

Mental Well-being in the Maltese Workforce

Research report from **novargo** in collaboration with the Department for Industrial & Employment Relations





DEPARTMENT FOR INDUSTRIAL AND
EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS (DIER)

This research was carried out in
collaboration with the Department for
Industrial and Employment Relations

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Mental Well-being in the Maltese Workforce

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Introduction

- This report presents the results of a research project about the psychological well-being of the Maltese workforce.
- The data was collected from a national survey based on the population parameters describing the Maltese workforce as outlined in the Labour Force Survey published by the National Statistics Office.
- Data for this research was collected through an online questionnaire which participants were invited to complete. Participation in the research was voluntary and participants were able to withdraw their participation at any time.

Sample

- Data was collected between June and August 2021.
- We received 4,135 responses of which 3,550 were considered valid and consequently used in the final analysis.
- The following industries participated in the study:

Automotive
Security (Police & CPD)
Construction
Defence (Army)

Education
Financial Services
Healthcare
Hospitality & Tourism

Manufacturing
Public Administration
Retail & Wholesale
Technology

Transportation

Definition of variables (i)

- **Mental well-being** was assessed using 3 measures all presenting sound psychometric properties
 - The **Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)** is a heavily used measure of the life satisfaction component of subjective well-being. The scale has high internal consistency and good test-retest correlations.
 - The **Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS-21)** is a set of three self-report scales designed to measure the negative emotional states of depression, anxiety and stress. The scales have been shown to have high internal consistency and to yield meaningful discriminations in a variety of settings.
 - The **World Health Organisation Well-Being Index (WHO-5)** is a widely used measure of subjective psychological well-being which is psychometrically sound, brief and non-invasive.

Definition of variables (ii)

- **Job Satisfaction** was assessed using a 1-item question as part of the set of questions in the questionnaire used.
- **Demographic variables** collected as part of the data collection process were:
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Level of education
 - Employment type
 - Contract type
 - Employment basis
 - Nationality
 - Occupational group
 - Industry
 - Income

Results

The following slides present the results of the research. Only statistically significant results are reported. The analysis in this report is based on the following demographic variables: Gender, Age, Educational Level and Income Level.

Note: All analysis was carried out using MS Excel mainly for pivot tables and others basic data visualisation techniques and SPSS for further analysis mainly frequencies, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, cross-tabs, chi-square analysis and ANOVA. Unless otherwise indicated all significant results are at $p < 0.05$ level.

Overall profile of the Maltese Workforce



As a group the Maltese workforce is

1. generally satisfied with life and the job it does
2. has good overall mental well-being
3. tends to be somewhat anxious and
4. shows very slight but higher levels of depression and stress than the norm.

This is the overall picture, the different shades which make this up are presented in the next pages.



Part 1 – Satisfaction with life

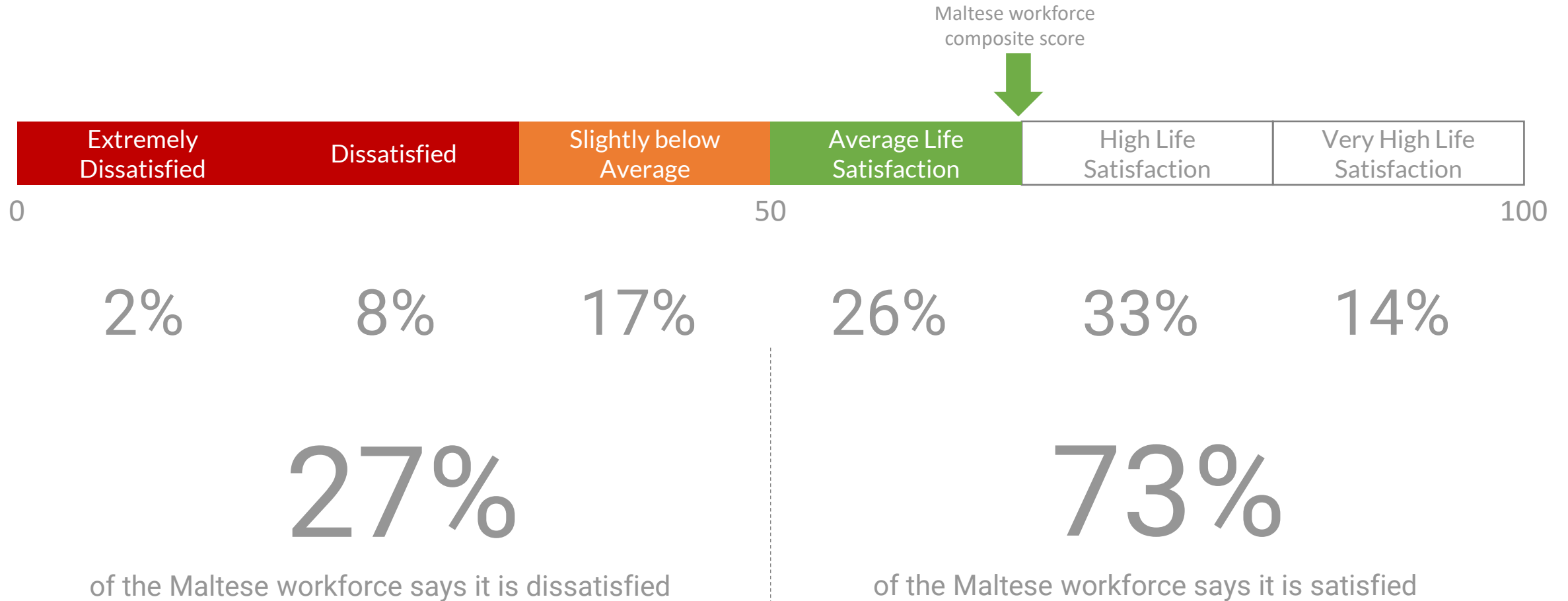
Satisfaction with Life

- The Maltese workforce score falls within the average of life satisfaction as found in other economically developed nations. This means that the majority of respondents are generally satisfied but have some areas where they very much would like some improvement.
- 27% of the Maltese workforce reports lower than average life satisfaction while 47% reports higher than average life satisfaction.

Why is life satisfaction important?

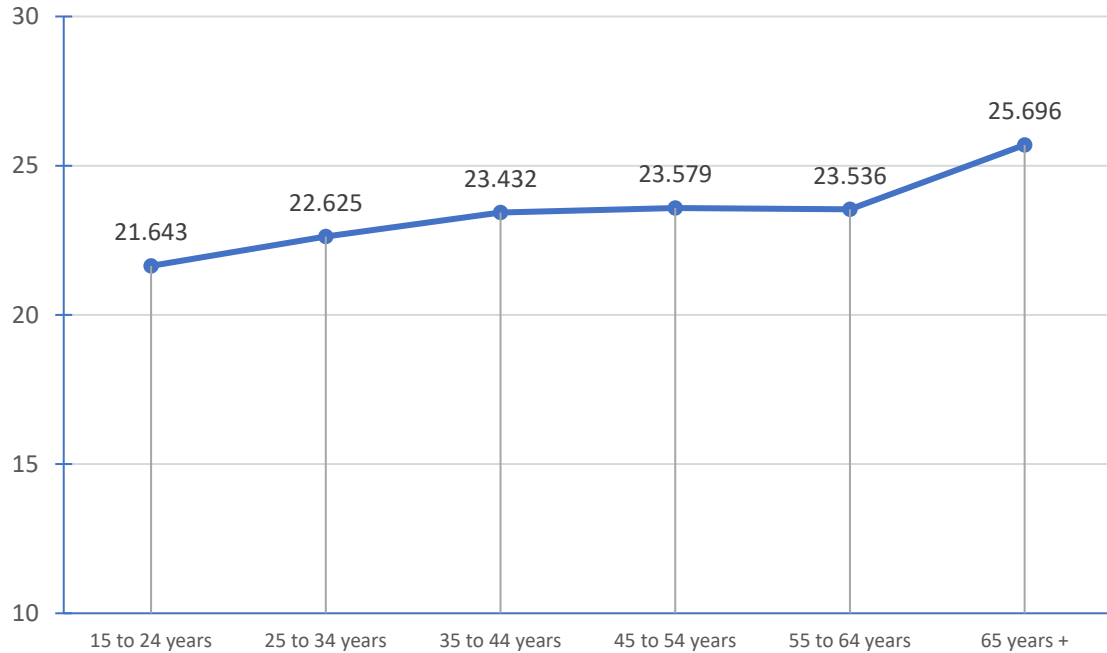
- Life satisfaction influences job satisfaction extensively. In this study the measure SWL accounts for 33% of all the variables effecting job satisfaction

