

# Workload and coping of female officers in the Finnish forest sector

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METSÄMIESTEN SÄÄTIÖ  
FOUNDATION



Kuva: Pedacom Oy

# The project

Well-being at work among female officers in the forest sector, a qualitative study (MetsäNaiset)

- Funded by Metsämiesten Säätiö Foundation and the Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke)
- A joint project between the University of Helsinki and the Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke)

Research questions:

1. Which elements of work weaken well-being at work among women in the forest sector?
2. How can well-being at work among women be improved?



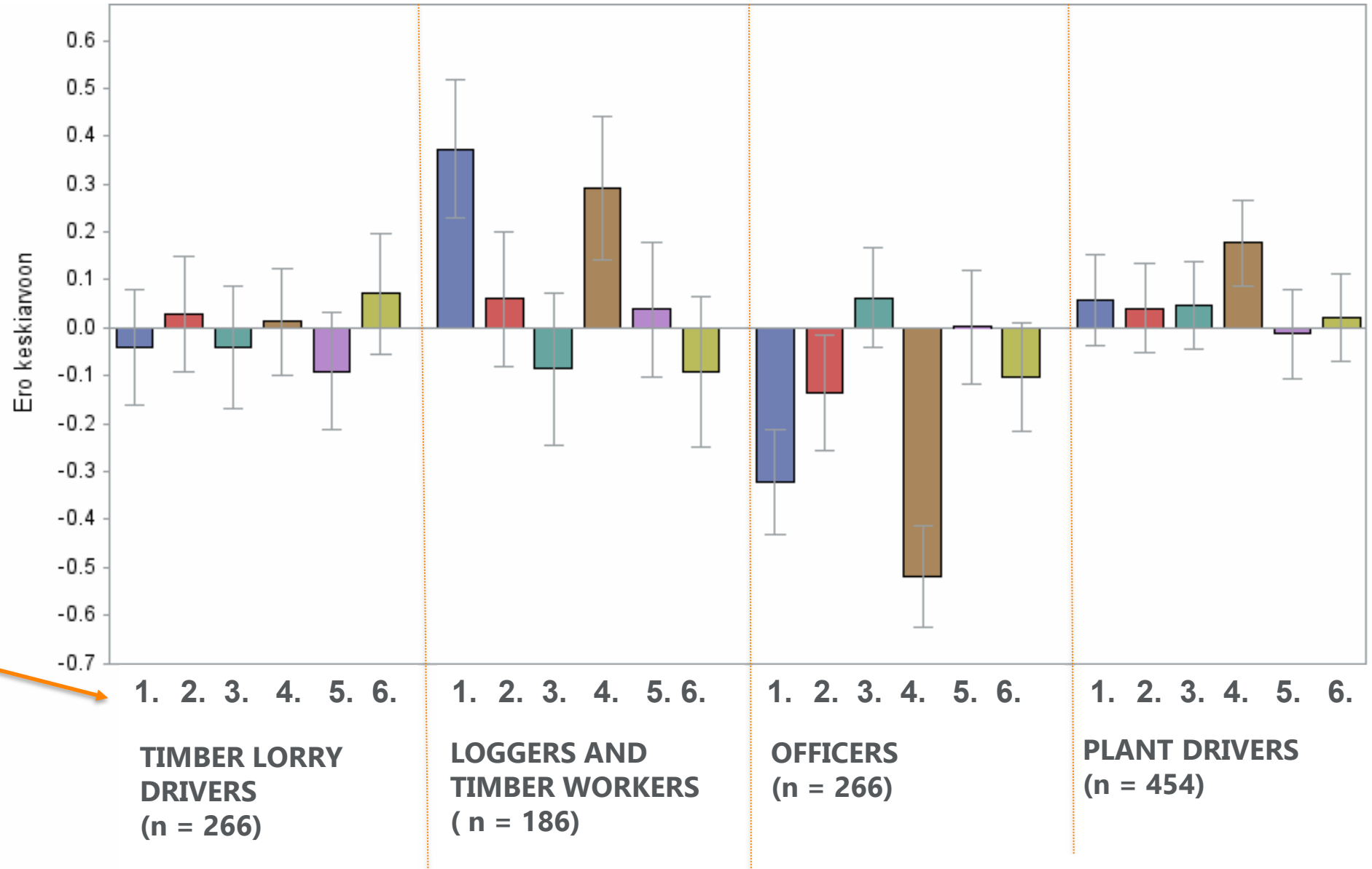
Kuva: Rodeo.fi

# WOOD HARVESTING AND TRANSPORTATION PROFESSIONALS

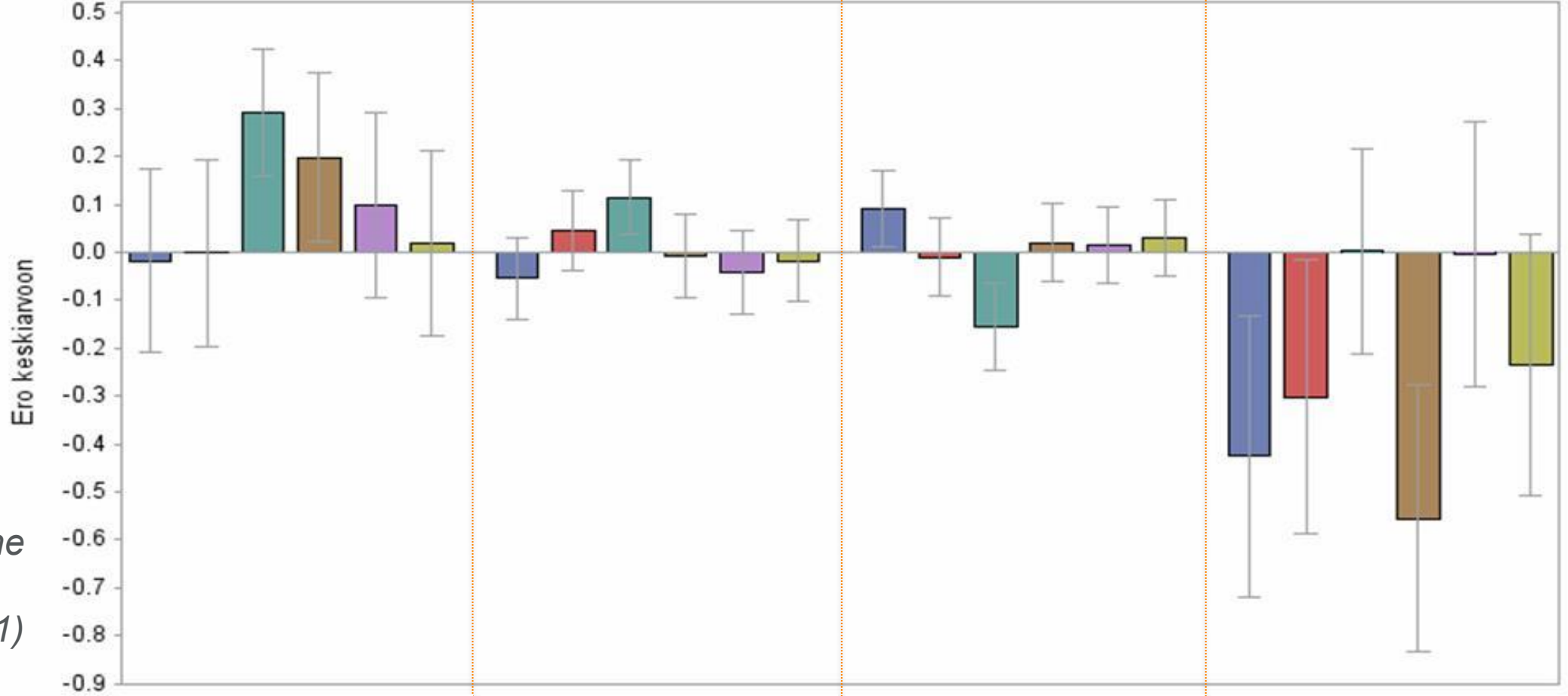
Postal and online survey conducted in 2019, (N=1 282)

All themes were standardized to the same scale (mean = 0, SD = 1)

1. WORK STRAIN
2. RECOVERY
3. WORK ABILITY
4. WORK LOAD
5. JOB SATISFACTION
6. COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS



# Gender and age groups



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- 1. WORK STRAIN
- 2. RECOVERY
- 3. WORK ABILITY
- 4. WORK LOAD
- 5. JOB SATISFACTION
- 6. COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS



1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.      1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.      1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.      1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

**MALES, age under 30 years (n = 118)**      **MALES, age 30-50 years (n = 515)**      **MALES, age over 50 years (n = 589)**      **FEMALES (n = 53)**



# References

Kallioniemi, Marja K., Kymäläinen, Hanna-Riitta, Kaseva, Janne & Katajamäki, Esa 2025. Workload in wood harvesting and among transportation professionals — A study based on survey research in Finland. *Forest Policy and Economics* 178:103530.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2025.103530>

Kallioniemi, Marja K. & Kymäläinen, Hanna-Riitta 2024. Kirjallisuuskatsaus työhyvinvoinnin keskeisistä teemoista puuhuoltoketjussa: psyykinen kuormittuminen, työtuntien määrä ja naisten tilanne (Literature review on key themes in occupational well-being in the wood supply chain). *Metsätieteen aikakauskirja* 2024–23009: 24 s. (In Finnish)

