

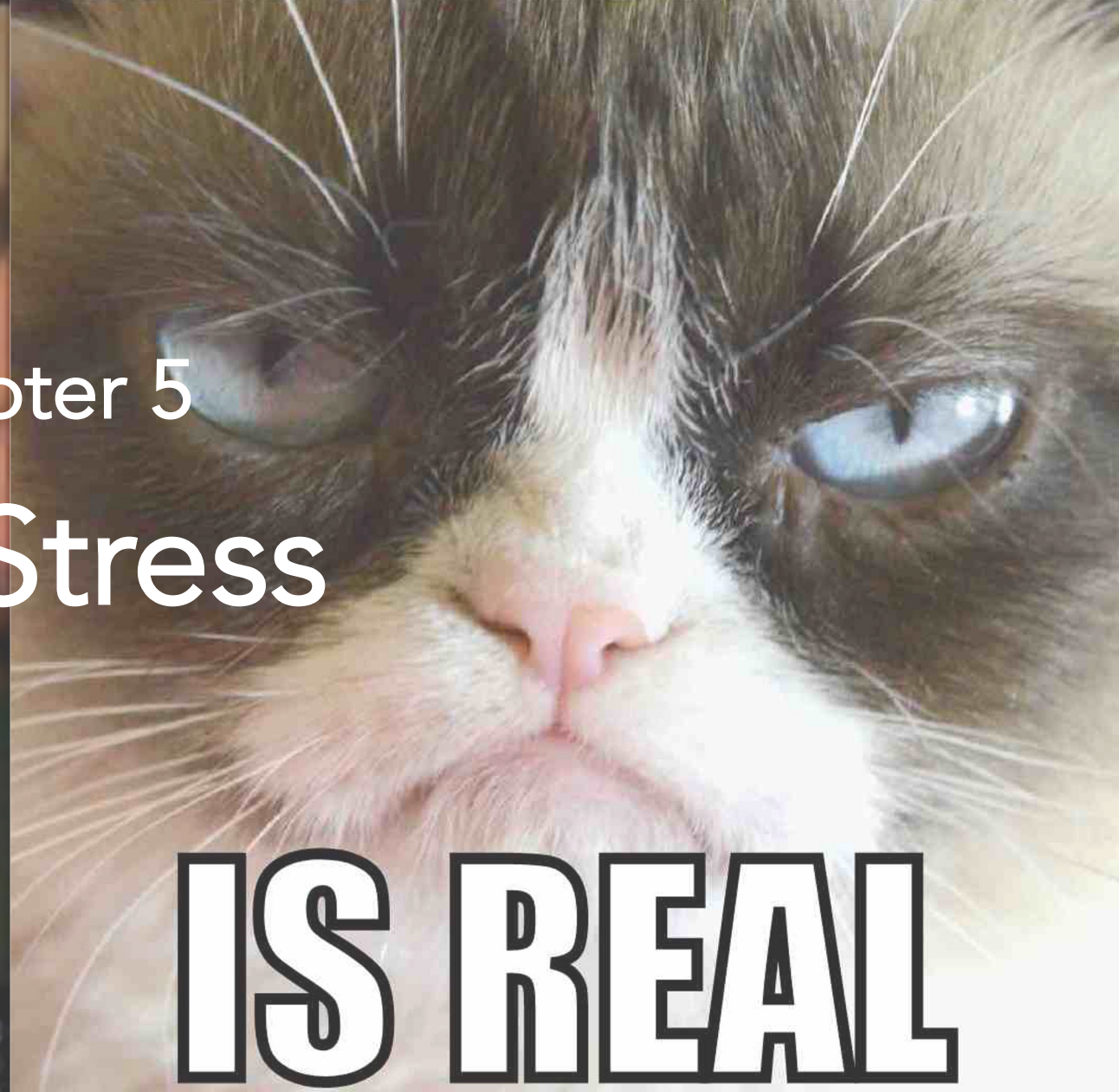
WHEN YOU'RE AT WORK THE WORK STRUGGL



Chapter 5

Job Stress

TRYING TO STAY POSITIVE



IS REAL



We say we feel 'stressed-out.'
What is stress, broadly speaking?