Satisfaction with Life



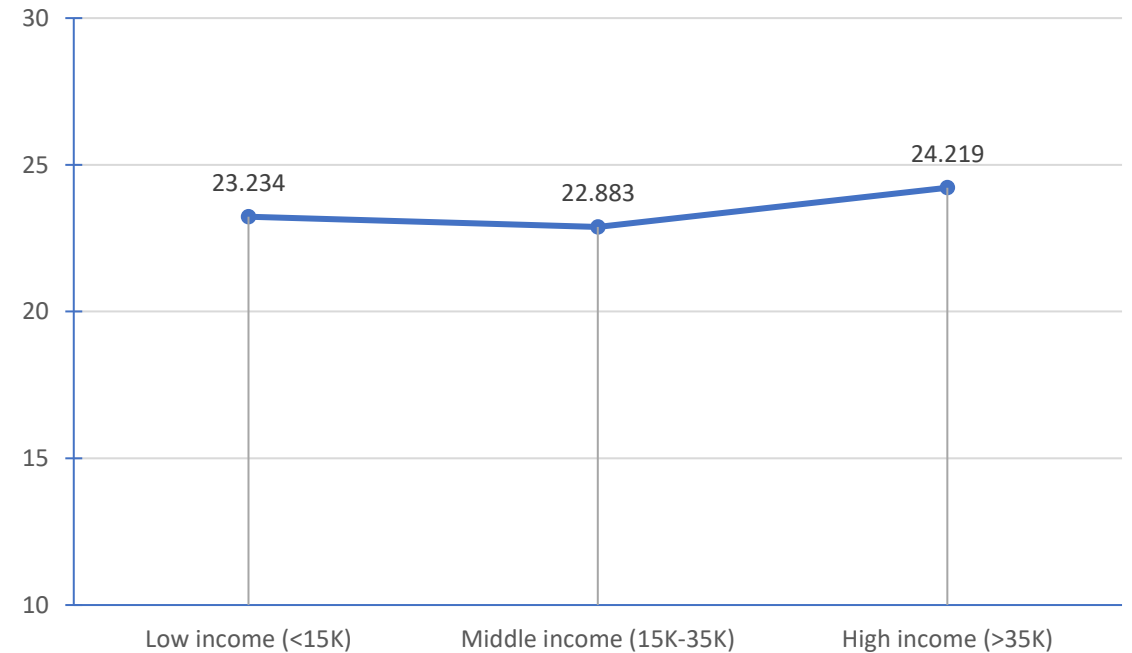
Satisfaction with Life

- Age and SWL



The data shows that age plays a role in satisfaction with life with the youngest and oldest age groups being the least and most satisfied with life respectively.

- Income and SWL

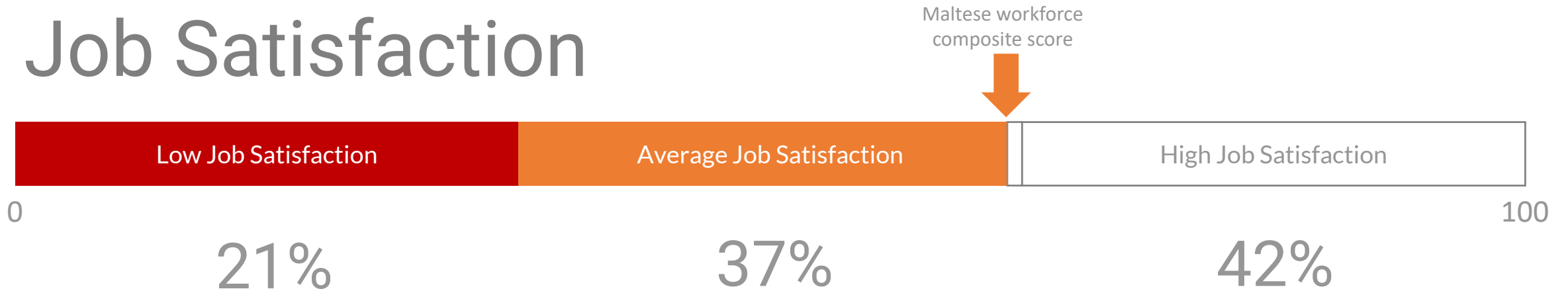


Income plays a role in satisfaction with life with the high income group being more satisfied with life than both the other two groups.

A black and white photograph of an elderly man wearing a hat and glasses, with a purple overlay containing the text 'Part 2 - Job Satisfaction'. The man is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background shows a house and trees.

Part 2 – Job Satisfaction

Job Satisfaction



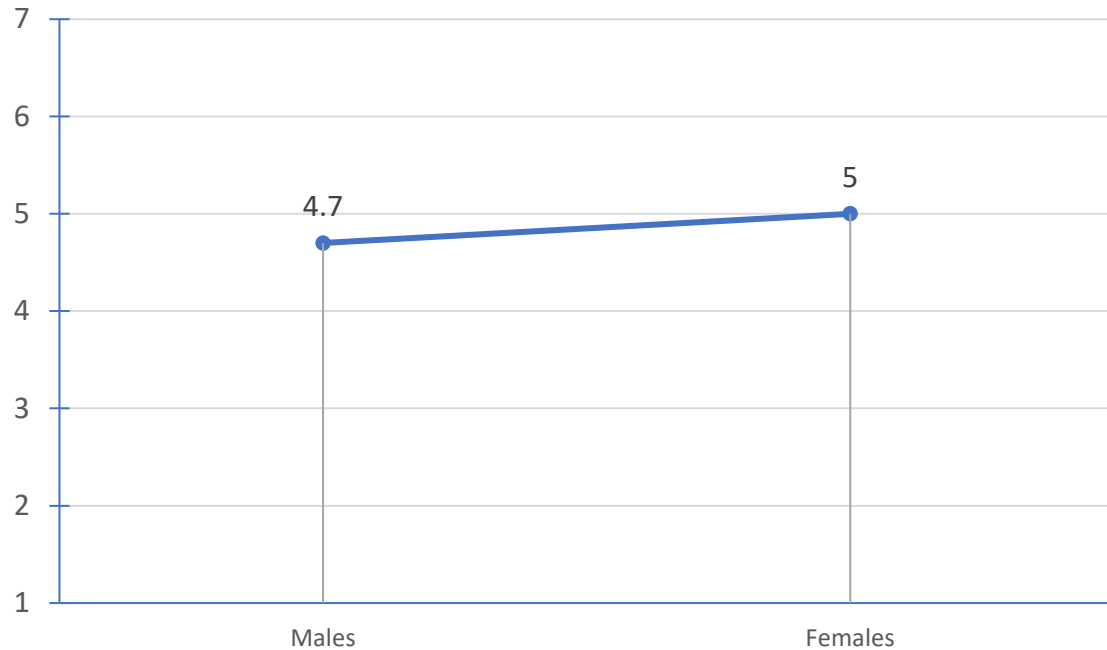
- The overall job satisfaction of the Maltese workforce is indicated to be at the medium level
- One in every five employees reports low job satisfaction
- Two in every five employees report high job satisfaction

Why is job satisfaction important for mental health?

- There is a negative relationship between job satisfaction and depression ($r=-.425, p<.01$), anxiety ($r=-.269, p<.01$) and stress ($r=-.326, p<.01$)

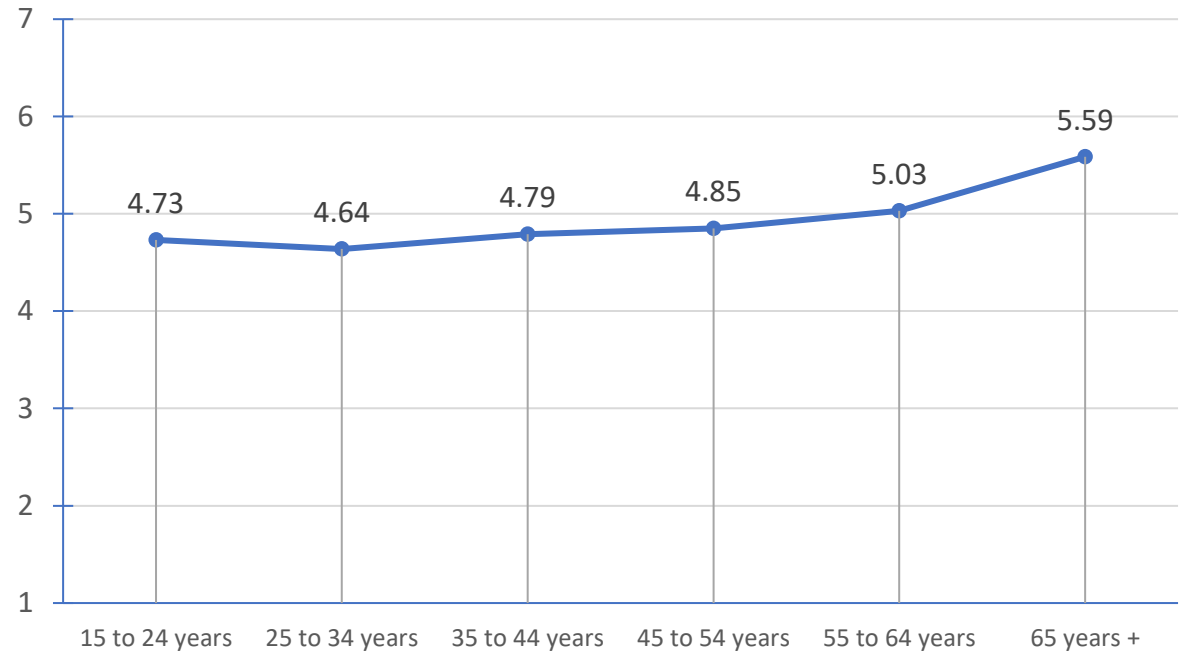
Job Satisfaction

Gender and Job Satisfaction



Females tend to be slightly more satisfied in their job than males.

