

## TEMC/ATEM 2012

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What can research on leadership in student support and development services in Australian universities tell us about leading professional teams?

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## Session Overview

2:40 – 3:30

1. Think about your own leadership practices (15 mins)
2. Research study – rationale, process, preliminary findings (10 mins)
3. Applying 1 and 2 to leadership of professional teams in universities (10 mins)
4. Q&A (5 mins)
5. Summary (5 mins)

## Think about your own leadership practices...

1. Write three “leadership practices” you use – one per separate yellow post-it notes. (these may be practices you use often or just occasionally). Use unique identifier.
2. With a couple of people around you, share what you have all written down.
3. Now attempt to categorise all these practices in any way that seems meaningful. Use the pink post- it note as the category label. Don’t worry if some don’t fit any category – just use label “other”

**Note:** Your notes will be collected up and will help in conceptualising themes for the study. If you would prefer not to submit them that is fine – just remove from the bundle as these are collected.

# Leadership research study

## **Aim:**

To investigate how leaders in **senior** and **mid-level** positions in student support services in Australian universities perceive /describe:

- leadership, management, and “sustainability” in leadership
- their effectiveness in leading, managing and in sustainable leadership
- their leadership style
- their level of job satisfaction
- challenges and successes in the role
- any advice they would give to future leaders
- “depictions” of what they do

## **Approach:**

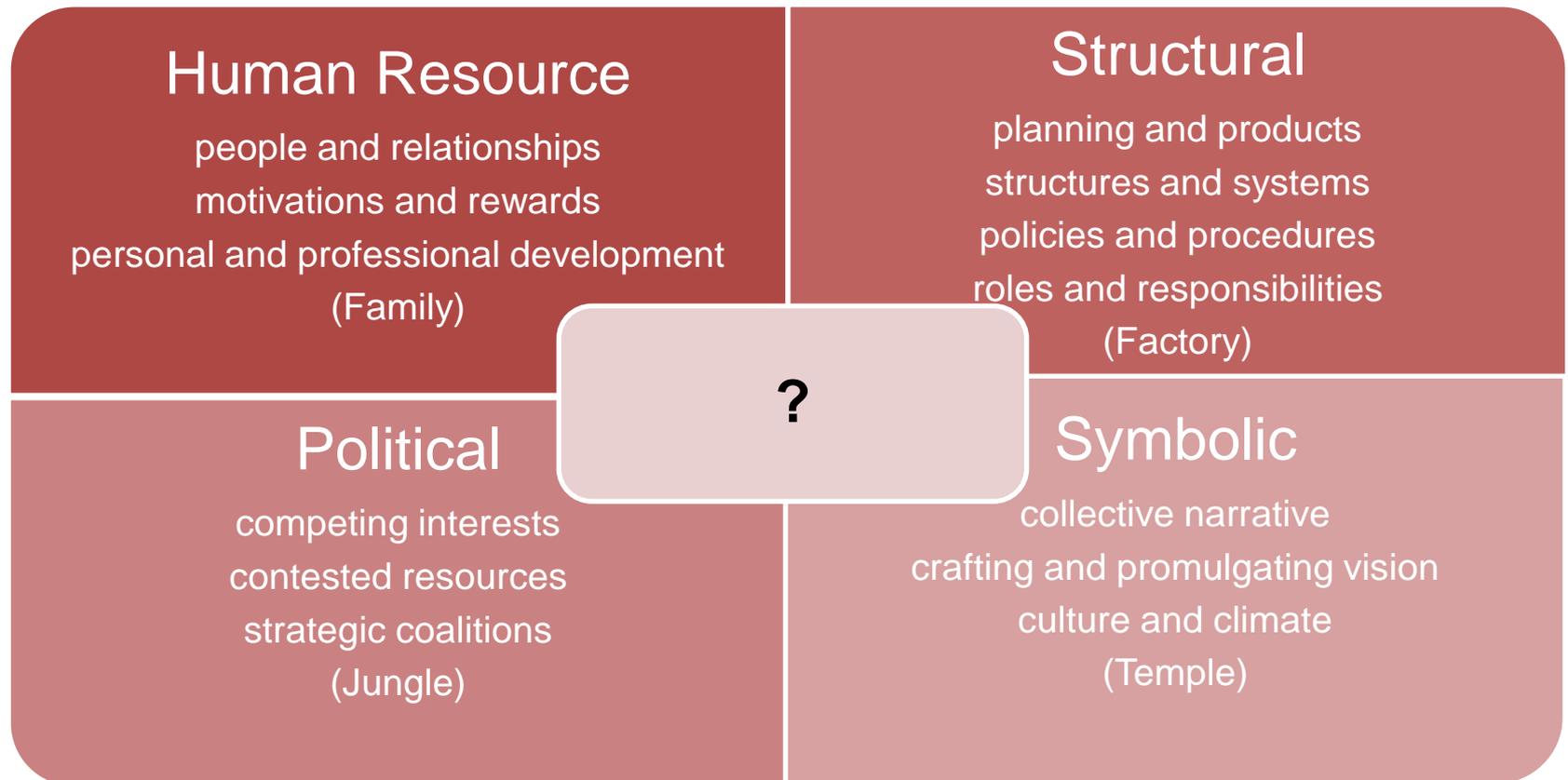
Mixed methods – survey, interviews, focus group

