

Up-and-Coming Voices: The Future of Work

June 28, 2021

Poster presentations offer student and early-career researchers an invaluable opportunity to connect with colleagues and present their work to the broader scientific community. With many such events still taking place online, including the recent [2021 APS Virtual Convention](#), this Observer feature provides early-career participants in the APS Virtual Poster Showcase with another platform to share their research. This edition spotlights a selection of research related to the changing workplace from the 2020 Virtual Poster Showcase.



[#ArmMeWith: Analyzing Teacher Resource Needs Through Twitter](#)

Christina Naegeli Costa, Nansook Park, and Mari Kira (University of Michigan, USA)

What drew you to this research?

As a former teacher, I am drawn to research on teacher well-being because I know firsthand how difficult and demanding, yet underappreciated, the profession can be. I am also drawn to social media methods because we can access so much information in such a short amount of time. It would have taken many more resources to get the same amount of feedback from teachers if we were doing survey research with this particular study. Instead, we were able to examine 2,639 tweets from the #ArmMeWith Twitter campaign.

What did the research reveal that you didn't already know?

The most interesting thing we found in this particular study was factors of well-being that have not been traditionally considered in occupational well-being models. For example, we found that teachers' need for political change, physical building characteristics, and safety were all factors. We are working now on follow-up research to measure these factors and see how they relate to teacher well-being.



[Differences in Vocational Interests and Personality Between Occupational Groups](#)

Linda Berga, Inese Muzikante, and Ivars Austers (University of Latvia)

What drew you to this research?

During the summer of 2018, a leading telecommunications company in Latvia was looking to answer the question of which employees should be reskilled for future jobs. We started to wonder what besides cognitive ability can predict a person's willingness and efficiency to reskill for professions on the rise, such as chatbot trainers. In Latvia, there is no valid assessment tool available for vocational interests. Based on the research done in other countries and the theory of vocational personalities and work environments by J. L. Holland, we were able to develop an instrument—the Latvian Questionnaire of Vocational Interests—that fits Latvian employees and their vocational interests.

This project led to the research question of whether employees in different occupations differ in their

vocational interests. We wanted to understand the best fit for a job, based on an employee's vocational interests and personality, and whether these characteristics can predict their job performance beyond cognitive ability.

What did the research reveal that you didn't already know?

The research revealed how similar the vocational interests of people working as client specialists, sales specialists, and managers are, and how different those interests are from the interests of people working in IT or business analysis. Investigative interests were significantly higher in the business analysis group, and conventional interests (a preference for working in structured environments) were significantly higher for client and sales specialists when age and gender were controlled for. Another interesting finding was that we can use these vocational interests to predict job performance even when the employees made their education and career choices years ago.

Finally, we found that there were no differences in vocational personality if age and gender were controlled for. We could not say from our data that managers who are doing their jobs well and IT specialists who are doing their jobs well, for example, are different in broad personality traits as occupational groups. Yet the sample size does not allow us to generalize our research findings outside the organizations where the study was conducted.



[Idea Championing, or Whom and How? The Interactive Effects of Leader Characteristics and Idea Championing on Employee Idea Implementation](#)

Eun Soo Son and Andreas Richter (University of Cambridge, England)

