



W106

General Participant Information About the Study

Study Title: Mental Health of Ph.D. Students at the University of Tübingen

Welcome to our study titled "Mental Health of Ph.D. Students at the University of Tübingen". Thank you for your interest in participating in this study.

Purpose of the study

Mental health issues are an increasing problem in our society, and especially in academia. But there exist only few data about Ph.D. students and the situation in Tübingen can only be estimated. Knowing the situation is the basis for potential changes and structural improvements. That is why in this study we investigate the overall situation and the mental health status of Ph.D. students at the University of Tübingen.

Course of the study

For our survey, we will ask you to fill in an online questionnaire which will take 20 minutes. The survey will be conducted online in one session.

Your task is to answer questions concerning your demographic and background information, your current Ph.D. situation, your current mental health status, and your previous knowledge and use of resources for seeking help. We will not collect any personal data that will allow for your direct identification. Only an indirect identification would be potentially possible from the demographic information (i.e., age, gender, nationality) and information concerning your Ph.D. (i.e., faculty, starting date, contract type).

About the Ph.D. initiative sustainAbility

We are a multidisciplinary group of fellow Ph.D. students at the University of Tübingen working together in the sustainAbility Ph.D. Initiative. We work towards a more sustainable future by challenging structures in society that reinforce climate as well as other injustices. In this context, we are also interested in the mental health status of Ph.D. students from all disciplines and backgrounds at the University of Tübingen.

Voluntariness and Anonymity

- ☐ I have been informed about the study and the procedure. I hereby agree to the collection and processing of my above-mentioned data. Consequently, I would like to voluntarily participate in this study. CO05
- ☐ I hereby confirm, that I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Tübingen. CO07

1 Active Filter(s)

Filter CO07/F1

If not (all of) the option(s) **1** is (are) selected.

Then display the text **CO08** and finish the interview, after the next button was clicked

PHP code

```
// If the option C005_01 was not selected ...
if (value('C005_01') != 2) {
    // ...show the text
    text('C006');
    // Display a "back" button, no "next" button
    option('backbutton', true);
    option('nextbutton', false);
    option('leavebutton', true);
    // Do not display anything else on this page
    pageStop();
}
```

text('C006')

Thank you for your time. If you change your mind please click the "Back"-button below and tick the consent box.

Which gender do you identify with?

SD01 

- ☐ diverse
- ☐ female
- ☐ male
- ☐ rather not say

How old are you?

SD02 

I am years old

What is your nationality?

SD08 

Country:

What is your family's academic background?

SD10 

- ☐ academic (at least one parent/legal guardian has a university degree)
- ☐ non-academic (none of my parents/legal guardians has a university degree)

SD11 

Did you move to Tübingen for your Ph.D.?

- ☐ no
- ☐ yes, from another place in Germany
- ☐ yes, from another country

Do you have a child/a person in your family you have to take care of?SD13 

- ☐ no
- ☐ yes

What is your housing situation?SD14 

- ☐ Alone
- ☐ Together with parents
- ☐ Together with partner
- ☐ Student accommodation
- ☐ Shared flat
- ☐ Other, please specify:

Which faculty are your studies associated with?

AP01

- ☐ Protestant Theology
- ☐ Catholic Theology
- ☐ Law
- ☐ Medicine
- ☐ Humanities
- ☐ Economics and Social Sciences
- ☐ Science
- ☐ Center for Islamic Theology (ZITh)

Other, please specify:

Did you choose the topic of your Ph.D. yourself?

AP02

- ☐ no
- ☐ yes

How many hours a week do you spend on your Ph.D.?

AP03

hours/week

How many hours a week do you work in total?

AP05

hours/week

When did you start your Ph.D.?

AP04

MM/YYYY

How are you financed? (Contract type only related to your Ph.D.)

