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Survey on the Mental Well-being of Civil Servants in Bosnia and Herzegovina



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* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and ICJ opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of independence.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ReSPA	Regional School of Public Administration
p	Statistical significance
**	Statistical significance at the 0.01 level
*	Statistical significance at the 0.05 level
M	Arithmetic mean
WHO	World Health Organisation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research on the mental well-being of civil servants was conducted to gain insight into the actual state of well-being of civil servants in Bosnia and Herzegovina and identify factors in the work environment that affect mental well-being. The research aims to develop various corrective measures for enhancing mental well-being through various personal and professional development activities based on the data obtained.

The research has contributed to expanding civil servants' knowledge of mental well-being. After answering the questions, respondents received detailed descriptions of the components of mental well-being and interpretations of their responses as feedback, which raised awareness about the importance of mental well-being.

The research also contributed to the culture that promotes openness to mental well-being, reduces stigma, and encourages employees to share their experiences and seek help when needed. Periodically conducting surveys and interviews with employees to understand their overall well-being and satisfaction in the workplace will further assist in creating better working conditions and providing support to employees.

Of the 27,075 civil servants in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1,303 participated in the mental well-being survey, representing 4.81%.² In terms of administrations, the research involved 829 civil servants from the institutions of the *Republika Srpska*, 267 from the *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, and 207 from the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The overall mental well-being is represented as the sum of scores obtained from three components: emotional, social, and psychological. In a sample of 1,303 respondents whose responses were processed, the overall mental well-being of civil servants in Bosnia and Herzegovina is 3.43 (Figure 1).

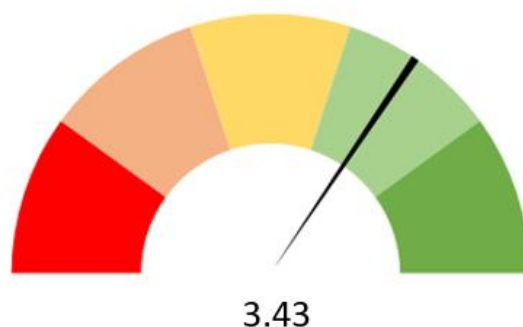


Figure 1: The average rating for overall mental well-being of civil servants in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Figure 2 shows the average overall mental well-being of public servants in Bosnia and Herzegovina by levels of administration. Civil servants of the *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina* exhibit slightly higher overall mental well-being (3.46), followed closely by those of the *Republika Srpska* (3.45), while those at the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina show a slightly lower level (3.38).

² This sample size corresponds to a marginal error of 3.48% and a confidence level of 99%.



Figure 2: The average rating for overall mental well-being of civil servants in Bosnia and Herzegovina by levels of administration

Emotional well-being is measured based on responses regarding the presence or absence of work-induced positive emotions. As seen in the results, respondents generally have positive feelings regarding their work, and the average rating of the emotional well-being of civil servants is 3.35, which indicates that this component is slightly above average (Figure 3).

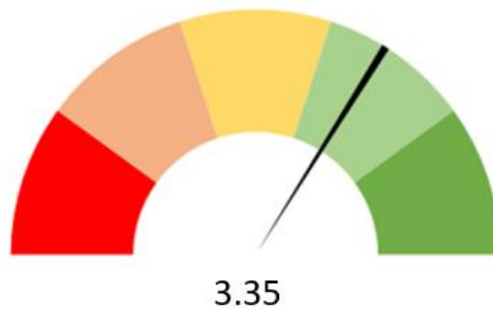


Figure 3: The average rating for emotional well-being of civil servants in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Social well-being encompasses an individual's ability to adapt and integrate into their social and/or work environment, connect with others, feel a sense of belonging to a collective, enjoy an atmosphere of mutual affection, respect, and trust in interactions with colleagues. Based on the self-assessment of respondents' social well-being, the average rating of social well-being is 3.31, indicating that this component is slightly above the average value (Figure 4).

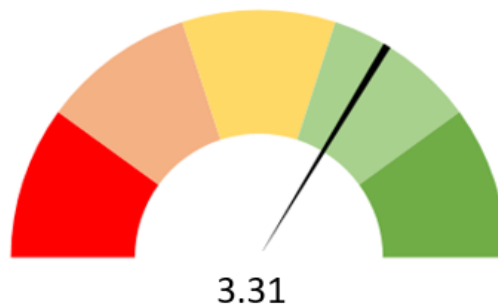


Figure 4: The average rating for social well-being of civil servants in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Psychological well-being involves self-acceptance, meaning self-love and valuing one's

being despite being aware of one's limitations and shortcomings. The average rating of the psychological well-being of civil servants is 3.65, which is slightly higher than other aspects of mental well-being (Figure 5).

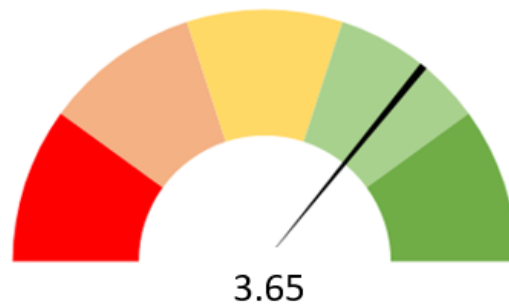


Figure 5: The average rating for psychological well-being of civil servants in Bosnia and Herzegovina

By comparing the results based on gender, age, location of employment, job position, marital status, financial status, and health status, differences in the overall level of mental well-being among different participant groups were identified. It was found that there are no differences in the level of mental well-being between male and female respondents, but there are differences among respondents of different age groups. Civil servants younger than 30 and those older than 60 achieve a slightly higher level. It has also been shown that the location of employment and the institution where they work do not make a difference in the level of mental well-being. However, whether someone is in a managerial position or not does affect overall well-being, as well as the social and psychological components. Individuals in managerial positions achieve higher levels of well-being. As expected, significant differences exist among respondents based on their financial and health status, with higher well-being levels among civil servants who rated their status as good or very good. The research also revealed that there are no differences among respondents based on their marital status, whether they are in a marriage or de facto relationship, single, divorced, or widowed. However, significant differences were found based on how they rated the quality of their relationship. Higher levels of well-being were achieved by respondents who were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of their relationship.

1. INTRODUCTION

Mental well-being represents a crucial and determining condition for the health of every individual. It affects social relationships, work performance, the ability to take care of oneself and others, and the capacity to make sound business and life decisions. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as “complete physical, mental, and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease.” The word “well-being,” as a synonym for “prosperity” (from Latin “*prosperitas*” meaning “successful growth”), in the broadest sense, signifies a state of development, success, and happiness.

The concept of mental well-being encompasses the unity of emotional, social, and psychological well-being. Individuals who achieve the entirety of mental well-being are more resilient to stress, fulfil their potential, are more productive, and contribute more to their community.

Impaired mental well-being can lead to substance abuse, hasten the onset of other health problems, hinder an individual’s ability to fit into a collective, result in social exclusion, and even lead to self-harm and suicide.

The work that active workers perform and the work environment where they spend a significant part of their days and lives significantly affect their mental state, positively or negatively. The consequences of poor mental well-being of individuals spread to their immediate and broader environment, and the more such individuals there are, the greater the burden on the community and society. Therefore, it is essential to identify work-related factors and the work environment that promote or endanger the mental well-being of employees.

Considering this, the survey “Mental well-being of civil servants” was conducted in Serbia in October 2022. ReSPA organised a regional survey on the same topic conducted in other ReSPA members that expressed interest in this initiative, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and North Macedonia. Regional research provided additional cross-cultural data, which will establish a strong foundation for taking action to improve well-being. The focus of the regional research is the mental well-being of civil servants, including their emotional, social, and psychological well-being.