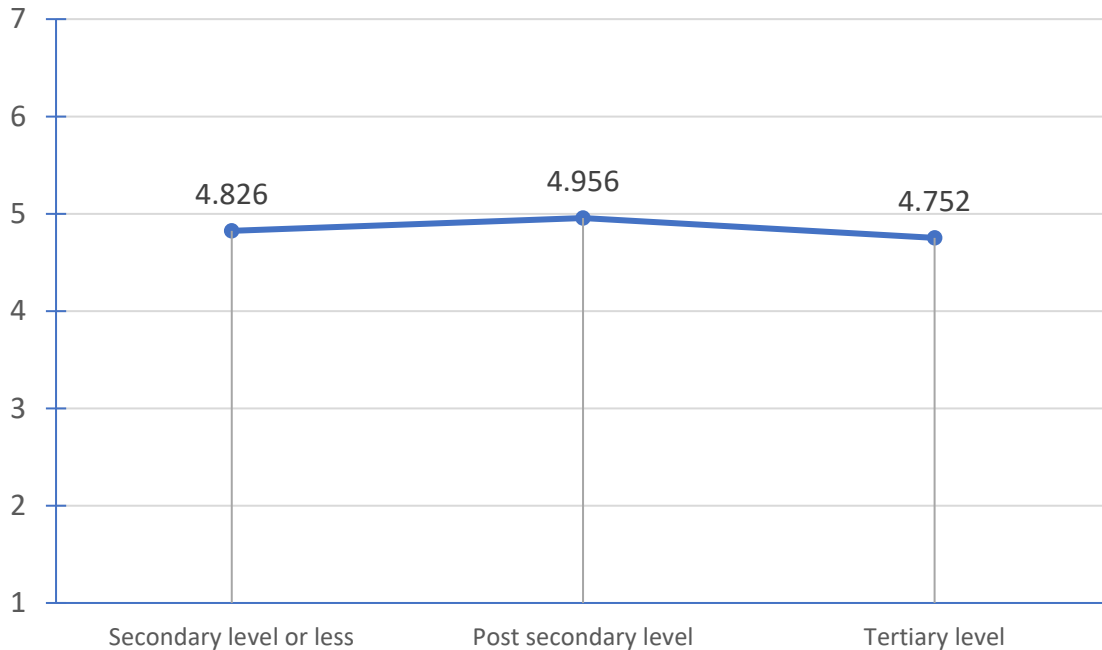
Age and Job Satisfaction



The oldest age group (65+) tend to be the more satisfied with their jobs than all of the other groups.

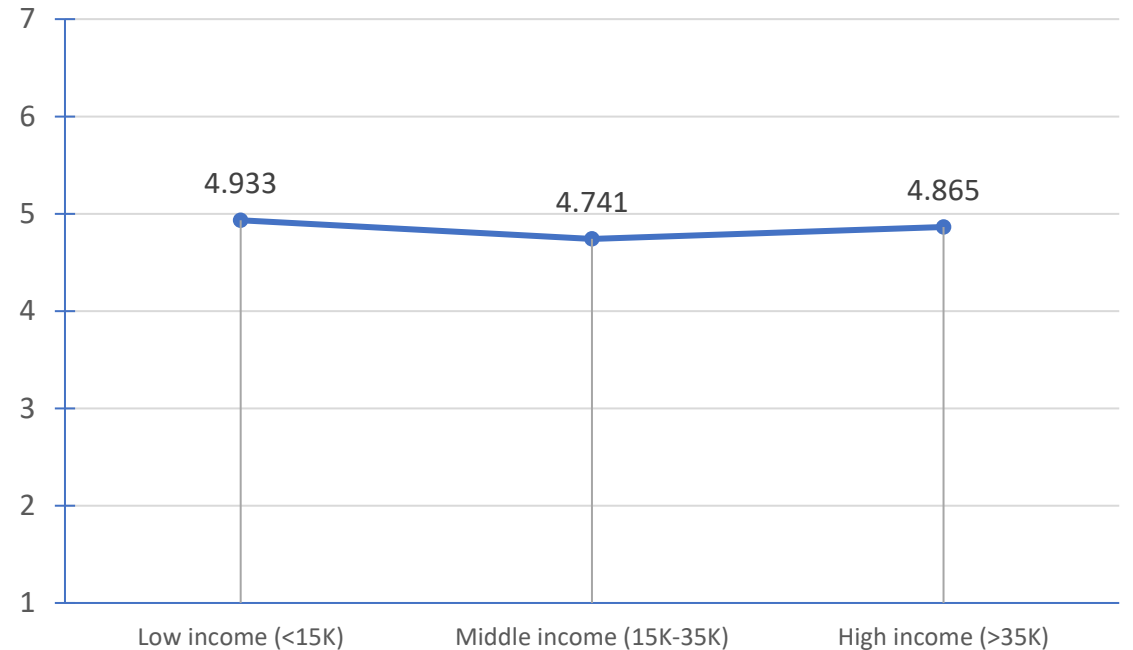
Job Satisfaction

Education and Job Satisfaction



Overall education level plays a role in job satisfaction with the main difference being between those with a post-secondary level and those with a tertiary level of education. The former tends to be more satisfied.

Income and Job Satisfaction

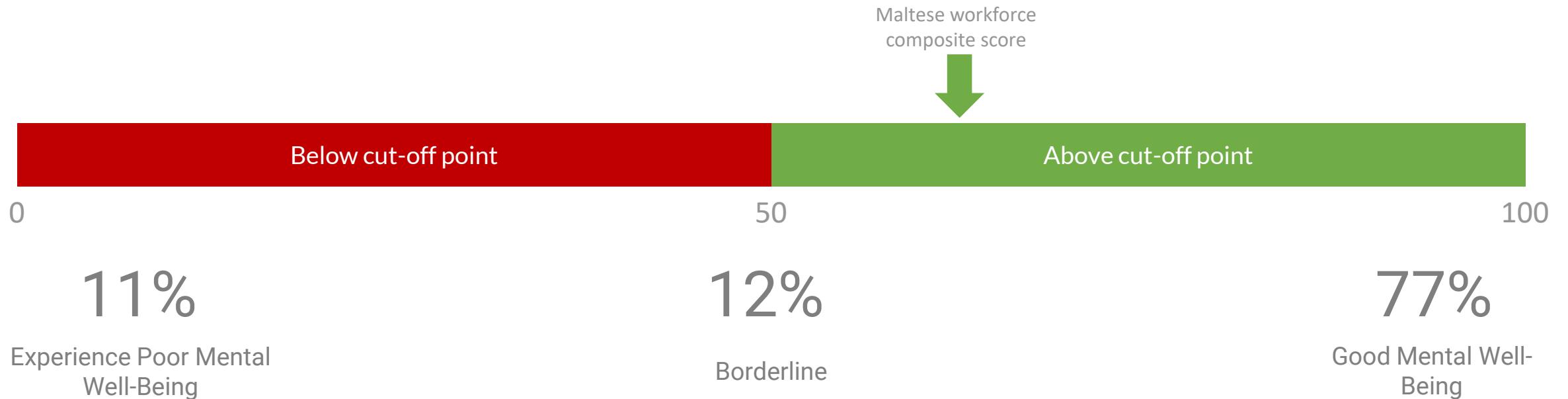


Overall income level plays a role in job satisfaction with the main difference being between the low income group and the middle income group. The middle income group tends to be the least satisfied with their job.