## **Theoretical framework:**

Bolman & Deal Four Frames Leadership

## Multiple Frame Leadership – in theory

Bolman & Deal (1991, 2001, 2002, 2008)



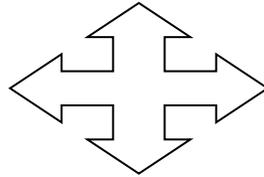
## Leadership Frames at work – thinking and relating.....

**SYMBOLIC**

**(artistic/expressive/metaphoric)**

**HUMAN RESOURCE**

**(caring/trusting/collaborative)**



**POLITICAL**

**(realistic/sceptical/competitive)**

**STRUCTURAL**

**(rational/linear/sequential)**

Are there trends in the sector, or locally for you in your area of work, that suggest need for strengths in particular frames?

## Multiple Frame Leadership - in action...

### Human Resource

open door, always available, consultative  
encouraging people to take responsibility  
devolving authority

### Structural

good systems  
well managed budget  
re-structuring to achieve goals

changing approach  
depending on  
situation

multi-frame

**effective leadership**

### Political

advocating for unit within the context (uni)  
getting new resources  
making sure work is visible and valued in  
the organisation (uni) or wider context

### Symbolic

motivating staff and setting direction  
talking about (up) the bigger picture  
building a “culture” of “how we do things”  
creating shared identity

## Identifying Leadership Frames

32 item scale    How often is each of the items below true?

*1 = almost never ..... 5 = almost always*

- I think very clearly and logically*
  - I show high levels of support and concern for others*
  - I have exceptional ability to mobilise people and resources to get things done*
  - I inspire others to do their best.*
- 
- scoring 4 or more on a particular frame = characteristically use that frame (often or always)
  - highest scoring frame = primary leadership frame (can have >1 eg HR/Structural)
  - more than one frame = multi-framing
  - use of 4 frames = “fully balanced”
  - can be less than 4 on all = no frame

## Multiple Frame Leadership – in theory

Bolman & Deal (1991, 2001, 2002, 2008)

### Human Resource

people and relationships  
motivations and rewards  
personal and professional development  
(Family)

### Structural

planning and products  
structures and systems  
policies and procedures  
roles and responsibilities  
(Factory)