This report contains the research results involving civil servants from Bosnia and Herzegovina and recommendations for improving the existing well-being.

2. SURVEY RESULTS ON EMOTIONAL, SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

The survey was conducted online using a specially designed questionnaire, and it was completed by 1,303 civil servants employed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The questions in the questionnaire pertained to the domains of emotional, social, and psychological well-being, and participants provided self-assessments in their responses. The survey was carried out in September 2023.

2.1. The emotional component of well-being

In the section related to this well-being component, the questionnaire contained ten statements in which respondents expressed their degree of agreement or disagreement and one open-ended question. The following chart depicts the degree of agreement with the statements from the questionnaire expressed in percentages (Figure 6).

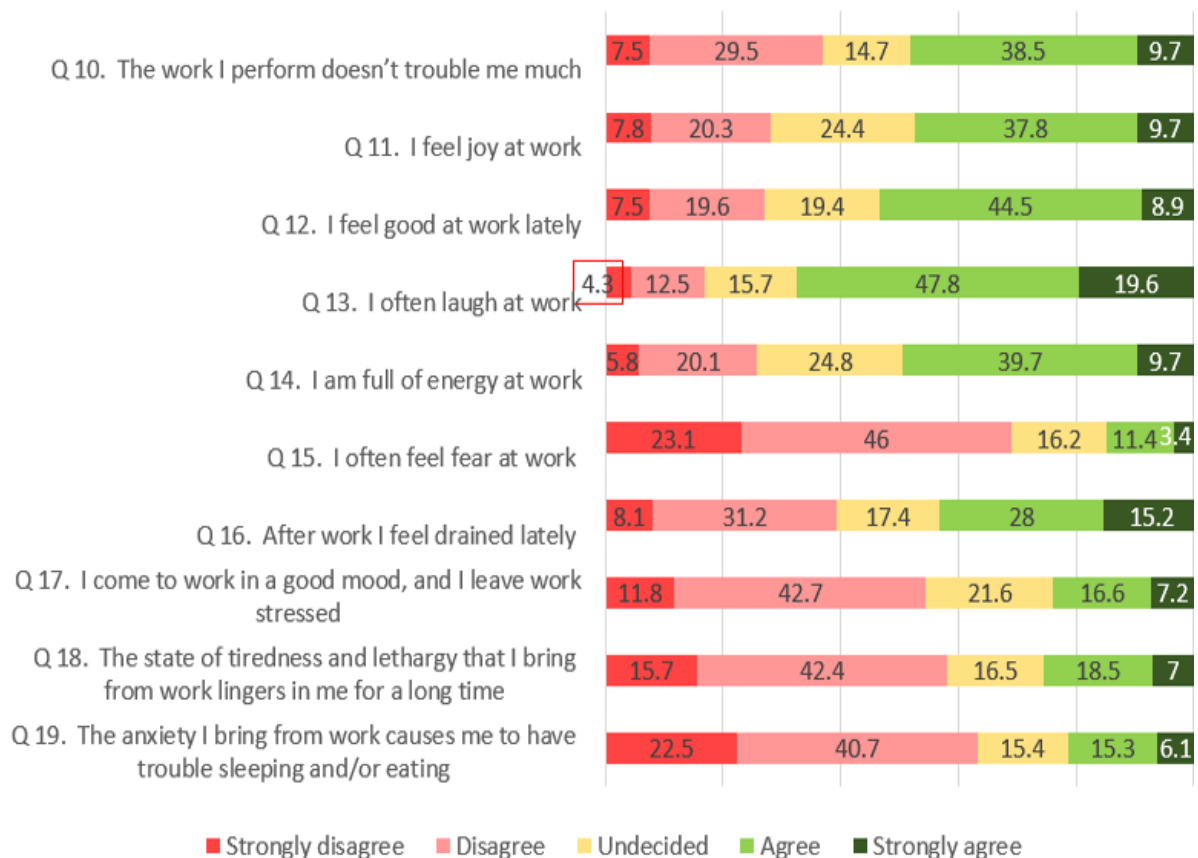


Figure 6: Assessment of the emotional well-being

There is no significant difference in responses among participants from different levels of administration. They mostly agree with the statement, "I often laugh at work". With this statement, 65.9% of respondents in the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina agree or strongly agree, 61.8% in the institutions of the *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, and

69.4% in the institutions of the *Republika Srpska* (Figure 7).

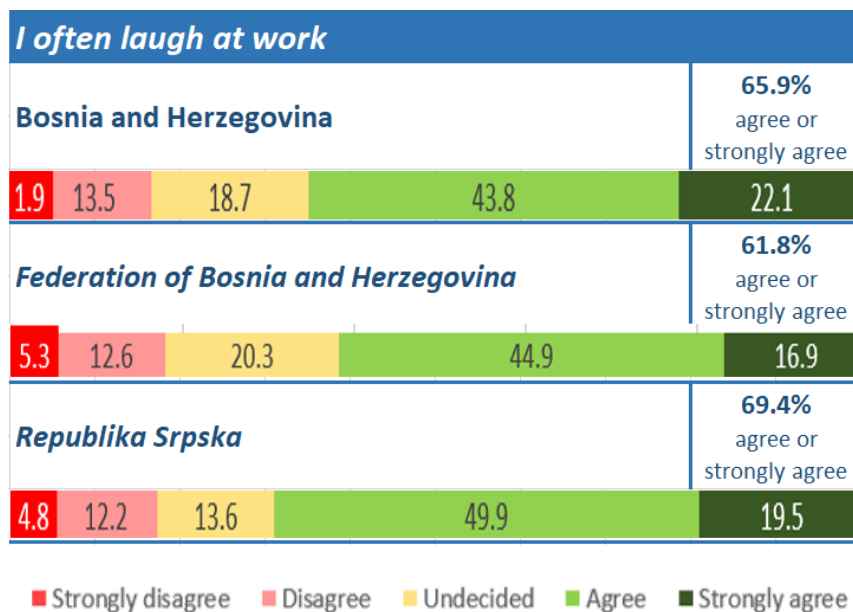


Figure 7: Degree of agreement with the statement, “I often laugh at work”, expressed in percentages

The highest number of disagree or strongly disagree responses is for the statement, “I often feel fear at work”. With this statement, 69.9% of respondents in the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina disagree or strongly disagree, 65.2% in the institutions of *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, and 70.5% in the institutions of the *Republika Srpska* (Figure 8).

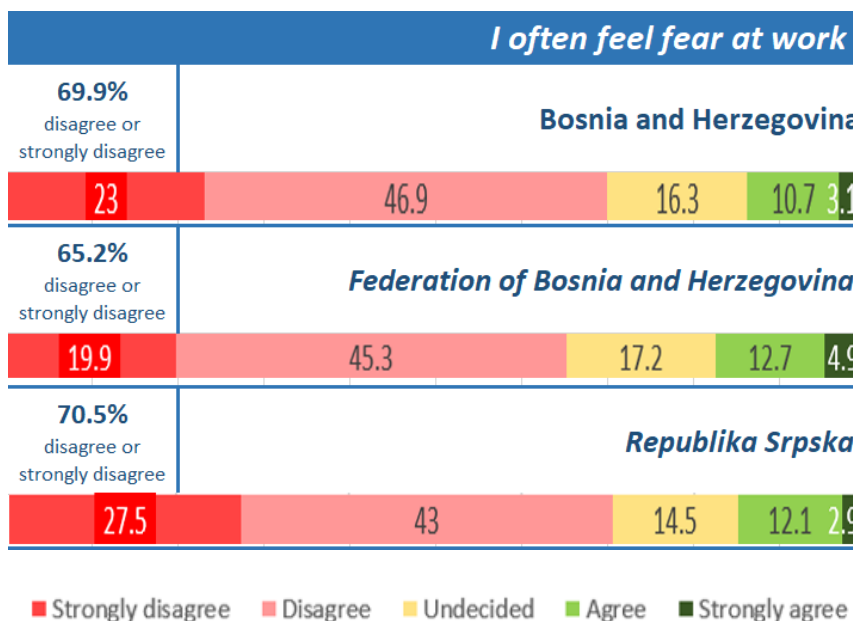


Figure 8: Degree of disagreement with the statement, “I often feel fear at work”, expressed in percentages

Based on the content analysis of the responses to the first open-ended question, “*How would you describe the mood you bring to work?*” the following dominant themes were identified and categorised as “positive feelings”, “neutral and borderline feelings,” and “negative feelings” (Figure 9).

