

# WELL-BEING AND WORKING SKILLS AMONG UNIVERSITY STAFF: INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF AN ACT-BASED ONLINE PROGRAM

Veera Lampinen, Ella Kämper, Viktória Balla, Nina Katajavuori, Kristiina Räihä, Henna Asikainen

### BACKGROUND

- While **university staff face significant stressors** impacting both their well-being and student outcomes, their **mental health remains largely overlooked** (Hammoudi et al., 2024; Meeks et al., 2023).
- Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)**-based interventions improve wellbeing (WB) by cultivating psychological flexibility (PF).

### CONTEXT:

- Online **ACT-based self-study program** offered to **university personnel**, including 6 thematic modules with theory and individual exercises. 83.1% participated in regular peer group discussions.

### PRELIMINARY RESULTS

- Significant **increases** in participants' **psychological flexibility** ( $t(84) = -3.83, p < .001$ ) and **decreases** in **procrastination** ( $t(84) = -2.65, p < .05$ ).
- Increased **psychological flexibility** was associated with **increased mental well-being** ( $r(83) = 0.35, p = .001$ ) (Figure 1) and **decreased perceived stress** ( $r(83) = -0.34, p = .00125$ ) (Figure 2).

### WE AIM TO EXPLORE MORE IN DEPTH:

- Why change happens (or doesn't) at an individual level.**
- Examine how participants **prioritize and relate to different PF processes** before and after the intervention (**via the Q-sort method**).
- Investigate **shifts in perceived relevance of PF/inflexibility items** (via Q-sort).
- Identify **internal** (e.g., motivation) and **contextual** (e.g., workload, support) factors that **support or hinder change** in this context (via semi-structured interviews).
- Analysis strategy: **mixed methods** -> *factor/network analysis* (Q-sort), *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis* (IPA) (semi-structured interviews)

*Any thoughts, insights and comments are welcome!*

### METHODS

- Pre- and post-intervention** measures:
- PF:** Work-related Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (**WAAQ**)
- Mental Well-Being:** Mental Health Continuum Short Form (**MHC-SF**)
- Perceived Stress:** Perceived Stress Scale (**PSS**)
- Burnout:** Bergen Burnout Inventory (**BBI-15**)
- Organized Work Skills:** HowULearn questionnaire (**modified version**)
- Procrastination:** Pure Procrastination Scale (**PPS**)

### NEXT STEPS

- The **Process-Based Therapy approach** (PBT) argue we must **look beyond pre/post symptoms and group-level changes to individual mechanisms of change** (Hofman & Hayes, 2019; Ong et al., 2024). Little is known about intraindividual **change processes** within higher-ed staff.
- Facilitation and/or incorporating live interaction can increase engagement in digital ACT-based interventions, where high dropout has been a consistent problem (Lampinen et al., 2024)

- GROUP-LEVEL CHANGES WERE LIMITED, BUT PF WAS LINKED TO IMPROVED WELL-BEING AND REDUCED STRESS.**
- VIA A PBT-LENS, WE AIM TO MOVE BEYOND GROUP-LEVEL AVERAGES TO EXPLORE HOW INDIVIDUAL PROCESSES OF PF RESONATE WITH PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR EXPERIENCES OF CHANGE.**
- WE WANT TO UNDERSTAND WHY AND HOW PF CHANGES (OR DOESN'T CHANGE) IN UNIVERSITY STAFF.**

Figure 1 Correlation between psychological flexibility and well-being.