EF01 

- ☐ Permanent employment
- ☐ Temporary employment
- ☐ Hourly employment
- ☐ Scholarship (employed, paying social security)
- ☐ Scholarship (not employed)
- ☐ Not employed
- ☐ Other, please specify:

3 Active Filter(s)**Filter EF01/F1**

If any of the following options is selected: **6, 7, 8, -9**

Then display question/text **EF06** placed later in the questionnaire (otherwise hide)

Filter EF01/F2

If any of the following options is selected: **1, 2, 6, 8, -9**

Then display question/text **EF03** placed later in the questionnaire (otherwise hide)

Filter EF01/F3

If any of the following options is selected: **2, 3, 8, -9**

Then display question/text **EF02** placed later in the questionnaire (otherwise hide)

Do you have any other paid employment which is unrelated to your Ph.D.?

EF04 

- ☐ no
- ☐ yes

1 Active Filter(s)**Filter EF04/F1**

If any of the following options is selected: **2**

Then display question/text **EF05** placed later in the questionnaire (otherwise hide)

If you only have a temporary employment: What is the total length of your contract (in months)?

EF02 

e.g. 3 years = 36 months

 months

If you have a scholarship: What is the total length of your current scholarship (in months)?

EF06 

e.g. 3 years = 36 months

 months

What is the percentage your contract covers in terms of full-time employment?

EF03  %

Why did you decide to have a side-job?

EF05 

- ☐ Earning money
- ☐ For the CV
- ☐ Personal interest

Other, please specify:

Looking back, if I had not started my Ph.D. yet, I would do it again.

EV01 

☐ strongly disagree ☐ disagree ☐ neither agree nor disagree ☐ agree ☐ strongly agree | ☐ not sure

I regret having started a Ph.D.

EV04 

☐ strongly disagree ☐ disagree ☐ neither agree nor disagree ☐ agree ☐ strongly agree | ☐ not sure

Do you think doing your Ph.D. in/at a different country/university would offer better conditions?

EV05 

- ☐ no
☐ yes
☐ not sure

Please evaluate in the scale the following statements regarding your Ph.D.:

EV06 

"I enjoy being at work."

☐ strongly disagree ☐ disagree ☐ neither agree nor disagree ☐ agree ☐ strongly agree

"I am content with the job I have."

EV07 

☐ strongly disagree ☐ disagree ☐ neither agree nor disagree ☐ agree ☐ strongly agree

"I am satisfied with my job."

EV08 

☐ strongly disagree ☐ disagree ☐ neither agree nor disagree ☐ agree ☐ strongly agree

How satisfied are you with your life at the moment?

EV09 

not satisfied at all



slightly satisfied



moderately satisfied



very satisfied



totally satisfied

Are there colleagues in your department/research center that support you professionally?

WG01 

no



yes

Are there colleagues in your department/research center that support you emotionally?

WG02 

no



yes

Have you ever felt mistreated (e.g., insulted, shouted at, undervalued) by your colleagues?

ST17 

not at all



rarely



some of the time



most of the time



all of the time

In the last 12 months (or since you started your Ph.D.)...

GH05

...how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?

GH01

☐ never
 ☐ almost never
 ☐ sometimes
 ☐ fairly often
 ☐ very often

...how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?

GH02

☐ never
 ☐ almost never
 ☐ sometimes
 ☐ fairly often
 ☐ very often

...how often have you felt that things were going your way?

GH03

☐ never
 ☐ almost never
 ☐ sometimes
 ☐ fairly often
 ☐ very often

...how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

GH04

☐ never
 ☐ almost never
 ☐ sometimes
 ☐ fairly often
 ☐ very often

What other responsibilities do you have besides working on your research topic/project?

OR01

- ☐ Teaching
☐ Supervision of other students
☐ Administration
☐ Research unrelated to your topic
☐ Other, please specify:
☐ No further responsibilities

1 Active Filter(s)

Filter OR01/F1

If any of the following options is selected: **1, 2, 3, 4, 8**

Then display question/text **OR02** placed later in the questionnaire (otherwise hide)

How much time do you spend on other responsibilities besides your research activities?

OR02 

Please give a percentage of week-time spend on those duties.

