

The impact of external valuation perceived by HEI staff members

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- The Estonian context
- Aims of the study
- Method
- Results
- Conclusion

Estonia – some indicators



Population: 1,312 million

45 000 sq km

1500 islands

Forests 52,3 % of land area

Average monthly salary 1039 EUR

Unemployment rate 6,3 %

GDP at current prices 18 738 mil EUR

<http://estonia.eu/>

Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education



Founded **January 2009** on the basis of
Estonian HE Accreditation Center

Two councils

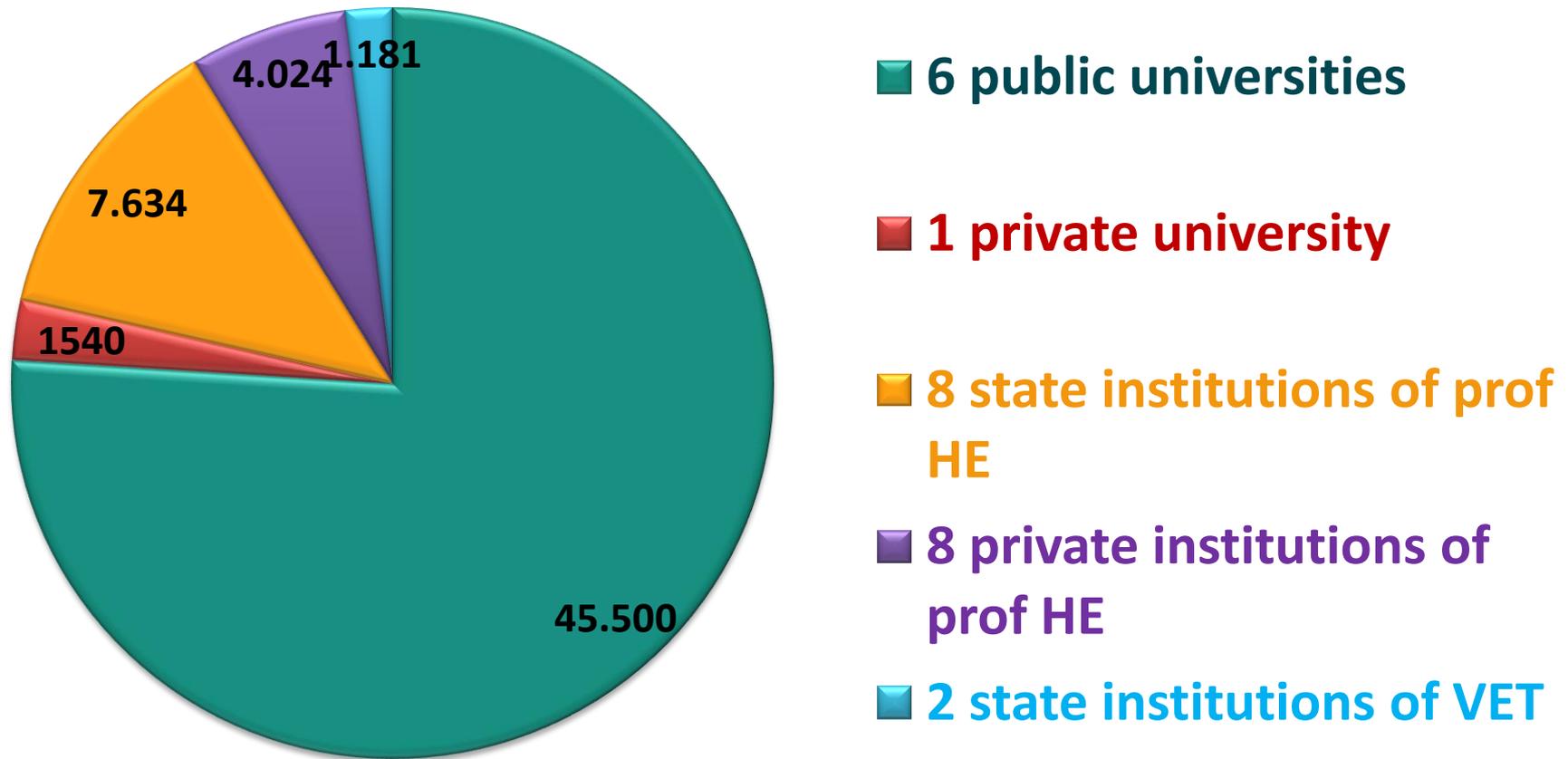
Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education
Quality Assessment Council for VET