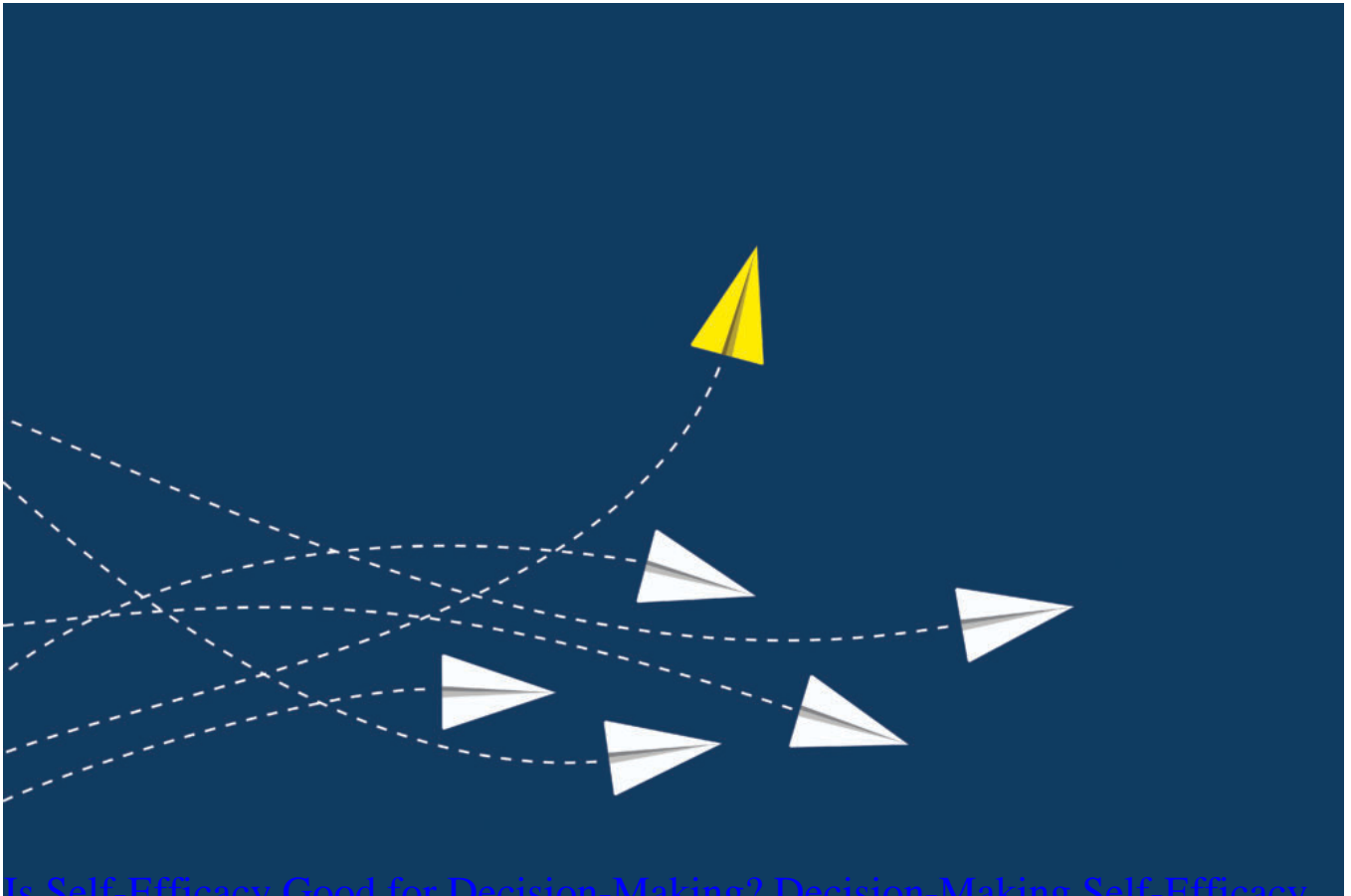
What drew you to this research?

“A new idea either finds a champion or dies,” said Donald A. Schon (1963). Although there is a burgeoning need for novel and useful ideas in today’s ever-more-challenging business environment, employees often face difficulties in single-handedly pushing their creative ideas forward to implementation. I had similar experiences, yet I eventually saw my ideas come to fruition with kind support from my advisor, family, and friends. Hence, I wanted to examine this situation in the context of real organizations. I was interested in examining how others, especially team leaders or line managers, could play a role in the execution of their direct reports’ creative ideas.

What did the research reveal that you didn’t already know?

Our study revealed that the success of a leader’s idea championing, in terms of improving the odds of an employee’s idea implementation, depends on two leader characteristics: political influencing behavior and organizational status. We also found that, although only political behavior moderated the relationship between the effectiveness of a leader’s peer-level idea championing and employee idea implementation, both political behavior and status separately moderated the relationship between leader’s idea championing and top-management-level and employee idea implementation.

Peer leaders as well as top managers rewarded active idea championing by team leaders who were passive in their political behavior, increasing the chances of their team members’ ideas being implemented. Peer leaders penalized active idea championing by highly political team leaders, indicating the detrimental effects of excessive influence activities. But top managers seemed less concerned and did not penalize such actions.



