

**Self-Organizing Teams and Perceived Work Stress:
Associations With Decision Latitude and Support at Work**

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Executive Summary

The prevalence of work-related stress in the contemporary work environment, particularly in educational institutions, is a well-known issue. Prolonged periods of work-related stress may have adverse consequences for employees' physical and mental health, akin to negatively impacting the quality of education in these institutions. Therefore, it is important to find ways to reduce work stress and improve employee well-being, which can have positive outcomes for both individuals and organizations. The current study aims to examine the relationship between self-organizing teams (SOTs), and perceived work stress in the educational sector. It also addresses the role of decision latitude and support at work in mediating and moderating this relationship, respectively.

This cross-sectional study was conducted at the Breda University of Applied Sciences among a total of 60 employees at different stages of SOT engagement. Data on SOT, decision latitude, support at work, and perceived work stress was collected through an online survey using Qualtrics. The data was analysed using bivariate correlation analysis and moderated mediation regression, controlling for relevant variables. The study received ethical approval, and participants were assured of confidentiality.

The hypothesized moderated mediation effect of support at work on the relationship between SOT, decision latitude, and work stress was not supported. However, a simple mediation analysis showed a significant indirect effect of SOT on work stress through decision latitude. Additionally, higher levels of SOT were positively associated with greater decision latitude, while this relationship did not depend on the level of support at work. Further exploratory analysis did not find significant interaction effects for the sub-dimensions of support at work.

The findings show that working in SOTs does not directly reduce perceived work stress through decision latitude at different levels of support at work. This could be due to the recent implementation of SOTs and employees' adjustment period may also contribute to the unexpected results. Additionally, the effectiveness of job resources and especially support at work is highly context-dependent, varying across professions and organizational settings. Another potential reason could be that high support levels could undermine autonomy within SOTs. Implications for practitioners and organizations are that comprehensive approaches, the consideration of multiple job resources and tailor made interventions are important to address work stress effectively.

Abstract

Perceiving elevated levels of work-related stress have become exceedingly prevalent within the contemporary work environment, prompting considerable interest among both organizations and researchers in identifying factors for its mitigation. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between self-organizing teams (SOTs) and employees' perceived work stress via decision latitude moderated by support at work.

A cross-sectional online survey among 60 employees at Breda University of Applied Sciences who were at different stages of engagement in SOTs was conducted to test the above-mentioned relationships. The data was analyzed using a hypothesized moderated mediation model using a bootstrapping approach.

Results revealed that SOTs were not significantly related to perceived work stress and that the hypothesized relationship between SOTs and work-related stress through decision latitude does not depend on the level of support at work. However, working in functioning SOTs was negatively related to work stress via decision latitude only.

The findings suggest that (1) implementing SOTs might lower perceived work stress via decision latitude and (2) contextual factors need to be considered when planning and implementing organizational interventions.

Keywords: Job-Demand Resource model, work stress, self-organizing team, support at work, decision latitude

The contemporary work environment is increasingly characterized by high work stress, which has been associated with a range of adverse physical, psychological, and behavioral outcomes for employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker & De Vries, 2021; Bottiani et al., 2019; Salas-Vallina et al., 2020; Schouteten, 2004). Indeed, prolonged exposure to high work stress has been linked to a higher susceptibility to cardiovascular diseases, elevated mortality rates, and symptoms indicative of anxiety disorders or depression (Bakker & De Vries, 2021; Schaufeli et al., 2009). Moreover, excessive work stress has also been associated with increased absenteeism, turnover, and diminished work performance (Schouteten, 2004; Giurciu et al., 2015; Giurciu et al., 2016).

Although these associations have been found across various occupations, employees in educational institutions are particularly affected by heightened work stress (Salmela-Aro et al., 2019; Sokal et al., 2020). This is a matter of concern because the physical and mental well-being of educational institution employees does not only impact their personal welfare but also influences the quality of education (Salmela-Aro et al., 2019; Sokal et al., 2020). Therefore, mitigating employees' perceived work stress potentially enhances employee well-being, work satisfaction (Bakker & De Vries, 2021; Ruotsalainen et al., 2023; Schaufeli et al., 2009), and yielding positive financial outcomes for organizations (Schaufeli, 2017). One widely used approach to mitigating the adverse impact of contemporary work environments, such as high perceived work stress, involves transitioning from traditional work methods to a teamwork-oriented approach (Schouteten, 2004; Steijn, 2001; Tata, 2000). Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the relationship between team-based work and perceived work stress in the educational sector by investigating the association of self-organizing teams to work stress levels.

The understanding of team-based work is not always clearly defined in the literature, leading to challenges when comparing research findings. However, there are two main taxonomies that are commonly used: sociotechnical teams and lean teams (Jønsson & Jeppesen, 2013; Steijn, 2001). *Sociotechnical teams*, also referred to as *self-organizing teams* (SOTs), grant team members higher decision latitude—the degree of freedom employees possess to perform their work tasks in terms of timing and methodology (Karasek, 1979)—while *lean teams* impose more constraints on individual autonomy concerning task execution (Hoda et al., 2010; Schouteten, 2004; Steijn, 2001). In essence, SOTs empower individuals within the teams, allowing them to independently structure their work without requiring supervisory approval, unlike their counterparts in lean teams. Interestingly however, employees working in SOTs exhibit better coping mechanisms for perceived work stress compared to those in non-SOTs, regardless of their level of decision latitude (Steijn, 2001).

Decision latitude is often associated with reduced levels of work stress (Elsass & Veiga, 1997; Saragih, 2011; Thompson & Prottas, 2005). It has also been found to have connections with various work outcomes such as job satisfaction (Park & Searcy, 2012) and job performance (Langfred & Moye, 2004; Shirom et al., 2006). It appears that individual freedom granted to employees is negatively associated with perceived stress. This association can be attributed to two possible reasons: (1) employees can limit their exposure to potential stressors, which may especially be true in SOTs as the perception of a stressor might vary between team members and hence, tasks can be passed on, or (2) employees engage in new coping mechanisms such as job crafting (Saragih, 2011). However, it is suggested that the impact of decision latitude is contingent on organizational factors and the alignment with job characteristics (Park & Searcy, 2012). For instance, Chen and Wu (2022) found no positive relationship between decision

latitude and work stress among police officers. More specifically, in that study, greater freedom in approaching work tasks was positively related to work stress. These findings emphasize the need for research that considers profession-specific and even more importantly organization-specific factors, as organizations differ from one another.

In sum, considering the significance of decision latitude in mitigating perceived work stress, organizations often adopt SOTs to foster a positive work environment (Acharya & Colomo-Palacios, 2019; Tata, 2000). Nevertheless, intervention studies are required to make valid claims about the role of decision latitude within a specific organization. Moreover, it seems that employees in SOTs generally possess better coping mechanisms for work stress, suggesting that factors beyond autonomy contribute to effective stress management in SOTs. Therefore, it is assumed that decision latitude acts as a potential mediator between SOTs and work stress. In other words, when employees perceive themselves as working in SOTs, they experience greater freedom in how and when they perform work tasks, resulting in reduced work stress. To test this hypothesis, the current study aims to examine the relation of SOTs, decision latitude and perceived work stress.