Staff **9**



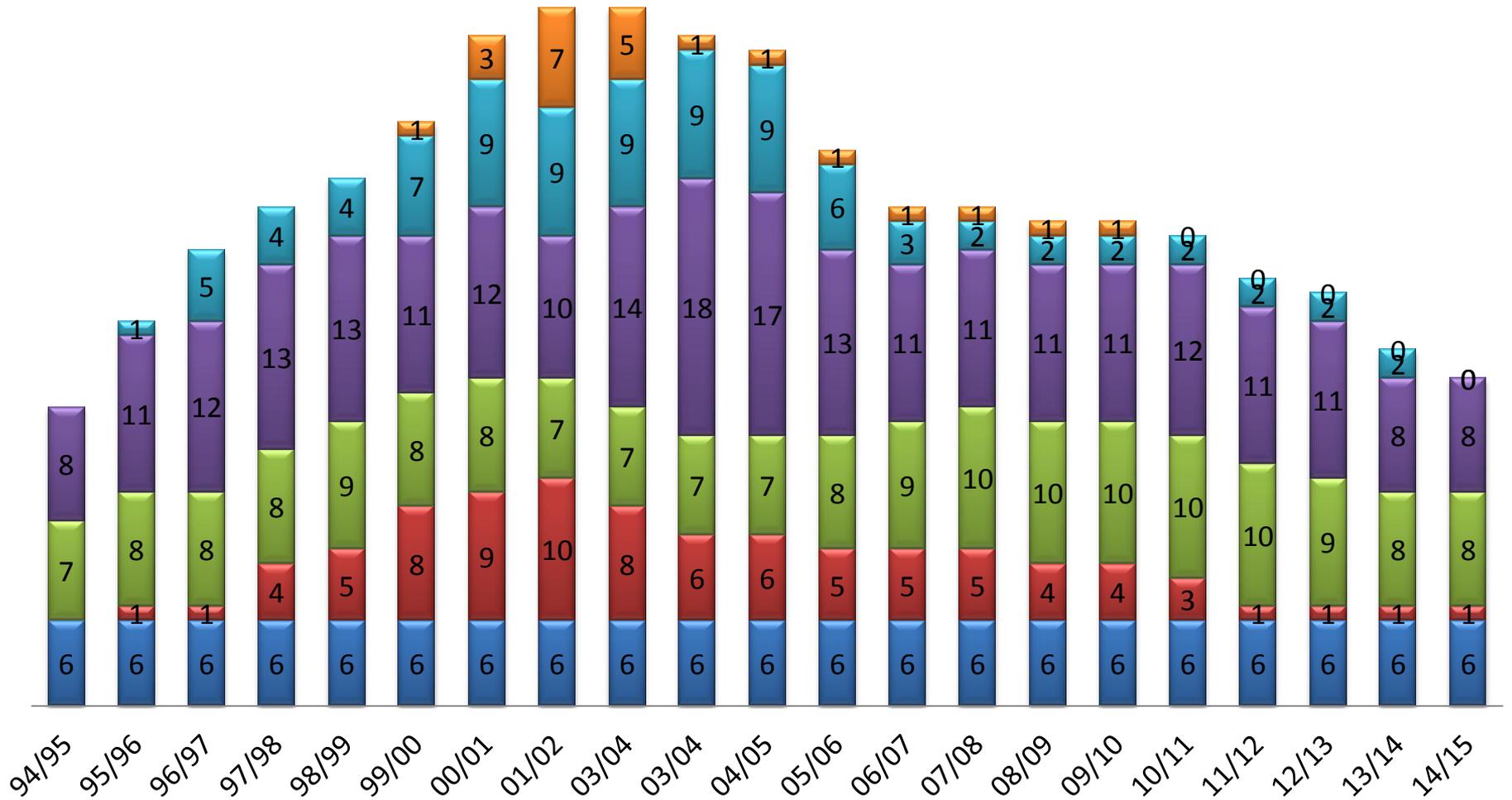
EKKA's mission is,
in cooperation with its partners,
to promote quality in the field of education
and thereby increase the competitiveness
of the Estonian society.