Stress

A psychological response to demands that possess certain stakes for the person and that tax or exceed the person's capacity or resources.



Overall, how big of a problem is stress
for U.S. workers?



NIOSH

(National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health;
federal government institute for occupational health research)

- 40 % of U.S. workers feel their jobs are “very stressful” or “extremely stressful”
- Linked to poor physical health (even injuries) and mental health

Job Stress:

The harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker.



Stress vs. Stressor vs. Strain

- We know

- What is a

- The demand
- In other

- What is “

- The negative
- capacity
- In other w

Where does “burnout” belong?

person's

period of time



Strains

- Prolonged stress leads to strains
- Strains are broadly in three main forms
 - **Physiological strains**
 - *Illness, blood pressure issues, heart disease, bodily pain, weak immune, etc.*
 - **Psychological strains**
 - *Anxiety, depression, irritability, reduced confidence, burnout, etc.*
 - **Behavioral strains**
 - *Drug abuse, teeth grinding, compulsive behaviors, over-eating, etc.*



Stress vs. Stressor vs. Strain : In other words,





Q. Jeremy is a customer service representative at a call center. He thought a job answering phones all day would be easy, and at first it seemed to be. Over time, however, the large daily call volume and number of aggressive callers made him edgy. He found himself being short with customers for no reason. Jeremy cannot recall since when it started, but he noticed that he's been having muscle spasms and he often gets headaches while at work. These symptoms that Jeremy has been experiencing are examples of:

- a) Personality quirks
- b) Stress reduction
- c) Stressors
- d) Strains
- e) Poor decision making



Is job stress a function of the “person?”

For example, some employees seem to be more stressed-out or stress-tolerant than others.

OR

Is job stress a function of the “environment?”

For example, employees in some industries/job categories or employees with some type of managers seem to be more stressed out than others.



You are correct. The answer is "both!"

Two main theories/approaches to job stress

- Transactional theory of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)
 - Person-driven perspective
- Job demand-resources theory (JD-R theory; Demerouti et al., 2001)
 - Environment-driven perspective



Transactional Theory of Stress

: Looking at stress from a “person-driven” perspective

Focus on perception and appraisal (evaluation).

- Primary appraisal:
 - Triggered when people first encounter stressors
 - Evaluate the significance and the meaning of the stressor
 - “Is it a threat to me?” “Is it burdening me?”
- Secondary appraisal:
 - Triggered when people realize the stressor is problematic
 - “What should/can I do?” “Can I handle this?” (coping)
- Reappraisal:
 - Reevaluation of the situation following the coping efforts

Are all stressors the same?
If different, how?



Correct, not all stressors are the same : Challenge and Hindrance Stressors

Building on the Transactional theory, researchers found two repeatedly showing patterns of stressors

- Challenge stressors
 - *VERY SIMPLY, good stressors*
- Hindrance stressors
 - *VERY SIMPLY, bad stressors*





Challenge Stressor

- Stressful demands that people tend to perceive as opportunities for learning, growth, and achievement.
 - Can be exhausting, while it also triggers positive emotions (pride/enthusiasm/devotion)
- When prolonged, leads to strains regardless



Hindrance Stressor

- Stressful demands that people tend to perceive as hindering their progress toward personal accomplishments or goal attainment
 - Detrimental or unnecessary for you
 - Often trigger negative emotional reactions (anxiety, anger)
- Closely related to negative consequences



Examples of Challenge Stressors?

Examples of Hindrance Stressors?