Part 3 – Overall Mental Well-being

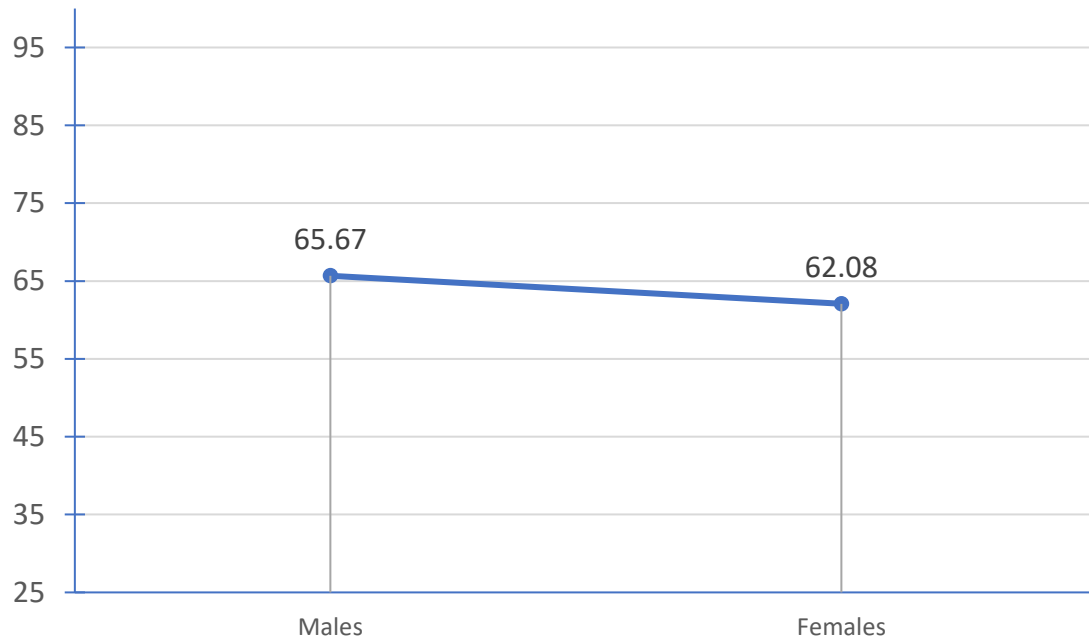
Overall Mental Well-being



- Overall the Maltese workforce scores above the cut-off point on the mental well being (MWB) scale
- One in every 10 employees reports scores which fall in the bottom part of the scale indicating poor mental well-being

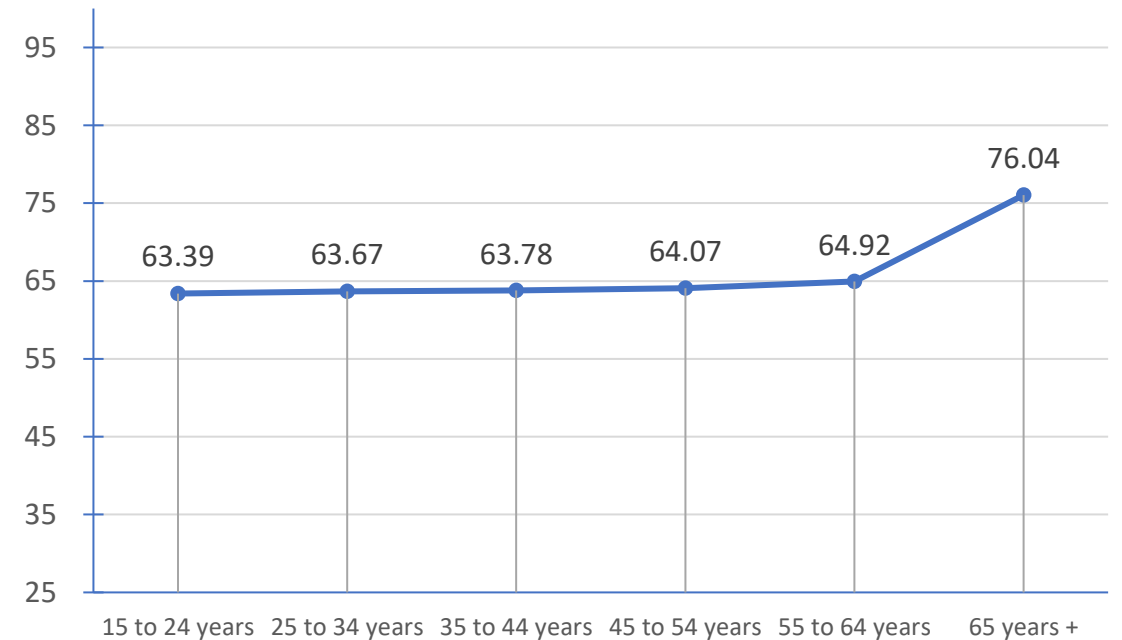
Overall Mental Well-being

Gender and Mental Well-being



Both genders score beyond the cut-off point on the scale yet females tend to score lower than males indicating lower overall mental well-being.

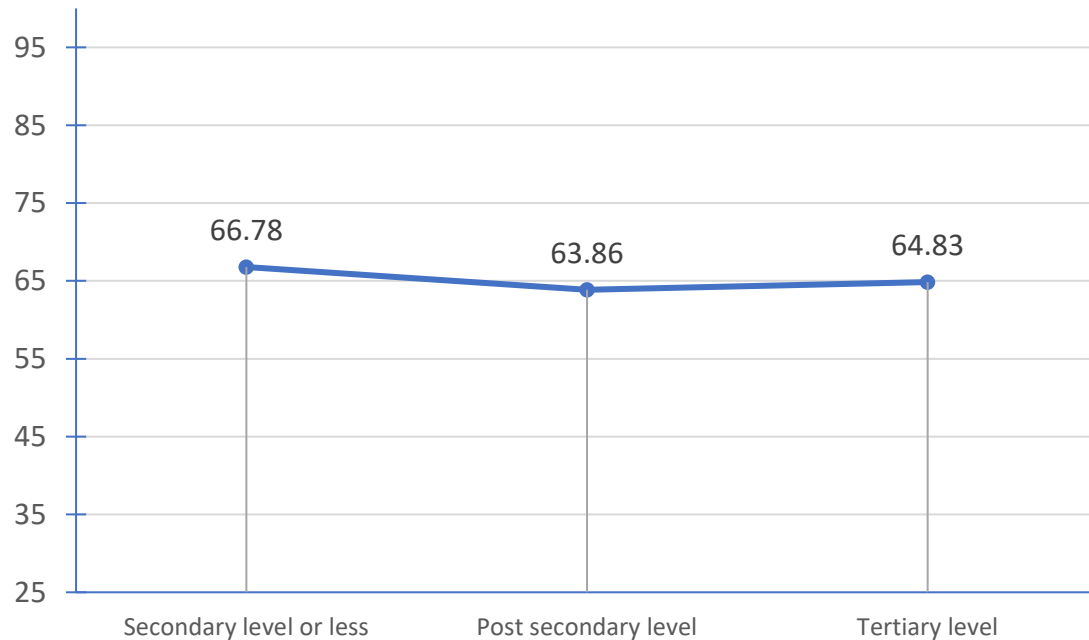
Age and Mental Well-being



All age groups score beyond the cut-off point on the scale but the oldest age group (65+) tend to have the best overall mental well-being when compared to all of the other groups ($p < 0.01$).

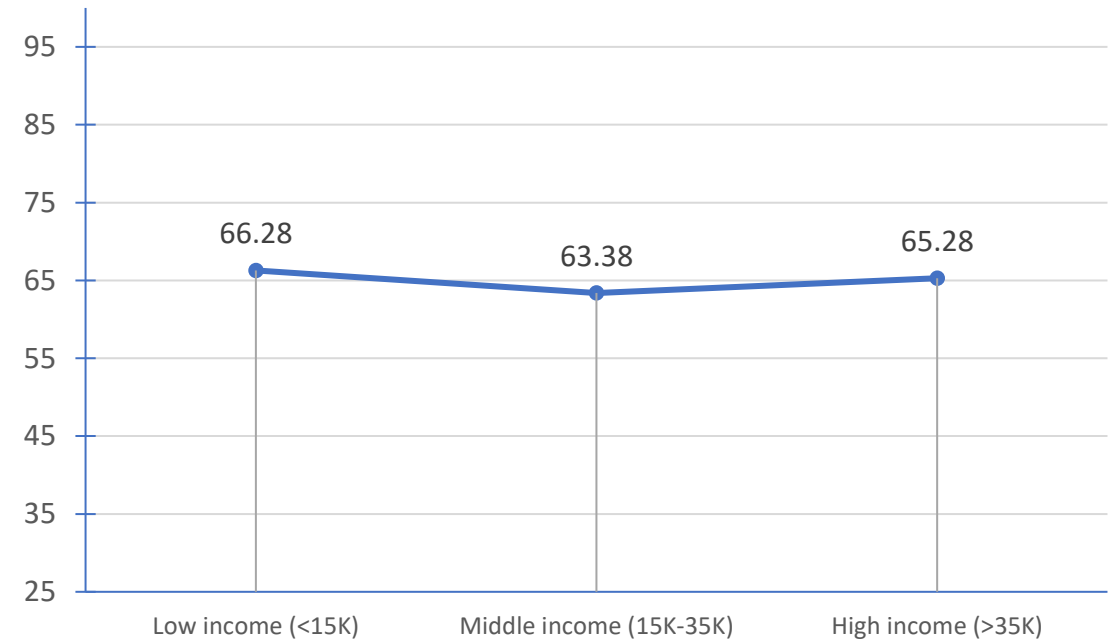
Overall Mental Well-being

Education and MWB



Education level plays a role in overall mental well-being with those having a secondary level of education reporting better overall mental well-being than the two other groups ($p < 0.01$).