Types of HEI-s and student numbers 2015



Higher Education Institutions in Estonia 1994-2015

- Public University
- Private University
- State Prof HEI
- Private Prof HEI
- State VET Institutions
- Private VET Institution



Higher Education Quality Assessment System in Estonia 1997-2015

1997-2009

33 HEI-s

Accreditation of study programmes
STATE RECOGNITION

Institutional accreditation
(voluntary)

Registration of study programmes by the Ministry of Education and Research

2009-2011

TRANSITIONAL EVALUATION

2011 ...

2015: 23 HEI-s

Quality assessment of a study programme group at least once every 7 years

Institutional accreditation at least once every 7 years

STATE RECOGNITION:
The right to conduct studies in a study programme group



- The aim in external evaluation is **to support autonomy** and encourage improvement, while at the same time **keeping the institutions accountable and comparable**
- Even if it might be perceived as „**useful**“ – it is still an additional, **resource-consuming** obligation for the institution, especially for the teaching staff
- **Too many assessments** fo different types – in addition research evaluation (regular and targeted)

Main questions in the study



- How do staff members of HEIs **perceive** external evaluation?
- Is the attitude towards external evaluation mostly **positive or negative**?
- Do the staff members' attitudes **depend on the type of HEI** and the main role of its employees, their age and gender?
- What does external evaluation **mean to the staff members**?

The current study



- This study was conducted by EKKA in spring 2014
- **Quantitative** and **qualitative** methods were used (i.e. the concurrent mixed method)(Tashakkori and Cresswell 2007).
- The **perceived effect of evaluations on the level of the system and the individual** was analysed.



- An Internet-based questionnaire **was sent to all Estonian HEIs.**
- The study **was anonymous.**
- The data were processed in SPSS and Nvivo.