Stressors

Hindrance

Challenge

Work

- Role conflict
- Role ambiguity
- Role overload
- Daily hassles

- Time pressure
- Work complexity
- Work responsibility



Again, a challenge stressor is:
something that pushes you to become better

Time pressure

- A strong sense that the amount of time you have to do a task is not quite enough
 - *A 5-page homework due in 2 weeks vs. due in 4 months*

Work complexity

- The degree to which the requirements of the work (knowledge, skills) exceed the capabilities of the person who is responsible for performing the work
 - *A 5-page homework that requires you to just write your thought vs. requires you to find at least 10 pieces of evidence and use the concept of correlations*

Work responsibility

- The nature of the obligations that a person has toward others
 - *A 5-page group homework that requires you to play a leader role vs. lets you play a loafer role*



A hindrance stressor is:
something that prevents you from achieving goals (unnecessary burden)

Role conflict

- Conflicting expectations that other people have of you
 - *A call center employee expected to be thorough in answering the customers' question; while also expected to spend as little time as possible with each caller*

Role ambiguity

- A lack of information about what needs to be done in the role
 - *A manager telling the employees to get the project report done soon vs. by March 20th*

Role overload

- When the number of demanding roles a person holds is so high that the person simply cannot perform some or all of the roles effectively
 - *A manager expected to perform well in the Marketing department vs. in the Marketing AND Sales department*



Are job-related stressors the only ones that contribute to employees' stress-responses?



		Stressors	
		Hindrance	Challenge
Work	Nonwork	• Role conflict • Role ambiguity • Role overload • Daily hassles	• Time pressure • Work complexity • Work responsibility
		• Work–family conflict • Negative life events • Financial uncertainty	• Family time demands • Personal development • Positive life events



Nonwork Challenge Stressors

Family time demands

- The time that a person commits to participate in family activities and responsibilities
 - *Attending social events, family travel, hosting parties, etc.*

Personal development

- Something that may be challenging but still challenges you to experience a sense of self-improvement
 - *Seeking extra educational opportunities, music lessons, hobby, volunteer, etc.*

Positive life events

- Something that requires a lot of time and effort but still rewarding
 - *Marriage, new family member, graduation, etc.*