Theoretically, this proposed association can be studied with reference to the Job-Demand Resource model (JDR). The JDR model serves as a stress model, aiming to predict the adverse effects of job demands on employee well-being. Essentially, the model posits two key propositions: (1) that high job demands coupled with low job resources ultimately lead to elevated levels of perceived work stress, and (2) that an abundance of job resources can alleviate the negative impact of job demands on work stress (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Prior research has consistently supported the predictions of the JDR model, indicating that heightened job demands and limited job resources contribute to job strain and negatively affect the perceived

stress levels of employees at work and that this can be counteracted by providing job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Magnavita & Chiorri, 2022; Lesener et al., 2019). Nonetheless, it seems that the impact of resources on work stress depends on factors such as occupation (Schouteten, 2004), type of resources provided (Bottiani et al., 2019), and organizational factors (Steijn, 2001), which, makes it difficult to compare effects across occupations and even between organizations within professions. In other words, the relation between job resources and therefore indirectly SOT (as a pre-requisite of potential resources such as decision latitude) and work-stress is highly context dependent (Acharya & Colomo-Palacios, 2019; ; Hoda et al., 2010; Shouteten, 2004; Steijn, 2001; Stray et al., 2018; Tata, 2000) which, incidentally, also stresses the importance of intervention studies to determine whether the intervention was successful.

Therefore, drawing from previous literature, it is hypothesized that working in SOTs characterized by higher decision latitude can diminish perceived work stress (Acharya & Colomo-Palacios, 2019). Consequently, applying the JDR model, it is anticipated that the negative impact of heightened work stress (job demand) can be attenuated, if not completely nullified, through decision latitude (job resource).

As previously stated, the JDR model posits that job strain can be mitigated by appropriate job resources. However, due to the complex nature of job demands and their contextual dependence, there is no universal solution. Hence, it is crucial for managers and supervisors to have a comprehensive understanding of job-specific and organizational-specific demands to effectively alleviate their consequences. This entails consistent engagement with employees to accomplish the following objectives: (1) identify existing job strains, (2) determine and foster potential resources to counteract them, and (3) ensure that employees are well-informed about and aligned with organizational objectives (Bakker & De Vries, 2021; Kelemen et al., 2019). In

other words, supervisors and managers should exhibit supportive behavior. Therefore, it can be argued that supervisor support itself may serve as a valuable job resource.

In line with this perspective, literature highlights the importance of support at work to mitigate the negative impact of job demands. Theoretically, offering employees working in SOTs support facilitates more autonomous and proactive work engagement as one urges to reciprocate the support (based on social exchange theory, for interested reader see: e.g., Cole et al., 2002; Mierlo et al., 2006). Furthermore, it appears that not only support from superiors but also support from co-workers influences job demands. Specifically, work-related support indirectly affects job demands by influencing other job resources such as decision latitude (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Mierlo et al., 2006).

Drawing on these theoretical suggestions, it can be hypothesized that increased levels of support within SOTs are positively associated with decision latitude, which subsequently exerts indirect effects on work-related stress. Therefore, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1: *Employees in SOTs will report lower levels of perceived work stress compared to those in non-SOTs. That is, the further along one is in the process of working in a full functioning SOT, the less work stress is perceived.*

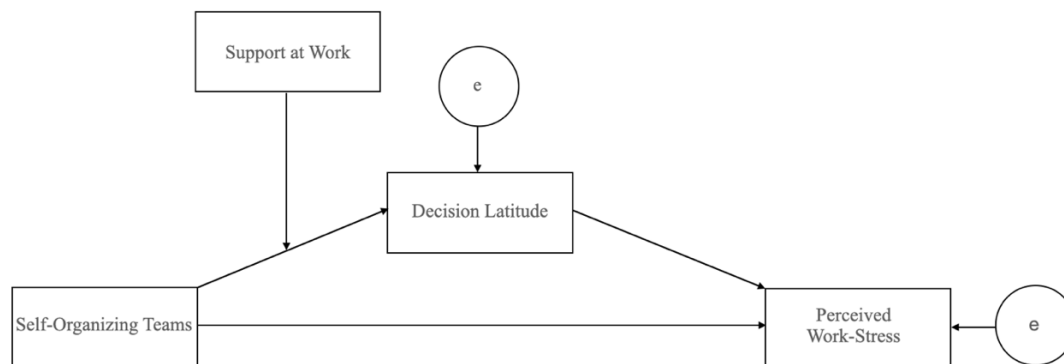
Hypothesis 2: *Depending on the level of support at work, decision latitude functions as a potential mediator of SOT and perceived work stress. That is, SOT is positively related to decision latitude which in turn lowers perceived work stress for individuals with high levels of support at work compared to individuals with low levels of support at work.*

Hypothesis 3: *The relationship between SOT and decision latitude will be moderated by support at work. That is, compared to individuals with low levels of support at work, individuals with high levels of support at work experience greater levels of decision latitude when working in SOTs.*

In sum, a growing number of employees across various professions are increasingly facing high levels of work-related stress (Schouteten, 2004), leading to negative impacts on multiple aspects of work as well as their physical and psychological well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker & De Vries, 2021; Bottiani et al., 2019; Salas-Vallina et al., 2020; Schouteten, 2004). This phenomenon is particularly prevalent among workers in educational institutions (Salmela-Aro et al., 2019; Sokal et al., 2020). Given the societal significance of this issue, the present research aims to investigate the influence of organizational job resources, specifically SOTs, on work stress among employees in educational institutions. Additionally, the study seeks to explore the mediating role of decision latitude in the relationship between SOTs and work stress moderated by support at work. Based on the hypotheses, the conceptual model is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Conceptual model



Methods

Overview

This correlational study aimed to explore the relationship between SOT and perceived work stress. The study was conducted at the Breda University of Applied Sciences (BUAs) in the Netherlands. The entire workforce is involved in the change process towards becoming fully functioning SOTs, but it was anticipated that the teams would differ in their progress as they are at different stages of SOT. Consequently, the participants were also expected to vary in their levels of perceived work stress.

The study was conducted in two phases. First, the pilot phase, took place over a period of six days starting mid-May 2023. Main purpose of the pilot was to shorten the used item batteries to avoid survey fatigue as the actual data collection was combined with another study of an independent external research company. Second, the actual data collection phase, took place over a period of sixteen days starting five days after the pilot study. The following sections outline the procedure, participants and item scales for the main study. Information about the pilot phase and item analysis can be seen in the pilot study attached to Appendix B.

Procedure

A cross-sectional survey was employed to examine data obtained from employees at BUAs who are currently at different stages of engagement in SOTs. The data collection spanned a duration of sixteen days. During this period, employees were contacted via email on two occasions: once at the commencement of data collection and again halfway through.

Additionally, an announcement on Microsoft Teams was made to further emphasize the importance of participating in the study. It was explicitly communicated that participation was voluntary, and respondents' responses would be treated with strict confidentiality. The study was

conducted utilizing the online platform Qualtrics, a web-based application designed for creating and distributing digital surveys.

A total of 860 employees were invited to participate in the survey, out of which 100 individuals completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 11.63%. The focus was narrowed down to respondents who exclusively perceived themselves as working in a team as the purpose of this study was to gather information about the role of teamwork (at different stages towards becoming a full functioning SOT) on work stress exclusively (excluding 14 respondents). Furthermore, respondents were excluded if they did not fully complete the survey as the used statistical analysis requires a complete data set (excluding 23 respondents). Respondents were also excluded if they encountered difficulty comprehending more than two questions due to language barriers as the survey was conducted in English to ensure the validity of the study (excluding three respondents). Consequently, the final sample size comprised 60 participants.