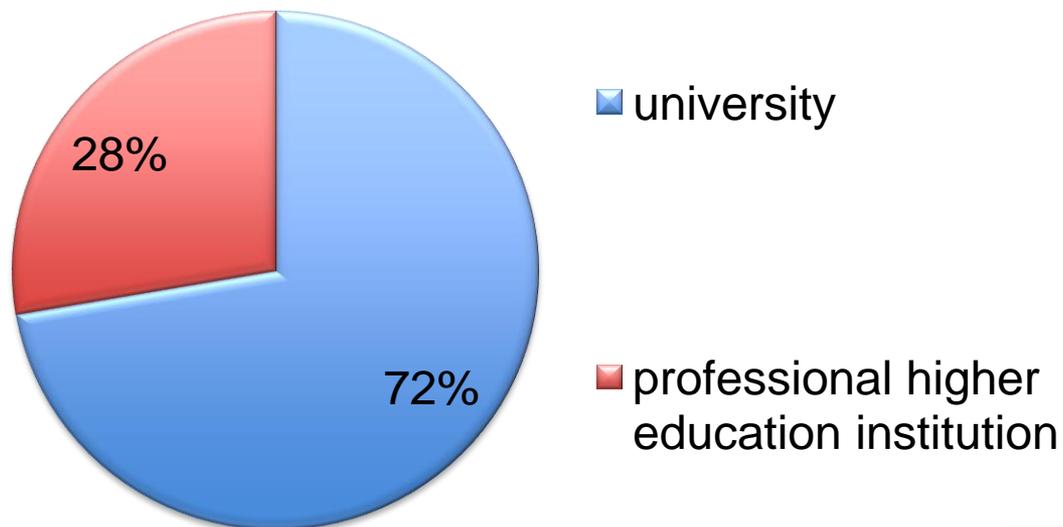


Participants

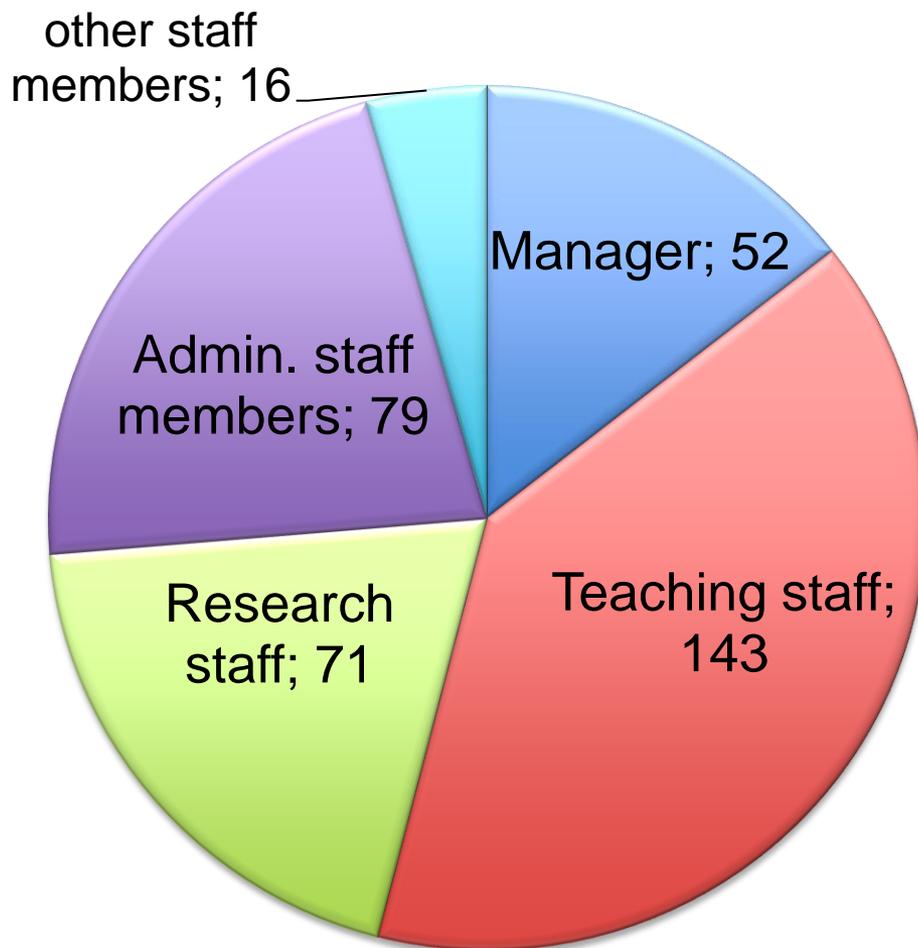
361 staff members of Estonian HEIs:

261 from universities

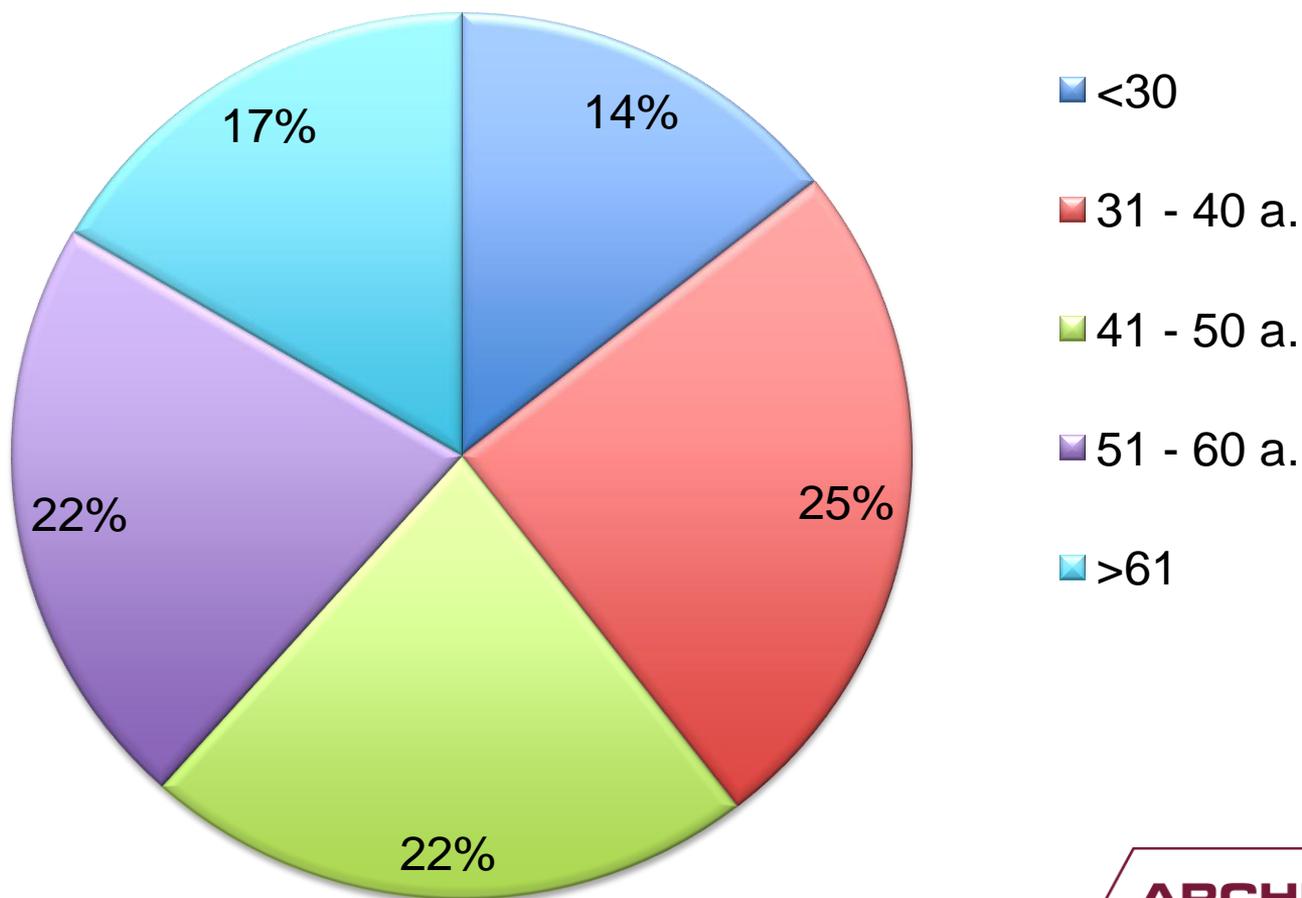
100 from professional higher education institutions