Nonwork Hindrance Stressors

Work-family conflict

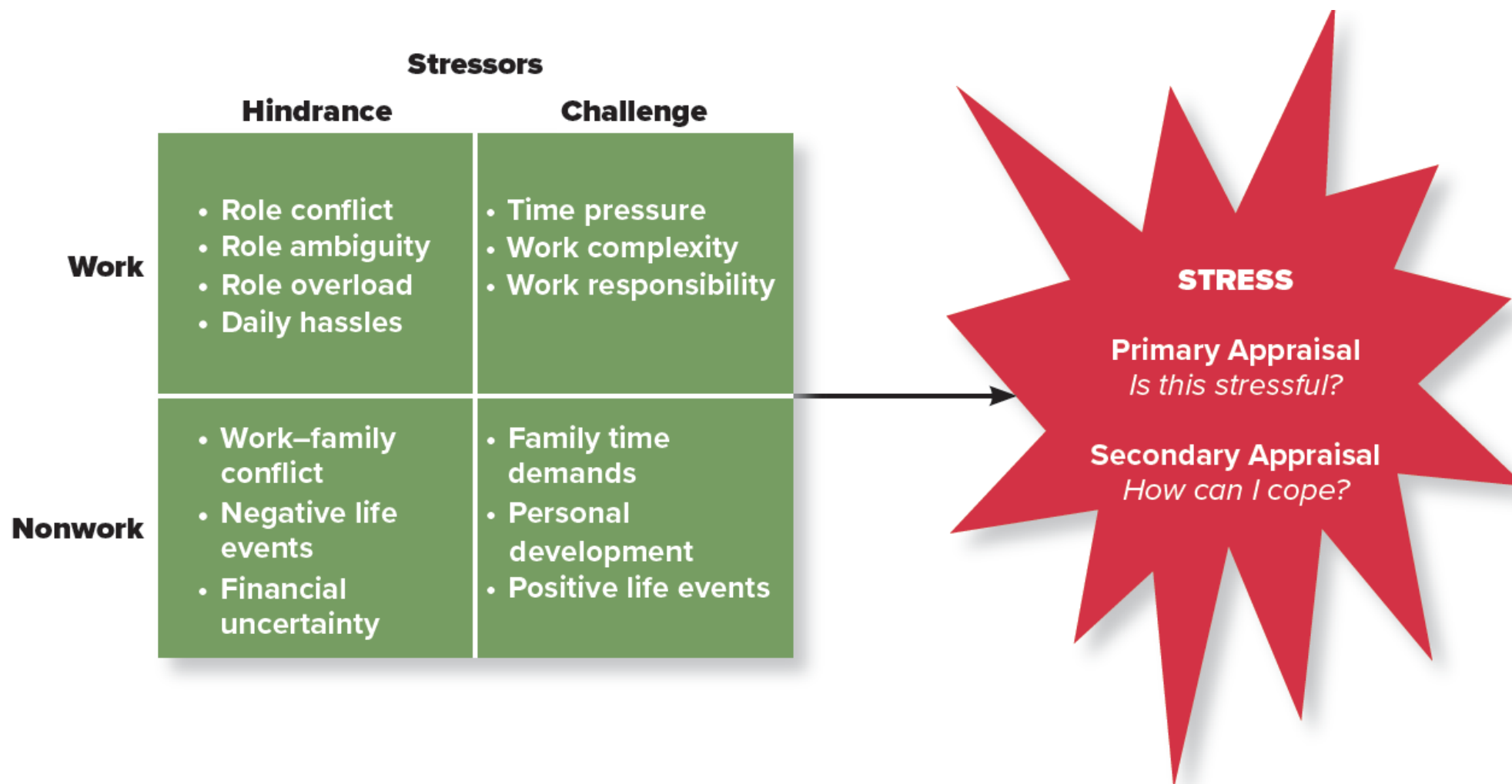
- The demands of a work role hinder the fulfillment of the demands of a family role (and/or vice versa)
 - *Job stress affecting role as a good mother and a wife; Family stress affecting role as a good employee*

Negative life events

- Something that requires a lot of time and effort and is not leading to development
 - *Divorce, personal illness, etc.*

Financial uncertainty

- Conditions that create uncertainties/insecurities with regard to the loss of livelihood, savings, or the ability to pay expenses
 - *2020-2021 a good example*





Q. Which of the following is correct about Transactional Theory of Stress?

- a) Primary appraisal is when employees ask questions such as: "How can I handle this situation?"
- b) Secondary appraisal is when employees ask questions such as: "Is this task burdening me?"
- c) Secondary appraisal is closely associated with coping
- d) The theory explains why employees feel happy when they perceive procedural justice from their manager
- e) The theory explains why some employees are more proactive than others



True/False

Employees have stress responses due to *work-related stressors*, but not due to *non-work stressors*.