The study is approved by the Social Sciences Ethics Committee of the Radboud University (reference number: ECSW-LT-2023-4-24-33517). Additionally, this study's desired sample size, included variables, hypotheses, and planned analyses were pre-registered on AsPredicted (<https://aspredicted.org/zk9aq.pdf>) prior to any data being collected.

Participants

Of the participants ($N = 60$), 25 were males (41.7%), 24 females (40.0%), and 11 preferred not to indicate their gender (18.3%), mean age of those who mentioned their age ($N = 45$) was 47 years ($SD = 9.2$). The majority of the participants (75.0%) worked at the organization for more than five years, had a current full-time equivalent (FTE) status equal or greater than 0.67 FTE (80.0%), worked in a lecturer team (63.3%), and worked in a team between five and

ten members (56.7%). In the survey, participants were also asked to indicate how many training sessions for working in a self-organized team from an external training company they have already received. Some of the participants received no training yet (10.0%), 41.7% received one training session, 25.0% two sessions, 10.0% three, 3.3% four, 3.3% five, and 6.7% more than five training sessions. A sensitivity power analysis was conducted using G-power (Faul et al., 2009) to test the model with a sample size of 60 participants and a power of .80. Results showed that the minimum required effect size (f^2) for the aforementioned parameters is 0.19.

Measurements

The degree to which the participants work in *self-organizing teams* was measured with an adjusted version of the MAEK Team Quick Scan. The 17 items used were answered on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". For example, one item states, "Mistakes made and learning points are openly discussed". A mean score was computed with a high score indicates a higher level of SOT. The scale showed good internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha 0.90).

Decision latitude is measured with three items and is assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "none" to (5) "much." Each of the three items pertained to the central question of "To what extent do you perceive having influence over..." such as "the execution of daily work." A mean score was computed with a high score indicate more decision latitude. The reliability of the scales for this sample was deemed satisfactory, as evidenced by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.84 which is also in line with previous research (Jønsson & Jeppesen, 2013).

Support at work is measured with an adjusted version of the Comprehensive Evaluation of Social Support (CESS) questionnaire by Bojar et al. (2014). The eleven items used measure

two dimensions “work-related support from a supervisor” and “co-workers and the organization” on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The scale asks questions such as “My supervisor shares work ideas with me” or “My co-workers help me to figure out how to solve work problems”. A mean score was computed with a high score indicating that an employee perceives greater levels of support at work (Cronbach’s alpha .82).

Perceived work-stress is measured with an adjusted version of the Work Stress Questionnaire (WSQ) by Holmgren et al. (2008). The sixteen items used were rated in a two-fold. First, participants agree or disagree with whether the content of the item describes a specific work experience e.g. “Has your workload increased”. Second, those who agreed are asked to rate the impact of it on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from (1) “not stressful” to (4) “very stressful” where higher scores indicate higher level of perceived stress. An item was scored zero when the preceding item was not agreed on. A mean score was computed with a high score indicating greater levels of perceived work stress (Cronbach’s alpha 0.85).

Statistical Analysis

First, bivariate correlation analysis was conducted to examine the correlation between the variables of interest. Second, the predicted moderated mediation was tested in a single model using bootstrap intervals to determine whether the indirect effect is significant at different levels of the moderator (Hayes, 2018). More specifically, the predicted moderated mediation model was tested using PROCESS macro model number 7 in SPSS to estimate those relations (Hayes, 2018; Model 7). The significance of the effects was assessed with 95% bootstrap confidence intervals ($n = 10000$) to correct for bias. SOT was the predictor variable, with decision latitude as the mediator. The dependent variable was perceived work stress and support at work was used as the moderator. The sample size used for the data analysis is 59 (excluding one) as PROCESS

macro requires a complete data set. To account for potential contextual factors, it was controlled for team size, tenure, gender, full-time equivalent (FTE) and received training hours.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Bivariate correlations and descriptive statistics are depicted in Table 1. Preliminary correlational analysis showed that all main variables are significantly related to each other. This suggests that individuals with elevated levels of SOT tend to report decreased levels of perceived work stress. Likewise, individuals who report greater support at work and higher decision latitude show a higher likelihood of reporting lower levels of perceived work stress. Regarding the covariates, the findings reveal a significant positive association between tenure (length of employment) and decision latitude, as well as between training and decision latitude. These results suggest that individuals with longer tenure or those who have received more training tend to report higher levels of decision latitude.

Table 1*Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Self-organizing teams	3.0	0.6	(.90)							
2. Work stress	1.6	0.8	-.41**	(.85)						
3. Support at work	3.5	0.6	.63**	-.41**	(.82)					
4. Decision latitude	3.7	0.9	.51**	-.46**	.37**	(.84)				
5. Tenure	2.7	0.6	-.09	-.06	-.09	0.31*	-			
6. Full-time equivalent	2.8	0.4	-.09	.08	-.22	-.10	.01	-		
7. Training	2.6	2.1	.21	-.11	.03	.08	.27*	.05	-	
8. Team size	2.2	0.6	-.12	.14	-.15	.03	-.04	.03	.05	-

Note. For tenure, a score of two indicates working at BUAs between two and five years and a

score of three indicates a tenure of more than five years. For team size, a score of two represents

a team between five and ten members and a score of three means the team consists of more than

ten members. Figures in parentheses are Cronbach's alphas. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Inferential Statistics

Hypothesis 1 stated that the further along an employee is in the process of working in a full functioning SOT, the less work stress is perceived. Data analysis showed that working in a self-organizing team negatively relates to how one perceives stress at work. However, this effect is statistically not significant [$B = -.220$, 95% CI (-0.650; 0.211), $p = .310$].

Hypothesis 2 proposed that the negative relation of SOT and work stress through decision latitude depends on the level of support at work. The analysis yielded that the hypothesized relation is not supported with the index of moderated mediation [Index = 0.061, 95% CI (-0.127; 0.390)]. This indicates that there is no significant moderation effect of support at work on SOT on the indirect effect via decision latitude as zero is contained within the confidence interval (Hayes, 2015). An exploratory post-hoc analysis has been conducted to analyze the simple

mediation. That is, PROCESS macro model 4 was used to test the mediation (Hayes, 2018, Model 4). The outcome variable for the analysis was perceived work stress, predictor variable was SOT and the mediator variable for analysis was decision latitude. The analysis showed that the indirect effect of SOT on perceived work stress through decision latitude was significant [$B = -0.265$, 95% CI (-0.536; -0.007)]. Moreover, the analysis showed that the relation between SOT and decision latitude was significant [$B = 0.770$, 95% CI (0.414; 0.123), $p < 0.001$].

A second exploratory post-hoc analysis was conducted with each of the three sub-dimensions included in the variable “Support at work”. Analysis yielded no significant moderated mediation effect for none of the three dimensions either [$\text{Index}_{\text{Organization}} = 0.040$, 95% CI (-0.096; 0.217), $\text{Index}_{\text{Co-worker}} = 0.048$, 95% CI (-0.134; 0.300), $\text{Index}_{\text{Supervisor}} = 0.021$, 95% CI (-0.079; 0.219)].