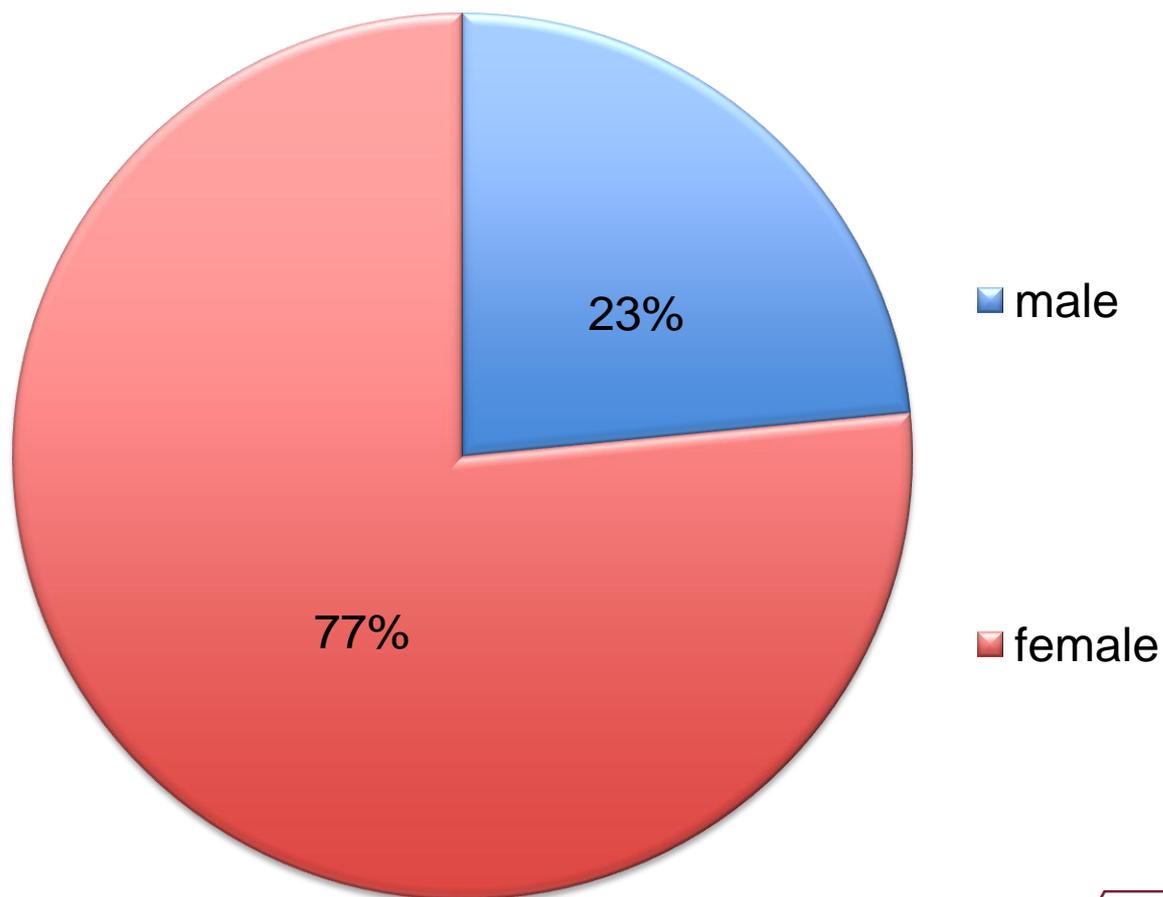
Participant's primary role in the HEI



Participant's age groups



Participant's gender





A 10-item questionnaire on a six-point scale examined the perceived impact of external evaluation.

Sample items:

- „External evaluation helps to raise awareness of the weaknesses in the system and to find solutions“.
- „External evaluation makes those being assessed feel controlled and pressured“.



Respondents were also asked to complete two sentences:

- “External evaluation means for me...”.
- “External evaluation has an impact on ...”.

The statistical analysis



The collected data were analysed with following methods:

- factor analysis
- reliability analysis
- descriptive statistics
- independent samples test
- analysis of variance
- multidimensional scaling analysis
- summative content analysis

Perceived positive and negative impact of external evaluation



Perceived impact	Average consolidated result	Standard-deviation
Positive impact	3.96	.94
Negative impact	4.11	1.04

Factor 1 Perceived positive impact of external evaluation



Scale item	M (SD)
External evaluation encourages organisational restructuring and/or other developmental activities.	4.08 (1.18)
External evaluation helps to raise awareness of the weaknesses in the system and to find solutions.	4.38 (1.10)
External evaluation strengthens teamwork within an organisation.	3.86 (1.18)
External evaluation is a positive challenge for those being assessed.	3.74 (1.13)
External evaluation provides a good opportunity to share experience with experts and to get useful feedback from them.	3.91 (1.20)
External evaluation makes Estonian higher education more reliable.	4.35 (1.24)
External evaluation makes those being assessed feel supported and encouraged.	3.46 (1.10)

Factor 2 Perceived negative impact of external evaluation



Scale items	M (SD)
External evaluation makes those being assessed feel controlled and pressured.	4.03 (1.17)
External evaluation causes stress among those being assessed.	4.04 (1.19)
External evaluation increases bureaucracy within the higher education institute.	4.26 (1.28)

Perceiving positive and negative impact of external evaluation by different groups



Characteristics	Positive influence	Negative influence
Gender	No differences	No differences
Age	No differences	No differences
The type of HEI institution	The staff from professional higher education institutions perceive the positive influence more than the staff from universities	No differences
The primary role in the HEI	The managers perceive the positive influence more than other staff members	No differences

External evaluation means for me ... 1



- **A director:** *A lot of **extra work** and analysis. A lot of **stress**. Forces you to assess realities objectively, which is good.*
- **A teaching staff member:** *Compiling a lot of **bureaucratic documents**, conducting sometimes **pointless analyses**, producing an immense amount of text. Sometimes also content discussion and **team work** (to the effect of "fighting a common enemy"). **Slight frustration**, because a lot of work is done but it has little impact on our everyday work and is not paid for separately. There are not enough explanations of why another evaluation is coming up and what it's good for...*

External evaluation means for me ... 2



- **A researcher:** *A thorough and **honest overview of my work** and activities from a different angle from everyday feedback.*
- **A researcher:** *It mainly means **stressing external indicators** (the magic of big numbers).*
- **An administrative staff member:** ***Some additional tasks** in helping to prepare for evaluation.*