**Which frame was  
dominant in survey  
participants?**

### Political

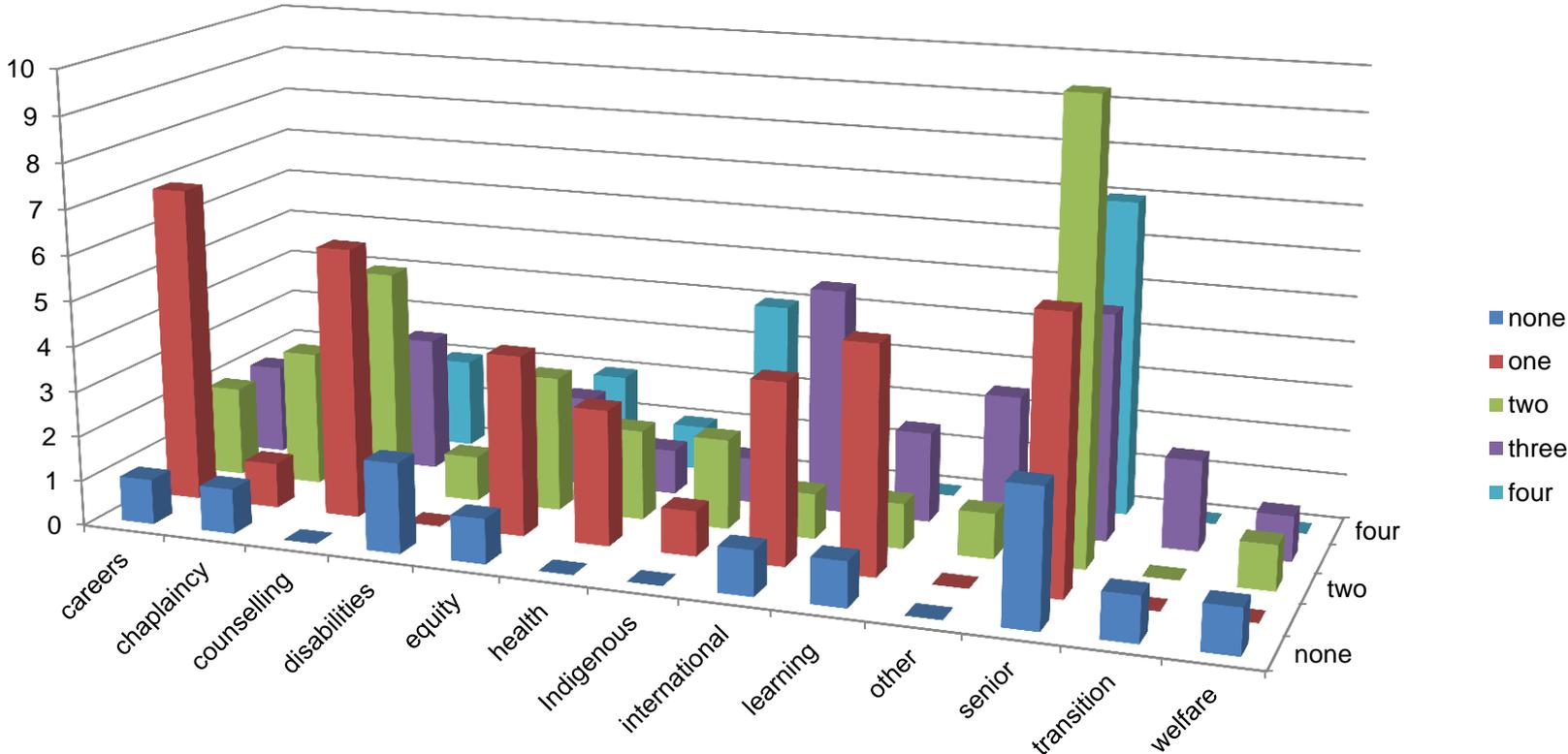
competing interests  
contested resources  
strategic coalitions  
(Jungle)

### Symbolic

collective narrative  
crafting and promulgating vision  
culture and climate  
(Temple)



# Use of Multiple Frames – by Group



## Effectiveness (self rating)

Participants asked first to briefly describe what these terms (eg effective management) meant to them, then asked to rate themselves as follows:

Compared to other individuals that you have known with comparable levels of experience and responsibility, how would you rate yourself on:

- Overall effectiveness as a manager
- Overall effectiveness as a leader
- Overall effectiveness in sustainability in your leadership practices

*(1 = lowest rating/bottom 20% and 5 = highest rating/top 20%)*

## Open Ended Questions – Responses

### Management

- designing and maintaining systems, processes and structures to “get things done”
- effective/efficient/productive within available resources
- decision making
- delivering outcomes for the organisation
- delivering outcomes for clients
- building capability of individuals and team

### Leadership

- direction setting/vision/strategic alignment
- modelling
- motivating/inspiring others (team)
- empowering/mentoring others (team)
- influencing others (internal and external)
- maximising team output
- identifying/mitigating/overcoming threats
- innovation/improvements