Hypothesis 3 predicted that employees working in SOTs experience a greater level of decision latitude when being supported at work compared to those who are not supported at work. The predicted relation is not supported by the results of the analysis suggesting that the level of support at work does not predict decision latitude scores. That is, employees who experience high levels of support at work do not experience more decision latitude compared to employees who experience low levels of support at work. However, higher levels of SOT are positively associated with greater decision latitude, this effect is statistically significant while controlling for gender, tenure, FTE, received training and team size (see Table 2). Exploratory post-hoc analysis for each of the three sub-dimensions of the “Support at work” variable yielded no significant interaction effect for none of the three dimensions either (see Tables 3a, 3b, and 3c in Appendix A).

Table 2*Regression Analysis for Support at Work as a Moderator of SOT on Decision Latitude**(Hypothesis 3)*

	Decision Latitude		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	2.519	0.965	.012
Self-organizing team	0.704	0.215	.002
Support at work	0.098	0.233	.678
Self-organizing team x Support at work	-0.176	0.383	.648
Gender	-0.042	0.107	.694
Tenure	0.573	0.178	.002
Full-time equivalent	-0.128	0.254	.615
Training	-0.053	0.061	.388
Team size	0.140	0.147	.345
$R^2 = .43$			
$F(8,50) = 4.81, p = < .001$			

Discussion

Ever increasing levels of work-related stress and their adverse impact on both employees and organizations highlight the importance of interventions to counteract these effects (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker & De Vries, 2021; Bottiani et al., 2019; Salas-Vallina et al., 2020; Schouteten, 2004). One promising approach is the implementation of SOTs. In addition to literature on SOTs, this study employs the more general JDR model to explore potential relationships between job resources (such as decision latitude and support at work) and job demands (work stress). Combining the rationale of the JDR model and previous research on the interrelationship between SOT and perceived work stress it was expected that SOTs have an indirect relationship with perceived work stress through decision latitude, but that this association depended on the level of support at work. In other words, it was predicted that employees who work in full functioning SOTs would experience greater decision latitude, which

is associated with lower perceived work stress, when one feels supported by their supervisors and co-workers. To test this assumption, a correlational study was conducted with employees at Breda University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, who are at different stages of becoming a full-functioning SOT.

Data analysis revealed that the direct negative relationship between SOT and perceived work stress (see hypothesis 1) could not be confirmed. Contrary to the predictions, employees working in SOTs do not directly perceive less work-related stress. Relating these findings to the JDR model, it could be argued that high work stress takes a toll on employees and that a single job resource (SOTs) is insufficient to buffer the adverse impact. It is likely that multiple job resources combined are required to mitigate perceived work stress. This argument is supported by the findings of this study, showing that the combination of working in SOTs and having heightened levels of decision latitude seem to significantly lower employees' perception of work stress. Another reason for the unexpected results may be that SOTs were recently implemented at BUAs and that employees, even the ones who perceive themselves to be working in fully functioning SOTs, are still adjusting to the new way of working and may not have had the resources to engage in new coping mechanisms or strategies as suggested by Saragih (2011).

Further, the data suggest that employees who work in SOTs and who receive higher levels of support at work do not perceive less work-related stress through decision latitude (see hypothesis 2). This is contrary to what was predicted, and it could be argued that this occurs because employees in fully functioning SOTs have more freedom to structure their work, reducing their reliance on excessive support at work. Consequently, high levels of support may undermine the novel perceived decision latitude, leading to a potential backlash (Mierlo et al., 2006). This line of argumentation might also explain why the hypothesized relation between

SOT and decision latitude moderated by support at work (hypothesis 3) could not be confirmed. Another possible reason for the unexpected finding pertains to the argument that the influence of potential job resources on job demands appears to be highly context-dependent (Acharya & Colomo-Palacios, 2019; Hoda et al., 2010; Shouteten, 2004; Steijn, 2001; Stray et al., 2018; Tata, 2000). For example, in the context of the police force, individuals require extensive support in addition to high decision latitude to perceive lower levels of work stress (Chen & Wu, 2022), whereas moderate levels of support at work are most promising for individuals working in the healthcare profession to (1) develop higher decision latitude and (2) perceive work as less stressful (Mierlo et al., 2006). This illustrates that the same job resource can have different impacts on the same job demand when applied in diverse contexts. Therefore, it might be that support at work as a potential (moderating) job resource just does not have the expected impact on individuals working in an educational institution.

Interestingly, exploratory post hoc analysis showed that employees working on SOTs perceive less stress at work through decision latitude (simple mediation) which is in line with previous research (Acharya & Colomo-Palacios, 2019; Tata, 2000). Additionally, another exploratory post hoc analysis was conducted to account for the possibility that the predicted moderated mediation as well as the moderation between SOT and decision latitude was not significant because the sub-dimensions of support at work (“support from supervisor”, “support from co-workers” and “support from the organization”) were combined, despite potentially having different impacts on the outcome variables of interest. However, data did not support this reasoning as none of the three sub-dimensions yielded significant results either. Noteworthy, the confidence intervals for the relation between SOT and work stress through decision latitude for different levels of support at work (and for the three sub-dimensions separately) were extremely

close to being significant or non-significant, respectively, which might indicate that there is an effect but could not be detected due to low power of this study (see Tables A4a, A4b, A4c and A4d in Appendix A). However, this is highly speculative as it is not recommended to interpret the suggested relation between SOT and work stress through decision latitude for different levels of support at work when the magnitude of the moderated mediation itself is not large enough to be of significance (Hayes, 2018). That is, if the moderated mediation is not significant (index of moderated mediation) there is not enough evidence that the conditional indirect effect for different levels of the moderator is valid.

Future Research

The findings of the current study are interesting and call for future research. Although the data of the current study does not indicate that support at work or the different sub-dimensions “support from the organization”, “co-workers” or “supervisor” separately influence the assumed moderated mediation, given that the confidence intervals are extremely close to be either significant or not significant and taking into account the low power of the current study, it could be the case that the relationship between SOTs and work-related stress via decision latitude (i.e., the mediation effect) varies for different types, as well as for different levels, of support at work. Therefore, a possible avenue for future research is to replicate the current study with satisfying power to be able to make more confident claims about the proposed moderated mediation.

In a different vein, within the scope of this study, decision latitude was conceptualized as the individual freedom granted to employees in structuring their work. However, decision latitude can be further categorized into team autonomy and individual autonomy, as previous research suggests that SOTs have different effects on these two dimensions (Harley, 2001). For example, Harley (2001) conducted a study in the UK to explore the relationship between SOTs

and individual autonomy, finding that a complete absence of guidance in teams actually leads to decreased individual autonomy. Conversely, other studies indicate that team-based work models enhance both individual and team autonomy (Batt, 2004; Niemelä & Kalliola, 2007). However, yet another study argues that team-based work may potentially suppress individual autonomy (Barker, 1993). Nonetheless, more recent research supports a positive association between higher levels of team autonomy in team-based work environments and individual autonomy (Jønsson & Jeppesen, 2013). This implies that when employees perceive themselves as working autonomously within a team, their individual freedom in work-related matters also increases, which is why the focus of the present study was on individual autonomy. However, considering that the impact of SOTs on the two types of decision latitude exhibits a somewhat diverse pattern with no clear consensus, it might be beneficial to include both types in future research, thereby addressing the existing gap in the literature.

Limitations

Every research comes with its limitations and this one is no exception. The following focuses on less obvious limitations but understand that other elements such as the used cross-sectional design, self-reported measures and common method bias are also present.