Income and MWB

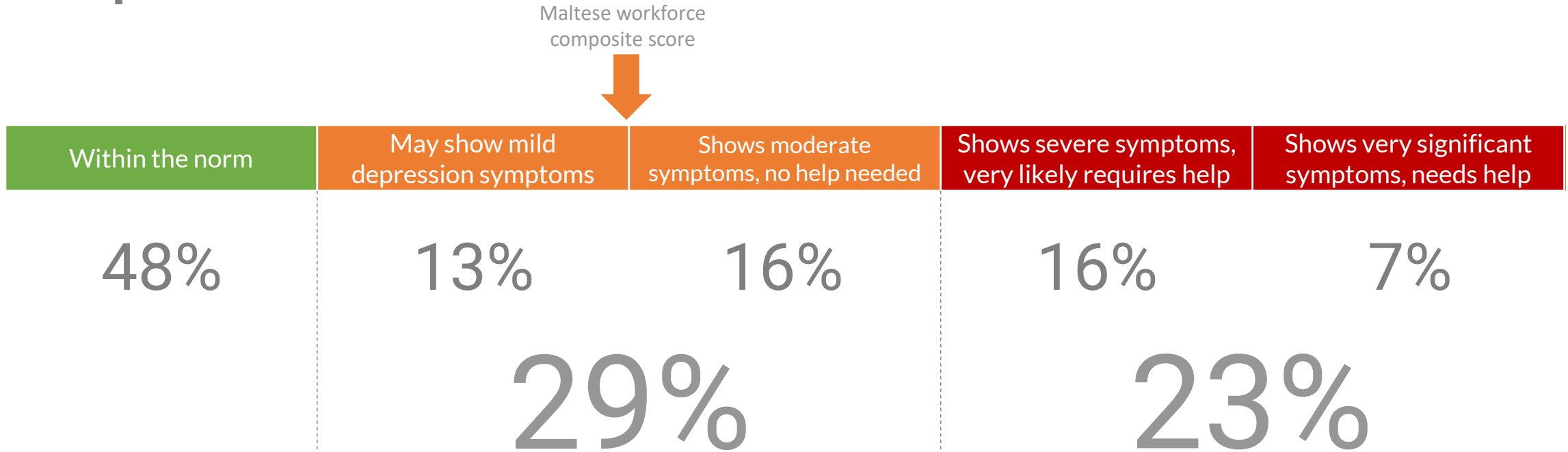


Income level plays a role in overall mental well-being with those having a middle income reporting lower overall mental well-being than the other two groups ($p < 0.01$).



Part 4 – Depression

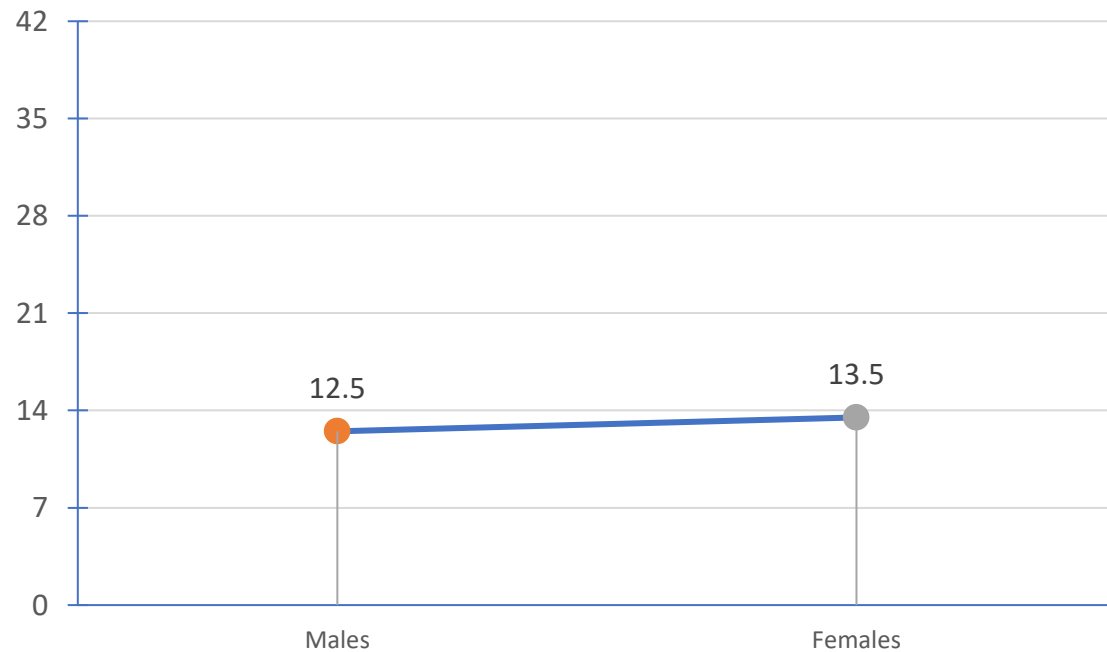
Depression



- Overall the Maltese workforce scores above the norm on depression but significantly below the level of someone who needs help
- Almost one in every 4 employees reports scores which fall in the top end of the scale

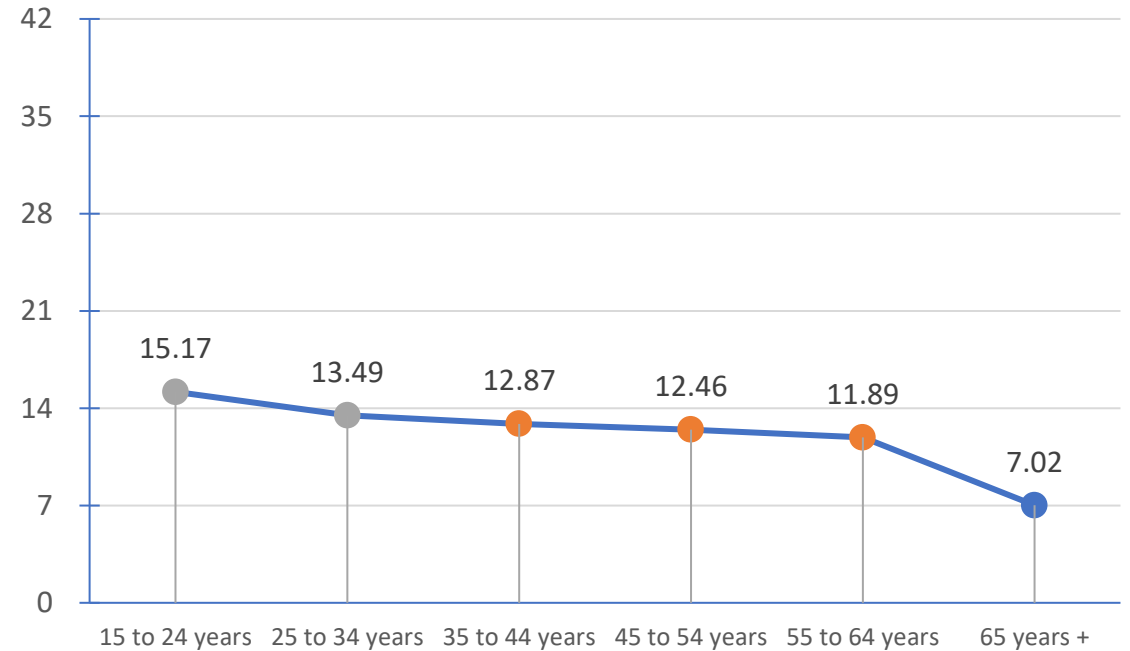
Depression

Gender and Depression



Female employees tend to report slightly higher scores on the depression scales than males. 29% of females and 23% of males score in the top two categories of the scale.