Is Self-Efficacy Good for Decision-Making? Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Increases Regret Through Decision-Making Styles

Shin-I Shih and An Hoang Kim Vo (National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan)

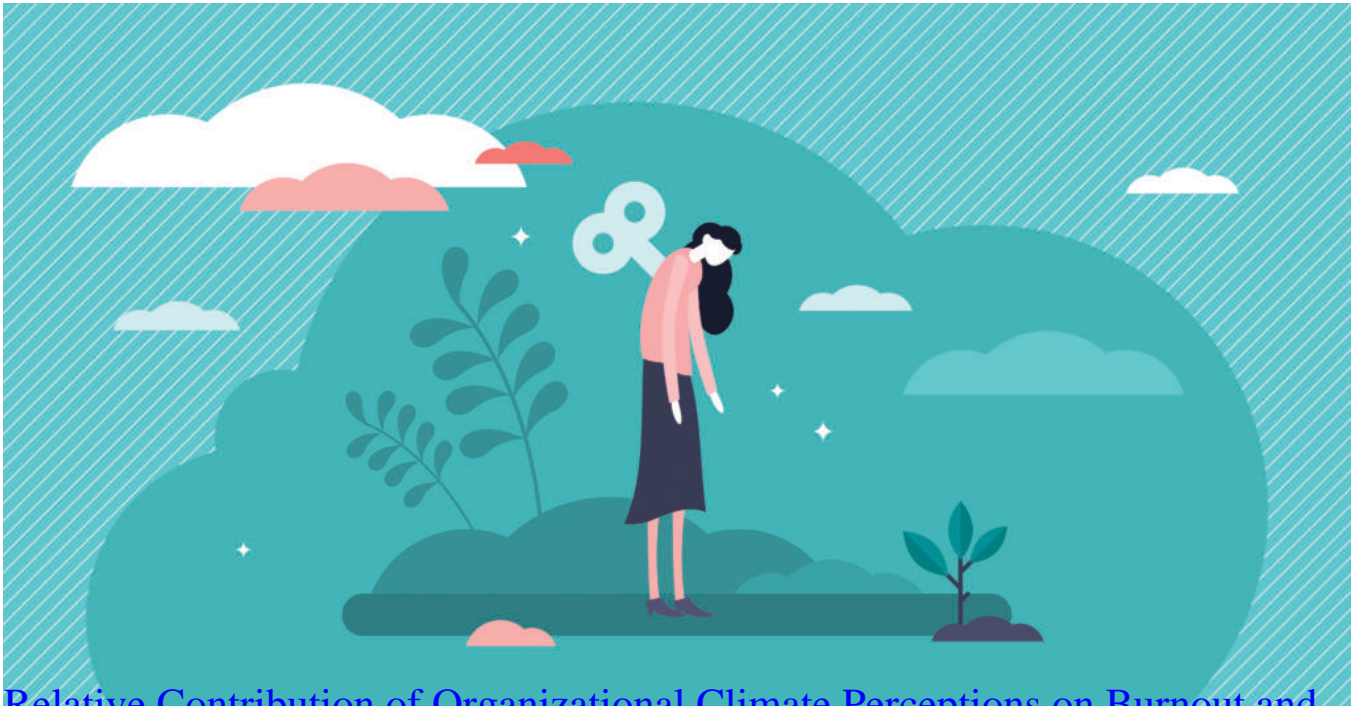
What drew you to this research?

I noticed that people react differently after they have made decisions—some people feel good about their decisions, while others don't—even when the feedback on the decision outcomes is not immediately available. Among all the discrete emotions, regret has attracted a considerable amount of scholarly attention and is frequently experienced in the decision-making process. Therefore, I used regret to represent the negative emotions experienced after decision-making and tried to identify factors that can help explain the variability in people's negative feelings after making decisions.

What did the research reveal that you didn't already know?