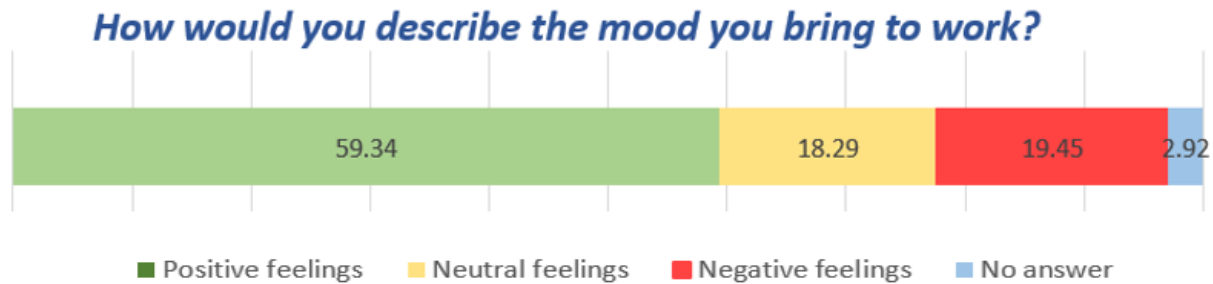


Figure 9: Responses to the first open-ended question from the questionnaire

A total of 772 respondents described the mood they bring to work in a positive way, which accounts for 59.34% of the responses. They used terms such as good, wonderful, full of enthusiasm and zeal, willingly, nice, I love my job and the people I work with, smiling, optimistic, relaxed because I know the job, and even up to: I go to work and sing, albeit with the addition of “for now.” Some participants even mentioned feeling grateful for working and having the opportunity to improve in their jobs, while others expressed gratitude because they had previously worked in the private sector, where it was much more challenging.

Responses coded as “negative feelings” have a lower frequency, with 253 participants or 19.45% of responses providing such answers. However, they were very precise in describing their feelings, mentioning anxiety, apathy, depression, lack of motivation, boredom, bitterness, or comparing their arrival at work to attending a funeral, going to war, a camp, or forced labour.

“Neutral feelings have the lowest frequency, with 238 respondents, accounting for 18.29% of the responses. These are responses from participants who describe the feelings they bring to work as normal, average, variable, without specific emotions, dependent on the day and circumstances.

Thirty-eight respondents did not answer this question.

2.2. The social component of well-being

The questionnaire for measuring social well-being contained ten statements, and the responses provided data on social inclusion, social actualisation, and social contribution. The following chart depicts the degree of agreement with the statements from the questionnaire expressed in percentages (Figure 10).

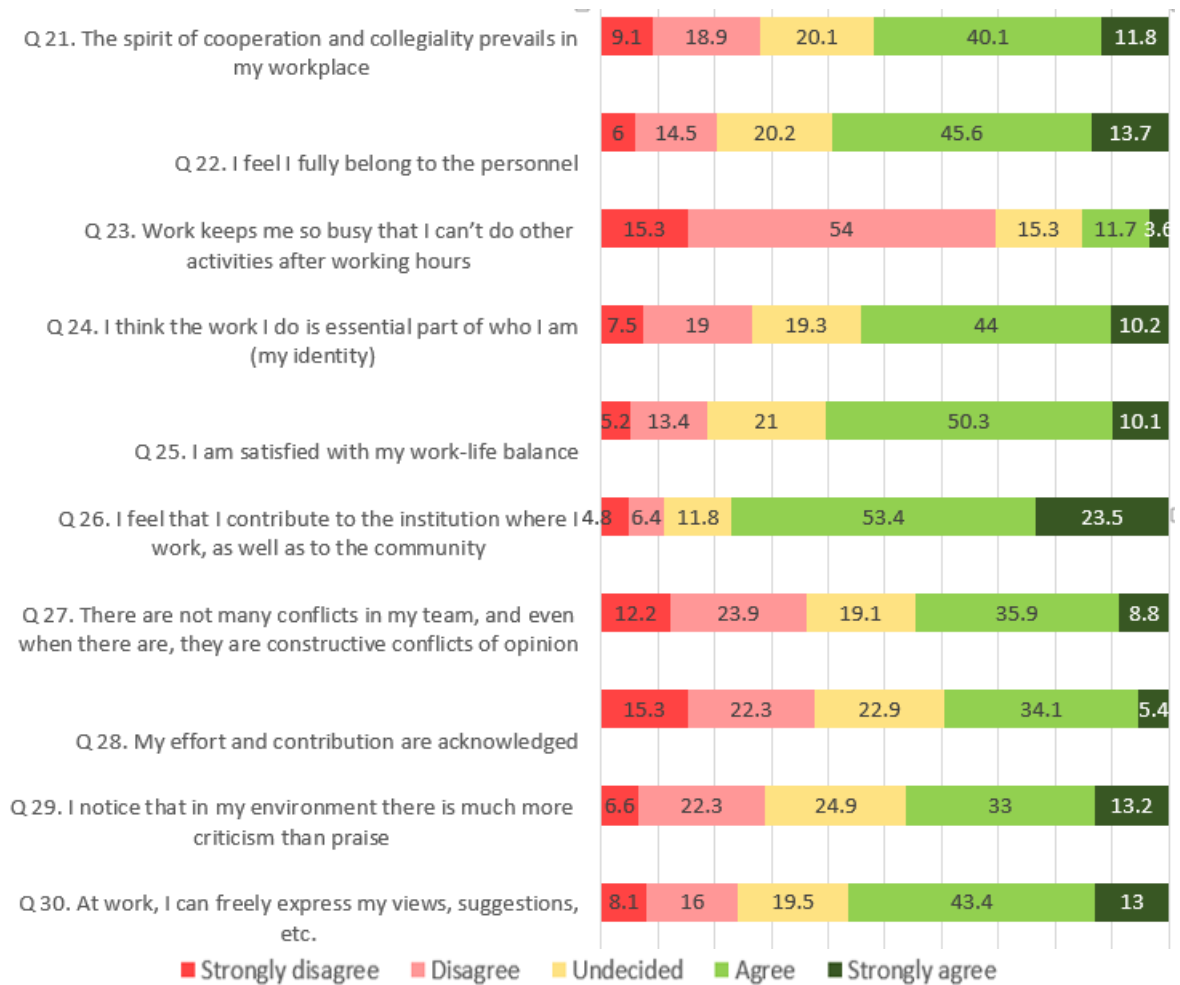


Figure 10: Assessment of the social well-being

The sense of contributing to the community is shared by respondents at all levels of administration, but it is more pronounced among civil servants at the institutions of the *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. The statement is supported by 83.2% of civil servants in the institutions of the *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 77.4% in the institutions of the *Republika Srpska*, and 66.7% in the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Figure 11).