A strong limitation concerns the measurements scales utilized, more specifically the scale used to capture SOT because it has not undergone formal validation procedures yet. Utilizing non-validated measurements questions the accuracy and reliability of the collected data. A lack of validation might increase the possibility to measurement error and bias. It was initially considered to utilize the data obtained from the pilot study to determine construct validity of the used SOT scale by comparing it with theoretically related (convergent validity) and un-related (discriminant validity) constructs. To be clear, the planned validation process would have been

considered as a first indication as it does not compensate for rigorous validation processes. However, limited resources and the small sample obtained for the pilot did not allow for it. Despite this limitation, it can be argued that this study contributes to the understanding of the interrelationships of the constructs of interest as an attempt was made to capture the level of SOTs compared to other studies that neglected to account for potential differences in the level of SOT (Batt, 2004; Mierlo et al. 2006; Ruotsalainen et al., 2023).

In a similar vein, removing items based on an item analysis conducted on a small pilot sample size might have harmed the construct validity of those scales. As already mentioned, the mere purpose of the pilot study was to reduce the length of the survey as the data collection of the present study was combined with the data collection of an external research organization. Main purpose was to avoid survey fatigue and high drop-out rates which is the reason why the item reduction can still be considered beneficial, even with a small sample.

Another potential limitation is that even when neglecting the fact that the study was underpowered, the findings should be generalized to other organizations with caution as the data was obtained in a single organization. This is especially important to consider when taking the high context dependency of the effects of job resources (e.g., SOTs) on job demands (e.g., work stress) into account (Acharya & Colomo-Palacios, 2019; ; Hoda et al., 2010; Shouteten, 2004; Steijn, 2001; Stray et al., 2018; Tata, 2000).

Implications for Practice

Although the findings should be considered with caution, they have implications for professionals and organizations. One implication is that organizations might want to consider implementing SOTs as a potential approach to counteract perceived work-related stress and hence to mitigate its adverse impact on employees physical and mental health. While the present

study did not find a direct association between SOTs and perceived work-related stress, it revealed that employees working in SOTs perceive their work as less stressful due to having more decision latitude regardless of the level of perceived support at work. This implies that working in SOTs might contribute to decreased perceived levels of work stress when combined with perceived decision latitude. Another implication is that contextual factors need to be considered when planning and implementing organizational interventions. The influence of job resources on job demands such as work stress seems to be highly context dependent which is the reason why translating existing research findings and mirroring interventions that have shown to be effective in some settings should be done with great caution which highlights the importance of process interventions and for properly conducted intervention studies to determine whether an intervention yields the intended effect.

Conclusion

The findings of the current study suggest that working in SOTs alone is not directly linked to perceived work-related stress. However, employees in SOTs perceive their work as less stressful due to increased decision latitude at work. The potential moderating role of perceived support at work could not be confirmed in the current study. Building upon this study, future research should consider differentiating between types of support at work, investigating the impact of SOTs on both individual and team autonomy and validating measurement scales to enhance accuracy and reliability. For practitioners, implementing SOTs as a strategy to address work-related stress should be done with the understanding that other job resources are necessary for success. Furthermore, practitioners should approach existing research with caution, conduct intervention studies, and consider the unique context of their organization to (1) develop a

suitable intervention, preferably with a participatory approach and (2) determine the effectiveness of specific interventions in reducing work stress.

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Appendix A
Exploratory Analysis

Table A3a

Regression Analysis for Support from Organization as a Moderator of SOT on Decision Latitude

	Decision Latitude		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	2.471	0.967	.014
Self-organizing team	0.484	0.180	.010
Support from organization	0.347	0.215	.112
Self-organizing team x Support from organization	-0.117	0.307	.706
Gender	-0.061	0.103	.554
Tenure	0.627	0.177	<.001
Full-time equivalent	-0.151	0.261	.565
Training	-0.045	0.055	.401
Team size	0.132	0.137	.342
$R^2 = .49$			
$F(8,50) = 6.03, p = <.001$			

Table A3b

Regression Analysis for Support from Co-worker as a Moderator of SOT on Decision Latitude

	Decision Latitude		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	2.811	0.970	.006
Self-organizing team	0.554	0.190	.005
Support from co-worker	0.355	0.203	.086
Self-organizing team x Support from co-worker	-0.139	0.276	.617
Gender	-0.031	0.103	.768
Tenure	0.525	0.159	.002
Full-time equivalent	-0.177	0.254	.490
Training	-0.026	0.053	.624
Team size	0.080	0.142	.575
$R^2 = .47$			
$F(8,50) = 6.99, p = <.001$			

Table A3c*Regression Analysis for Support from Supervisor as a Moderator of SOT on Decision Latitude*

	Decision Latitude		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	2.808	0.937	.004
Self-organizing team	0.832	0.193	<.001
Support from supervisor	-0.156	0.132	.243
Self-organizing team x Support from supervisor	-0.062	0.173	.723
Gender	-0.042	0.101	.677
Tenure	0.569	0.176	.002
Full-time equivalent	-0.201	0.233	.392
Training	-0.066	0.063	.296
Team size	0.110	0.153	.477
			$R^2 = .44$
			$F(8,50) = 5.02, p = < .001$

Table A4a*Conditional indirect effect of SOT on Perceived Work Stress through Decision Latitude in**Hypothesis 2*

Support at Work	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI	
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
-0.56	-0.277	0.182	-0.675	0.008
0	-0.243	0.131	-0.512	-0.003
0.56	-0.209	0.108	-0.407	0.014

Note. Different values for support at work are one standard deviation below the mean, at mean level and one standard deviation above the mean.

Table A4b

Conditional indirect effect of SOT on Perceived Work Stress through Decision Latitude for the Moderator Variable “Support from Organization”

Support from Organization	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI	
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
-0.77	-0.198	0.129	-0.465	0.023
0	-0.167	0.093	-0.356	0.006
0.77	-0.136	0.090	-0.312	0.045

Note. Different values for support from organization are one standard deviation below the mean, at mean level and one standard deviation above the mean.

Table A4c

Conditional indirect effect of SOT on Perceived Work Stress through Decision Latitude for the Moderator Variable “Support from Co-workers”

Support from Co-workers	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI	
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
-0.62	-0.220	0.165	-0.592	0.026
0	-0.191	0.119	-0.453	-0.002
0.62	-0.161	0.099	-0.365	0.021

Note. Different values for support from co-workers are one standard deviation below the mean, at mean level and one standard deviation above the mean.

Table A4d

Conditional indirect effect of SOT on Perceived Work Stress through Decision Latitude for the Moderator Variable “Support from Supervisor”

Support from Supervisor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	95% CI	
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
-0.79	-0.304	0.184	-0.708	-0.006
0	-0.287	0.148	-0.580	-0.008
0.79	-0.270	0.131	-0.515	-0.006

Note. Different values for support from supervisor are one standard deviation below the mean, at mean level and one standard deviation above the mean.

Appendix B

Pilot Study

Purpose

The primary objective of the pilot study was to minimize the length of the utilized item batteries while maintaining the internal consistency of the various scales. This objective was achieved by evaluating the psychometric properties of the item batteries through a corrected item-total correlation analysis. This analysis provided insights into the relationship between each individual item and the remaining items within a given scale, which helps to determine an item's contribution to the overall construct being measured. The aim was to differentiate well-functioning items from those that inadequately captured the intended construct. Consequently, a decision was made to exclude items that fell below the threshold of 0.3 or 0.4, respectively. The latter criterion was implemented when an insufficient number of items correlated below the more lenient threshold or when it positively influenced the internal consistency. Additionally, irrespectively of the impact on the internal consistency, in order to safeguard the construct validity considerable attention was devoted to avoiding a reduction in the number of items within a scale or dimension, respectively, to a level below three.

Procedure and Participants

To be able to conduct an item analysis, data were collected from three out of the five academies from Breda University of Applied Sciences. The participants were contacted via email twice, once at the start of the data collection and a second time halfway in. In total 38 employees were randomly selected and then contacted to participate in the pilot study of which 17 returned the survey, yielding a response rate of 44.73%. The number was predetermined by the organization and was based on the resources available – therefore, the researcher had no

influence on the sample size. The focus was narrowed down to respondents who exclusively perceived themselves as working in a team as the purpose of this study was to gather information about the role of team work (at different stages towards becoming a full functioning SOT) on work stress exclusively (excluding three). It was pre-registered that data from participants who did not finish the survey in its completeness are excluded as well, however, due to the small sample it was decided to include all who completed the survey to at least 75% (excluding three). Yielding a total sample size of 11 participants.

Of the participants that completed the survey ($N = 10$), seven were female (70.0%), three male (30.0%) and one participant preferred not to mention the gender (10.0%), mean age was 46 years ($SD = 10.1$), and no one experienced difficulties with the language for more than two items.

Measures

According to available information, there is currently no established and validated measurement for determining SOT. However, an external training organization has developed the MAEK Team Quick Scan Scale comprising 30 items, based on Tuckman's (1965) 4-stage framework, which is being employed by the target organization to assess participants' perception of their progress in the teamwork process. Respondents rate the items on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." For example, one item states, "Mistakes made and learning points are openly discussed."

Through corrected item total correlations analysis (see Table B5), it was found that thirteen items demonstrated correlations below the threshold of 0.3 with the remaining items. Consequently, these thirteen items were excluded from the scale. Thus, the final version of the scale used for the actual data collection comprises 17 items. The reduction in the number of

items also had a positive impact on the internal consistency of the scale, which increased from 0.83 to 0.92.

Table B5

Reliability Analysis of the MAEK Team Quick Scan Scale

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. As a team we are driven by a common story (mission) that we want to get to. §	.65	.81
2. The team 'mission' has been translated into concrete goals that must be achieved within a certain period.	.58	.81
3. The team goals are in line with the organizational goals.	.36	.82
4. The team goals have been translated into individual goals for the team members.	.45	.18
5. Team members depend on each other to achieve common goals.	-.05	.84
6. The progress and successes of the team are measurable and visible.	.64	.81
7. The tasks and responsibilities of the various team members are clear to all team members.	-.20	.84
8. The consultation structure is of added value for the team result.	.65	.81
9. The work processes in the team are clear.	-.20	.80
10. The decision-making process in the team is clear.	.66	.81
11. The working method of the team is well aligned with the working method of other departments.	.31	.82
12. Team members know what their colleagues are working on and what contributions they make to team performance.	.14	.83
13. Mistakes made and learning points are openly discussed.	.16	.83
14. Team members keep to the agreements made (saying yes is doing so).	.15	.83
15. Team members don't talk about each other, but to each other.	.08	.83
16. Team members give each other feedback.	.69	.81
17. Divergent opinions are encouraged.	.32	.82
18. The team interest takes precedence over the individual interest.	.06	.83
19. The team tasks are divided based on the talents of the different team members.	.85	.80
20. There is room to discover which tasks suit the talents of the various team members.	.76	.80
21. Team members coach each other.	.17	.83
22. If there are private situations that affect work, team members know about each other.	-.12	.84
23. The work-life balance in the team is good.	.63	.82
24. Team members are encouraged to further develop their talents within the team.	.74	.80
25. The team has clear frameworks and a mandate within which it can be self-organising.	.49	.81
26. The team has a good escalation model when going to management.	.61	.81
27. The team works with team assessments.	.37	.82
28. The team members have clear agreements about what we do when a team member is not performing.	.16	.83
29. All team tasks can be found in the chosen team roles.	.09	.83
30. The team members have the necessary hours to fulfill the team tasks.	.07	.83

Note. Items 5, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 21, 22, 28, 29, and 30 correlate with the rest of the scale below the threshold of 0.3 are therefore removed from the scale.

Decision latitude. In order to preserve the psychometric properties, particularly construct validity, a corrected item-total correlation analysis was not performed for this scale, given the limited number of items it already contained.

Support at work is measured with an adjusted version of the Comprehensive Evaluation of Social Support (CESS) questionnaire by Bojar et al. (2014). Corrected item total correlations analysis showed (see Table B6) that seven items correlated with the remaining items below the threshold of 0.3 or 0.4 respectively which is the reason why they are omitted from the scale. Therefore, the new scale used for the actual data collection consists of 11 items. The item reduction also positive impacts the internal consistency of the scale increasing from 0.82 to 0.84.

Table B6

Reliability Analysis of CESS

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. My supervisor shares work ideas with me	.48	.81
2. I can depend on my supervisor for help on the job	.78	.79
3. My supervisor is understanding or sympathetic on the job	.62	.80
4. My supervisor reduces my workload when it is too much	.14	.83
5. When my workload is heavy, my supervisor will assign extra help	.48	.81
6. My supervisor volunteers to pick up the slack if I need him/her to	.59	.80
7. My coworkers share work ideas with me	.73	.81
8. My coworkers help me to figure out how to solve work problems	.06	.83
9. My coworkers listen to my work-related problems	.41	.81
10. If I get behind on my work, my coworkers will help me out	.27	.83
11. My coworkers will cover for me if I need a break	.47	.81
12. When my workload is heavy, my coworkers will help	.38	.82
13. My organization strongly considers my goals and values	.52	.81
14. My organization cares about my opinions	.43	.81
15. My organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor	.13	.82
16. In general, organizational policies are fair	.40	.81
17. My organization provides the tools necessary for doing my job	.51	.81
18. My organization provides me with the necessary training	.38	.82

Note. Items 4, 8, 10, 12, 15, 16 and 18 correlate with the rest of the scale below the threshold of 0.3 or 0.4 respectively and are therefore removed from the scale.

Perceived work-stress is measured with an adjusted version of the Work Stress Questionnaire (WSQ) by Holmgren et al. (2008). Four of the 21 items were omitted prior the pilot study as they measure dimensions that are related to the independent variables of this study (job autonomy and support at work). A corrected item total correlations analysis for the remaining 16 items could not be conducted as the data was not complete. The reason for that is possibly due to the small sample size of the pilot and the nature of the scale. Consequently, all items selected prior the pilot study were included for the actual data collection as well.

Appendix C

Survey Materials

Information Letter Pilot Study

Dear #namerecipient#,

I am writing to inform you that you have been selected to participate in a pilot study about work stress that we are conducting. Your academy director and Rianne Willmers are actively involved in this pilot study. As part of this pilot study, you will also be included in the actual data collection process that follows.

The main goal of this pilot study is to analyze the item batteries and assess how well they function. Based on the analysis, we aim to shorten the survey to make it more efficient and effective for the actual data collection.

We greatly appreciate your participation in this study, and we hope that your involvement will provide valuable insights that will help us to refine our research methodology. However, we wanted to emphasize that filling out the pilot study is time-sensitive due to unforeseen difficulties that we have encountered in the process. Therefore, we kindly request that you complete the pilot study within the given timeframe of 5 working days (20-05-23).

Rest assured that any data collected from you will be anonymized and kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Additionally, we invite you to share any ideas or suggestions that you may have to improve the study with the researcher (buettner.m@buas.nl)

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your participation, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Marco Büttner

Information Letter Directors



Dear XYZ (Director of each academy),

I am writing to create awareness about an intervention study to research the effects of team-based working on work stress at Buas.

In today's fast-paced business environment, it is essential that organizations find ways to reduce stress among their employees. Self-organizing teams have been gaining traction in many industries as a way to increase efficiency which is also one of the reasons why it is part of the community organization project. Most academies have already successfully implemented team-based working – now, it is crucial to investigate its effectiveness. An intervention study provides valuable insight into the effects of self-organizing teams on work stress, allowing your academy and Buas to make informed decisions about the use of this practice in the future.

Furthermore, an intervention study on team-based working could provide a unique opportunity to gain a competitive advantage. With the insights gained from the study, Buas could develop an even more comprehensive stress-management strategy. This could help to create an even healthier work environment which eventually helps Buas to remain a top-tier educational institution.

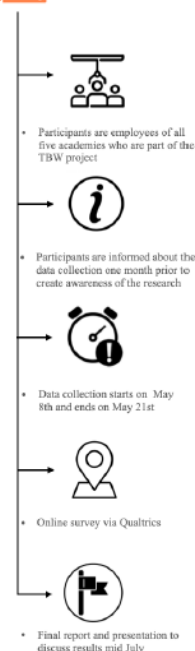
The intervention study is conducted by a psychology student from Radboud University as part of a master project and is supervised by well-known researcher in the field of organizational change and employee well-being as well as by the new project manager of the community organization project – Rianne Willmer. Support from directors and upper management is also of utmost importance for the study but also for the whole project to be successful as it sends the right signals to all involved which then has the potential to increase the commitment from the participants.

Thank you for your help and engagement in advance and I would like to invite you to contact the researcher – Marco Büttner – via buettner.m@buas.nl for more information regarding the research in case you want to know more about it.

Research



What to expect and upcoming steps



Invitation Letter

Dear #recipientname#,

How is team-based working developing for you? We want to learn from your experiences. With this dialogue (via Circlelytics), the participation council and the Executive Board want to use open-ended questions to hear from you how you view different aspects of team-based working (TBW) and what you need more or differently to support.

We as BUAs have an ambition to help students grow as young professionals who make meaningful contributions to a better world. This is a powerful mission, but it is also an enormous challenge. It makes high demands on our employees to contribute to get the best out of themselves and stay inspired. Strengthening the professional space (autonomy, responsibility), providing clear frameworks to operate in an learning to work together in results-oriented teams will lead to empowered and engaged employees and this will contribute to the quality of agility of the organization. To do that, it is therefore of utmost importance to realize an organizational culture in which employees can flourish and everyone's input is not only valued, but us also necessary to achieve the set goals. To this end, team-based working (TBW) has been introduced. With this dialogue (via Circlelytics), the participation council and the Executive Board want to use open-ended questions to hear from you how you view different aspects of team-based working (TBW) and what you need more or differently to support. The first round in this dialogue gives the opportunity to give your own answers on five questions (deadline beginning of June), in the second round you can enrich and support others' answers, giving more value and validation to others' answers to help us learn where we stand and what is needed more/most. We realize that every support services/academy is at a different stage of team based working, so to get a complete picture it is important that everyone within BUAs joins the dialogue.

After participating in this online dialogue, you will also receive a link to a survey designed by Marco Büttner, a student from the Radboud University, about the effect of self-organizing teams and perceived work stress. It would be highly appreciated if you also find some time to fill in this questionnaire and help Marco to see if self-organizing teams perceive less work stress.

All answers given will be processed confidentially. The results will be anonymously reported back per academy via the executive board and the participation council before the summer holidays.

Qualtrics Survey

Master_Thesis

Start of Block: Informed consent

INFORMED_CONSENT Dear participant, please read the following consent form carefully.

Study on work stress

This study is being conducted by the department of social sciences at Radboud University. The intention of this study is to research and gain knowledge of work stress. This study entails four questionnaires as well and may be conducted on computer or smartphone.

Participation, Benefits and Risks

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any time or refuse to participate entirely. If you desire to withdraw, please simply close your internet browser. Risks are minimal for involvement in this study. It is very unlikely that answering these questions affects you emotionally or otherwise.

Confidentiality and Questions

All data obtained from participants will be kept anonymous. There will be no record that links the data collected from you with any personal data from which you could be identified (e.g., your name, address, email, etc.). Once anonymized, these data may be made available to researchers via accessible data repositories and possibly used for novel purposes. The data will be stored for 10 years.

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Marco Büttner at marco.buettner@ru.nl, or his supervisor (Yannick Griep) at yannick.griep@ru.nl.

Ethical Approval

This research has been approved by the Social Sciences Ethics Committee of Radboud University. If you have any remarks or complaints regarding this research, you may also contact the Social Sciences Ethics Committee of Radboud University via secretarisrec@science.ru.nl.

- I understand that I have the right to decline to participate and withdraw from the research once participation has begun, without any negative consequences, and without providing any explanation
- I know that participation is completely voluntary
- There was opportunity for questions
- I give permission to process the anonymous data
- I give permission for storing the research data for a period of at least ten years

I have read the informed consent statements above and I agree to participate in this study. (1)

End of Block: Informed consent

Start of Block: General information

INFO This study will have five parts and will take approximately 10 minutes

End of Block: General information

Start of Block: Way of working

WAY_WORKING Part 1

I work in a team

- Strongly disagree (1)
- Somewhat disagree (2)
- Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- Somewhat agree (4)
- Strongly agree (5)

Skip To: SOT If Part 1 I work in a team = Somewhat agree

Skip To: SOT If Part 1 I work in a team = Strongly agree

OUT I'm sorry, but due to the nature of the study which requires participants to work in teams, I regret to inform you that you can no longer participate in the study.

You will now be forwarded to the end of the study.

Skip To: End of Survey If I'm sorry, but due to the nature of the study which requires participants to work in teams, I reg... Is Displayed

SOT Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about team based working.

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
As a team we are driven by a common story (mission) that we want to get to. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The team 'mission' has been translated into concrete goals that must be achieved within a certain period. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The team goals are in line with the organizational goals. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The team goals have been translated into individual goals for team members. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The progress and success of the team are measurable and visible. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The consultation structure is of added value for the team result. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The decision-making process in the team is clear. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The working method of the team is well aligned with the working method of other departments. (11)

Team members give each other feedback (16)

Divergent opinions are encouraged. (17)

The team tasks are divided based on the talents of the different team members. (19)

There is room to discover which tasks suit the talents of the various team members. (20)

The work-life balance in the team is good. (23)

Team members are encouraged to further develop their talents within the team. (24)

The team has clear frameworks and a mandate within which it can be self-organizing.
(25)

The team has a good escalation model when going to management.
(26)

The team works with team assessments.
(27)

End of Block: Way of working

Start of Block: Perceived work stress

Intro part 2 **Part 2**

Below is a list of questions concerning how stressful you perceive your work. The questions are rated in a two-fold.

First, I want to ask you to agree or disagree with whether the content of the question describes a specific work experience.

Second, depending on your answer please indicate how stressful you perceive that specific work experience.

PWS_1A Has your workload increased?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Skip To: PWS_2A If Has your workload increased? = No

PWS_1B Do you perceive it as stressful?

- not stressful (1)
 - less stressful (2)
 - stressful (3)
 - very stressful (4)
-

PWS_2A Are the goals for your workplace clear?

- Yes (1)
- Partly or no (2)

Skip To: PWS_3A If Are the goals for your workplace clear? = Yes

PWS_2B Do you perceive it as stressful?

- not stressful (1)
 - less stressful (2)
 - stressful (3)
 - very stressful (4)
-

PWS_3A Do you know which assignments your work tasks include?

- Yes (1)
- Partly or no (2)

Skip To: PWS_4A If Do you know which assignments your work tasks include? = Yes

PWS_3B Do you perceive it as stressful?

- not stressful (1)
 - less stressful (2)
 - stressful (3)
 - very stressful (4)
-

PWS_4A Do you know who is making decisions concerning your workplace?

- Yes (1)
- Partly or no (2)

Skip To: PWS_5A If Do you know who is making decisions concerning your workplace? = Yes

PWS_4B Do you perceive it as stressful?

- not stressful (1)
 - less stressful (2)
 - stressful (3)
 - very stressful (4)
-

PWS_5A Are there any conflicts at work?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: PWS_8A If Are there any conflicts at work? = No

PWS_5B Do you perceive it as stressful?

- not stressful (1)
 - less stressful (2)
 - stressful (3)
 - very stressful (4)
-

PWS_6A Are you involved on any conflicts at your workplace?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: PWS_8A If Are you involved on any conflicts at your workplace? = No

PWS_6B Do you perceive it as stressful?

- not stressful (1)
 - less stressful (2)
 - stressful (3)
 - very stressful (4)
-

PWS_7A Have your supervisor done anything to solve the conflicts?

- Yes (1)
- Partly or no (2)

Skip To: PWS_8A If Have your supervisor done anything to solve the conflicts? = Yes

PWS_7B Do you perceive it as stressful?

- not stressful (1)
 - less stressful (2)
 - stressful (3)
 - very stressful (4)
-

PWS_8A Do you put high demands on yourself at work?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: PWS_9A If Do you put high demands on yourself at work? = No

PWS_8B Do you perceive it as stressful?

- not stressful (1)
 - less stressful (2)
 - stressful (3)
 - very stressful (4)
-

PWS_9A Do you often get engaged in your work?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: PWS_10A If Do you often get engaged in your work? = No

PWS_9B Do you perceive that as stressful?

- not stressful (1)
 - less stressful (2)
 - stressful (3)
 - very stressful (4)
-

PWS_10A Do you think about work after your working-day?

- Yes or partly (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: PWS_11A If Do you think about work after your working-day? = No

PWS_10B Do you perceive it as stressful?

- not stressful (1)
 - less stressful (2)
 - stressful (3)
 - very stressful (4)
-

PWS_11A Do you find it hard to set a limit to work assignment although you have a lot to do?

- Yes or partly (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: PWS_12A If Do you find it hard to set a limit to work assignment although you have a lot to do? = No

PWS_11B Do you perceive it as stressful?

- not stressful (1)
 - less stressful (2)
 - stressful (3)
 - very stressful (4)
-

PWS_12A Do you take more responsibility at work than you ought to?

- Yes or partly (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: PWS_13A If Do you take more responsibility at work than you ought to? = No

PWS_12B Do you perceive it as stressful?

- not stressful (1)
 - less stressful (2)
 - stressful (3)
 - very stressful (4)
-

PWS_13A Do you work after ordinary working hours to finish your assignments?

- Yes or partly (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: PWS_14A If Do you work after ordinary working hours to finish your assignments? = No

PWS_13B Do you perceive it as stressful?

- not stressful (1)
 - less stressful (2)
 - stressful (3)
 - very stressful (4)
-

PWS_14A Do you find it hard to sleep because your mind is occupied with work?

- Yes or partly (1)
- No (2)

Skip To: End of Block If Do you find it hard to sleep because your mind is occupied with work? = No

PWS_14B Do you perceive it as stressful?

- not stressful (1)
- less stressful (2)
- stressful (3)
- very stressful (4)

End of Block: Perceived work stress

Start of Block: Social support at work

SSW Part 3

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about social support at work. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
My supervisor shares work ideas with me (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can depend on my supervisor for help on the job (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My supervisor is understanding or sympathetic on the job (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When my workload is heavy, my supervisor will assign extra help (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My supervisor volunteers to pick up the slack if I need him/her to (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My coworkers share work ideas with me (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My coworkers listen to my work-related problems (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My coworkers will cover for me if I need a break (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

My organization strongly considers my goals and values (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My organization cares about my opinions (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My organization provides the tools necessary for doing my job (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Social support at work

Start of Block: Decision Latitude

DL Part 4

Below is a list of question concerning your general feelings about your perceived autonomy at work.

The questions below relate to the main question:

"How much influence do you experience that you have on..."

Please indicate how much **you** experience each question.

	None at all (1)	A little (2)	A moderate amount (3)	A lot (4)	A great deal (5)
how the daily work is performed? (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how the daily work tasks are organized? (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
how working time is organized and scheduled? (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Decision Latitude

Start of Block: Demographics

DEMO Part 5

Finally, I would also like to assess some basic demographic data of you. Please answer the following questions:

AGE What is your age?

- Age: (1) _____
- Prefer not to say (2)
-

GENDER What is your gender?

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary / third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)
-

TENURE How many years have you been working for BUAs already?

- Less than two years (1)
- Between two and five years (2)
- More than five years (3)
-

FTE What is your current full-time-equivalent (FTE) status?

- Less than 0.33 FTE (1)
 - Between 0.34 and 0.66 FTE (2)
 - More than 0.67 FTE (3)
-

ACADEMY In which academy do you primarily operate?

- ALE (1)
 - ABEL (2)
 - AT (3)
 - AHF (4)
 - AGM (5)
 - other (e.g., support services) (6)
-

TYPE What type of team are you working in?

- Lecturer team/Semester team (1)
 - Support team (2)
 - Other (3)
-

TRAINING How many training sessions for team-based working from an external training company (MAEK) have you received already?

- One training session (1)
 - Two training sessions (2)
 - Three training sessions (3)
 - Four training sessions (4)
 - Five training sessions (5)
 - More than five (6)
 - None (7)
-

SIZE How large is your team?

- Less than five members (1)
- Between five and ten members (2)
- More than ten members (3)

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: Debriefing

DEBRIEF_1 Did you encounter any difficulties understanding the language of this study?

- Not at all (1)
 - Once or twice (2)
 - More than twice (3)
-

DEBRIEF_2 Dear Participant,

Thank you for participating in this study. The goal of the study was to determine whether team-based working and perceived work-stress is related and whether social support at work as well as decision latitude has any influence in this relationship. If you have any questions about the study you can reach the researcher at marco.buettner@ru.nl

Thank you for your time spent taking this survey.

Please click the arrow to record your response and finish the survey.

End of Block: Debriefing
