



הקרן הלאומית למדע

المؤسسة الإسرائيلية للعلوم

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לכבוד
ד"ר שני פינדק
שירותי אנוש
אוניברסיטת חיפה

לד"ר פינדק שלום רב,

הנדון: בקשתך למענק מחקר בנושא:

האם כישורי יתר יכולים לפגוע בבריאות?

מחקר יומנים על לחץ בעבודה והתנהגויות לא בריאות בקרב ערבים ישראלים

הצעת המחקר אשר הגשת לקרן הלאומית למדע לא נכללה, לצערנו, בין ההצעות אשר זכו במענקי מחקר השנה.

מצ"ב עיקרי חוות הדעת.

לתשומת לבך, החלטות הנהלת הקרן מתקבלות על סמך סיקור עמיתים ודיונים בוועדות מקצועיות. ראוי להדגיש כי הוועדה המקצועית אשר בחנה את הצעת המחקר התבססה על מכלול ההערות והציונים שהתקבלו מסוקרים חיצוניים ומחברי הוועדה שהם מומחים בתחום, ונתנה משקל, בדיוניה, רק לאותן ביקורות והערכות שהיו מקובלות עליה.

מאחר שכספי ההקצבה השנתית מחולקים עד תום, החלטות הנהלת הקרן הן סופיות ואינן ניתנות לשינוי.

אנו מאחלים לך הצלחה בהמשך דרכך המדעית.

בכבוד רב,

תמר


ד"ר תמר יפה-מיטווד
מנכ"ל

העתק: רשות המחקר, אוניברסיטת חיפה

מוזמנים לבקר באתר קול המדע <https://kolhamada.isf.org.il> - מיזם של הקרן הלאומית למדע, המגיש מידע מדעי מחזית המדע, לציבור ולקהילה המדעית בישראל.

Reviewer No. 1

This is an interesting proposal with some novel elements, and I enjoyed reading it. I think there is broad support for some of their model in the extant literature. For example, research to date has shown that work stress is associated with daily drinking, with the relationship moderated by job involvement and employee personality (Liu, Wang, Zhan, and Shi, 2009). This study adds to this earlier body of literature by examining daily eating behaviors as well as drinking, and examining additional mediators and moderators.

Originality: There are a few aspects that I thought were relatively original. The sample is definitely done – examining these relationships in a vulnerable population has the potential to add to the literature. Using a daily study method to capture variations in individual tasks and job challenge is also potentially interesting and important. The use of a food photo diary approach was interesting, even though I am not sure about the feasibility of this approach. An alternative could be to ask participants to use a food diary app, which could make it easier to analyze the data. 

Project importance and contribution: I believe the model the author is proposing is novel and important enough that it is likely to be published in a high quality management journal. The project is important because it adds to theory but it also has sound practical implications. If there is a relationship between daily work experiences and individuals' unhealthy eating habits, interventions may be designed around these findings. These are good reasons for me to be supportive of this work.

Regarding contribution to scientific knowledge, one challenge I see, which is fixable, is overall theoretical justification provided for the entire model. For some of the relationships, I think alternative explanations or directions are possible. For example it is unclear to me why boredom and anger are the two mediators or why overqualification is the moderator. There is not a tight or neat theoretical explanation for these predictions. Further, illegitimate tasks and lack of job challenge could be predictors of perceived overqualification. I would encourage the author to tighten these connections to increase the theoretical contribution of the resulting manuscript.

Adequacy of methods. I am impressed with the proposed study methodology. I think it is likely to be successful – I do not have any suggestions to increase the study rigor.

Suitability of investigator background: The investigator has a strong background and the expertise to successfully complete this project. This study flows naturally from the author's previous work in this area. I do not have concerns regarding their ability to complete the project.

Summary: The model makes sense, is not previously tested, and has the potential to generate knowledge that would have implications of the health and well-being of a vulnerable population. The specific ways in which the model would advance theory and this specific subfield is not fully clear and top journals in management would likely expect a stronger rationale for the choice of these specific variables.

Reviewer No. 2


Dr. Pindek's research proposal aims to reveal the effect of two specific stressors (illegitimate tasks and unchallenging work) on unhealthy behaviors via an effect on negative emotions. In addition, the researcher seeks to find out whether perceiving one's job as not fitting one's qualifications intensifies these associations.

While the researcher's CV is clearly impressive and the research question is highly interesting, I have recognized several issues that need to be considered before this research proposal can be approved:

1. The outcomes are under-defined or do not fit the characteristics of this population:
 - a. Unhealthy eating
 - i. It is unclear what is considered unhealthy eating. Is it only snacks? What about eating multiple times during the day (even if one is eating healthy foods), and specifically in response to distress DURING work hours? This is important as identifying the specific foods consumed or eating patterns should serve as means for future interventions.
 - ii. As emotional eating occurs following exposure to a stressor, employees should take photos of what they eat during the workday, rather than in the evening.
 - b. Alcohol consumption
 - i. The researcher emphasizes the importance of conducting this study among Arab Israelis, many of which do not drink Alcohol (religious Muslims). As such, and as found in previous studies (e.g., Baron-Epel et al., 2014), Young Muslim men tend to drink heavily but also hide Alcohol consumption. Muslim women generally refrain from drinking as they are looked upon if they attempt to do so. Thus, choosing Alcohol consumption in this specific ethnic group may heavily restrict the researcher's ability to assess the desired outcome (in addition to the chance that due to social desirability participants will refrain from reporting Alcohol intake).
 - ii. It is unclear what is considered unhealthy Alcohol consumption.
 - c. Smoking
 - i. As smoking is sometimes triggered by negative emotions, it is important to record smoking as it happens, right after the event has happened, rather than in the evening.
 - ii. The researcher assesses cigarette intake, while Nargila smoking (i.e., Hookah, Waterpipe) is also highly prevalent among Israeli Arabs. Has this been taken into consideration?
 - iii. While smoking is highly prevalent among Arab men (43.4% in 2013), Arab women generally refrain from smoking (6.5% in 2013). Thus, as with alcohol consumption, it is unclear whether the researcher will be able to assess changes this outcome among Arab women.
 - d. Other unhealthy behaviors
 - i. Given the clear obstacles mentioned above, has the researcher considered alternative measures of unhealthy behaviors which may be easier to assess such as physical activity, and sleep habits?
2. The chosen population

While I agree it is highly important to conduct studies among Arab Israelis, to reflect the specific needs and characteristics of this group, the rationale is not clearly articulated in this proposal.

- i. While many Arabs indeed work in underqualified jobs, focusing on graduates of Haifa university does not necessarily reflect the underqualified jobs that many Arabs are employed in (e.g., construction, agriculture).

- ii. If the specific challenges of this group are at the core of this proposal, it is advised to recruit a matching sample of non-Arab participants and examine the degree to which the model holds for both groups or for Arab Israelis only.
 3. The research model
 - a. The characteristics of underqualified jobs tend to stay stable over time, and certainly within a 10-day frame. As such, why does the researcher expects to find fluctuations in either job stressors (unchallenging tasks stay unchallenging), POQ, negative emotions or eating behaviors during such a short time frame? It seems like a more fitted design for the research question would be a longitudinal design that spans over several months, preferably targeting newcomers to the organization (rather than controlling for tenure) and following them for several months. As the sense of being overqualified may develop with time and changes in eating behaviors may follow.
 - b. Although POQ is presented as a moderator, it may very well be a mediator, where the two job stressors may affect POQ, and POQ in turn may elicit negative affect.
 - c. It is unclear what the theoretical contribution is. It is not clearly stated in the proposal, the association between negative affect and health behaviors has been documented before, as well as the association between work stressors and negative affect. How does POQ as a moderator changes our understanding of such effects?
 4. Measures
 - a. In addition to the concerns raised above, here are additional points that should be considered:
 - i. The researcher should account for health status, weight, and eating disorders.
 - ii. It is advisable to assure recruitment of 50% women and 50% men, given the restrictions mentioned above.
 - iii. It is important to track the average alcohol consumption during the month that proceeded the study.
 - iv. Tracking one's food by taking pictures is an intervention in and of itself. It may change what is being reported (due to social desirability) or change what is eaten (due to increased awareness). As such, it may heavily confound the research findings. 
 - v. Participants are asked to report how many unhealthy foods they have consumed, yet the definition of "unhealthy" is debatable, and participants will not necessarily know how to answer this question.
 - vi. Some workplaces have food courts, while others do not. It is highly important to know which food is offered or available in the workplace, are employees given regular breaks, do they eat in front of the computer or in a dining room, is food given for free or subsidized? Likewise, is smoking permitted in the facility? Is it acceptable to take a smoking break? Do others smoke during the workday? The answers to these questions may again heavily affect the study outcomes and should be assessed and controlled.
 - vii. The researcher did not mention the gender, ethnicity, or occupation of the participants in the pilot study. Can we infer from the pilot's population on the proposed study's population?
 5. I hope these comments will help the researcher move this interesting proposal forward.

Reviewer No. 3

Dr. Pindek proposes a project investigating affective reactions to two specific stressors (illegitimate tasks and non-challenging tasks) and the consequences for health behavior (eating, smoking, alcohol), moderated by a) overqualification and b) habitual aspects of the behaviors investigated.

In my view, the proposal is interesting with regard to several aspects. First, the topic of overqualification is an important one, but it has not received the attention it deserves. Second, overqualification might be a specific stressor for the target population, for which it might well imply a special kind of discrimination. Third, the proposed study would complement existing research on stress and health behavior (e.g., research by [Frone, Siegrist, O'Connor, or Sonnentag](#)), by proposing a very specific pathway involving not simply negative affect in general but two specific affective reactions (anger and boredom) as triggered by two specific stressors (illegitimate tasks; tasks lacking challenge). The proposed moderator of overqualification also is specifically tied to this process. Beyond these very specific moderators, the applicant might consider adding a more general moderator, notably [self-control](#).

The model is developed in a convincing way, involving very specific hypotheses concerning the anger-inducing quality of illegitimate tasks, the boredom-inducing quality of low-challenge tasks, and anger and boredom as mediators for health-related behaviors. Overqualification makes sense as a moderator, and so do behavioral tendencies regarding eating, alcohol consumption, and smoking. The proposed methodology is sophisticated and appropriate for this kind of data. Also, having conducted a pilot study is a great asset for the proposed study.

In sum, the proposed study is interesting and innovative, and it can have important theoretical and practical implications. With regard to the applicant, Dr. Pindek clearly has demonstrated her ability to conceive, conduct, and analyze this kind of study.