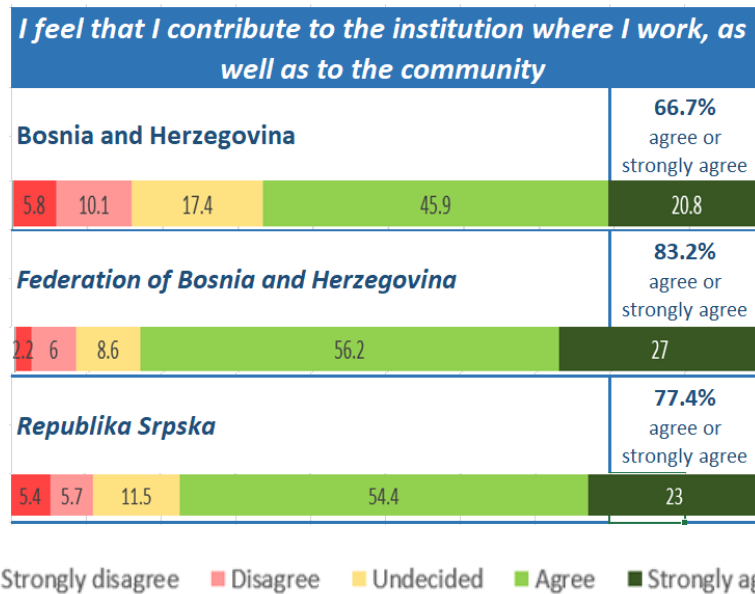


Figure 11: Degree of agreement with the statement, “I feel that I contribute to the institution where I work, as well as to the community”

Civil servants in the *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina* agree more than employees at other levels of administration with the statement, “I can freely express my views, suggestions, etc.” (Figure 12).

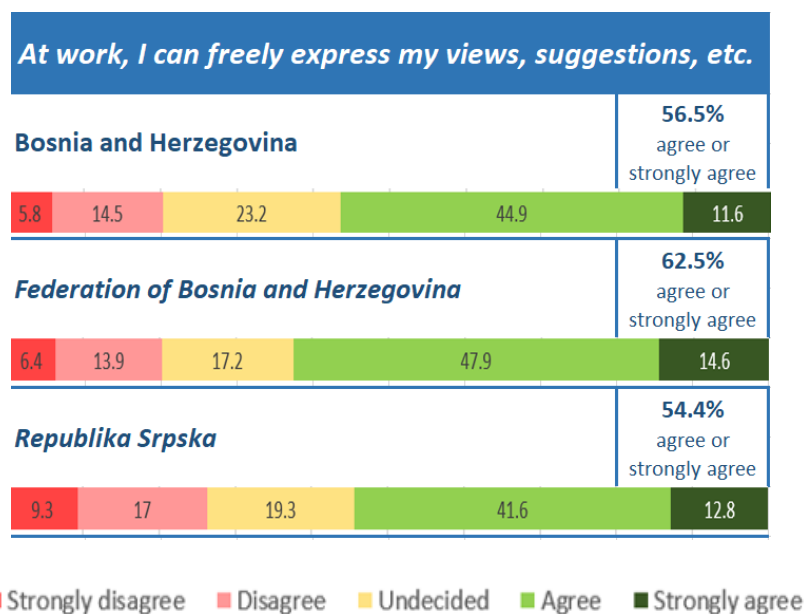


Figure 12: Degree of agreement with the statement, “At work, I can freely express my views, suggestions, etc.”

52.7% of the civil servants in the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina strongly agree that there is more criticism than praise at work. The statement is supported by 49.4% of the civil servants in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 43.5% of the civil servants in the institutions of the *Republika Srpska* (Figure 13).

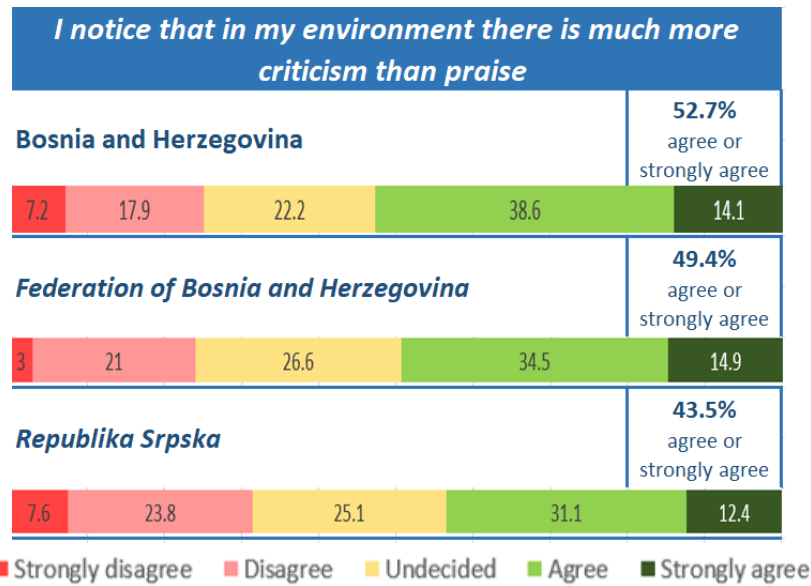


Figure 13: Degree of agreement with the statement, “I notice that in my environment, there is much more criticism than praise”

On other questions, there are no significant differences in responses among respondents at different levels of administration.

The questionnaire also includes one open-ended question in this section. Based on the content analysis of the responses to the second open-ended question, “*In your opinion, what are the most common causes of tension and conflict at work?*” the following dominant themes were identified and coded: “political influence”, “social interaction”, “professional (in)competence”, “financial reasons”, and “social perception” (Figure 14).

The highest frequency is for “social interaction,” which was 42.59% of the responses. Here, general descriptions prevail: poor organisation and division of work, interpersonal relationships, poor communication, misunderstandings, and lack of collegiality.

Under “social perception,” 26.63% of the responses attribute the cause of tensions to some personal traits of colleagues, such as ego, vanity, arrogance, intolerance, and the like.

Some respondents attribute the cause to the “professional (in)competence” of colleagues (6,06%), “political influence” (2,53%), or “financial reasons” (1,61%).

Just over 15% of respondents stated that they had not experienced any tensions or conflicts in their workplace.

The question was not answered by 68 respondents.

In your opinion, what are the most common causes of tension and conflict at work?

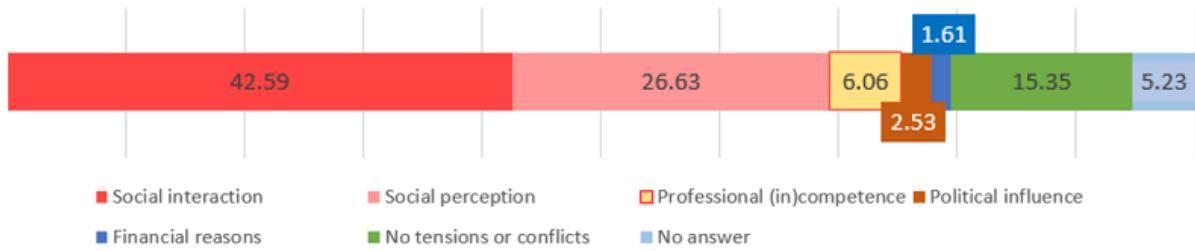


Figure 14: Responses to the second open-ended question from the questionnaire

2.3. The psychological component of well-being

The questionnaire contains ten statements to measure the psychological component of well-being, and the responses provide data on self-efficacy, personal growth and development, self-evaluation, and a sense of autonomy. Figure 15 depicts the degree of agreement with the statements from the questionnaire expressed in percentages.