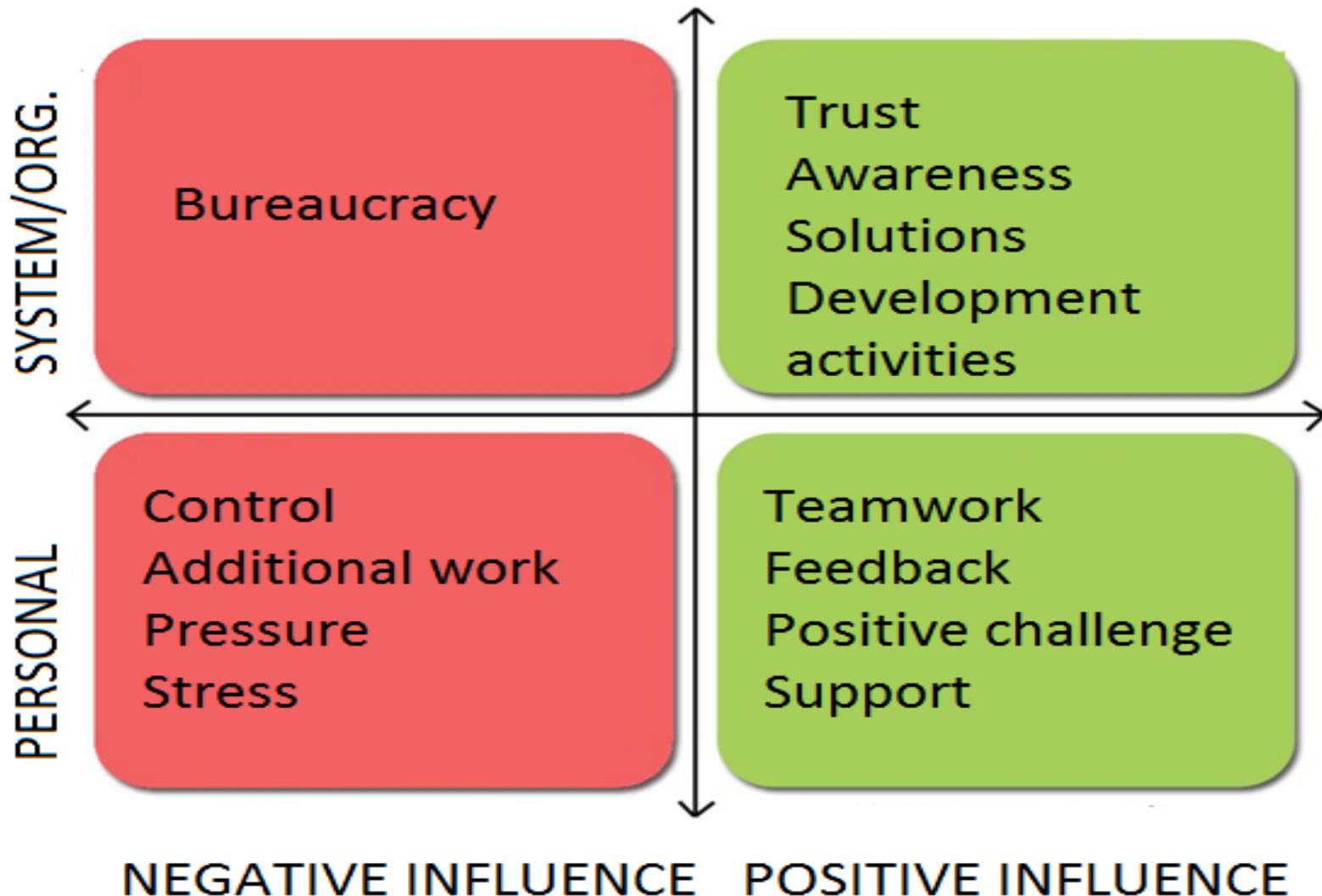


External evaluation has an impact on ...



- **A director:** *Consolidating staff around a common goal and analysing what's been done supports **increasing and maintaining quality**.*
- **A teaching staff member:** *External evaluation of higher education institutions **forces them to critically analyse** their activities and find ways of making them more efficient.*
- **An administrative worker:** *Primarily **the internal climate** and structure of the organisation, but hopefully the quality of Estonian education and research activities in the long run.*

Organisation vs individual: the perceived impact of external evaluation



Conclusion



- External evaluation has both a positive and negative impact as perceived by the staff members of HEI-s.
- Evaluation is necessary at the level of the organisation or the higher education system.
- Managers perceive the positive impact of external evaluation the most.
- Staff members feel that external evaluation increases bureaucracy and also leads to extra work and stress.

System/organisation versus individual



The perceived positive and negative impact of external evaluation differs depending on the organisational vs individual viewpoint.



Thank you!



See also short overview
on EKKA's webpage

<http://ekka.archimedes.ee/en/publications-2/>