 %

Have you ever felt looked down on by your supervisor?

ST01 

☐ not at all ☐ rarely ☐ some of the time ☐ most of the time ☐ all of the time

Do you feel supported by your supervisor?

ST02 

☐ not at all ☐ rarely ☐ some of the time ☐ most of the time ☐ all of the time

Do you feel your supervisor is interested in your topic?

ST03 

☐ not at all ☐ rarely ☐ some of the time ☐ most of the time ☐ all of the time

Have you ever felt mistreated (e.g., insulted, shouted at, undervalued) by your supervisor?

ST04 

☐ not at all ☐ rarely ☐ some of the time ☐ most of the time ☐ all of the time

Does your supervisor encourage you to participate in career-building opportunities such as conferences, summer schools, research stays, etc.?

ST05 

☐ not at all ☐ rarely ☐ some of the time ☐ most of the time ☐ all of the time

Based on your experiences in academia so far, do you reconsider your career path?

ST06

- ☐ not at all ☐ rarely ☐ some of the time ☐ most of the time ☐ all of the time

Do you feel comfortable contacting your supervisor when you need help?

ST07

- ☐ not at all ☐ rarely ☐ some of the time ☐ most of the time ☐ all of the time

Has the behavior of your supervisor ever made you consider quitting your Ph.D.?

ST08

- ☐ not at all ☐ rarely ☐ some of the time ☐ most of the time ☐ all of the time

Do you have regular meetings with your supervisor(s)?

ST09

- ☐ not at all ☐ rarely ☐ some of the time ☐ most of the time ☐ all of the time

How often do you have meetings with your supervisor(s)?

ST16

- ☐ at least once a week
☐ at least once a month
☐ at least every three months
☐ at least every six months
☐ at least once a year
☐ less than once a year

Please evaluate in the scale the following statements:

ST11 

"The lack of permanent/long-term contracts in academia worries me."



strongly disagree



disagree

neither agree nor
disagree

agree



strongly agree

"I believe having a Ph.D. will help me to find a good job."

ST12 

strongly disagree



disagree

neither agree nor
disagree

agree



strongly agree

Please evaluate in the scale the following statements regarding your Ph.D.:

ST13 

"I am worried about having to leave my job before I would like to."



strongly disagree



disagree

neither agree nor
disagree

agree



strongly agree

"There is a risk that I will have to leave my present job in the year to come."

ST14 

strongly disagree



disagree

neither agree nor
disagree

agree



strongly agree

"I feel uneasy about losing my job in the near future."

ST15 

strongly disagree



disagree

neither agree nor
disagree

agree



strongly agree

Over the **past 2 weeks**, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

MH22

Little interest or pleasure in doing things

MH12

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Several days
- ☐ More than half the days
- ☐ Nearly every day

Feeling down, depressed or hopeless

MH14

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Several days
- ☐ More than half the days
- ☐ Nearly every day

Over the **past 4 weeks**, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

MH13

Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge?

MH15

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Several days
- ☐ More than half the days

1 Active Filter(s)

Filter MH15/F1

If any of the following options is selected: **1**

Then hide the questionnaire page(s) **jump1** (otherwise display them)

Over the **past 4 weeks**, how often have you been bothered by any of the following problems?

MH13

Being so restless that it's hard to sit still

MH16

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Several days
- ☐ More than half the days
- ☐ Nearly every day

Being tired easily

MH17

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Several days
- ☐ More than half the days
- ☐ Nearly every day

Muscle tension or muscle pain

MH18

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Several days
- ☐ More than half the days
- ☐ Nearly every day

Trouble falling asleep or sleeping through

MH19

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Several days
- ☐ More than half the days
- ☐ Nearly every day

Trouble concentrating, e.g., on reading or watching TV

MH20

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Several days
- ☐ More than half the days
- ☐ Nearly every day

MH21

Becoming easily annoyed or irritable

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Several days
- ☐ More than half the days
- ☐ Nearly every day

Page 20

MH

How often do you feel stressed since you have started your Ph.D.?MH01 

- ☐ not at all ☐ rarely ☐ some of the time ☐ most of the time ☐ all of the time

Has your stress level increased since you started your Ph.D.?MH02 

- ☐ no
- ☐ yes

What is/are the cause(s) of your stress?MH03 **Do you have anyone at your institute to consult about your work-related stress?**MH04 

- ☐ Nobody
- ☐ Colleagues
- ☐ Admins / Coordination
- ☐ Supervisor
- ☐ Other, please specify:

Do you feel your mental health has declined due to the Ph.D.?

