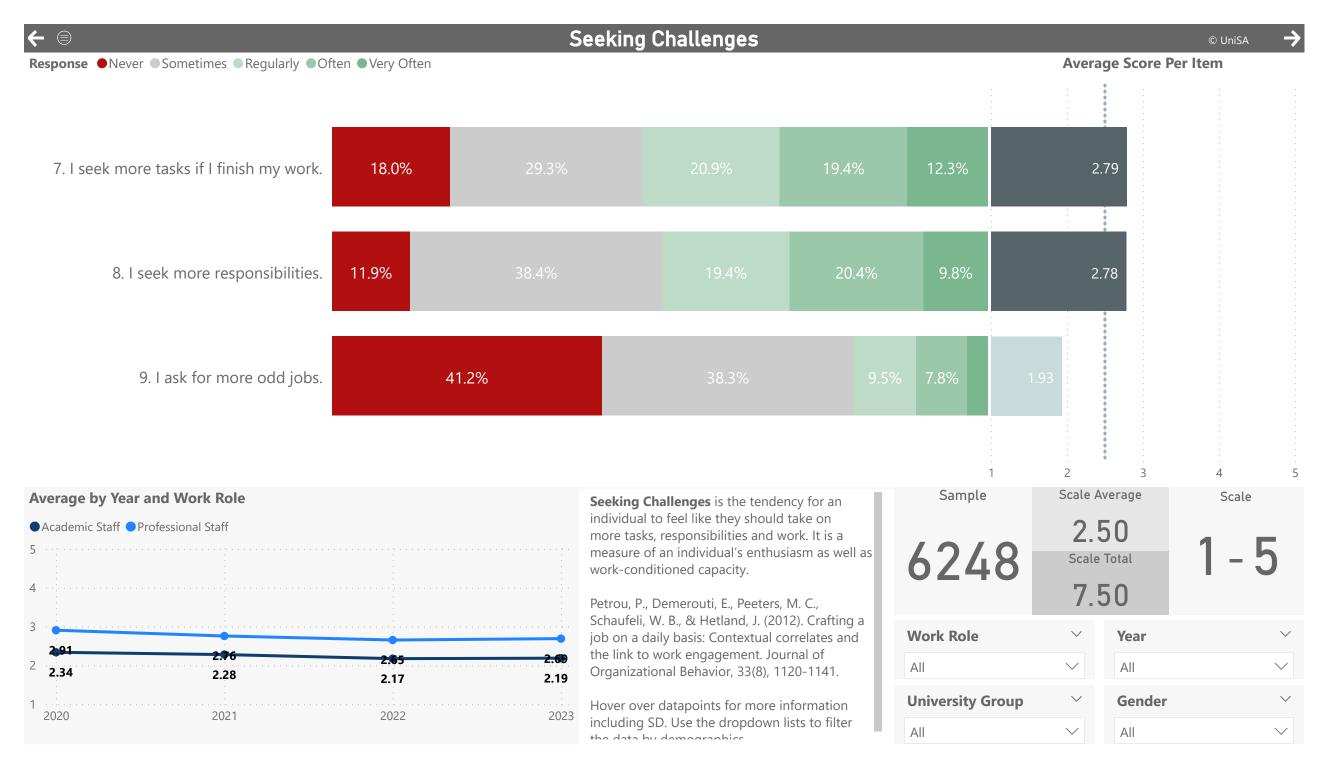


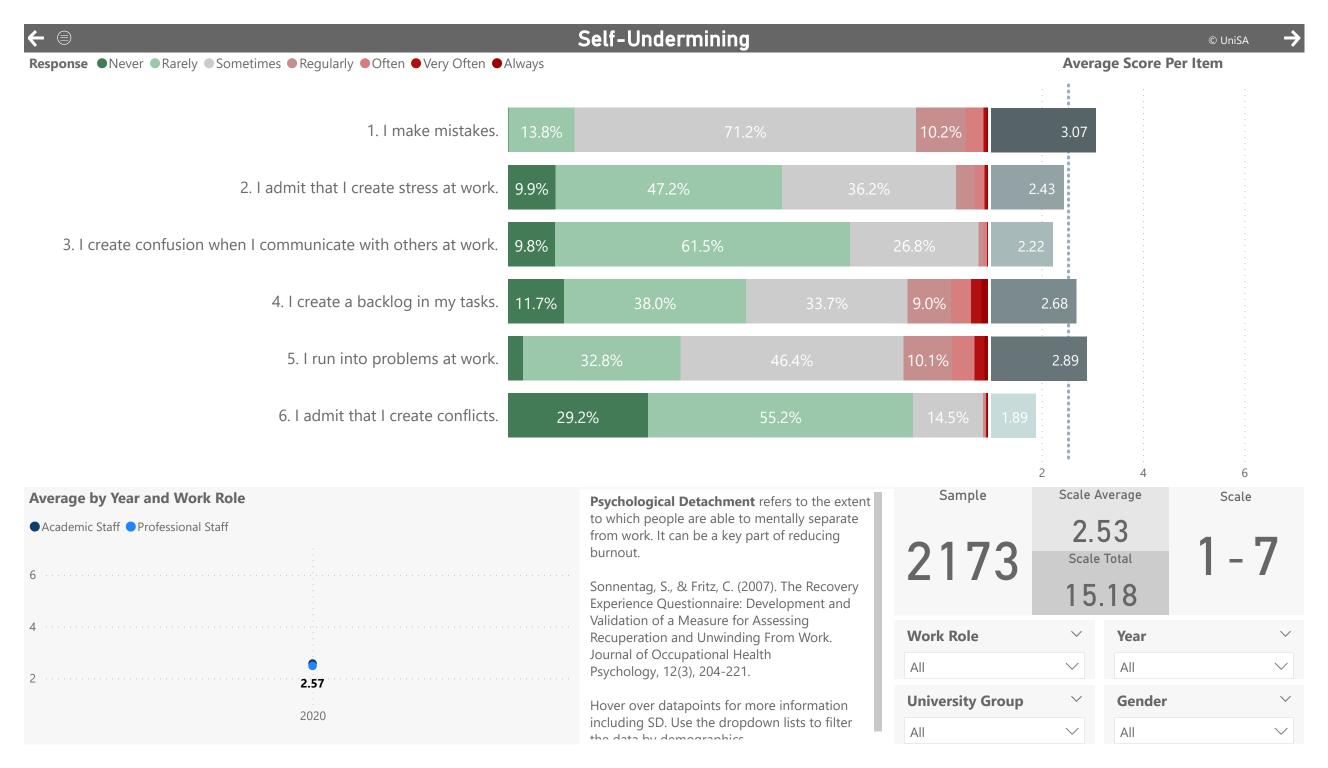


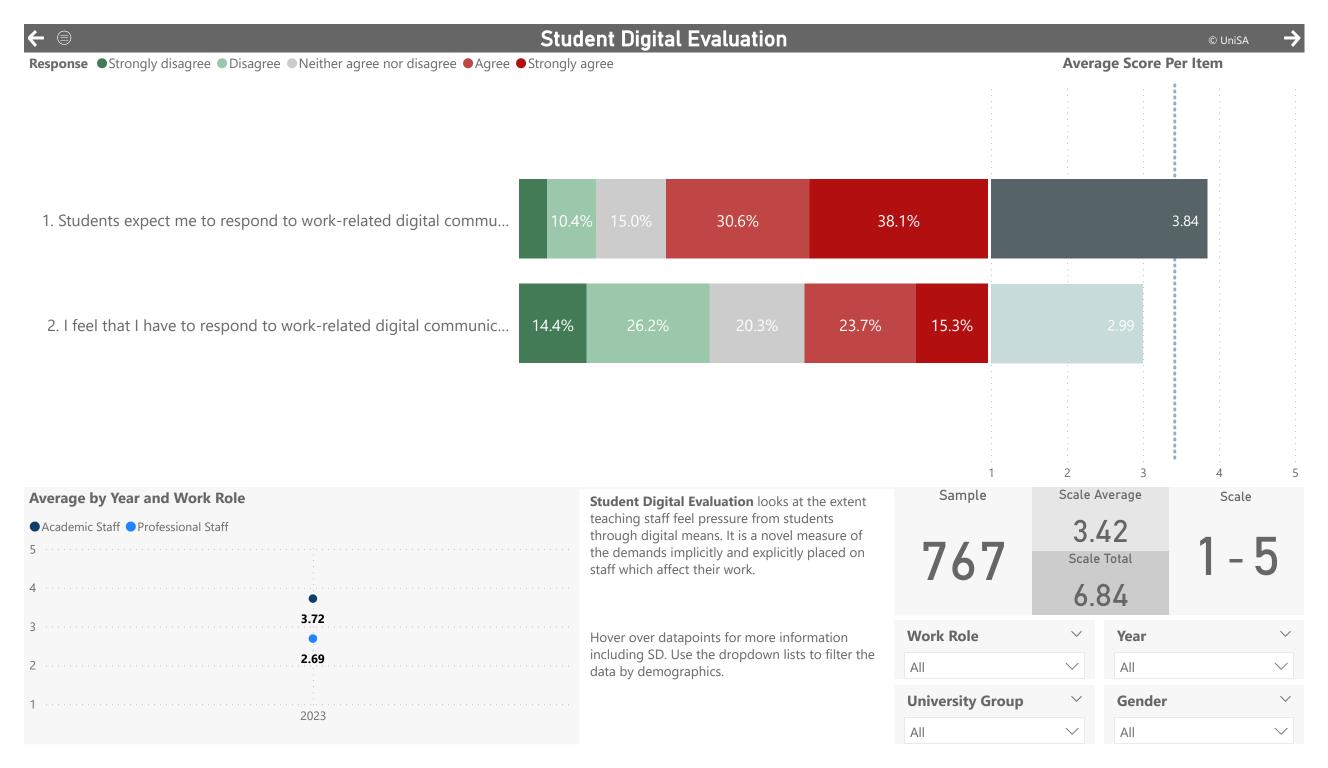


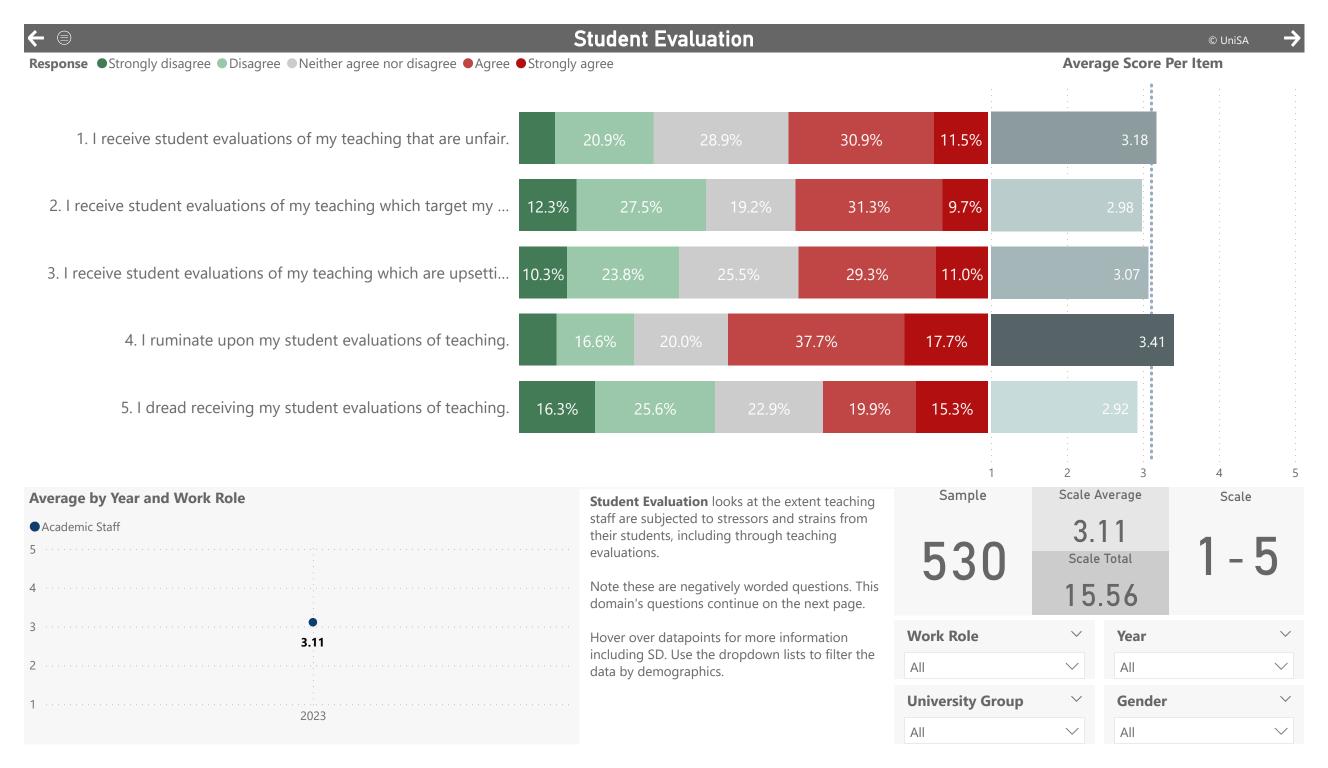


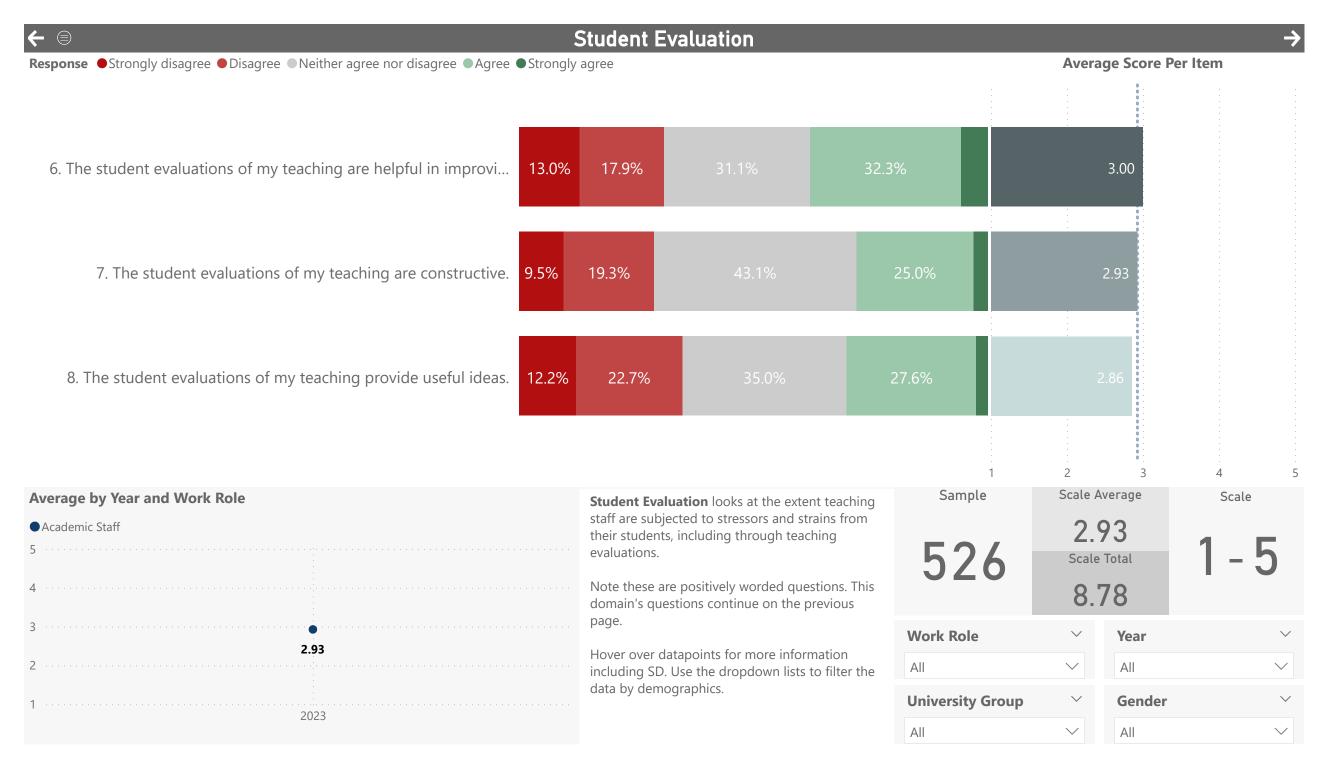


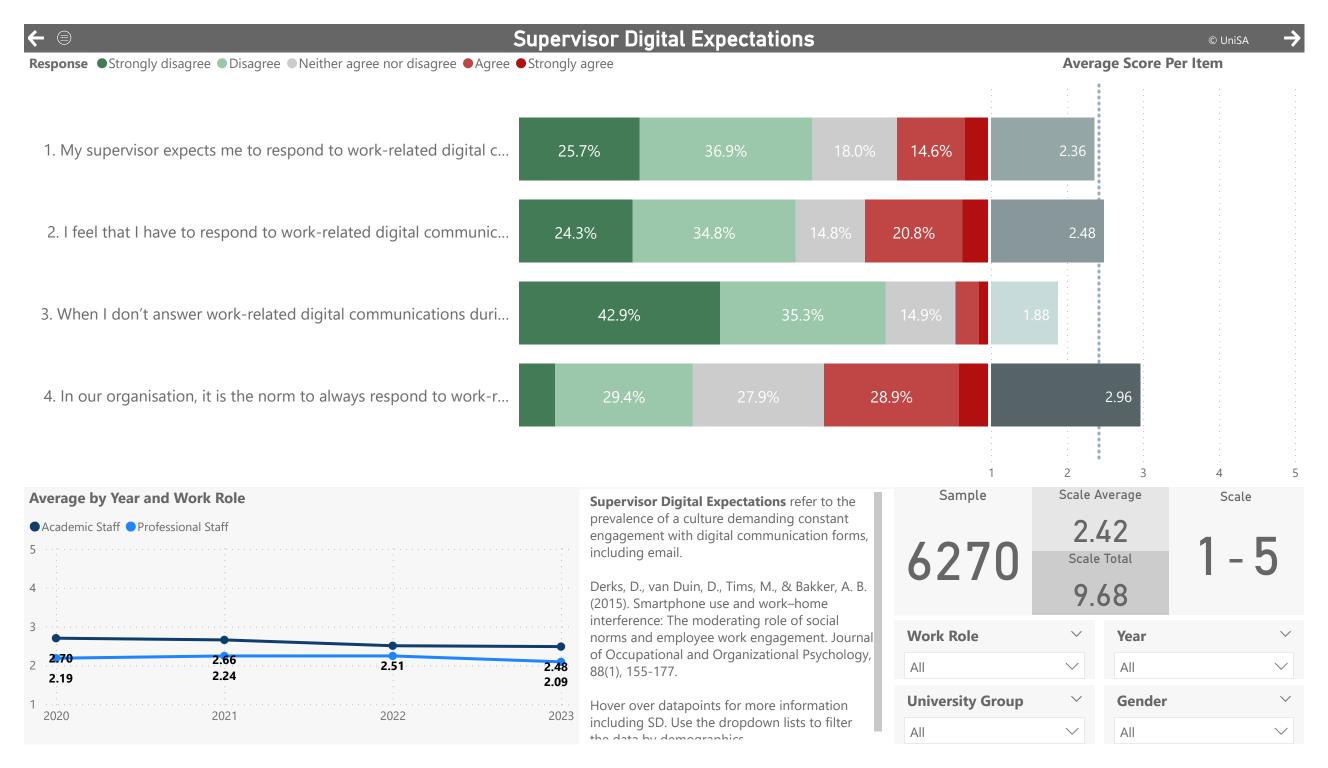


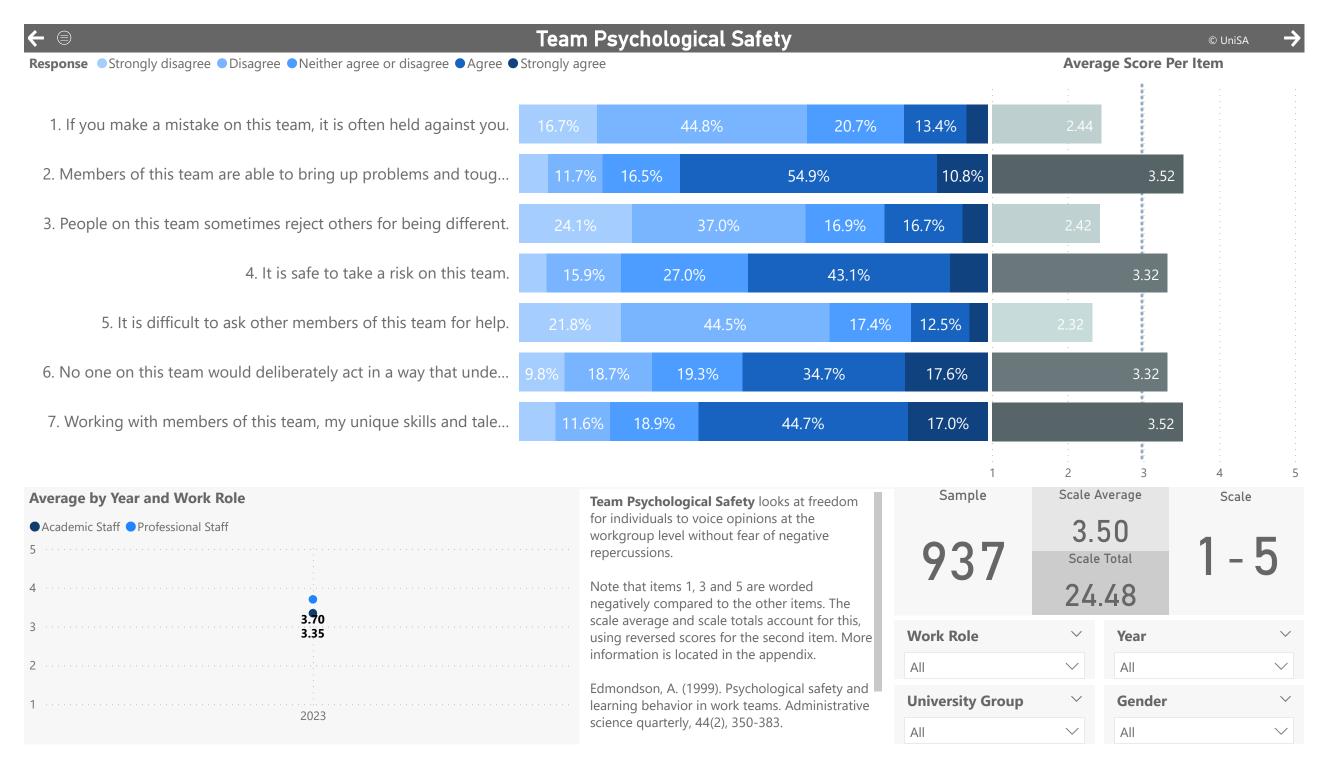


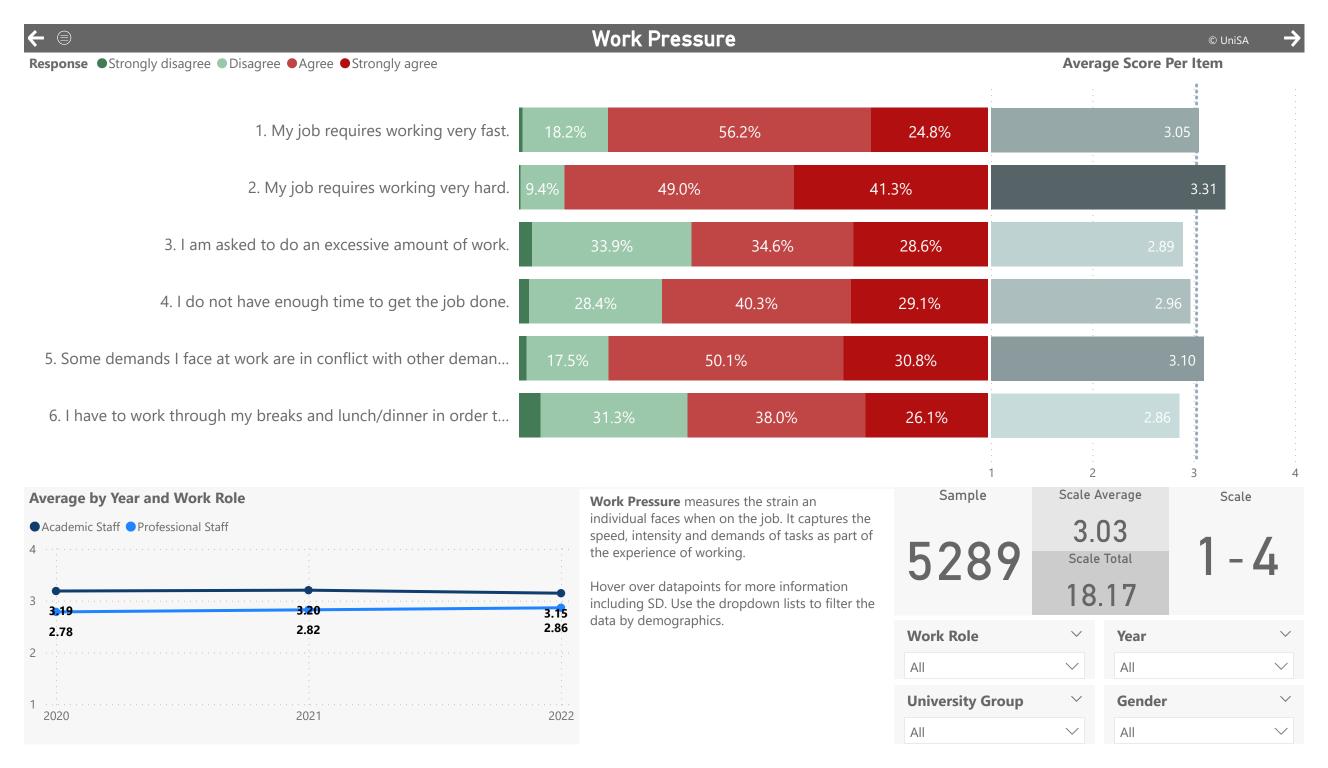