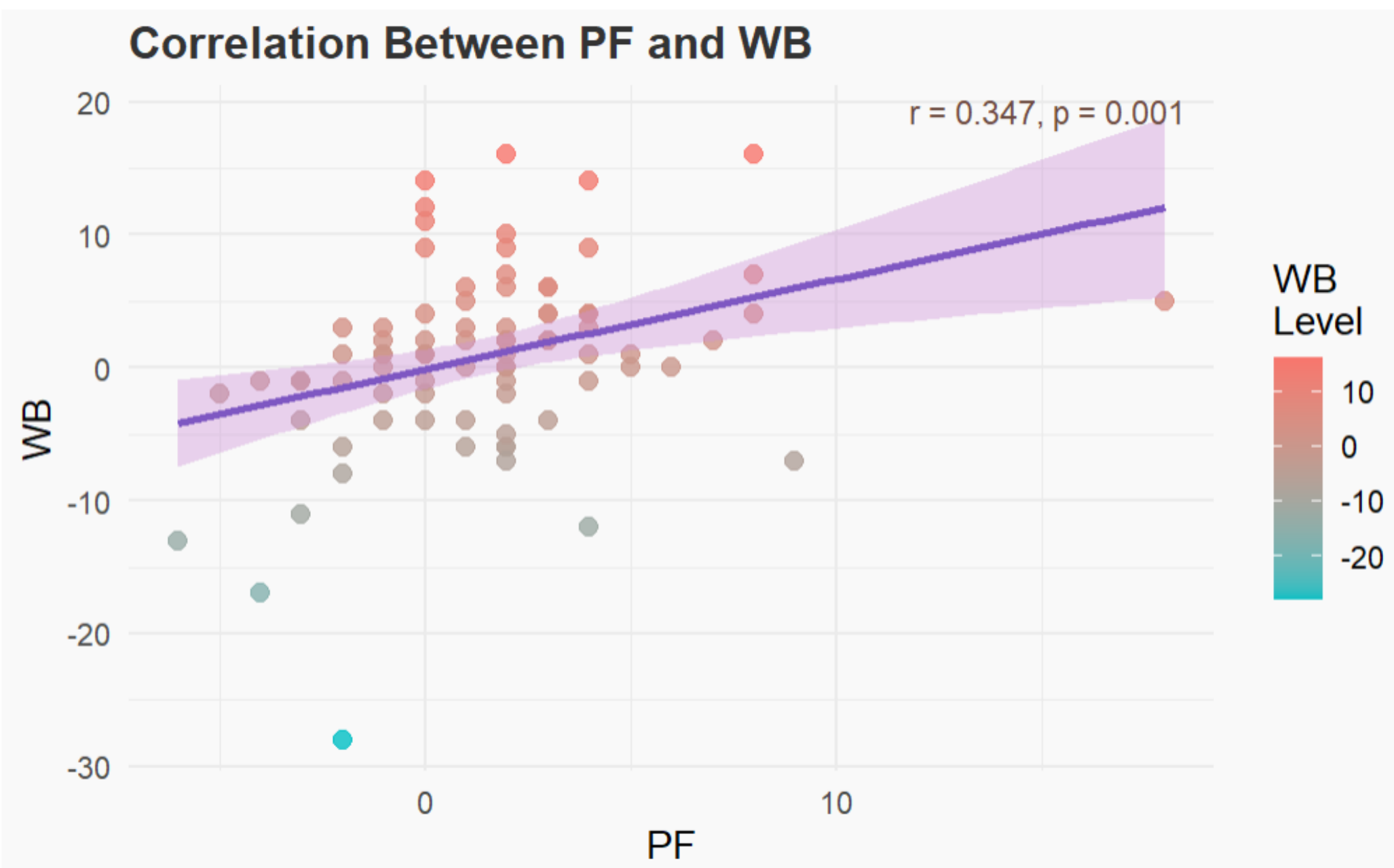
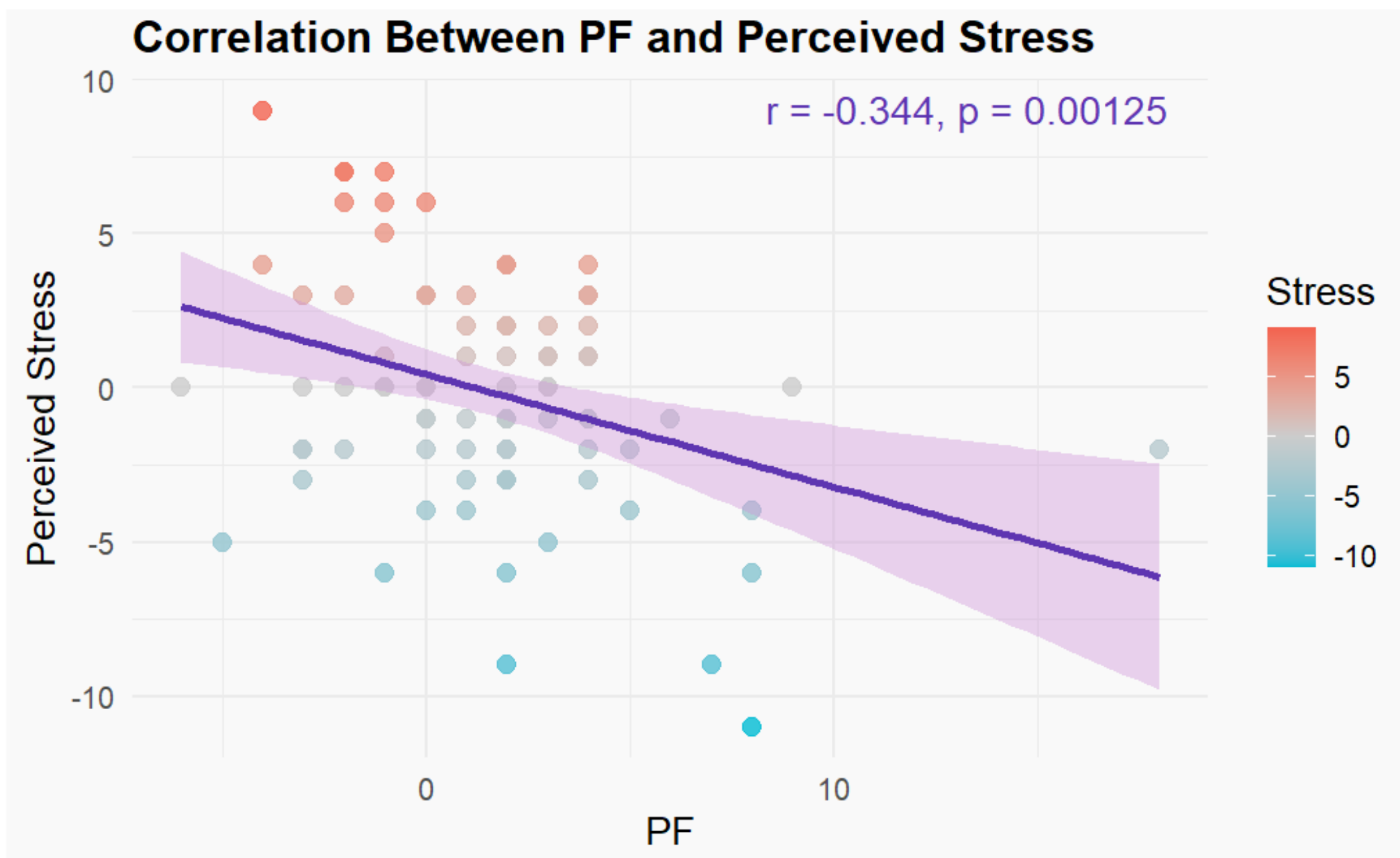


Figure 2 Correlation between psychological flexibility and perceived stress.



### REFERENCES:

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