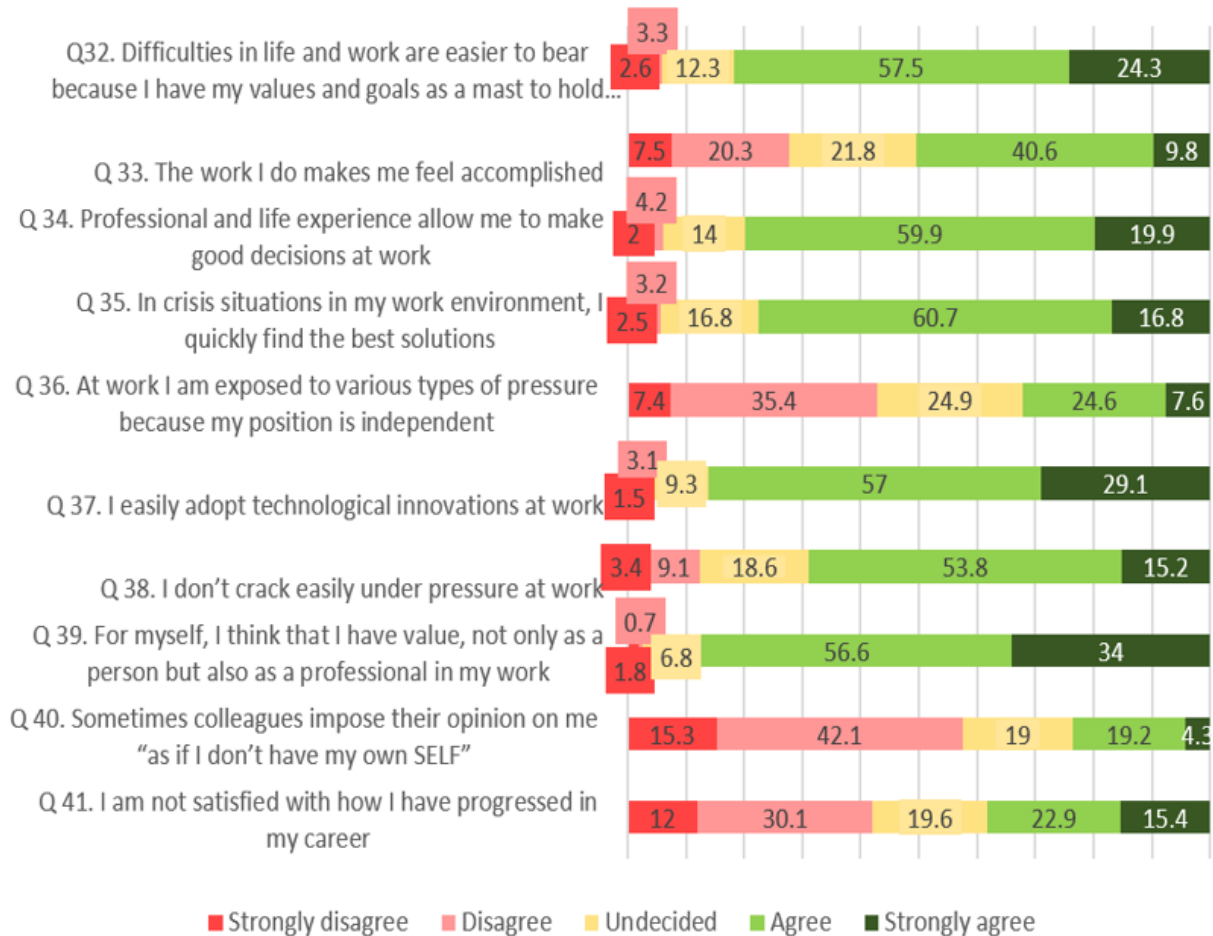


Figure 15: Assessment of the psychological well-being

Civil servants at all levels of administration perceive themselves as valuable, not only as a person but also as professionals in their work. With this statement, 92.3% of respondents in the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina agree, 92.6% of respondents in the institutions of the *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, and 89.6% in the institutions of the *Republika Srpska*. They also agree with the statement that they easily adopt innovations at work (institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina 85.6%, institutions of *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina* 88.4%, institutions of the *Republika Srpska* 85.5%).

Differences arise in responses to the question about the pressure they face at work. Civil servants at the institutions of the *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina* experience more pressure than civil servants at the Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the institutions of the *Republika Srpska*. This statement is supported by 40.5% of civil servants of the institutions of the *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 33.3% of the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and 29.3% of the institutions of the *Republika Srpska* (Figure 16).

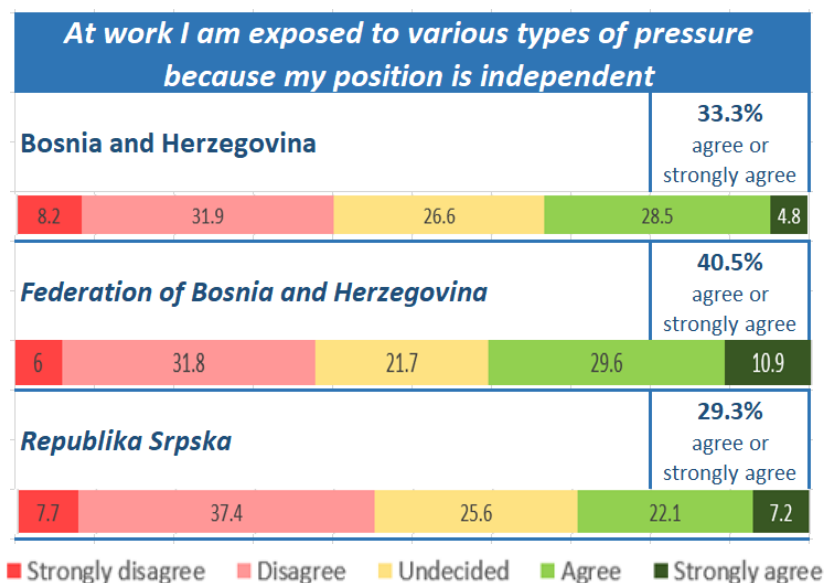


Figure 16: Degree of agreement with the statement, “At work, I am exposed to various types of pressure because my position is independent”

Civil servants in the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina are less satisfied with their career progression compared to employees at other levels of administration. The statement “I am not satisfied with how I have progressed in my career” is supported by 45.8% of civil servants in the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 39.1% in the institutions of the *Republika Srpska*, and 30% in the institutions of the *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Figure 17).

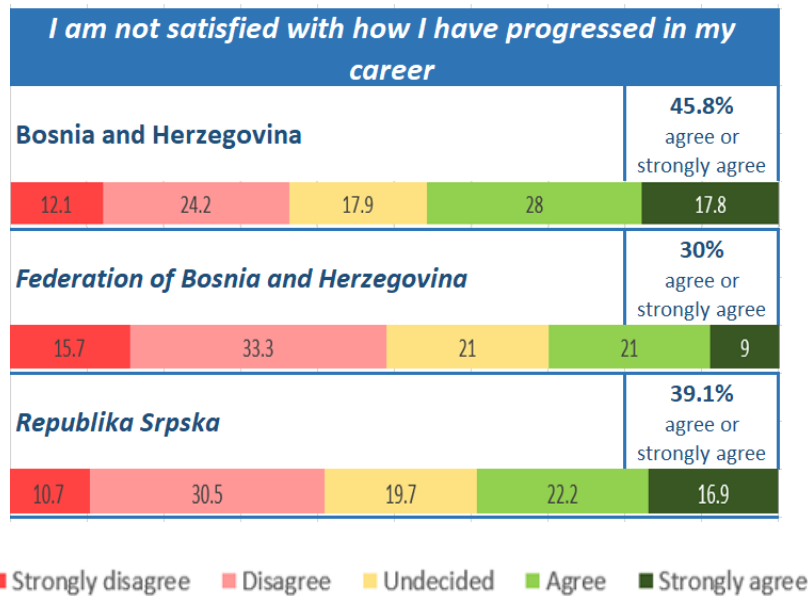


Figure 16: Degree of agreement with the statement, “I am not satisfied with how I have progressed in my career”

The questionnaire also includes one open-ended question in this section. Based on the analysis of the content of the third open-ended question, *Describe your relationship with superiors (Do you have problems with superiors or the superiors have problems with you)*; the following dominant themes were identified and coded as a problem originating from the employee, “a problem within me,” “a problem with authority,” and “a respectful relationship” (Figure 17).