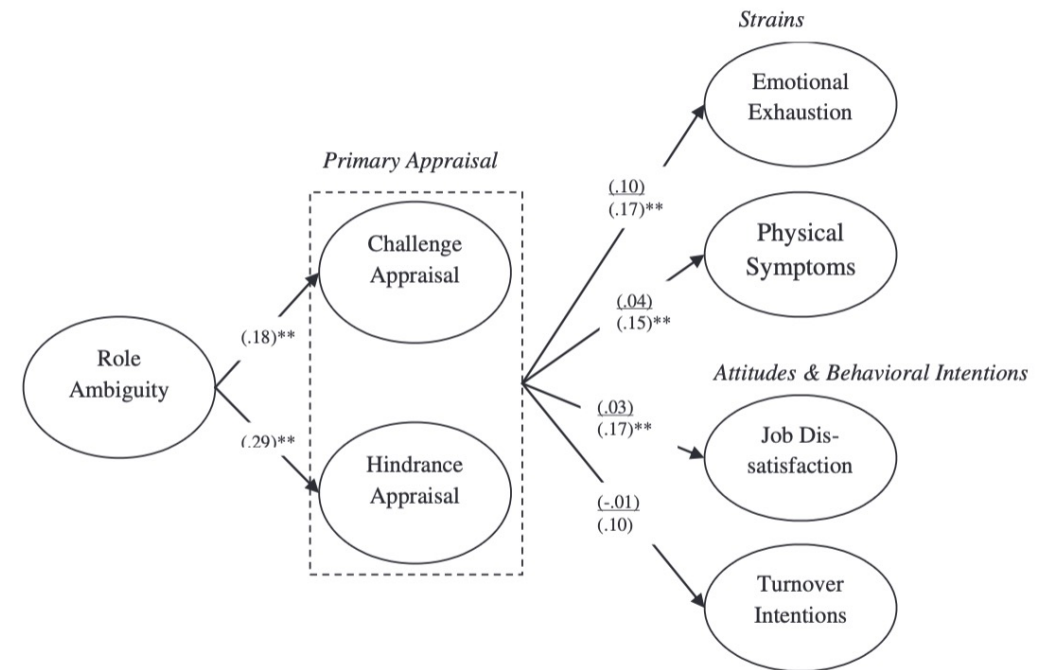
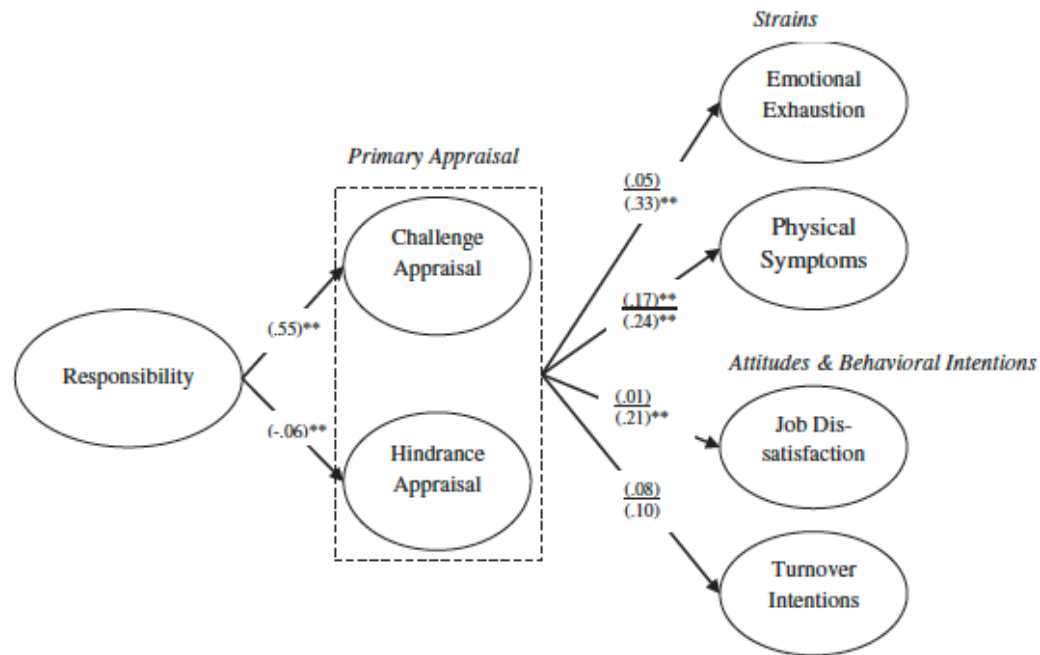


To summarize the Transactional theory of stress:

- Stressors are typically present in two main forms:
 - **Challenge and hindrance stressors**
- Upon encountering the stressors, employees engage in 'appraisals'
 - **Primary appraisal**: "Is this stressful?" If yes, move on to the secondary appraisal
 - **Secondary appraisal**: "How can I cope?"
 - **Reappraisal**: "Have I been able to cope? Did I handle it OK?"
- What's important is the "people" and "how they evaluate" the stressful events
- Challenge stressors also lead to strains when prolonged