Age and Depression

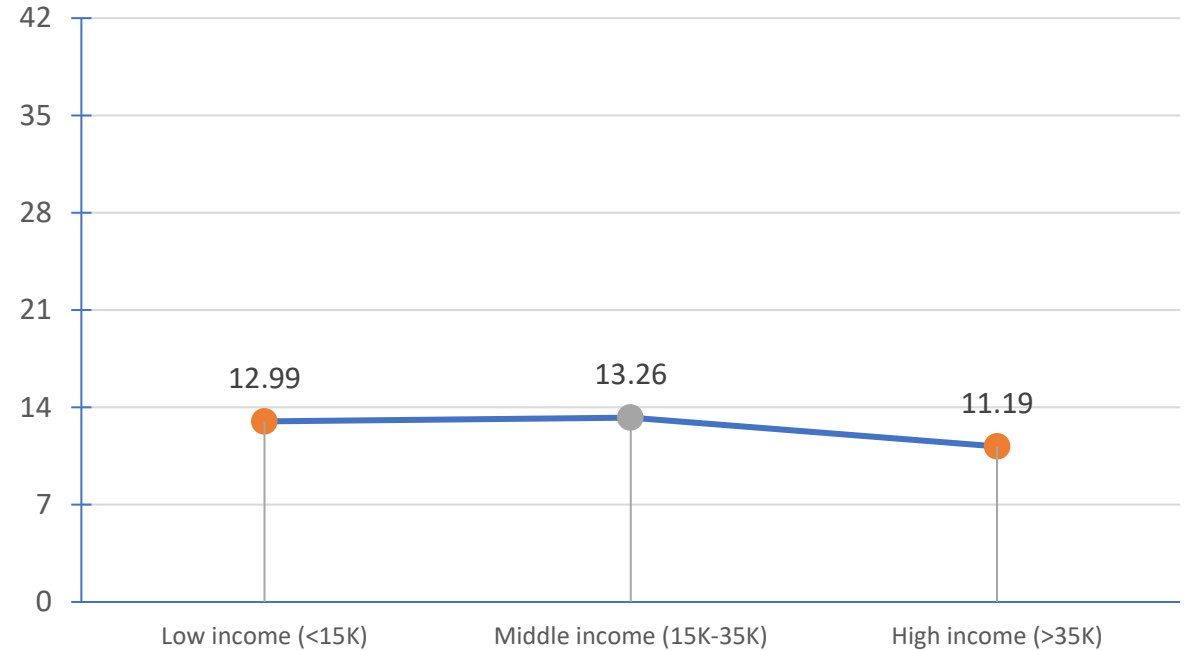


The youngest age group tends to score highest on the depression scale from all the other groups except from the 25-34 year olds, the oldest age group tends to score the lowest.

Income and Depression

The graph shows the average score obtained by each income group on the depression scale.

- Overall the high income group tend to report the lowest score on the depression scale from all the income groups

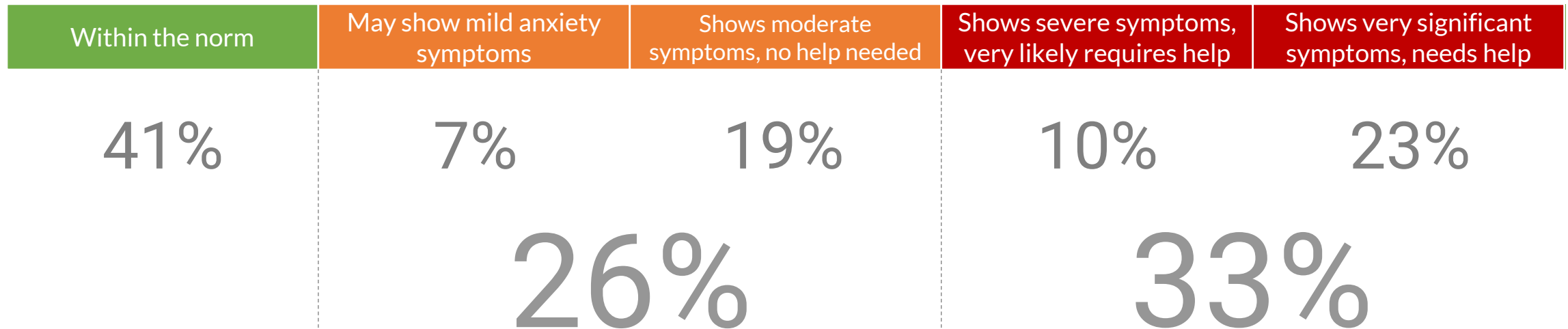


A person wearing a grey hoodie and dark pants is walking away from the camera on a metal truss bridge. The bridge's structure is made of dark metal beams forming a complex lattice. The person is centered in the frame, and the perspective is from behind them, looking down the length of the bridge. A semi-transparent purple rectangular box is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text "Part 5 – Anxiety" in white, bold, sans-serif font.

Part 5 – Anxiety

Anxiety

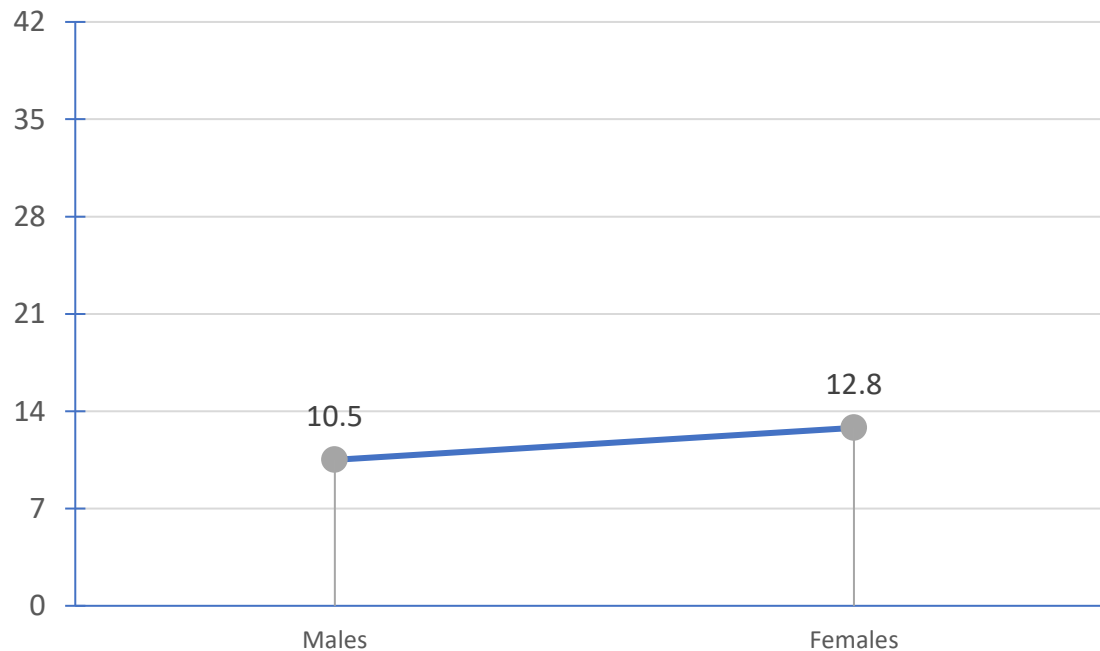
Maltese workforce
composite score



- Overall the Maltese workforce scores somewhat above the norm on anxiety but still below the level of someone who needs help
- One in every 3 employees reports scores which fall in the top end of the scale

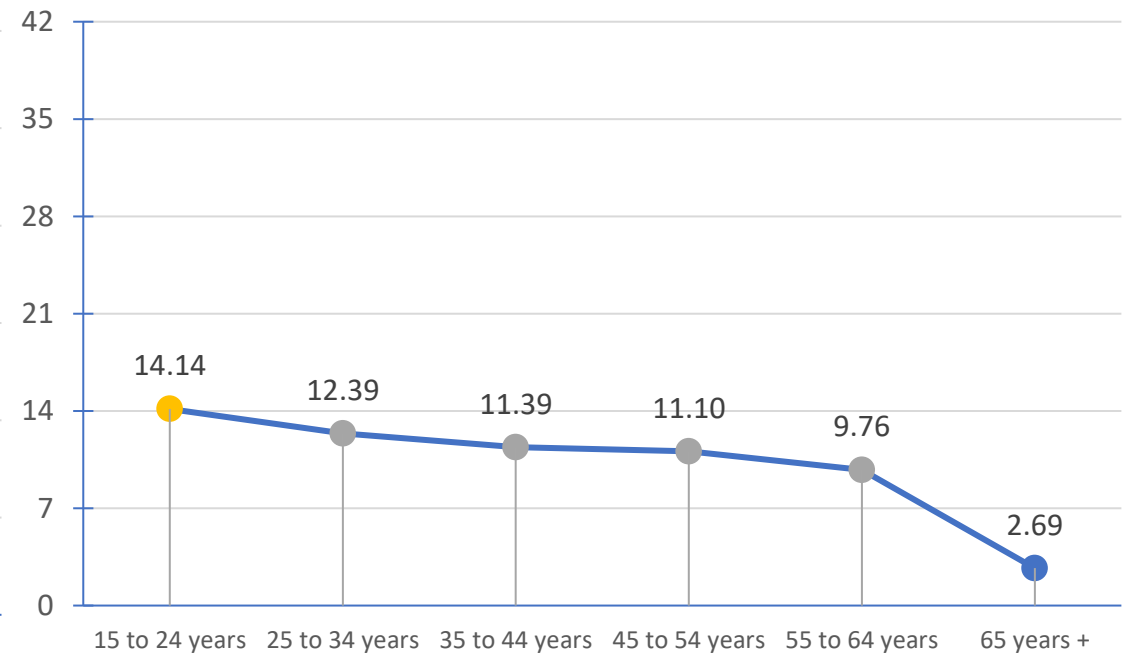
Anxiety

Gender and Anxiety



Female employees tend to report higher scores on the anxiety scales than males. 39% of females and 29% of males score in the top two categories of the scale.