## Open Ended Questions – Responses

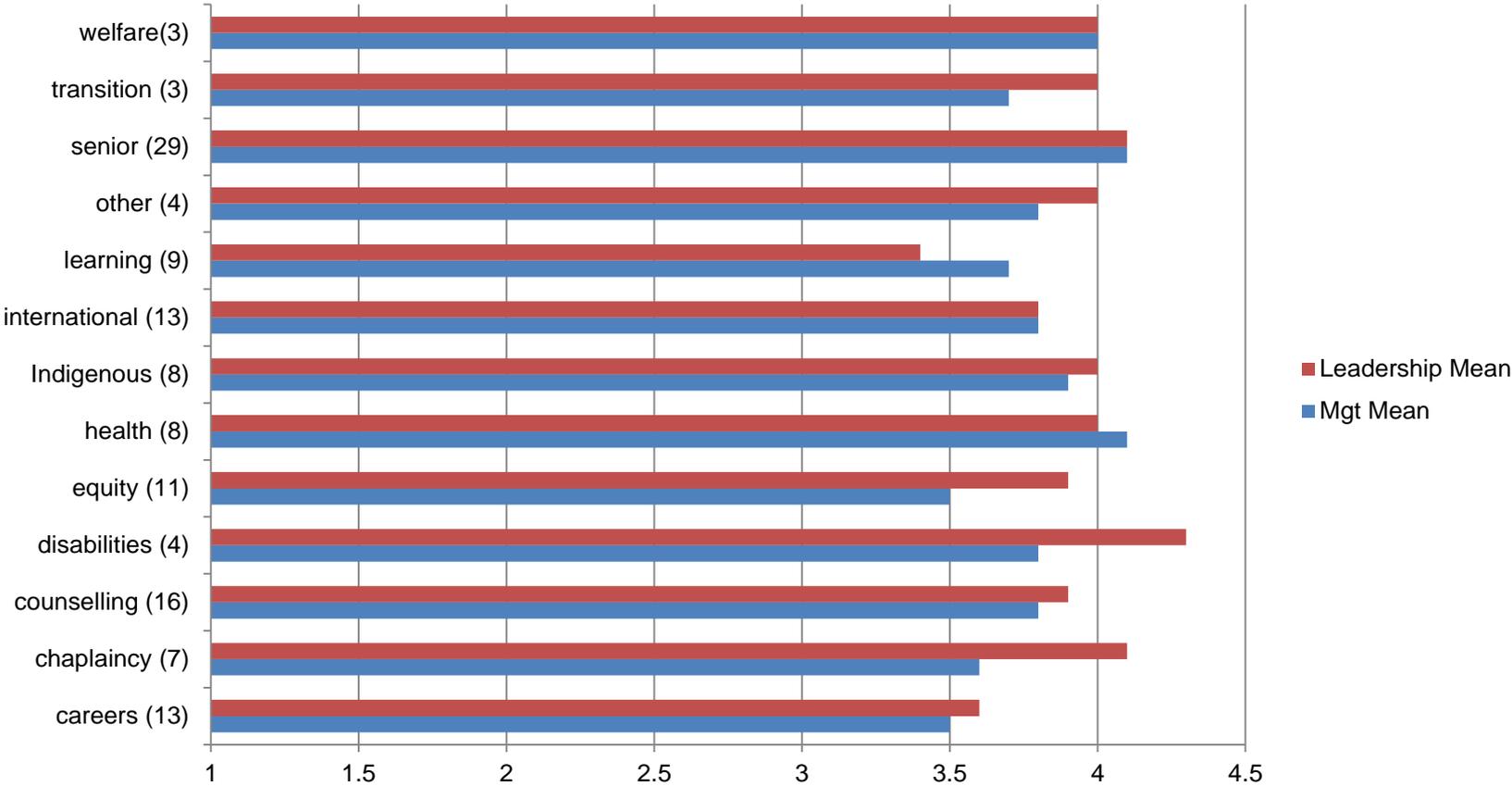
### Sustainability in Leadership

- organisational relevance/alignment
- effectiveness over the longer term
- succession planning/organisational renewal
- persistence
- consistency
- maintaining balance/well-being (self & team)
- resources – stretching/reducing waste
- environment – caring about future

