

EAWOP Small Group Meeting

Call for Papers

Challenges in Work Stress: Advancing the Knowledge about Challenge Stressors and Recommendations for Addressing Ambivalent Work Demands in Policy and Practice

12-13 September 2024

University of Graz, Austria

Organized by

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Meeting theme and scope

In the literature on job stress, it has become common to distinguish between challenge stressors and hindrance stressors. Although both types of job stressors are thought to be detrimental for workers' health and well-being because they increase strain, challenge stressors differ from hindrance stressors in that their effects are ambivalent because they also have the potential to enhance workers' motivation, growth, and performance (e.g., Cavanaugh et al., 2000). Initially, the core assumptions of the challenge-hindrance stressors framework were well supported in meta-analyses (e.g., Crawford et al., 2010; LePine et al., 2005), but more recent meta-analytic findings also question the favourable effects of challenge stressors (Mazzola & Disselhorst, 2019) and/or suggest that some challenge stressors may need to be reclassified (Kubicek et al., 2023). Empirical studies investigating the underlying mechanisms have mostly focused on the role of cognitive appraisal processes (e.g., Searle & Auton, 2015) and already identified several boundary conditions for the favourable effects of challenge stressors (e.g., LePine, 2016; Ma et al., 2021; Rosen et al., 2020). Nevertheless, a better understanding of challenge stressors and how they affect workers' health, well-being, and performance is essential to improve recommendations on how to deal with such ambivalent job demands, both on a policy level and in organizational practice.

The SGM seeks to answer the following questions:

- a. Which specific job demands should be classified as challenge stressors and what is the rationale for this classification?
- b. What are the actual effects of challenge stressors on workers’ health, well-being, and performance and which additional outcomes should be considered?
- c. What role do cognitive appraisal processes play in explaining the effects of challenge stressors and what other mechanisms should also be taken into account?
- d. What boundary conditions play a role in the effects of challenge stressors and what interventions could enhance favourable effects and/or buffer adverse effects?
- e. What is the role of time in the favourable and/or adverse effects of challenge stressors and how do they combine in the long term?
- f. What advances in theory and/or methodology are needed to further our understanding of challenge stressors?

Although this SGM is intended to have an academic focus, it will also seek to bridge the ‘academic-practitioner gap’ by actively involving policy makers and practitioners in a panel debate and presentations. As such, this SGM will also strive to produce a policy brief with evidence-based recommendations that will be easily readable and widely accessible, and shape a new research agenda based on insights, experiences, and suggestions from policy makers and practitioners.

Meeting program and location

The EAWOP SGM titled "Challenges in Work Stress: Advancing the Knowledge about Challenge Stressors and Recommendations for Addressing Ambivalent Work Demands in Policy and Practice" will be held for two full days, 12-13 September 2024. The event will begin at 9:00 on 12 September 2024 and end at 18:00 on 13 September 2024.

It is planned that the SGM will include the following three keynote speakers: Marcie LePine (Arizona State University), Anja Van den Broeck (KU Leuven), and Alexandra Michel (Scientific Head of Division “Changing Working World” at BAuA; Heidelberg University). Additionally, the program will include approximately 20 oral presentations and conclude with a panel debate with researchers, policy makers, and practitioners.

The meeting will be held in Graz, Austria, and will be hosted by the University of Graz. According to TripAdvisor’s page about Graz, “a bevy of universities give Austria's second-largest city its lively pace. Baroque palaces are a pleasant contrast with 16th-century courtyards and provocative modern buildings. The Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, teems with fine architecture, including the Burg castle complex, with its Gothic double staircase, and the graceful Uhrturm clock tower. A funicular takes visitors up the dramatic bluff. The River Mur dashes through the city, and thermal springs dot the surrounding countryside.” The city also has a regional airport with direct connections to several European airports, including Amsterdam, Berlin, Düsseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Munich, Vienna, and Zurich. The Austrian Federal Railways also provide service between Graz Main Station and the larger Vienna International Airport.

Participation fee

Participants will be required to pay a participation fee that is expected to be 60 Euros. This participation fee includes two lunches, four coffee breaks, and a dinner. Participants are expected to cover their own travel and accommodation costs.

Submission of abstracts

Applicants are invited to submit their abstracts (up to 750 words) by 1 May 2024 to sgm2024@uni-graz.at. Abstracts should be structured as follows: 1) research goals, 2) theoretical background, 3) methodology, 4) results, 5) limitations, 6) conclusions incl. implications for research, policy, and/or practice, and 7) relevance to the SGM topics. Conceptual, review, and practitioner papers are welcomed as well. However, the general structure of these abstracts should be modified to fit the scope of the paper. Applicants will be notified about the acceptance of their presentations by 15 June 2024.

References

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