Age and Anxiety

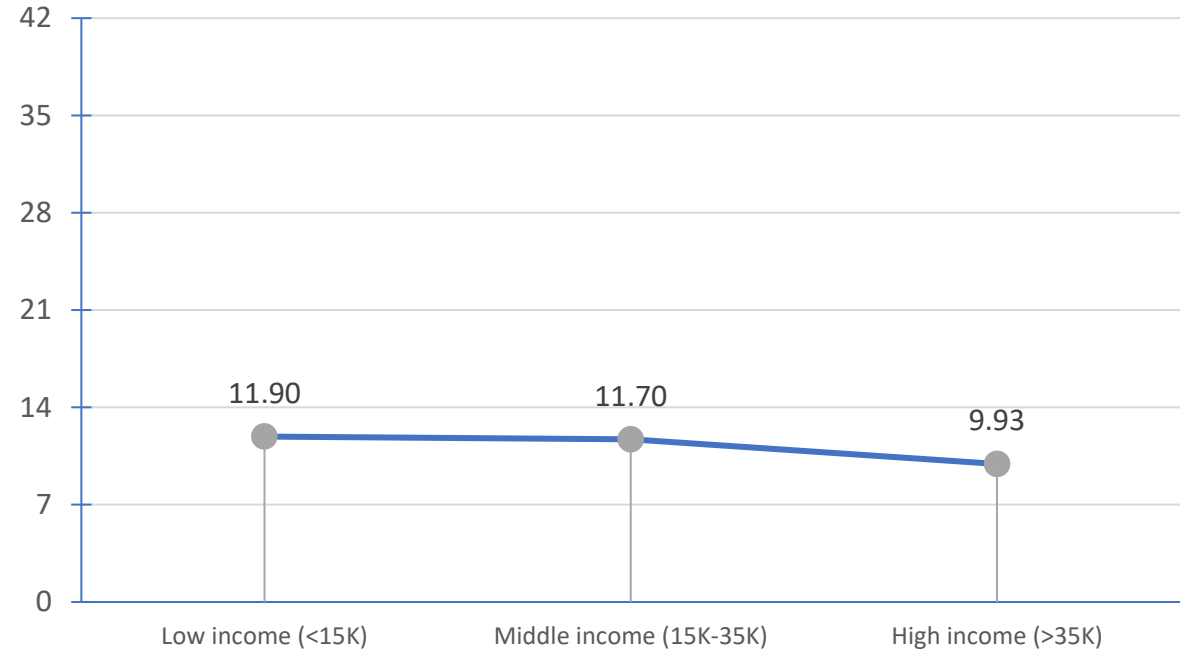


There seems to be a trend that anxiety declines with age. The two youngest age groups tend to be the most anxious from all the age groups while the two oldest age groups tend to score the lowest from all the age groups.

Income and Anxiety

The graph shows the average score obtained by each income group on anxiety

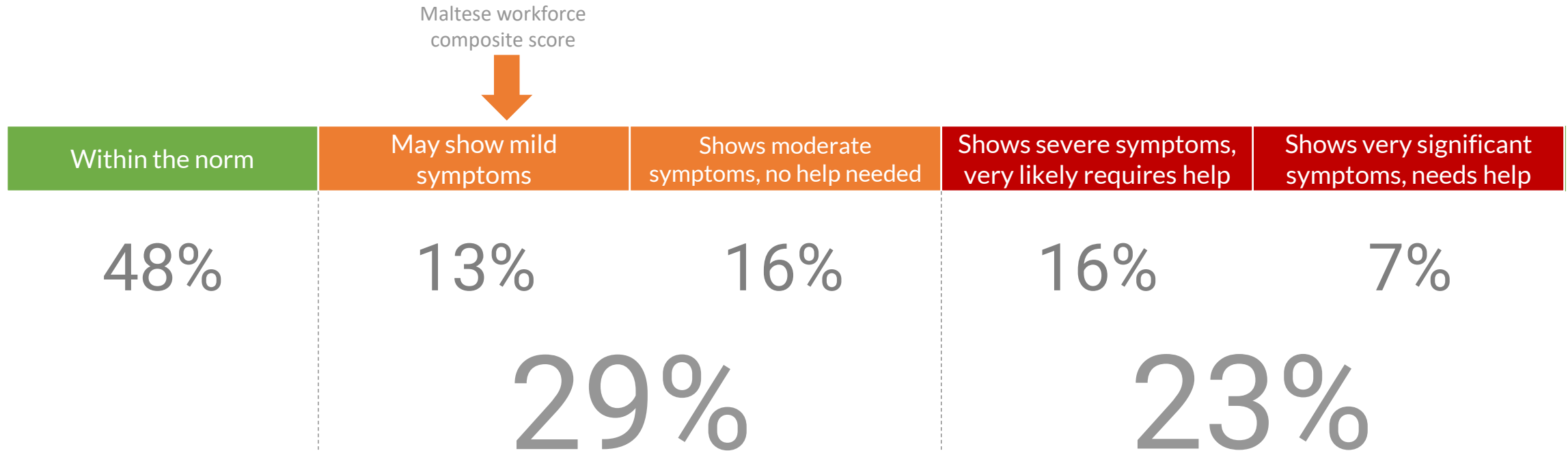
- Overall those earning the most tend to report the lowest scores on the anxiety scale when compared with the other two income groups



A black and white photograph of a woman with her eyes closed, holding her hands to her forehead in a gesture of distress or pain. The background is dark and textured, with faint, overlapping text from a document. A semi-transparent purple rectangular box is overlaid across the center of the image, containing the text 'Part 5 – Stress' in white. The overall mood is one of stress and mental anguish.

Part 5 – Stress

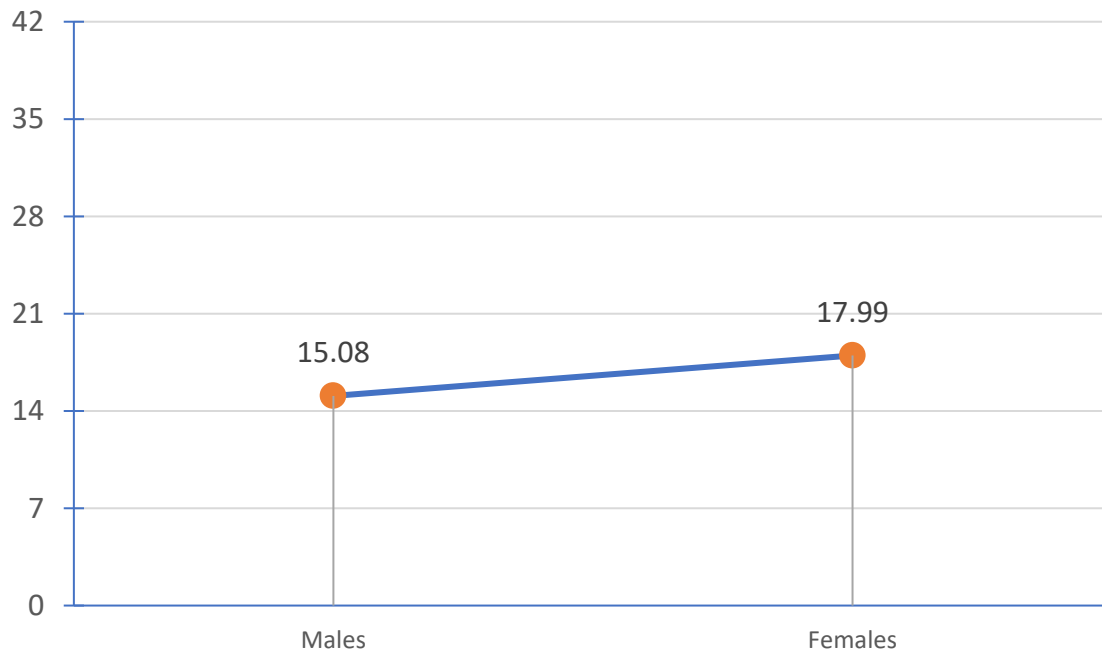
Stress



- Overall the Maltese workforce scores above the norm on stress but significantly below the level of someone who needs help
- Almost one in every 4 employees reports scores which fall in the top end of the scale