MH05 

☐ not at all

☐ somehow

☐ plenty

☐ severely

1 Active Filter(s)**Filter MH05/F1**

If any of the following options is selected: **2, 3, 4, 5**

Then display question/text **MH06** placed later in the questionnaire (otherwise hide)

What would need to change to improve your mental health status?

MH06

Do you know other Ph.D. students who are struggling with their mental health?

MH07 

- ☐ nobody
- ☐ some
- ☐ many
- ☐ most
- ☐ all

Do you think your mental health problems negatively affect your quality of work?

MH08

- ☐ never ☐ almost never ☐ sometimes ☐ fairly often ☐ very often

Do you think that some special services (e.g., time management courses, coaching, etc.) or structural changes are necessary?

MH09

- ☐ no
☐ personalised coaching
☐ mentoring
☐ time management courses
☐ stress management courses
☐ structural changes

☐ Other, please specify:

Have you already tried to improve your situation?

SH01

- ☐ never ☐ almost never ☐ sometimes ☐ fairly often ☐ very often

Have you heard of the consultation services at the university?

SH02

- ☐ no
☐ yes

1 Active Filter(s)**Filter SH02/F1**

If any of the following options is selected: **2**

Then display question/text **SH04** placed later in the questionnaire (otherwise hide)

How much do you know about the consultation services at the university?

SH04 

☐ nothing

☐ almost nothing

☐ something

☐ plenty

☐ a lot

Have you sought help from a specialist?

SH05 

☐ no

☐ yes

Are you currently in psychotherapy?

MH10 

☐ no

☐ yes

Have you ever been diagnosed with a mental disorder?

MH11 

☐ no

☐ yes

Do you have anyone to talk to about your issues?

SH06 

☐ no

☐ yes

Did the Covid-19 pandemic affect your general situation?

SH10

- ☐ yes, it improved my general situation
- ☐ yes, it worsened my general situation
- ☐ yes, but it neither worsened nor improved my general situation
- ☐ no

Do you think the answers you have provided in this survey have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic?

SH11

☐
Very likely

☐
Likely

☐
Neutral

☐
Not likely

☐
Very unlikely

What could be done to improve your situation? Feel free to express your opinion and feelings here.

SH07

Do you have any further comments?

SH09 

W103

Thank you very much for your participation in the study!

In case you feel like you need immediate help or someone to talk to, you can make use of the numerous counseling services offered by the University of Tübingen:

- the Psychosocial Counseling Service for University Employees at the University of Tübingen: <https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/2176>
- the Psychotherapeutic Outpatient Clinic of the Department of Psychology: <https://uni-tuebingen.de/en/120748>
- or, in emergencies, the General psychiatry and psychotherapy with outpatient clinic: +49 7071 29-82684 at any time. <https://www.medizin.uni-tuebingen.de/de/das-klinikum/einrichtungen/kliniken/psychiatrie-und-psychotherapie/allgemeine-psychiatrie>

We would also like to emphasize that participation in this study does not correspond to a personal health check or psychological screening. Therefore, we can neither assess your individual mental health state nor give you individual feedback. If you need additional information or a counseling session on health-related questions, please get in touch with your family doctor.

If you have any questions concerning our survey, please contact Julian Friedrich (julian.friedrich@uni-tuebingen.de).

Last Page

You can now close the window.

sustainAbility Ph.D. Initiative - MHAK julian.friedrich@uni-tuebingen.de