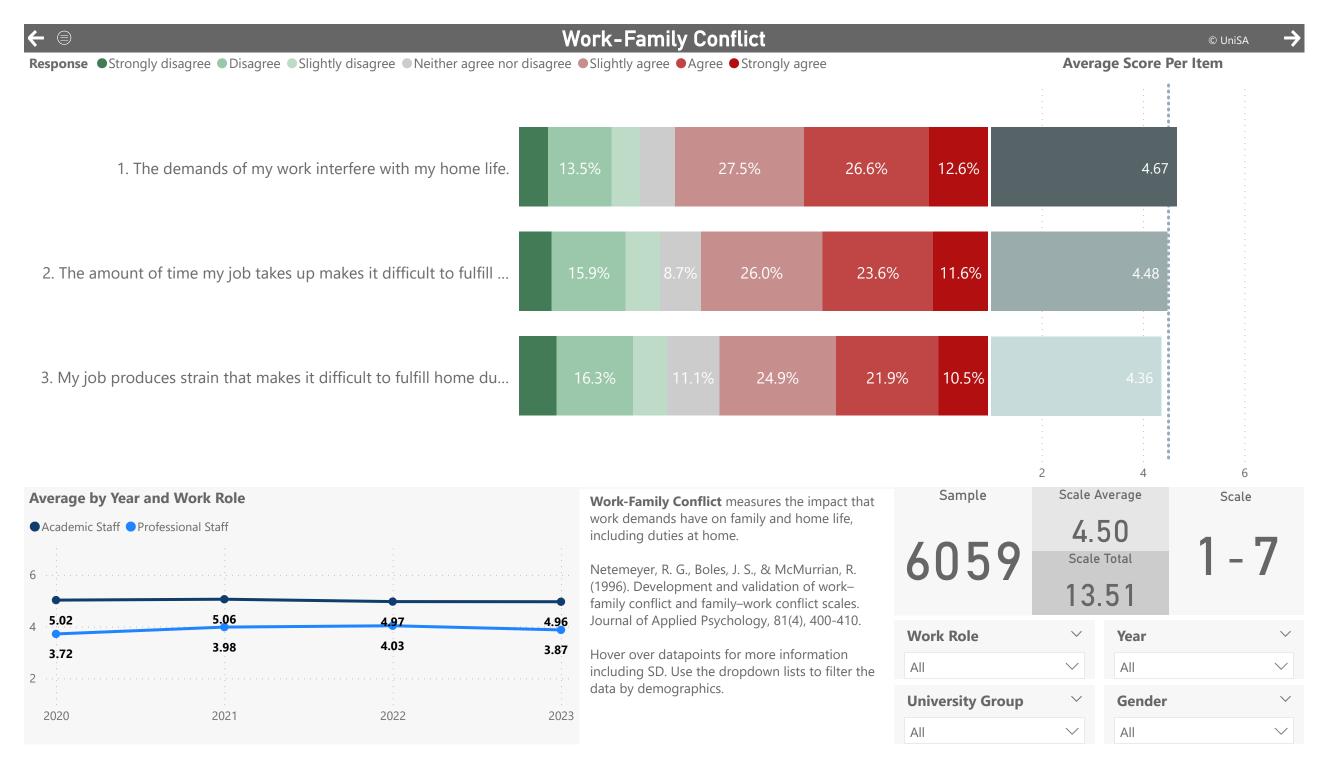












**Response** Never Sometimes Most of the time Always

1. You find it difficult to fulfil your personal interests because you...

23.8%

2. You do not fully enjoy your personal interests because you wo...

29.0%

3. Your work schedule makes it difficult for you to fulfil your pers...

21.4%