<https://doi.org/10.14214/ma.23009>

Kallioniemi, Marja; Kaseva, Janne; Peltola, Aarre; Anttila, Arja & Katajamäki, Esa 2020. Työhyvinvointi puuhuoltoketjussa. (Well-being at work in forest harvesting and transportation) *Luonnonvara- ja biotalouden tutkimus* 99/2020: 88 s. (In Finnish)

<https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-380-117-2>



# Qualitative sample 1/2

- We contacted a trade union expert, a professional paper journalist from Metsälehti, and the CEO of Metsämiesten Säätiö Foundation. → 40 women expressed their willingness to participate.
- In autumn 2025, we interviewed ten female officers working in wood trade, timber harvesting, advisory services, and forestry.
- The interviews were based on pre-formulated questions and open discussion.
- The respondents were located across Finland, from Uusimaa to Lapland, they represented a wide age range and had diverse educational backgrounds.
- Interview duration was on average 1 h 32 min (range: 1 h to 2 h 30 min).



# Qualitative sample 2/2

Interview themes:

- Positive aspects of work
- Structure and flow of the workday
- Well-being at work
- Challenges
- Coping strategies
- Suggestions for improvement
- Background questions



Kuva: Katja Tähja / Luke

# Positive aspects

- All respondents were satisfied with their work community.
- Work tasks were challenging and meaningful.
- Achievements were perceived as rewarding.
- Autonomy at work was valued.
- Forests as a work environment were viewed positively.



Kuva: iStock.com / SimonSkafar

# Gender repertoires

Based on Kupiainen & Kovalainen (2013)

## 1. Specialness

There is a clear distinction between women and men based on perceived characteristics. Femininity is viewed as a positive resource.

Our sample

**→ Females are more thorough, careful, and hardworking. They are seen as attentive to forest owners' needs. They ensure smooth workflow processes, e.g. the correct timetables. Respondents requested for suitable and high quality terrain outfit.**

Reference:

*Kupiainen Mari & Kovalainen Anne 2013. Ei samasta puusta. Miten miesvaltaisissa yrityksissä työskentelevät naiset tekevät sukupuolta puheessaan? [Not from the same tree. How females working in male dominated enterprises formulate gender in their speech] Työelämän tutkimus 11: 113–127. In Finnish*



## 2. Strength

Traditional females are seen as unsuited to male-dominated sectors.  
Females adapt, they are alike males, and succeed in the field.  
Strength creates a common femininity.

Our sample

**→ All females are not suitable to work in the forest sector.**

**A starting employee has to be able to create special strength during the first working years.**

**The needed personal characteristics: communicative, hardness, and high level professional skills.**

**Tutors were suggested to improve well-being at work.**



Kuva: Petri Timonen / Luke

Reference:

Kupiainen Mari & Kovalainen Anne 2013. Ei samasta puusta. Miten miesvaltaisissa yrityksissä työskentelevät naiset tekevät sukupuolta puheessaan? [Not from the same tree. How females working in male dominated enterprises formulate gender in their speech] Työelämän tutkimus 11: 113–127. In Finnish

### 3. Insignificance

Gender is considered irrelevant.  
Women prefer to be evaluated based on professional competence and work performance.

Our sample

→ *A young respondent questioned why gender should matter at all. She was silent if a customer mentioned gender.*

*A forest officer with a longer work experience assessed, that it is unpolite to mention female gender in advertising the services of the consulting association.*



Reference:

*Kupiainen Mari & Kovalainen Anne 2013. Ei samasta puusta. Miten miesvaltaisissa yrityksissä työskentelevät naiset tekevät sukupuolta puheessaan? [Not from the same tree. How females working in male dominated enterprises formulate gender in their speech] Työelämän tutkimus 11: 113–127. In Finnish*

Kuva: Erkki Oksanen / Luke

# Burnout

- Several interviewees had experienced burnout.
- Females must tolerate heavy workloads, and inappropriate speech and behaviour.
- The authority, skills and guidelines of female professionals may be questioned.
- Some clients preferred male forestry professionals.



# Conclusions

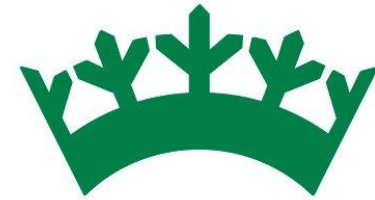
The findings suggest:

- A need for support, especially for young female officers.
- Transformation of traditional work culture.
- Development of workplace practices and education.

**The current masculine work culture of the forest sector should become more inclusive, fair and accepting of diversity.**



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***Thank You!***

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