The code “a respectful relationship” has the highest frequency, indicating a good relationship between employees and superiors (authorities). They described the relationship as solid, excellent, respectful, friendly, and humane, without conflict, honest and collegial, professional, and based on equality. This type of response was provided by 965 respondents, accounting for 74.06% of all responses.

Negative experiences were reported by 190 participants, constituting 14.58% of all responses. They mention having issues because authorities know less than their subordinates, lack experience, and that authorities are egotistical, focus on trivial matters, take credit for others’ work, or are not focused on real societal problems. Another group of participants begins their response by explaining that they don’t have a general problem with authority but do if authorities are disinterested in the job and appointed based on political or family connections.

Only 55 participants (4.45%) identified a “problem within themselves”. They describe themselves as too lenient, having difficulty setting boundaries, struggling to say no, or being overly honest.

A total of 76 participants did not provide any answer to this question, or they gave an answer from which the nature of that relationship cannot be concluded.

"Describe your relationship with superiors (do you have problems with superiors or the superiors have problems with you)"

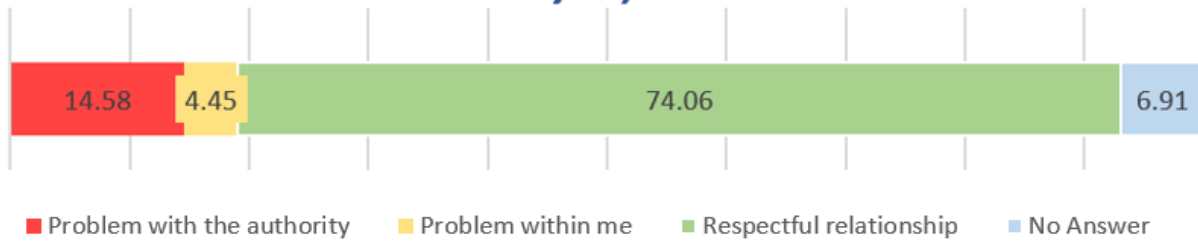


Figure 17: Responses to the third open-ended question from the questionnaire

3. SURVEY RESULTS ON SOCIOECONOMIC STATUSES

The content of this chapter provides insight into the mental well-being of participants of different socioeconomic statuses. Comparisons were conducted to determine the existence of differences in the levels of well-being components among specific groups of participants based on gender, age, location, employment position, marital status, material, and health conditions.

3.1 Gender and mental well-being

Based on the recorded values, the mental well-being of all participants is at an average level or moderately above average, and gender differences are not significant (Table 1).

	Gender			p
	Female	Male	I prefer not to say	
Emotional component	3.31	3.43	3.03	*
Social component	3.29	3.36	3.00	
Psychological component	3.67	3.64	3.43	
Mental well-being	3.42	3.48	3.15	

Table 1. Gender and mental well-being

3.2 Age and mental well-being

There are differences among respondents of different age groups. Civil servants younger than 30 and those older than 60 achieve a slightly higher level of mental well-being (Table 2).

	Age					p
	Up to 30 years	30 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	61 years and older	
Emotional component	3.56	3.32	3.30	3.35	3.39	**
Social component	3.43	3.30	3.24	3.33	3.48	*
Psychological component	3.64	3.64	3.65	3.67	3.74	
Mental well-being	3.54	3.42	3.40	3.45	3.54	*

Table 2. Age and mental well-being

3.3 Location of employment and mental well-being

The research has shown no statistically significant difference in the overall well-being of civil servants based on their location and organisation/institution of employment (Table 3 and Table 4). Furthermore, differences were observed among civil servants in managerial positions and

those who are not, with higher levels of well-being achieved by civil servants in managerial roles (Table 4 and Table 5). Among managers, lower levels of well-being are observed for managers in the position of Assistant to the Head of Civil Service Authority (Table 6).

	Location			P
	Banja Luka	Sarajevo	Other	
Emotional component	3.36	3.32	3.37	
Social component	3.25	3.26	3.39	**
Psychological component	3.62	3.69	3.67	
Mental well-being	3.41	3.42	3.48	

Table 3. Location of employment and mental well-being

	Organisation/institution of employment										P
	Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina				Institutions of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina				Institutions of the Republika Srpska		
	Ministry	Administrative organisation within Ministries	Autonomous administrative organisation	Other institutions established by a special law or decision	Federal level	Cantonal level	Municipality/city	Judicial authority	Administrative body of the Republika Srpska	Local self-government unit	
Emotional component	3.24	3.27	3.33	3.33	3.38	3.32	3.01	3.33	3.37	3.39	
Social component	3.22	3.11	3.12	3.33	3.35	3.43	3.11	3.66	3.30	3.41	*
Psychological component	3.60	3.70	3.66	3.70	3.72	3.69	3.54	3.62	3.63	3.69	
Mental well-being	3.35	3.36	3.37	3.46	3.48	3.48	3.22	3.54	3.43	3.50	

Table 4. Organisation/Institution of employment and mental well-being

	Do you do management work?		P
	Yes	No	
Emotional component	3.36	3.35	
Social component	3.44	3.27	**
Psychological component	3.79	3.61	**
Mental well-being	3.53	3.41	**

Table 5. Managerial position in the organisation and respondents' mental well-being

	Job post					p
	Head of Internal Organisational Unit of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Senior Civil Servant in the Administrative Body of the Republika Srpska	Head of Department in the Local Self-Government Unit of the Republika Srpska	Assistant to the Head of Civil Service Authority of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Other	
Emotional component	3.27	3.38	3.62	3.14	3.65	*
Social component	3.28	3.47	3.63	3.28	3.85	**
Psychological component	3.72	3.82	3.86	3.72	3.88	
Mental well-being	3.42	3.56	3.70	3.38	3.79	**

Table 6. Management of an organisational unit and mental well-being

3.4 Marital status and mental well-being

There are no statistically significant differences in mental well-being among respondents with different marital statuses (Table 7). However, it has been shown that a higher level of relationship satisfaction is associated with higher mental well-being for those in a relationship. An interesting finding is that out of the total number of respondents in a relationship (comprising 66.3% of all civil servants participating in the study), as many as 92.3% are satisfied or very satisfied with the relationship quality. Very dissatisfied respondents account for 0.8%, and 2.2% are dissatisfied (Table 8).

	Marital status					p
	Single	Married	Non-marital partnership	Divorced	Widow/widower	
Emotional component	3.31	3.37	3.46	3.28	3.29	
Social component	3.25	3.34	3.34	3.21	3.28	
Psychological component	3.61	3.68	3.63	3.58	3.59	
Mental well-being	3.39	3.47	3.48	3.36	3.39	

Table 7. Marital status and mental well-being

	How would you rate the quality of your partner relationship?					p
	I am very dissatisfied	I am not satisfied	I cannot decide	I am satisfied	I am very satisfied	
Emotional component	3.36	2.98	3.05	3.34	3.46	**
Social component	3.09	2.83	3.16	3.33	3.40	**
Psychological component	3.50	3.48	3.45	3.64	3.74	**
Mental well-being	3.31	3.09	3.22	3.43	3.53	**

Table 8. Quality of partner relationship and mental well-being

3.5 Financial status and mental well-being

A relationship between financial status and mental well-being has been demonstrated as expected. Those who have good or very good financial status achieve a higher level of mental well-being, while the lowest level is observed among employees who rated their financial status as very poor (Table 9).

	Financial Status Assessment					p
	Very bad – I can't afford the basics	Bad – I can't have everything I need	Average	Good – I can often afford everything I need, but it happens that I don't have enough money	Very good – I can afford more than I actually need	
Emotional component	2.33	2.79	3.31	3.44	3.60	**
Social component	2.33	2.74	3.29	3.39	3.50	**
Psychological component	3.40	3.40	3.59	3.71	3.81	**
Mental well-being	2.69	2.98	3.40	3.51	3.64	**

Table 9. Financial status and mental well-being

3.6 Health status and mental well-being

Mental well-being is an integral part of overall health, so, unsurprisingly, respondents who rated their health as good or very good have a higher level of mental well-being (Table 10). Among civil servants in Bosnia and Herzegovina, slightly more than half (53.2%) fall into this category.

	Health Status Assessment					p
	Very bad – I have severe health problems	Bad – I have serious health problems	Average – I have minor health problems	Good – I don't have any health problems	Very good – my health status is excellent	
Emotional component	2.40	2.77	3.14	3.53	3.72	**
Social component	2.57	2.89	3.18	3.43	3.53	**
Psychological component	3.36	3.48	3.58	3.70	3.84	**
Mental well-being	2.78	3.05	3.30	3.55	3.70	**

Table 10. Health status and mental well-being

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research on the mental well-being of civil servants in Bosnia and Herzegovina was conducted with the following objectives based on the obtained results:

- Gain insight into the actual state of well-being among civil servants.
- Explore different dimensions of well-being (emotional, social, and psychological).
- Investigate whether there are significant differences based on the demographic characteristics of respondents (gender, age, location of employment, economic and health status, job position).

The research aims to develop corrective measures for enhancing mental well-being through various personal and professional development activities based on the data obtained.

On a sample of 1,303 respondents, the research revealed that:

- Respondents generally have positive feelings regarding their work, and the average rating of the **emotional well-being** of civil servants is 3.35, which indicates that this component is slightly above average. Individual items on this subscale have ratings ranging from 2.89 to 3.74. The lowest average rating is for the statement “I have recently felt ‘wring-out,’” with which 43.2% of respondents agree. It is encouraging that most respondents agree or strongly agree that they often laugh at work (67.4%), and 69.1% disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that they feel fear at work. Respondents primarily describe states of emotional satisfaction and positive mood when describing the feelings they bring to work. When asked the open question, “How would you describe the mood you bring to work?” seven hundred seventy-two respondents (59.34%) expressed positive feelings. Approximately 20% of respondents have negative feelings when coming to work, while 18.29% could be described as having neutral feelings. Others did not respond to this question. However, as can be seen from the overall sample, emotional satisfaction and positive mood are predominant among civil servants when they come to work and perform their duties.
- Based on the self-assessment of respondents’ social well-being, the average rating of **social well-being** is 3.36, indicating that this component is slightly above the average value. Individual items in this subscale have ratings ranging from 2.76 to 3.84. 76.9% of civil servants feel they contribute to the institution they work for and the broader community. 60.4% of them are satisfied with their work-life balance. Civil servants are most bothered by the fact that there is more criticism than praise in their environment. The majority of responses to the question “In your opinion, what are the most common reasons for conflicts in the workplace?” fall within the category labelled as “social interaction,” which pertains to the interpersonal relationships between two or more individuals in the workplace (42.59% of responses). Here, general descriptions prevail: interpersonal relationships, poor communication with supervisors and colleagues, discrimination and favouritism towards certain colleagues, lengthy and purposeless meetings, criticism without arguments, poor organisation and task distribution, ineffective leadership, lack of discipline, injustices, and unequal rules for everyone. Respondents also mention working under pressure, tight deadlines, workload, and poor workload distribution. Other respondents perceive the problem to be related to the personal characteristics of their colleagues (26.63%), professional (in)competence

(6.06%), or the influence of politics (2.53%). Financial reasons are mentioned as a cause of tension and conflicts in only 1.61% of the responses.

- The average rating of the **psychological well-being** of civil servants is 3.65, which is slightly higher than other aspects of mental well-being. Based on the obtained results, the average ratings of items on the subscale of psychological well-being range from 3.00 to 4.20. This indicates that respondents have average to good or slightly above-average psychological well-being. The majority, 90.6% of the respondents, have a strong sense of their worth as individuals and professionals. Additionally, 86.1% claim to easily adapt to technological innovations at work, and 81.8% agree that they have clear life goals and know what they are striving for. The lowest scores were obtained in the field of career advancement satisfaction. 42.1% of respondents agreed with the statement that they were not satisfied with their career progression. Regarding the responses to the third open question, "Describe your relationship with superiors (do you have problems with superiors or do the superiors have problems with you)," the majority of respondents reported having a respectful relationship. This type of response was provided by 965 respondents, making up 74.06% of all responses. Only 14.58% of civil servants reported problems with authority, most commonly with their immediate supervisor, while a mere 4.45% identified problems within themselves.
- Based on the obtained average scores on the subscales of individual components, the **overall average assessment of mental well-being** is 3.43, which suggests a slightly above-average level. This result is encouraging, especially considering the large number of completed questionnaires.
- By comparing the results based on gender, age, location of employment, job position, marital status, financial status, and health status, differences in the overall level of mental well-being among different participant groups were identified. It was found that there are no differences in the level of mental well-being between male and female respondents, but there are differences among respondents of different age groups. Civil servants younger than 30 and those older than 60 achieve a slightly higher level. It has also been shown that the location of employment and the institution where they work do not make a difference in the level of mental well-being. However, whether someone is in a managerial position or not does affect overall well-being, as well as the social and psychological components. Individuals in managerial positions achieve higher levels of well-being. As expected, significant differences exist among respondents based on their financial and health status, with higher well-being levels among civil servants who rated their status as good or very good. The research also revealed that there are no differences among respondents based on their marital status, whether they are in a marriage or de facto relationship, single, divorced, or widowed. However, significant differences were found based on how they rated the quality of their relationship. Higher levels of well-being were achieved by respondents who were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of their relationship.

Below are the strengths and areas for development based on the survey.

Areas of strengths

- A large proportion of civil servants think for themselves that they have value, not only as people but also as professionals in their work (90.6%). They also think that their personal values make it easier for them to solve difficulties in life and at work (81.8%).
- A large proportion of civil servants feel that they contribute to the institution where they work and the community (76.9%). They also think they entirely belong to the team (59.4%).
- A large proportion of civil servants indicate that they often laugh at work (67.4%). They are also satisfied with their work-life balance (60.4%).

Areas for development

- Although the overall results are encouraging, there is a possibility that civil servants may not recognise signs of stress. In chronic stress, biochemical and psychological habituation is possible, where stress becomes perceived as a normal, regular state or part of one's temperament and personality. Therefore, the first recommendation is to organise training sessions to enhance participants' knowledge about the mechanisms for recognising "hidden stress" and its impact on physical health. Additionally, it is worth considering implementing programs that teach employees stress management techniques, such as meditation and mindfulness techniques, or encourage regular physical activity, which can help reduce stress and anxiety levels.
- The research has also shown that at the top of the list of reasons for conflicts and tensions in the workplace are problems in relationships with colleagues. The quality of interpersonal relationships, built through effective communication, is undoubtedly the foundation of mental well-being. A necessary condition for constructive and quality communication is the skill of listening, also known as "active listening". Hence, the second recommendation is to organise training sessions to raise participants' awareness and appreciation for the value and multiple benefits of active listening as an essential component of quality communication.
- A large proportion of civil servants notice that in their environment, there is much more criticism than praise (46.2%). A recommendation for improvement would be the organisation of training on providing feedback that includes both recognition and information on areas for improvement rather than just criticism. Additionally, the training should cover constructive ways of giving and receiving criticism.
- Almost half of respondents show dissatisfaction with their career progression (46.2%). It would be good to consider additional reward measures, set clearer criteria and reduce the role of factors outside the workplace that influence employment and career progression. Furthermore, based on the answers to the open questions, it can be

concluded that civil servants see personal connections and political affiliation as important factors regarding appointment and employment.

- Nearly half of the civil servants who participated in the study agree that they feel drained after work, and 21.4% experience sleeping or eating problems. In responses to the open-ended question, "What are the most common causes of tension and conflict at work?" tight deadlines and poor task distribution are frequently mentioned. It would be beneficial to organise special training for managers aimed at recognising opportunities to address such issues and to educate leaders and managers on the importance of mental well-being, including identifying factors that contribute to increased stress and anxiety levels among employees.

Annexe 1: Demographic Information of the Survey Sample and Population

A total of 1,303 respondents participated in the mental well-being survey. The realised sample exceeds a sufficient number of respondents and is considered valid. The survey was completed by civil servants employed in the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina (207), institutions of the *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (267), and the institutions of the *Republika Srpska* (829) (Table 11).

	Value	%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	207	15.89
<i>Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>	267	20.49
<i>Republika Srpska</i>	829	63.62
All (Σ)	1303	100.00

Table 11. Structure of the sample – level of administration

The study involved 814 women, 478 men, and 11 respondents who chose not to disclose their gender (Table 12).

	Value	%
Female	814	62.5%
Male	478	36.7%
I prefer not to say	11	0.8%
All (Σ)	1303	100.0%

Table 12. Structure of the sample – gender

The participants were divided into five age categories. The highest number of them were between 41 and 50 years old (36.0%), somewhat fewer were between 31 and 40 (31.8%), and the smallest number of participants were in the group of those older than 61 (4.2%) (Table 13).

	Value	%
Up to 30 years	178	13.7%
31 - 40	414	31.8%
41 - 50	469	36.0%
51 - 60	187	14.4%
61 years and older	55	4.2%
All (Σ)	1303	100.0%

Table 13. Structure of the sample – age

Out of 1,303 civil servants who responded to the questionnaire, the majority work in Banja

Luka (36.2%), followed by Sarajevo (22.3%). Two respondents did not answer this question (Table 14).

	Value	%
Banja Luka	471	36.20
Mostar	17	1.30
Sarajevo	290	22.30
Other	523	40.20
All (Σ)	1301	100.00

Table 14. Structure of the sample - location of employment

The majority of participants from the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina (9.9%) come from the ministries and autonomous administrative organisations within ministries. Just over half (63.7%) of the participants from the institutions of the *Republika Srpska* are employed in the administrative body and Local self-government units. In the institutions of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the majority of survey participants (12.7%) are from the *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina level*, while 7.9% of participants come from the cantonal level, level of municipality/city, and judicial authority (Table 15).

		Value	%
Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ministries	56	4.3%
	Administrative organisation within the Ministries	29	2.2%
	Autonomous administrative organisation	73	5.6%
	Other institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina established by a special law or decision	49	3.8%
Institutions of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina level	165	12.7%
	Cantonal level	65	5.0%
	Municipality/ city	27	2.1%
	Judicial authority	10	0.8%
Institutions of the Republika Srpska	Administrative body of the Republika Srpska	660	50.7%
	Local self-government unit	169	13.0%
	All (Σ)	1303	100.0%

Table 15. Structure of the sample – organisation/institution

Regarding job positions, the sample included 326 managers, accounting for 25.0% of the total (Table 16). Most commonly, these positions are in the category of Senior Civil Servant in the Administrative Authority of the *Republika Srpska* (45.7%) and Head of the Internal Organisational Unit of the *Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (21.7%) (Tables 17).

	Value	%
Yes	326	25.0%
No	977	75.0%
All (Σ)	1303	100.0%

Table 16. Structure of the sample – management of an organisational unit

	Value	%
Senior Civil Servant in the Administrative Authority of the Republika Srpska	147	45.7%
Head of the Internal Organisational Unit of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	70	21.7%
Head of department in the local self-government unit of the Republika Srpska	42	13.0%
Assistant to the Head of Civil Service Authority of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	49	15.2%
Other	14	4.3%
All (Σ)	322	100.0%

Table 17. Structure of the sample – management of an organisational unit

Regarding marital status, the participants were divided into five categories: single, married, in a non-marital partnership, divorced, and widowed. The results indicate that among civil servants, the highest percentage is married individuals at 60.9%, while the lowest percentage is widows or widowers, accounting for only 2.0% (Table 18).

	Value	%
Single	339	26.0%
Married	794	60.9%
Non-marital partnership	70	5.4%
Divorced	74	5.7%
Widow/Widower	26	2.0%
All (Σ)	1303	100.0%

Table 18. Structure of the sample – marital status

For the assessing of mental well-being, it is important not only to know if someone is in a relationship but also the quality of that relationship. Therefore, the question was posed to those who are in a marital or non-marital partnership to assess the quality of their relationship (Table 19). The data shows that as many as 92.3% of them are satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of their relationship.³

³ The average assessment of partner relationship quality is M=4.38 (Min = I am very dissatisfied [1] – Max = I am very satisfied [5]). A higher average score represents greater satisfaction.

	Value	%
I am very dissatisfied	7	0.8%
I am not satisfied	19	2.2%
I can't tell	40	4.7%
I am satisfied	362	42.2%
I am very satisfied	429	50.1%
<i>All (Σ)</i>	857	100.0%

Table 19. Quality of partner relationship assessment

Most respondents rate their financial situation as good (46.7%), meaning they can generally afford everything they need but occasionally find themselves short of money. Slightly fewer (34.7%) rate their financial situation as average, while 10.2% of the respondents believe they can afford more than they need. Others assess their financial situation as poor (7.9%) or very poor (0.5%), meaning they cannot even afford the basics (Table 20)⁴.

	Value	%
Very bad – I can't afford the basics	7	0.5%
Bad – I can't have everything I need	103	7.9%
Average	452	34.7%
Good – I can often afford everything I need. but it happens that I don't have enough money	608	46.7%
Very good – I can afford more than I actually need	133	10.2%
<i>All (Σ)</i>	1303	100.0%

Table 20. Financial status assessment

Most participants in the study assessed their health as average⁵, indicating they had minor health problems (42.4%). Fewer participants believe their health is good, indicating they have no health problems (40.8%). Excellent health is reported by 11.9% of the participants. More serious health issues are present in 3.8% of the participants, and 0.5% believe they have severe health problems (Table 21).

⁴ The average assessment of financial status is M=3.58 (Min= Very Bad [1] – Max = Very Good [5]). A higher average score indicates higher satisfaction

⁵ The average assessment of health status is M=3.60 (Min= Very Bad [1] – Max = Very Good [5]). A higher average score indicates higher satisfaction

	Value	%
Very bad – I have severe health problems	7	0.5%
Bad– I have serious health problems	50	3.8%
Average – I have minor health problems	553	42.4%
Good – I don't have any health problems	538	41.3%
Very good – my health status is excellent	155	11.9%

Table 21. Health status assessment