# Appendix

## Notes on the Study

Wave 1 of the survey was conducted in 2020, wave 2 was 2021, wave 3 was 2022 and wave 4 was 2023.

Recruitment: Participants in waves 1 and 2 of the survey were contacted through a range of methods, including through university communications and the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU). Waves 3 and 4 were all previous participants. We note that due to some significant changes in staff numbers through this period, participant attrition is noticeable, especially considering we only contacted previous respondents for waves 3 and 4. This was after the worst of the staff losses in the sector in from 2020 to 2022.

## Notes on the Report

**Gender:** While the survey encouraged self-identification, due to the low proportion in the data genders other than female and male were removed from the interactive filters. However, their data is still included as part of means and aggregations.

### **University Affiliation**

Australian Technology Network: Curtin University, Deakin University, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, University of South Australia, University of Technology Sydney

Group of 8: Australian National University, Monash University, University of Adelaide, University of Melbourne, University of New South Wales, University of Queensland, University of Sydney, University of Western Australia

Innovative Research University, Charles Darwin University, Flinders University, James Cook University, La Trobe University, Macquarie University, Univ

Regional Universities Network: Central Queensland University, Charles Sturt University, Federation University, Southern Cross University of New England, University of Southern Queensland, University of the Sunshine Coast

Other or Unaffiliated Universities: Australian Catholic University, Bond University, Edith Cowan University, Murdoch University, Queensland University of Technology, Swinburne University of Technology, University of Newcastle, University of Notre Dame, University of Tasmania

#### Benchmarks: