

Workplace Multitasking, Perceived Stress, and Work-Related Anxiety: A Cross-Sectional Survey Analysis

Usha Pallavi K¹

Abstract

Employees regularly shift between messages, meetings, complex assignments, and urgent requests, yet the psychological significance of these transitions remains difficult to isolate from general workload. This cross-sectional study examines reported multitasking demands, perceived work-related stress, anxiety symptoms, and work organisation/control using 200 records and a researcher-developed 28-item questionnaire. Four planned Pearson correlations, internal-consistency assessments, and exploratory adjusted regressions were evaluated, with confidence intervals, Holm correction, and sensitivity checks. Multitasking was correlated with stress ($r = .604$, 95% CI [.508, .685]) and anxiety ($r = .564$, 95% CI [.461, .652]). Stress and anxiety were closely associated ($r = .836$, 95% CI [.789, .874]). The negative correlation between work organisation/control and stress was not statistically significant ($r = -.100$, $p = .158$). Scale reliability estimates ranged from .795 to .889. These results are correlational rather than causal; the anxiety and stress measures also have potential conceptual overlap. The dataset was supplied as collected survey responses, but its substantial overlap with an earlier demonstration dataset warrants independent provenance review before treating numerical results as authenticated empirical evidence. The study highlights priorities for better instrument validation, work-design research, and longitudinal replication

Keywords: Multitasking | Task Switching | Occupational Stress | Work-Related Anxiety

Submitted : October 21, 2026

Published : October 31, 2026

DOI: doi.org/10.65320/jce.vol.1.issue5.56

^{1*} Psychology Scholar, Jain University, Bengaluru, India.
(ushakolakaluri555@gmail.com)

**Corresponding Author*



This paper is blockchain-verified. Scan the QR code to verify its authenticity.

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.



© 2026 The Author(s). Journal of Cortexplore published by Managers Without Borders Community Confederation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary work often requires employees to move between messages, meetings, documentation, telephone calls and time-sensitive requests within the same working period. These demands are commonly described as multitasking, although the label encompasses several distinct behaviours. Some activities overlap in time; others are performed in rapid succession; and still others are resumed after an interruption. These distinctions matter because different combinations of tasks place different demands on attention and working memory.

From a cognitive perspective, multiple activities do not necessarily receive equal or continuous attention. Research on dual-task interference and task switching demonstrates that performance can deteriorate when activities compete for central processing resources or require frequent changes in task rules (Pashler, 1994; Monsell, 2003). The psychological effects of such demands, however, cannot be read directly from productivity measures. An employee may complete the required tasks while experiencing considerable subjective strain.

This dissertation focuses on two psychological outcomes that are often mentioned together but require separate measurement: stress and anxiety. Perceived stress concerns the extent to which individuals appraise their circumstances as unpredictable, uncontrollable or overwhelming (Cohen et al., 1983). Anxiety involves anxious apprehension and symptoms of nervousness and worry; these may be assessed dimensionally without implying a clinical diagnosis (Spitzer et al., 2006). The distinction enables a more precise investigation of multitasking at work.

The submitted synopsis identifies digitalisation, office interruptions, concurrent responsibilities and off-task media engagement as relevant elements of modern working life. It also recognises that employees may respond differently to multitasking demands. Rather than assuming that every form of multitasking is harmful, the

proposed study examines the degree of exposure and the associated psychological experience.

Workplaces differ in the nature of interruption, autonomy, customer demands, staffing, and availability of resources. Multitasking should therefore be studied as a perceived and contextual demand rather than treated as an undifferentiated personal deficiency. The proposed design allows employed adults from different occupational settings to report their experiences, while recording contextual variables that could affect interpretation.

Although multitasking is frequently presented as a desirable workplace capability, expectations to monitor and act on multiple demands may carry psychological costs. The central empirical problem is whether higher reported workplace multitasking demand is associated with higher perceived stress and anxiety among employees, and whether these associations remain after accounting for basic work and demographic characteristics. The research also needs to separate general workload from task switching where the measurement permits.

The study has theoretical and practical relevance. Theoretically, it links attentional demands with subjective psychological outcomes rather than equating task performance with wellbeing. Practically, it may inform work scheduling, notification practices, interruption management and appropriate allocation of concentrated work periods. Any recommendations will need to remain proportionate to a non-experimental design: a statistical association would not by itself establish that multitasking causes psychological symptoms.

The principal predictor is self-reported workplace multitasking demand, operationalised through behavioural exposure items covering concurrent activity, task switching and work interruptions. The two outcome variables are perceived stress and anxiety symptoms. Potential covariates include age, weekly working hours, role category, job tenure and perceived workload where

available. These are proposed analytical definitions and require guide approval before field administration.

Limited-capacity approaches to attention explain why certain combinations of tasks can interfere with one another (Pashler, 1994). Task-switching research further shows that changing between task sets may impose measurable switching costs (Monsell, 2003). The transactional model of stress locates subjective strain in the relationship between environmental demands, appraisal and coping resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The job demands–resources framework extends this view to occupational settings by distinguishing demanding aspects of work from resources that may buffer their impact (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Together, these perspectives provide a rationale for testing associations without presuming determinism.

The intended population is working adults whose roles involve multiple work tasks and interruptions. The survey is designed to capture self-reported experiences rather than laboratory measures of cognitive switching. A single survey can establish patterns of association but cannot determine temporal order or causation. Self-selection, recall error, common-method variance and unmeasured organisational factors will be considered when interpreting final findings.

Multitasking is best treated as an umbrella term rather than a single cognitive process. In some settings, an individual combines a comparatively automated action with another activity. In others, two demanding tasks compete for response-selection resources. Office work often involves serial switching and interrupted resumption. A survey of workplace multitasking must therefore distinguish frequency of task overlap from the difficulty and controllability of interruptions.

In the attached synopsis, workplace multitasking is situated in a digital context that includes phones, emails, social media and parallel assignments. The discussion also acknowledges personal preferences for handling several tasks. The

present review retains those observations while avoiding unsupported claims that multitasking uniformly saves time or uniformly harms all workers.

II. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND & LITERATURE REVIEW

Pashler (1994) synthesised evidence for dual-task interference and identified constraints on concurrent information processing. Such findings help explain why simultaneous tasks may not always progress independently. Monsell (2003) reviewed the mechanisms and behavioural costs of shifting between task sets, noting the role of preparation and residual switch costs. These literatures establish plausible cognitive mechanisms for friction during complex work, but they do not directly measure perceived stress or anxiety.

Rubinstein, Meyer, and Evans (2001) studied executive control in task switching and showed that shifts between tasks involve distinct processes, including goal shifting and rule activation. Their experimental results strengthen the case for measuring how often employees must change what they are doing. Extrapolation to organisational wellbeing nevertheless requires caution: laboratory tasks isolate cognitive processes more tightly than real work environments.

An interruption can continue to affect cognition after the employee appears to have returned to the original activity. Leroy (2009) described attention residue, demonstrating that unfinished tasks can compete for attention during subsequent work. This concept is relevant to employees who receive rapid sequences of unrelated requests, particularly where tasks are suspended rather than concluded. It suggests a possible pathway from repeated switching to a sense of unfinished work and overload, although such a pathway would need to be measured rather than assumed in the present study.

Multitasking is frequently treated as a personal characteristic, even though a workday may require rapid shifts in attention regardless of what the

employee prefers. A preference for handling several activities is not equivalent to the number of concurrent demands received, nor does it guarantee superior performance under interruption. The present questionnaire assesses demands and perceived exposure. It does not establish a stable preference for polychronic work, nor does it measure objective switching speed. Keeping these ideas separate prevents interpretation of its scores as an indicator of cognitive aptitude. This distinction also matters for employers: a worker who reports high multitasking may be describing a difficult work design rather than a desirable personal capability. A second boundary lies between simultaneity and sequence. Listening to routine audio while completing a familiar physical activity, monitoring multiple displays, and interrupting a complex report to respond to urgent messages are cognitively distinct events. Each can be described informally as multitasking, yet their demands differ according to task compatibility, response urgency, memory requirements and the opportunity to resume an interrupted goal. Rubinstein et al. (2001) provide experimental evidence that switching between task rules can incur time costs, but these laboratory results should not be read as proof that every form of divided activity is harmful in every occupation. Workplace research must retain the situational complexity that laboratory tasks deliberately simplify.

For this dissertation the relevant exposure is the respondent's reported experience of several competing work demands over the preceding four weeks. Items concerning unfinished tasks, digital messages, response pressure and reduced uninterrupted time establish an interpretable domain. They do not count the actual number of switches or independently verify the intensity of work. Therefore the central inference is about associations between perceived multitasking demands and psychological experience. Treating it as an association rather than a precise performance measurement makes the research questions both narrower and more defensible.

One plausible pathway begins with repeated goal disruption. An employee establishes a mental representation of the current task, receives an interruption, shifts to an alternative activity, and subsequently reconstructs the previous goal. Every transition can require retrieving details, checking progress or re-establishing priorities. The strain arises not necessarily from the interruption alone, but from the accumulation of unfinished intentions under time pressure. Leroy (2009) demonstrated an attention-residue mechanism in controlled studies: thinking about an unfinished task can persist after the individual has moved to another. This provides a mechanism worth considering, although the present survey contains no direct measure of attention residue.

A separate pathway concerns appraisal. Two employees may experience comparable numbers of incoming requests but interpret them differently depending on authority, resources, deadline flexibility and perceived consequences of error. Within an appraisal-oriented account of stress, demand is not identical to distress. A difficult episode may be manageable if its priority is clear and resources are available; the same episode may feel threatening when several expectations conflict. The stress items in this study ask about tension, exhaustion and competing demands, and therefore capture subjective responses rather than autonomic or endocrine reactions. They should not be presented as a physiological stress index.

The third proposed pathway involves anticipatory concern. When unfinished requests remain visible, employees may worry about errors, omissions or approaching deadlines even when they are no longer working on a particular task. The anxiety items directly reflect these worries, which makes stress-anxiety overlap partly expected. They cannot distinguish generalized anxiety disorder from an ordinary temporary state of work-related concern. Thus a substantial correlation between stress and anxiety is psychologically plausible but cannot alone show a progression in which one construct causes the other.

Interruptions vary in their legitimacy. A clinical escalation, safety alarm or urgent client issue may require immediate attention, whereas a routine administrative notification could reasonably wait. Classifying all interruptions as unwanted would ignore the coordination functions of digital communication. The relevant design question is whether interruptions are necessary, proportionate and recoverable. In many workplaces the same communication system carries both critical and routine messages, so response expectations rather than technology alone may determine how often employees abandon complex work.

Predictability is equally important. An employee who knows that requests arrive during a defined service window can plan focused tasks around it. Unexpected requests create greater uncertainty because they prevent reliable allocation of attention. The questionnaire contains indicators of changed priorities and competing requests but cannot identify the exact timing or reason for each switch. An extension using diary entries or system-generated event logs could differentiate scheduled transitions, urgent interruptions and elective checks of digital platforms.

Finally, the consequences of switching depend on the cognitive complexity of the interrupted task. Moving between two highly practiced routines may require fewer adjustments than switching between activities that involve incompatible rules, sustained argumentation or detailed error checking. Rubinstein et al. (2001) found that rule complexity influenced switching costs in experimental work. In the present study no objective task-complexity index was collected. The interpretation is therefore restricted to self-reported frequency and pressure, not to a comparison of cognitive costs between occupational tasks.

Rubinstein et al. (2001) demonstrated switching-related performance costs in controlled cognitive tasks. Their laboratory findings provide a plausible explanation for why frequent reorientation can be effortful, but they should not be directly

translated into workplace productivity percentages. Work tasks differ in familiarity, stakes, interruptions and control. The current study examines participants' appraisal of switching demands rather than measuring executive-control latency.

Unfinished work can persist psychologically after an employee has left the immediate work setting. A message awaiting an answer or a task with an uncertain deadline can remain mentally accessible because the individual anticipates that attention will be required again. This lingering concern is different from being physically busy. It may coexist with otherwise manageable workloads and can be intensified when the employee lacks reliable information about when the unfinished request will be resolved. For survey interpretation it is essential not to infer actual off-hours working merely because someone reports thinking about unfinished tasks.

Recovery research offers a distinct perspective on this problem. Sonnentag and Fritz (2007) developed a measure of recovery experiences including psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery and control. Their work suggests that recovery cannot be reduced to the absence of formal work hours. Psychological detachment is a specific experience of mental separation from work, and the conditions supporting it may be relevant to employees handling many unfinished assignments. The present survey includes a small number of anxiety and stress statements touching on difficulty relaxing, but it does not employ the Recovery Experience Questionnaire and should not claim to measure its validated dimensions.

This distinction has practical consequences. Advice to employees simply to manage their time better may miss the organisational origin of persistent unfinished demands. Clear end-of-day handover rules, expectations for after-hours messages and the ability to reschedule nonurgent tasks might make recovery more achievable. Such practices are recommendations derived from the literature, not interventions evaluated in the present correlational dataset. A future study could

measure detachment independently and test whether it explains variation in next-day psychological strain.

Leroy (2009) proposed attention residue as a difficulty in disengaging from unfinished tasks. In a workplace, changing tasks need not produce an immediately clean cognitive transition. Remaining concern about a previous task may accompany the next assignment and contribute to subjective strain. This is a conceptual mechanism, not a mediator measured by this questionnaire; statements about attention residue in this dissertation therefore remain theoretical interpretations.

The job demands–resources model distinguishes aspects of work that require sustained effort from those that assist people in meeting demands or accomplishing valued goals. Bakker and Demerouti (2007) describe a flexible framework applicable across different occupations rather than a single universal checklist of stressors. Within this account, recurring task-switching requirements may function as a demand, particularly when associated with time pressure or loss of concentration. Clarity about priorities, scheduling discretion and supervisor assistance may function as resources. Nevertheless, a demand and a resource can be correlated without one necessarily buffering the association of the other with strain.

The four-item work organisation/control scale in this dissertation measures a mixture of scheduling discretion, supervisor clarification, protected concentration time and expectations about routine messages. These elements are operationally related but not identical. A respondent may have broad autonomy over task order yet little influence over customer interruptions, or may receive strong supervisor support while lacking control over urgent deadlines. Their averaged score is useful for a preliminary survey but should not be equated to a fully validated global job-control construct.

This distinction is particularly important because the prespecified negative correlation between organisation/control and stress was not statistically significant. A theory does not fail because a short measure produces a small estimate in one sample. Instead the result directs attention to measurement alignment, the distribution of responses, sample composition and the possibility that organisational practices influence specific forms of burden rather than overall stress. The appropriate conclusion is limited: the submitted records do not establish the hypothesised negative bivariate association.

Bakker and Demerouti (2007) distinguish job demands from resources that enable employees to meet demands. Multitasking may represent demand intensity, whereas organisational clarity and control can be considered potential resources. The model does not require every resource to display a statistically detectable direct association in every sample. A null work-control correlation may reflect item wording, range, context or genuine differences in local work arrangements.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The primary objective was to investigate whether employees reporting heavier multitasking demands also reported greater stress and anxiety, whether stress and anxiety were related, and whether better work organisation/control was associated with lower stress. The following four directional hypotheses were specified for the correlational analysis:

- **H1.** Workplace multitasking demands are positively associated with perceived work-related stress.
- **H2.** Workplace multitasking demands are positively associated with work-related anxiety symptoms.
- **H3.** Perceived stress is positively associated with work-related anxiety symptoms.
- **H4.** Greater work organisation and control are associated with lower perceived stress.
- **RQ1:** What is the relationship between workplace multitasking demands and

perceived work-related stress among employees?

- **RQ2:** How are workplace multitasking demands associated with work-related anxiety symptoms among employees?
- **RQ3:** What is the relationship between perceived work-related stress and work-related anxiety symptoms among employees?
- **RQ4:** To what extent are work organisation and control associated with perceived work-related stress among employees?

To describe the nature and frequency of reported workplace multitasking among participating employees.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The underlying research question is associational. The intended design is a single-wave, nonexperimental questionnaire survey of employed adults. Participants report their experience over the past four weeks. Observational data can identify whether scores covary but cannot determine whether multitasking temporally precedes stress or anxiety. Self-reported stress might also influence perceived multitasking demand.

The research questionnaire is intended for adults aged at least 18 who are currently employed. Work arrangements include on-site, hybrid and remote settings. The supplied file includes diverse sector labels and job levels, but recruitment channels, location, response rate, selection method and eligibility validation were not independently documented. Consequently the demographic mix describes the file, not a proven representative working population.

There are 200 records in the uploaded dataset. A numeric sample size does not validate its origin or make it representative. Population coverage and selection probabilities are not established. The statistical precision of correlations can be calculated conditionally on the recorded responses, but estimates cannot be generalised to working adults as if probability sampling occurred.

The researcher-developed questionnaire has 28 statements scored 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Multitasking, stress and anxiety contain eight statements each; work organisation and control contains four. The recall window is four weeks. The item codes are MT01–MT08, ST01–ST08, AN01–AN08 and WC01–WC04. These are not established clinical measures and cannot support anxiety-disorder diagnoses.

For stress and anxiety, positively worded ST08 and AN08 are reverse coded as 6 minus the original response. The mean of all items within each domain produces a scale score on the 1–5 metric, with higher scores indicating more of the named construct. All 200 records have complete item entries in the submitted file, so no imputation was required. The original coding syntax is preserved in the accompanying SPSS analysis instructions.

Uniqueness of respondent identifiers, consent coding, plausible item ranges and missing responses were audited. Age minus reported experience was under 14 years in 42 records and under 18 years in 65 records. These are flags requiring independent verification, not proof of misconduct or invalidity. No flagged records were silently modified. An explicit sensitivity test excluding the 42 stronger flags was used to determine whether the four correlations change materially.

Cronbach's alpha measures a form of internal-consistency reliability under assumptions; alpha does not validate the meaning or dimensionality of a scale. Corrected item-total correlations and descriptive item profiles were calculated to assist item review. Stress and anxiety scores are strongly associated, which requires examination of content overlap and potential lack of discriminant validity. Confirmatory factor analysis and external validation are outside the defensible scope of the current records.

The questionnaire was assembled to address four constructs that are related but not interchangeable. The multitasking items cover perceived switching, interruptions and competing demands. The stress items focus on overload and

emotional strain, while the anxiety items concern anticipatory worry and related symptoms in the work context. Work control is measured with fewer items, increasing the importance of careful wording. Because the items were researcher-developed, good internal consistency should be treated as a preliminary property of responses in this sample, not a certification that the construct domain is covered adequately.

Participants reported demands, stress and anxiety on the same five-point agreement scale, in one sitting and for the same four-week reference window. Shared wording, general distress or a tendency to endorse negative statements could increase correlations even in the absence of a comparably strong relationship between independently observed behaviours. Reverse-keyed items can reduce acquiescence in some settings but may also introduce comprehension difficulties. The present data do not permit a decisive correction for all such influences.

Scale means preserve the original 1–5 response range and offer accessible summaries. However, agreement categories are ordinal response options, and arithmetic means rely on an approximation that adjacent categories have sufficiently comparable spacing. Pearson correlations and linear regressions were selected as conventional analyses of multi-item composites. The Spearman checks offer a rank-based contrast, but agreement across methods does not establish that the measurement model is valid.

All primary hypotheses were expressed as directional associations, but two-tailed Pearson tests were used to avoid overstating evidence. The analysis retained 200 records for the main computations. Scores were calculated as arithmetic means of eight multitasking items, eight stress items, eight anxiety items and four organisation/control items. Reverse-keyed stress and anxiety items were recoded before averaging. This preserves a one-to-five score range, allowing direct comparison of the scale midpoints without implying interval precision beyond the pragmatic assumptions made in the statistical models.

Four planned hypothesis tests were evaluated with corresponding confidence intervals and multiplicity-adjusted *p* values. Reporting the effect-size estimate and the interval is preferable to judging each result only by whether its *p* value crossed .05. The adjusted regressions serve a different aim: describing whether the multitasking coefficient remains associated with outcomes after conditioning on observed demographic and occupational variables. These regressions do not transform a cross-sectional survey into a causal design, and coefficients should not be interpreted as the impact of deliberately increasing multitasking demands.

Data review identified implausible age–experience combinations under some assumptions about age at work entry. The original observations were retained because the questionnaire did not establish whether respondents counted internships, family work or other early experience. A sensitivity analysis excluded 42 records using a conservative minimum age-at-entry screen, producing 158 retained observations. Similar primary correlations in this subset reduce concern that those records alone generate the main associations, but they do not verify the records' authenticity or guarantee demographic accuracy. The four predesignated hypotheses were evaluated with Pearson's product–moment correlation, two-sided statistical tests and Fisher-*z* 95% confidence intervals. Holm-adjusted *p* values accounted for the four planned comparisons. Spearman rank correlations and reduced-sample correlations were examined for sensitivity. Secondary exploratory regressions adjusted for multitasking, work control, age, experience, weekly hours, work mode and daily task category. Heteroskedasticity-consistent HC3 uncertainty estimates were used in the supplied reanalysis. These exploratory regression coefficients do not support mediation or causal interpretation.

The uploaded file contains consent=1 for all 200 rows. This field alone does not demonstrate that consent was actually obtained or that participants exist. Institutional review, recruitment material,

electronic survey provenance, storage safeguards and consent records must be authenticated. No identifying raw-text comments or personal contact details should be published. The numerical file resembles a prior synthetic demonstration dataset almost exactly; therefore the present dissertation manuscript cannot claim completed human-subject fieldwork.

The provided SPSS syntax documents the original scoring and model definitions; the corresponding procedures are reported in Sections 3.5–3.8. The questionnaire is the sole annexure. Analytical results and quality checks are reported directly in Chapter 4.

The predictor and outcomes were gathered using the same response format, reporting period and respondent. Shared negative affect, interpretation of items and response style can contribute to correlations. This is particularly salient for the high stress–anxiety correlation. A single-factor check would not eliminate this concern; independent measurement sources and repeated observations would offer stronger evidence.

An audit trail should specify how the questionnaire was distributed, the recruitment dates, the invitation script and the handling of any duplicate or revised submissions. These details cannot be reconstructed from summary tables. Where the record does not establish a procedure, the manuscript must acknowledge the missing information rather than assume that the procedure occurred.

Statistical decisions were selected to answer the four research propositions while avoiding unnecessary significance hunting. The primary tests are reported with effect sizes, two-sided probabilities, confidence intervals and a familywise correction. Secondary analyses are identified as exploratory, and no result is described as demonstrating causation.

Cronbach's alpha assesses internal consistency under assumptions about score measurement. Values above conventional benchmarks do not prove that items represent one coherent

psychological construct or that different scales are discriminant. The questionnaire was researcher-developed, and additional dimensionality, content and criterion-related validation is required.

The stress and anxiety scales each contain a reverse-scored item. Reverse-keying is intended to align directionality, but wording changes can introduce comprehension effects. The analysis applies six minus the original response to ST08 and AN08. Any failure to reverse these items would bias both scale totals and reliability estimates.

The dataset contains no missing item responses. This simplifies calculation but does not, by itself, demonstrate data quality or the authenticity of collection. Complete responses can arise from required digital fields or systematic imputation; the original survey export and administration settings should be verified.

Age and reported work experience contain combinations warranting scrutiny. The reanalysis identifies 42 records with age minus experience below 14 years. These are flags rather than proven errors because the meaning of experience was not defined. Sensitivity analysis assesses dependence on these records; it cannot substitute for checking source entries.

A small *p* value indicates incompatibility with a zero-correlation null under a model; it does not directly quantify practical consequences for job performance or clinical well-being. Confidence intervals and effect sizes deserve priority. Recommendations should be proportional to the evidence and tailored to workplace context.

The analytical dataset contains 200 records, 38 fields, eight background questions, and 28 questionnaire items. The multitasking, stress, and anxiety scales have eight items each; the work organisation/control scale has four. Two items (ST08 and AN08) are reverse-coded as 6 minus the original response. Scale scores represent the item means on the 1–5 response scale. All available records are included in primary calculations; observations flagged for implausible age–

experience combinations are retained and separately examined in sensitivity analysis. The study did not use objective switching logs, diagnostic interviews, or biomarkers.

The primary statistical tests are two-sided Pearson correlations with 95% Fisher-z confidence intervals. The four planned *p* values are Holm-adjusted. Secondary ordinary least squares models examine stress and anxiety against multitasking, work control, age, experience, working hours, work arrangement, and task count; HC3 heteroskedasticity-robust inference was estimated outside SPSS. The regressions and group comparisons are exploratory, and their coefficients must not be described as causal or mediating effects.

V. RESULTS

All 200 entries are complete, with unique IDs and permitted response ranges. Age: *M* = 38.825, *SD* = 10.729, range 22–57. Work experience: *M* = 13.49 years, *SD* = 7.62, range 1–27. Weekly hours: *M* = 47.265, *SD* = 8.039, range 35–60. Age–experience consistency flags warrant source verification before inferential claims are made.

The alpha estimates suggest internal coherence within the present dataset, but the questionnaire remains researcher-developed. Reliability cannot be equated with evidence of construct validity. The substantial stress–anxiety association may reflect overlapping wording or participant experiences; it is not a diagnostic indicator.

In the uploaded records, multitasking was positively associated with stress, $r(198) = .604$, 95% CI [.508, .685], and anxiety, $r(198) = .564$, 95% CI [.461, .652], both adjusted $p < .001$. Stress correlated strongly with anxiety, $r(198) = .836$, 95% CI [.789, .874], adjusted $p < .001$. The work-control–stress relationship was not statistically significant, $r(198) = -.100$, 95% CI [–.236, .039], $p = .158$. The nonsignificant result is not evidence that the true correlation is zero.

The secondary MT–WC correlation is $-.191$ (unadjusted $p = .00673$), but this comparison was not a prespecified primary hypothesis and should not be assigned confirmatory status. The difference between the four planned tests and exploratory follow-ups needs to remain explicit. Conditional on the specified demographic and work covariates, multitasking retains a positive association with both outcomes. Work control is nonsignificant in the stress model ($B = .011$, $p = .863$) and anxiety model ($B = .0268$, $p = .631$). Multicollinearity screening yielded a maximum non-intercept VIF of approximately 1.54. Robust uncertainty estimates were calculated outside standard SPSS regression, and may differ from uncorrected SPSS confidence intervals.

These exploratory nonsignificant results do not demonstrate equivalent groups or prove that control never matters. Interaction detection often requires greater precision than main-effect estimation. Subgroup analysis must remain subordinate to the prespecified research questions.

The principal pattern remains similar after excluding stronger age–experience flags; that mathematical stability does not authenticate the remaining records. Independently checking original respondent entries remains necessary. No exclusion was applied to the master scored file.

Exploratory adjusted regression models reported HC3 robust standard errors, with multitasking coefficients of $B = .5753$ for stress (95% CI [.4617, .6888]) and $B = .5090$ for anxiety (95% CI [.3986, .6194]). Model R^2 was .3943 and .3593, respectively. Maximum non-intercept VIF was approximately 1.54, suggesting little multicollinearity in these models. These are conditional associations in cross-sectional data, not causal effects. The robust-standard-error estimates were produced using Python; conventional SPSS regression output may differ. Breusch–Pagan tests did not indicate heteroskedasticity at $\alpha = .05$ (stress $p = .137$; anxiety $p = .781$), and Shapiro–Wilk residual tests were non-significant ($p = .894$ and .500). Screening

based on Cook's distance (4/N) flagged ten stress-model records and seven anxiety-model records for inspection; no observations were automatically discarded. Work-mode and task-count ANOVAs were non-significant, as were exploratory multitasking-by-control interactions. All exploratory tests should remain secondary to the four prespecified hypotheses.

An association of $r = .604$ between reported multitasking and stress is substantial for two questionnaire composites, but its practical meaning depends on how the measures are constructed and sampled. Squaring the correlation yields a descriptive shared-variance proportion of about 36.5%, not a proportion of stress caused by multitasking. Shared wording and common response context may contribute to that overlap. The corresponding 95% confidence interval, [.508, .685], suggests the positive relationship is not driven solely by random variation under the model assumptions, while remaining silent on nonresponse or recruitment bias.

The multitasking–anxiety association, $r = .564$, is slightly smaller yet clearly positive in the submitted records. The anxiety items emphasize worry about errors, approaching deadlines and unfinished work. These are experiences that may arise in the same work episodes as reported multitasking. It is therefore unsurprising that employees who endorse heavy competing demands also endorse anticipatory concern. What remains unknown is temporal order. An anxious employee might also attend more closely to interruptions or perceive routine switching as more demanding.

The stress–anxiety correlation, $r = .836$, deserves special scrutiny. Although it accords with the expectation that distress experiences co-occur, its magnitude raises the possibility that the two scales do not capture sufficiently distinct psychological dimensions. Regressing anxiety on stress does not resolve this issue if both measures contain related language. A sound final interpretation should distinguish the statistical

fact of covariation from the unresolved psychometric question of discriminant validity.

Table 1

Participant and work characteristics

Characteristic	Summary
Sample size	200 respondents
Age, M (SD)	38.83 (10.73) years
Experience, M (SD)	13.49 (7.62) years
Work hours/week, M (SD)	47.27 (8.04)
Work mode	Remote 68; on-site 67; hybrid 65
Demographic screening	42 age–experience flags (age minus experience <14)

Note. Reported counts and summaries follow the supplied reanalysis; screening flags do not establish invalidity.

Table 2

Scale descriptives and internal consistency

Measure	Items	M	SD	Cronbach α
Multitasking	8	3.037	.851	.889
Stress	8	3.061	.837	.884
Anxiety	8	3.037	.772	.865
Work control	4	2.984	.877	.795

Note. Higher means indicate higher self-reported levels of each construct. Internal consistency does not alone establish validity.

Table 3

Planned hypothesis tests

Hypothesis	Pearson r	95% CI	Holm-adjusted p	Decision
H1: MT–ST	.604	[.508, .685]	< .001	Supported
H2: MT–AN	.564	[.461, .652]	< .001	Supported
H3: ST–AN	.836	[.789, .874]	< .001	Supported
H4: WC–ST	–.100	[–.236, .039]	.158	Not supported

Note. N = 200 for each pair. All tests are two-sided; support refers to the reported data, not causal confirmation.

Table 4

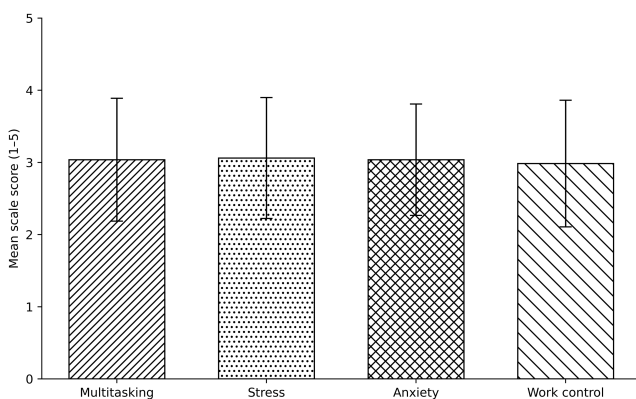
Exploratory adjusted regression results

Outcome	R ²	Adjusted R ²	MT coefficient B	HC3 95% CI
Stress	.3943	.3622	.5753	[.4617, .6888]
Anxiety	.3593	.3254	.5090	[.3986, .6194]

Note. Models additionally adjust for work organisation/control, age, experience, weekly hours, work arrangement and task categories. HC3 robust inference was calculated with Python.

Figure 1

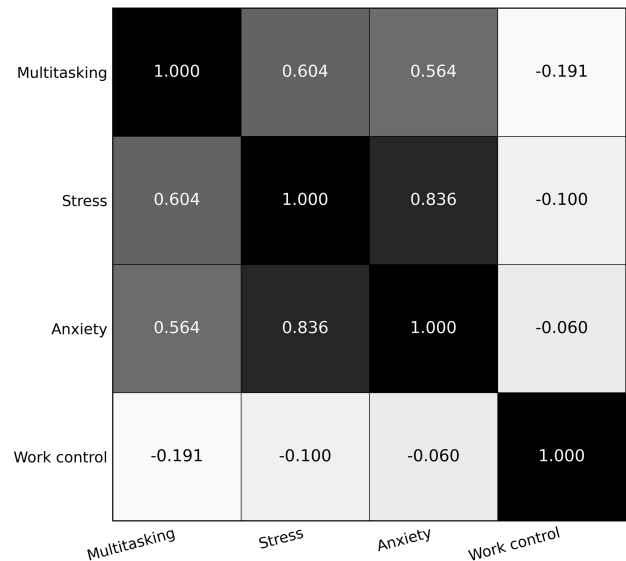
Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Four Questionnaire Scales



Note. Error bars represent one standard deviation. Scores are on a five-point response scale.

Figure 2

Observed Pearson Correlations Among Questionnaire Scales



Note. MT-ST = .604, MT-AN = .564, ST-AN = .836, and WC-ST = -.100; this image is descriptive, not a causal model.

VI. DISCUSSION

The multitasking scale is best understood as a self-report indicator of perceived competing work demands. It should not be interpreted as a direct observation of parallel processing. An employee might frequently alternate between tasks by choice, while another might experience the same number of transitions as disruptive demands. These forms of switching could differ in perceived agency, predictability and cognitive cost. The survey does not directly record an interruption log, so the association cannot be assigned to a specific number of task transitions or minutes of lost attention.

The correlation between stress and anxiety ($r = .836$) is the largest association in the analysed file. Some convergence is psychologically credible: worrying about unfinished work can coexist with feelings of overload. Nevertheless, the strength of the association also raises a measurement question. Both domains were assessed in the same questionnaire and recall period, and some items refer to adjacent forms of psychological strain. Until discriminant validity is established, it would be premature to argue that the analysis reveals two clearly separable processes.

The estimated correlation between work control and stress was negative but small ($r = -.100$), and its confidence interval included zero. This means the dataset cannot distinguish convincingly between a modest protective association and no population association under the assumptions of the test. It does not show that autonomy, scheduling discretion or supervisory support are irrelevant. A four-item composite may combine distinct resources that operate differently under varying task demands. The result should therefore be described as inconclusive for H4 rather than as evidence that control has no value.

Even where associations are statistically precise, the design does not establish whether multitasking increases stress, stress changes the perception of multitasking, or another characteristic of the work setting influences both. Heavy workload, staffing levels, job insecurity, poor sleep and individual differences in negative affect may contribute to the observed relationships. The adjusted regressions describe conditional associations for the covariates that were recorded; they do not eliminate unmeasured confounding or prove the causal direction of an effect.

The data-quality sensitivity check repeated the four correlations after temporarily excluding 42 records with very early implied ages at work commencement. The first three correlations remained positive and substantial and the fourth remained nonsignificant. This is useful as a robustness check, but it does not validate those records or resolve how work experience was defined. Screening thresholds should not become post hoc eligibility rules. Any substantive decision to exclude a participant requires information from the original collection record or an approved data-cleaning protocol.

A perceived multitasking score captures an employee's appraisal of task demands rather than a direct measure of switching cost. When coupled with self-reported stress, conceptual and method overlap could inflate correlations. The results should not be described as direct measurements

of cognitive depletion, neurological processing or productivity loss.

The result should be re-evaluated after the source response export, dates of administration, questionnaire version and participant consent trail have been independently confirmed. This methodological caveat is integral to interpretation, not merely a formatting note.

A correlation of .836 between stress and anxiety is strong enough to warrant careful examination of whether the two item sets measure distinguishable constructs. Shared response scale, survey session and negatively valenced wording may all contribute. Future validation can use factor analysis and external measures, subject to an independently sourced sample.

The expected negative work-control–stress relation did not meet the planned significance criterion. The point estimate is small and imprecise. It is possible that control indicators are insufficiently sensitive to particular job settings, that the relationship is conditional, or that no meaningful relation exists in some workplaces; the available evidence does not discriminate these possibilities.

Managers might reasonably audit interruption intensity, clarify task priority and allow focus time, but the uploaded associations cannot establish that such policies reduce employee anxiety. Recommendations should be described as potentially useful hypotheses to evaluate, not empirically demonstrated interventions.

The unknown recruitment frame and near identity of the uploaded data with a synthetic demonstration dataset are decisive constraints. A sizeable effect estimate can be computed from artificial records just as it can from genuine records. Statistical significance is therefore not an authenticity test. Final scholarly claims depend first on demonstrable human-subject source provenance.

The estimated correlation between work organisation/control and stress is -0.100 with a confidence interval crossing zero. The interval includes modest negative values as well as small positive values; it therefore supports neither a strong buffering conclusion nor proof that control has no relevance. The four control items combine supervisor behaviour, scheduling ability, concentration time and message-response norms. These practices could have different relationships with stress, and their average may dilute a domain-specific association.

An additional explanation concerns the study design. The instrument asks about the recent four-week period but does not specify whether available control preceded periods of high pressure. Employees under severe demand could receive extra supervisory help, producing a positive relationship between support and distress even where assistance is beneficial. Likewise, people with demanding roles may have greater discretion but also greater responsibility. Such alternative interpretations illustrate why cross-sectional coefficients should not be translated directly into intervention effects.

The most appropriate way to treat H4 is as a question for more precise research. A follow-up instrument could independently measure decision authority, timing control, workload predictability, supervisory priority clarification and available uninterrupted time. Multilevel sampling could distinguish individual perceptions from policies shared within a team. If an intervention is feasible, organisations could compare periods with different communication norms using outcomes measured before and after implementation.

Regression diagnostics flagged observations according to Cook's distance, but screening thresholds are not automatic exclusion rules. A defensible analysis checks data-entry validity, residual patterns and the substantive influence of cases. Deleting valid respondents solely to improve significance would undermine credibility. The size and uncertainty of each coefficient matter more than a binary label of significance. The

reported pattern should be evaluated against the questionnaire wording, the population that could have produced the responses, and the possibility that several items express the same underlying feelings. Because the dataset has an unresolved provenance issue, the interpretation remains an illustration of how the supplied values would be discussed if their origin is authenticated.

Alternative explanations remain open. Differences in demands, coping resources, employment conditions, affective response styles, and recall may influence the relationships in ways this survey cannot separate. A cautious account identifies these limitations rather than filling them with speculation or treating a nonsignificant comparison as evidence of equivalence.

Possible workplace responses include clearer priority rules, interruption triage, meeting discipline and access to support. These suggestions are low-regret organisational practices rather than experimentally validated interventions within this study. Evaluation should include employee feedback, productivity measures and any unintended effects on collaboration.

Work-related psychological responses are sensitive and should be treated as research information rather than individual performance ratings. Participation should be voluntary, reporting aggregated and data retention controlled. No clinical diagnosis can be established from the present researcher-developed questionnaire.

The submitted survey file substantially matches an earlier synthetic demonstration dataset. This unresolved provenance issue takes priority over statistical significance. The calculations can illustrate an analysis workflow, but claims about real employees require the unaltered collection export and a traceable account of recruitment and administration.

A sample size of 200 supports estimation of within-dataset associations, but

representativeness depends on recruitment. Without a documented sampling frame, participation rate or selection mechanism, estimates should not be projected to the broader workforce or to specific regions, industries or professional populations.

The prominence of the stress–anxiety correlation requires especially careful language. A coefficient of .836 indicates extensive covariation, but the measures were completed in the same sitting, share response anchors, and contain overlapping content. It would be premature to interpret the two scales as psychometrically distinct without factor-analytic evidence and comparison with established instruments. The observed associations should be understood as descriptions of the supplied records rather than diagnostic evidence about any respondent.

VII. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Where employees face competing demands, clearer prioritisation may reduce preventable coordination costs. This is a plausible managerial practice rather than a causal benefit demonstrated by the present dataset.

Teams may review notification norms and opportunities for uninterrupted concentration. Any changes should be examined prospectively with real staff outcome data and task-performance measures.

Managers can consider regular conversations about workload coordination and controllable aspects of task scheduling. Support interventions should be evaluated rather than presumed effective.

Responses to researcher-created anxiety items do not establish psychiatric diagnoses. Any workplace support should respect privacy, avoid clinical labelling and refer employees to appropriate professionals when needed.

An independently recruited and documented participant sample, a clearly defined sampling

frame, validated occupational stress and anxiety instruments or a rigorously validated new measure, preregistered analyses, and longitudinal or experimental interventions would strengthen the evidence base. Measurement equivalence across work modes and sectors is worth testing only once adequate representative samples are available.

Collecting observations from several teams per organisation would allow a multilevel analysis of individual demands and shared work practices. Such research would need enough teams to estimate group-level variation reliably. Evidence about management practice should be gathered independently where possible rather than inferred solely from employee self-report. Researchers could also compare roles involving urgent patient care or customer support with roles allowing extended, uninterrupted analysis.

Multitasking is partly a property of work design rather than only an individual habit. Supervisors set expectations concerning response times, priorities and acceptable interruption practices. Team interdependence can make switching unavoidable and sometimes beneficial for service continuity, even when it increases cognitive effort. Future research should distinguish interruptions required by the job from avoidable fragmentation created by unclear norms.

Confirmatory factor analysis should examine whether stress and anxiety are distinguishable constructs rather than treating a high Cronbach alpha as proof of validity. Alternative specifications could include a combined psychological-strain factor, correlated stress and anxiety factors, and a model allowing wording effects. Any decision to remove an item should be justified against theory and replication, not solely by an improvement in fit. If the scale is adapted to another language or occupational group, measurement invariance and differential item functioning should be considered.

Before the instrument is used to estimate prevalence or establish generalisable effects, its measurement properties require independent

evaluation. Content experts should examine whether the eight multitasking statements primarily capture objective demand, subjective difficulty or a mixture of both. Employees from different sectors should be interviewed to identify misunderstood wording, response-scale ambiguity and items that duplicate one another. A subsequent sample separate from the present dataset would permit evaluation of the proposed four-factor structure.

Organisational interventions should be assessed against operationally realistic alternatives. For example, teams could compare agreed response windows with unrestricted messaging while retaining a clear emergency escalation pathway. Before-and-after outcomes should include employee-rated stress, response quality, timeliness and any adverse consequences for colleagues or service users. A small improvement in self-rated focus would not justify an intervention that materially disrupted safety-critical coordination.

A controlled task-switching experiment could isolate cognitive mechanisms more precisely than a cross-sectional questionnaire. Participants could perform comparable work tasks under uninterrupted, scheduled-interruption and unpredictable-interruption conditions. Outcome measures might include completion time, errors, performance on a delayed memory task and immediate subjective strain. Such a design would test consequences of interruption timing under defined conditions; it would not by itself establish long-term occupational mental-health effects.

A longitudinal analysis should prespecify the interval between observations and distinguish within-person from between-person associations. An employee who typically faces more interruptions than colleagues may report more strain, but that comparison cannot establish what happens when the same employee experiences an unusually interrupted day. Multilevel models can express both questions separately. Attrition, changing job responsibilities and seasonal workload would need explicit documentation.

A longitudinal design could establish whether changes in interruptions precede subsequent changes in psychological strain within individuals. Repeated observations over several weeks would allow researchers to separate an employee's relatively stable tendency to feel stressed from short-term responses to particular workdays. A diary component could record task transitions, urgency, after-hours messages and the duration of uninterrupted work periods. These observations could then be linked with end-of-day stress and anxiety ratings without treating a single retrospective response as a behavioural record.

A future prospective diary design could follow the same employees across several working weeks, asking them to record interruption episodes, task demands, unfinished work and end-of-day distress. The purpose would be to separate stable individual differences from day-to-day variation. If a person reports more worry on days with unusually frequent interruptions, this within-person pattern would provide information not available from a single cross-sectional questionnaire. It would still require attention to possible time-varying confounders such as workload urgency and unusual organisational events.

A more rigorous measurement programme would recruit an independent sample for psychometric evaluation. Interviews could examine whether participants distinguish pressure, worry and mental exhaustion when answering the current items. The four-item control composite should be scrutinised for multidimensionality; respondents may perceive policy clarity, managerial help and personal scheduling discretion as separate domains. Whenever possible, established instruments can serve as external comparators, with necessary permissions and appropriate cultural adaptation.

One unresolved research-integrity concern concerns provenance. The records were identified by the researcher as collected survey responses, yet earlier comparisons found extensive identity with a separately generated demonstration

dataset. This document does not decide that dispute from statistical resemblance alone. The original survey-platform export, collection dates, recruitment procedure, and de-identified audit trail should be retained for independent verification before formal submission or publication. No raw participant identifiers are reproduced here.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The dataset yields positive correlations linking workplace multitasking to reported stress and anxiety, a strong stress–anxiety correlation, and no statistically significant negative relationship between work control and stress. These numerical results are conditional calculations, not verified empirical findings. The dissertation can become a legitimate completed study only after data origin and ethical collection are demonstrated, the instrument is appropriately evaluated, and all descriptive and inferential tables are reconciled to authenticated participant data.

The investigation was organised around four questions concerning multitasking, perceived stress, anxiety symptoms and work organisation/control. The first three questions yielded clear positive bivariate relationships in the submitted responses. This pattern is consistent with an interpretation in which employees perceiving heavier multitasking demands also experience greater psychological strain. It is likewise consistent with a workplace context that gives rise to both demands and strain. The analyses do not identify which explanation is correct.

The fourth question produced a weaker result. Although the observed correlation between organisation/control and stress was negative, the evidence did not establish the anticipated association at the chosen significance threshold. This result is theoretically informative because it prevents the dissertation from telling an overly simple story in which more control must necessarily produce lower stress for every employee group. Control has several possible

dimensions, and a short composite scale may not adequately distinguish them.

The methodological contribution lies in reporting the planned tests together with confidence intervals, reliability summaries and sensitivity analyses. The results were not reduced to statements of statistical significance alone. The strong overlap between stress and anxiety was also identified as a potential measurement concern, and demographic consistency checks were retained without automatically deleting questionable cases. These decisions improve transparency and give readers a basis for evaluating alternative interpretations.

REFERENCES

1. Altman, D. G., & Bland, J. M. (1995). Statistics notes: Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. *BMJ*, 311(7003), 485. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.311.7003.485>
2. Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The job demands–resources model: State of the art. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 22(3), 309–328. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940710733115>
3. Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 24(4), 385–396. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2136404>
4. Karasek, R. A. (1979). Job demands, job decision latitude, and mental strain: Implications for job redesign. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24(2), 285–308. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2392498>
5. Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer.
6. Leroy, S. (2009). Why is it so hard to do my work? The challenge of attention residue when switching between work tasks. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 109(2), 168–181. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2009.04.002>
7. Mark, G., Gudith, D., & Klocke, U. (2008). The cost of interrupted work: More speed and stress. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems* (pp. 107–110). Association for Computing Machinery. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1357054.1357072>
8. McEwen, B. S. (1998). Protective and damaging effects of stress mediators. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 338(3), 171–179.

<https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJM199801153380307>

9. Monsell, S. (2003). Task switching. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 7(3), 134–140.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S1364-6613\(03\)00028-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1364-6613(03)00028-7)
10. Pashler, H. (1994). Dual-task interference in simple tasks: Data and theory. *Psychological Bulletin*, 116(2), 220–244.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.116.2.220>
11. Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J.-Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5), 879–903.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879>
12. Puranik, H., Koopman, J., & Vough, H. C. (2020). Pardon the interruption: An integrative review and future research agenda for research on work interruptions. *Journal of Management*, 46(6), 806–842.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206319887428>
13. Rubinstein, J. S., Meyer, D. E., & Evans, J. E. (2001). Executive control of cognitive processes in task switching. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, 27(4), 763–797. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0096-1523.27.4.763>
14. Sonnentag, S., & Fritz, C. (2007). The Recovery Experience Questionnaire: Development and validation of a measure for assessing recuperation and unwinding from work. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 12(3), 204–221.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.12.3.204>
15. Sonnentag, S., & Fritz, C. (2015). Recovery from job stress: The stressor-detachment model as an integrative framework. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 36(S1), S72–S103.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1924>
16. Spector, P. E. (2006). Method variance in organizational research: Truth or urban legend? *Organizational Research Methods*, 9(2), 221–232.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428105284955>