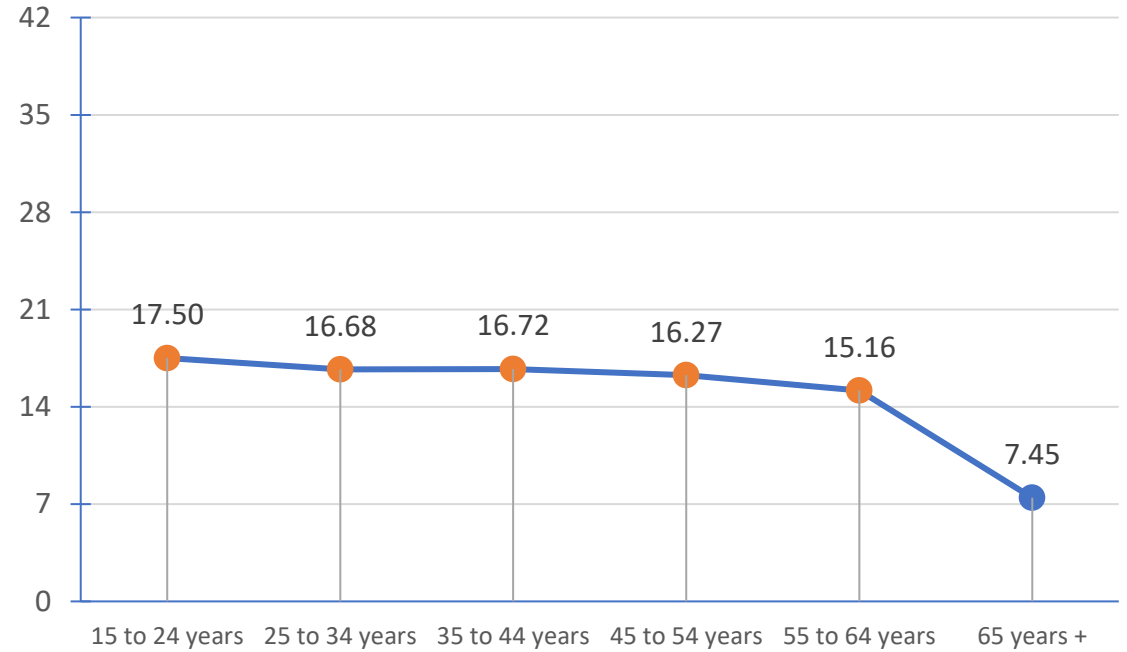
Stress

Gender and Stress



Female employees tend to report higher scores on the stress scales than males. 28% of females and 19% of males score in the top two categories of the scale.

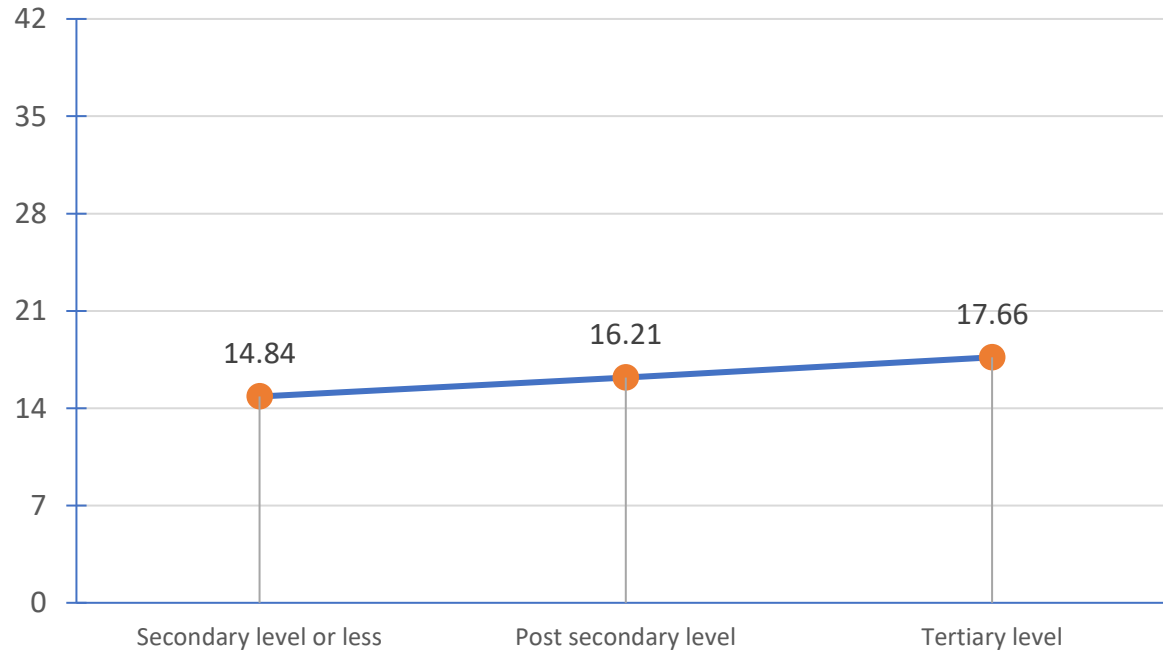
Age and Stress



There seems to be a trend that stress declines with age. The two oldest age groups tend to be the least stressed from all the age groups whereas there is no difference in the experience of stress in all the other age groups.

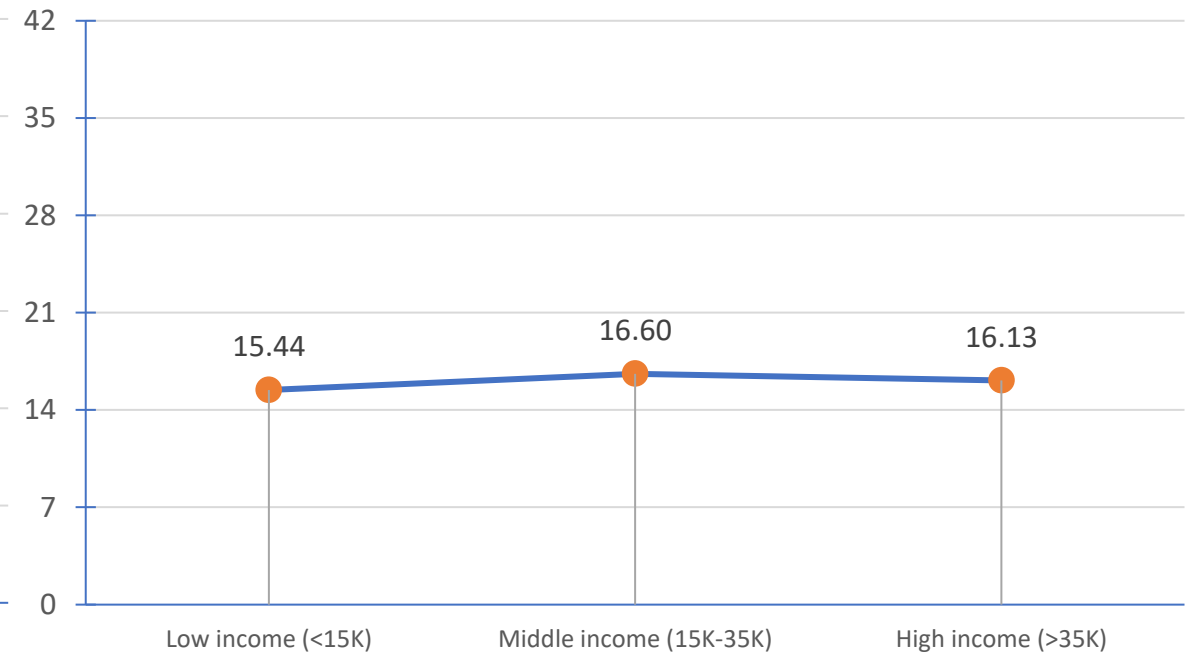
Stress

Education and Stress



Overall education level plays a role in the experience of stress. The higher the level of education the more stress one tends to experience.

Income and Stress



Income plays a role in the experience of stress with the middle income group experiencing more stress than the lower income group.

Key takeaways

- Gender differences exist in the workforce with females experiencing poorer mental health than males. Females also have higher job satisfaction than males
- Older age groups within the workforce seem to be happier and have better mental health than younger age groups
- Education level does not seem to have a big impact on mental health
- Income level plays a role in mental well-being although it is clear that other factors are at play
- There are indications that specific occupational groups and industries seem to be more prone to lower mental health

Contact us to learn more about how we can help you



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