First, extant research has emphasized the positive effect of self-efficacy on human performance, but its potential negative effects have been relatively understudied. Our results showed that people with a higher level of decision-making self-efficacy (DMSE) tend to experience a greater level of regret after making decisions. Given that high-DMSE individuals are desirable hires in organizations for having better productivity and learning ability, employers should pay attention to their emotional well-being, especially when they are placed in positions with greater decision-making capabilities.

Second, this study shed light on the relationship between decision styles and decision-making-related emotions. In the extant research on decision styles, rational style is considered a “good” style, while avoidant style is considered a “bad” style that leads to undesirable decision consequences. However, our study shows that people adopting greater levels of rational style tend to experience greater levels of regret, and people who employed avoidant style experienced lower levels of regret. Seeing that rationality and critical thinking are the cornerstones of higher education, working professionals might be the group that are more susceptible to greater levels of regret. Therefore, it is important for organizations to provide training or counseling to mitigate the negative effects of rational decision-making.



Relative Contribution of Organizational Climate Perceptions on Burnout and Job-Attitudes Among STEM Women Faculty

Sheng Zhang and Mahima Saxena (Illinois Institute of Technology, USA)

What drew you to this research?

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields have unique characteristics (e.g., male-dominated workforces and “boy’s clubs”) that may put women employees in disadvantaged positions. This is relevant for gender-related unequitable outcomes typically seen in STEM education and workplaces. As organizational psychologists, we were curious about the specific challenges that women in STEM face, causing additional strain above and beyond regular job demands at the workplace. Inspired by my advisor and collaborator, Dr. Mahima Saxena, we conducted this research to examine the impact of three organizational characteristics specific to the STEM fields: stereotype threat, workplace incivility, and STEM identification. Our sample was women faculty in university STEM departments. Moreover, we employed relative weight analysis to examine the relative contribution of these STEM-specific characteristics on burnout and job attitudes.

What did the research reveal that you didn’t already know?

Our results indicated that these STEM-specific characteristics moderately predicted burnout and job attitudes among STEM women faculty. In other words, these are meaningful outcomes. This has applications for university administration and policymakers—in addition to emphasizing greater representation and retention of women in STEM departments, they should investigate how on-the-ground STEM-specific characteristics in the department can contribute to women faculty's well-being. Moreover, relative weight analysis captured the relative contribution of each predictor; this is important statistically, as they are highly correlated. Our results suggest the dominant role of STEM identification among the three STEM-specific characteristics listed above. These results suggest that it is important for universities to create a culture that is welcoming to STEM women and to facilitate their identification with the broader field. Our study serves as a critical first step to examine the impact of these STEM-specific characteristics from an organizational psychology perspective, serving as a key impetus for future research.



[Workplace Aggression and Employee Role Behaviors: Mediation of Multiple Emotions](#)

Sobia Nasir (Superior University, Pakistan) and Ozge Can (Yasar University, Turkey)

What drew you to this research?

I was drawn to the idea of studying workplace aggression when I confronted related challenges during the initial phases of my academic career. In my country, as a part of its honor culture, gender discrimination and aggressive attitudes toward those who are not seen as equals remain strong. In the

past, I tried to withdraw from these scenarios, only to find the aggression even worse when the issues returned. My curiosity to know more about the mechanisms of such misconduct inspired me to choose my dissertation topic on understanding different workplace aggression profiles (e.g., whether the modality aggression is verbal or physical, information about the perpetrator, who else is involved) and how they influence target employees through multiple emotions. In this project, I was able to combine my research aspirations with my passion for seeing things from a broader perspective regarding cultural challenges, respect, employee rights, and well-being. In this journey, I have discovered that the more basic a question is, the more astonishing the answer can be.

What did the research reveal that you didn't already know?

Our inclusive model and empirical testing delivered multiple insights into existing research. First, our study revealed that there are different channels through which aggression manifests itself in work life. Those mechanisms emerge as unique combinations of several individual and relational factors. We also found that being exposed to aggression instigates several diverse emotional reactions beyond anger and sadness.

Finally, our research is a rare example of workplace aggression being examined comprehensively in the context of a non-Western, developing country. These insights can motivate other researchers to do more on the topic. Questions for future studies could include how such aggression events can be prevented, or at least reduced, and how employees might cope with them to decrease the negative effects.

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