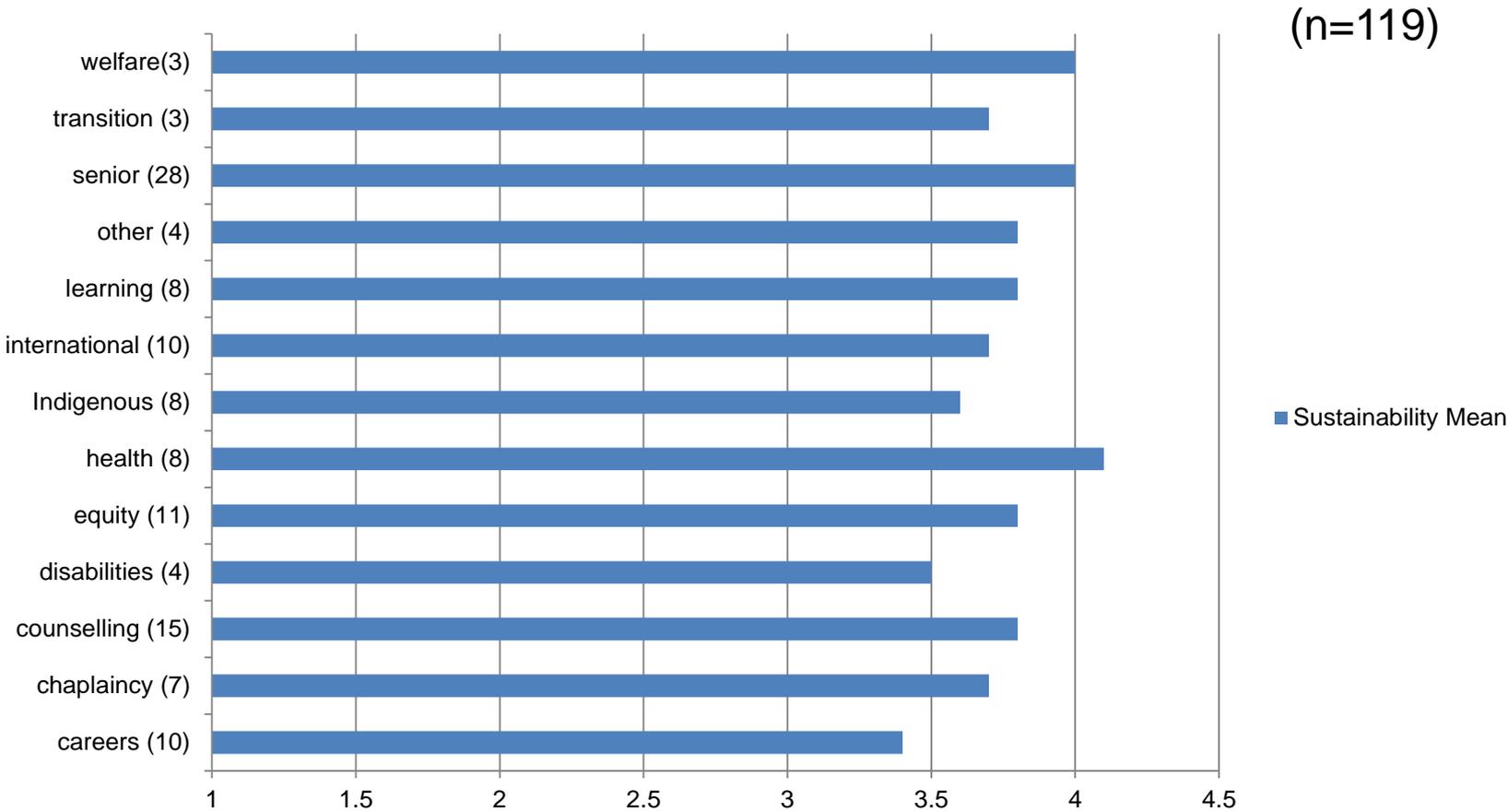
*So how high were self ratings and which function was rated highest?*

# Management & Leadership Effectiveness – self rated

(n=128)



# Effectiveness – self rated



## Job Satisfaction - Mohrman, Cooke & Mohrman

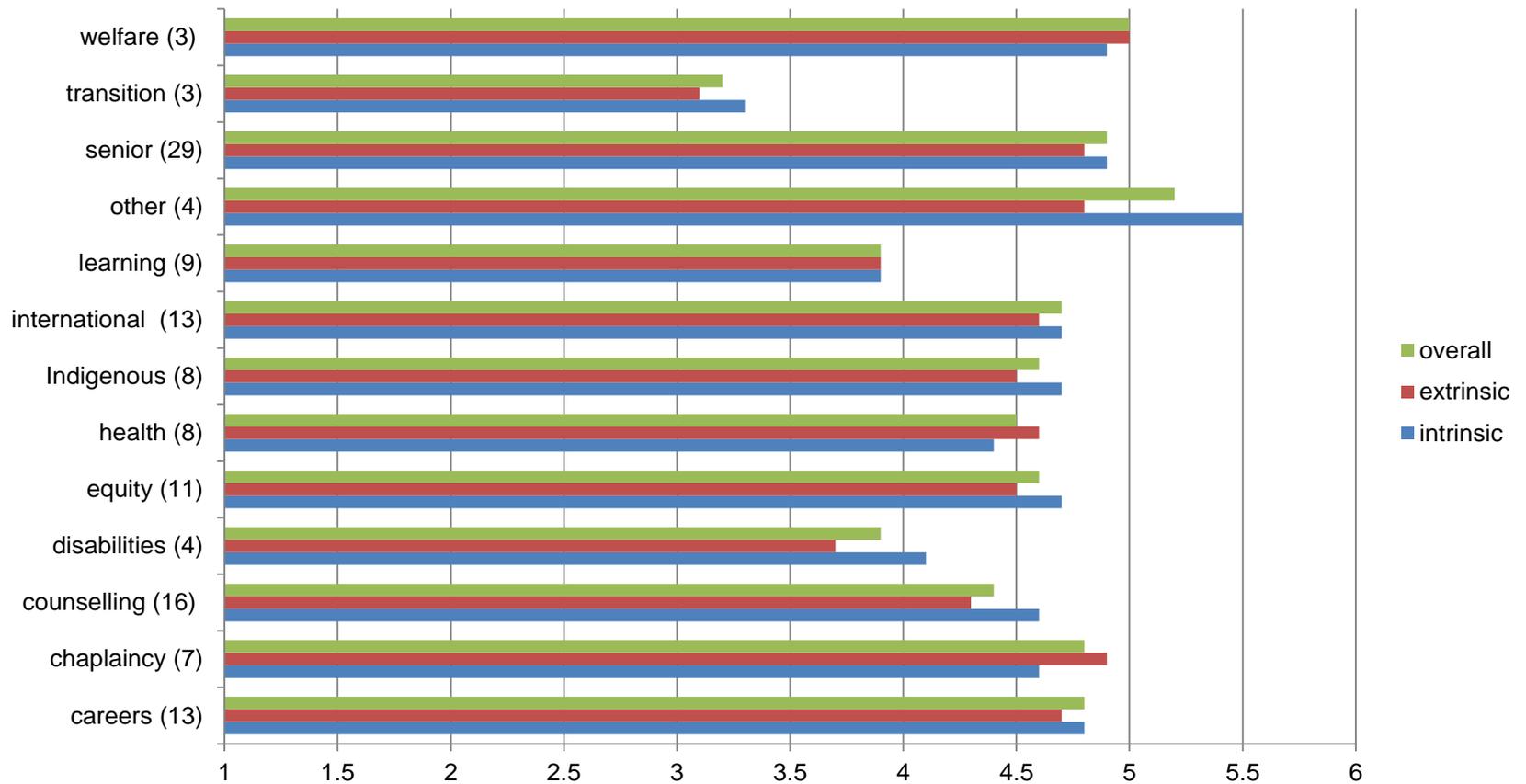
8 item scale

Please rate your personal level of satisfaction with the following aspects of your job and work environment. (1 = low satisfaction ..... 6 = high satisfaction)

- The feeling of self-esteem or self respect I get from being in my job.
- The opportunity for personal growth and development in my job.
- The feeling of worthwhile accomplishment in my job.
- My present job - when I consider the expectations I had when I took it.
  
- The amount of respect and fair treatment I receive from my superiors.
- The feeling of being informed in my job.
- The amount of supervision I receive.
- The opportunity for participation in the determination of methods, procedures and goals.

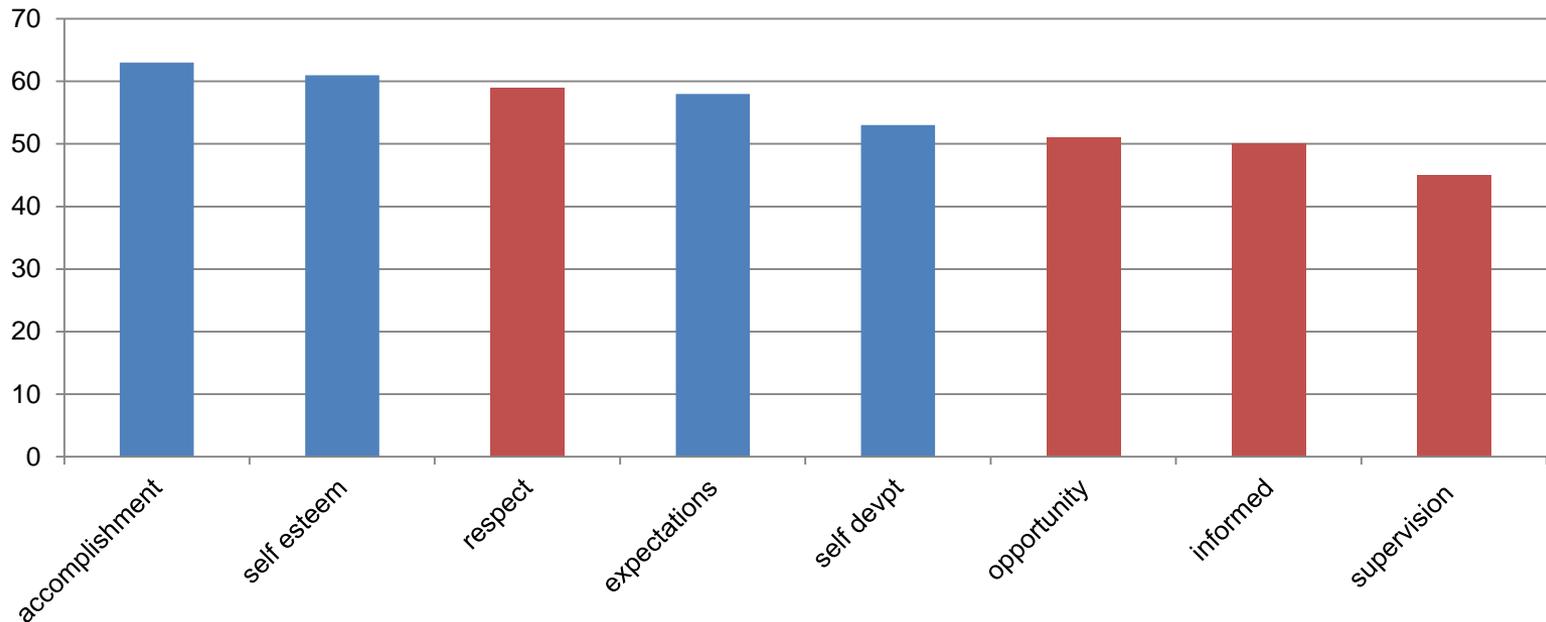
# Job Satisfaction – by Groups

(n=128)



## Job Satisfaction – highest ratings

% Respondents' high scores (5 & 6)



# Challenges

## Above

- visibility
- influence
- resources
- lack of clarity/leadership/decision-making

## Beside

- legitimacy
- collaboration
- contestability

## Within

- credibility with own team (prior roles, qualifications etc)
- change management (restructuring/alignment)

## Personal

- work life balance

## Successes

### Above

- recognition/awards
- increased funding/resources
- influence

### Beside

- collaborative outcomes
- positive feedback from stakeholders

### Within

- cultural shift
- resolving conflict/improved morale
- team cohesiveness

### Personal

- promotion
- professional development

## Advice to Emerging Leaders

### Above

- align unit plans with institution's priorities
- align activities with teaching & learning
- manage upwards

### Beside

- build alliances and collaborate
- promote the worth of your unit
- consult with stakeholders/staff
- communicate well with stakeholders

### Within

- manage change well
- be available for your staff
- distribute /delegate leadership
- recruit for talent and diversity
- provide career/prof devpt for staff

### Personal

- be open to change
- use professional networks
- stay informed and build expertise
- display courage
- be persistent
- be resilient

So....

Do the findings from this research study with this population resonate with you in terms of ***your*** work?

(your preferred frame? your effectiveness? satisfaction? challenges?)

What about the practices colleagues shared in the first part of the session?

What sounds familiar?

What's different?

What can we learn in terms of future practice?

# What's your blend?

## The tea bag...a metaphor

- process and tools of making good cup of tea
- connotations of warmth, support, invigoration, sharing
- vision & values embodied in some brands (sustainability; fairtrade)
- resource distribution (Billy vs Princes/Earls/Ladies)

Feel free to take the metaphor back to your workplace!