**But remember,
just because a stressor is typically “hindrance” doesn’t mean
it can’t also be “challenge”**

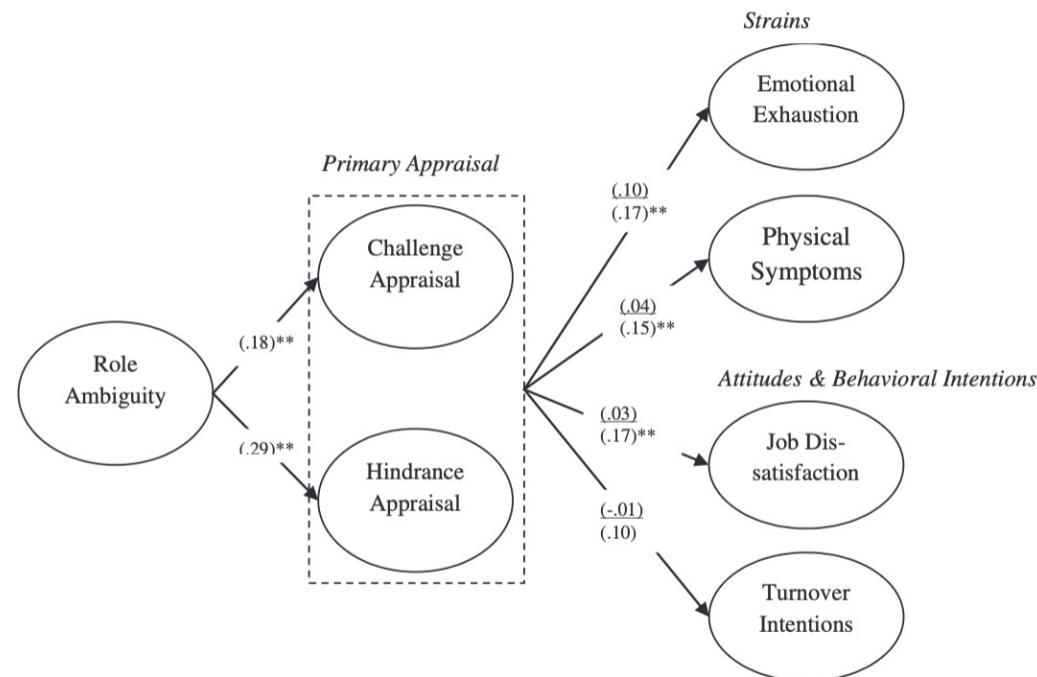




In the Webster et al. (2011) article, we examined evidence suggesting that dichotomous distinction between challenge stressors vs. hindrance stressors may not be appropriate.

Based on the Figure below (extracted from Webster et al., 2011), Jennie concluded the following:

“Role ambiguity, which is typically considered a hindrance stressor, can come across as both a challenge stressor and/or a hindrance stressor, depending on how individuals interpret it.” Is this a plausible interpretation? Why?





Are some jobs more stressful (stress-inducing) than other jobs?



LEAST STRESSFUL JOBS	STRESS LEVEL	MOST STRESSFUL JOBS	STRESS LEVEL
1. Tenured University Professor	5.03	143. Elementary School Teacher	27.37
2. Audiologist	6.33	148. Management Consultant	28.24
3. Medical Records Technician	7.48	150. Air Traffic Controller	28.58
4. Jeweler	8.10	154. Surgeon	28.90
8. Librarian	10.61	163. Construction Foreman	30.92
14. Software Engineer	12.13	166. Lumberjack	32.00
18. Computer Service Technician	12.64	172. Attorney	36.40
24. Occupational Therapist	13.14	175. Sales Representative	36.95
29. Chiropractor	13.55	179. Real Estate Agent	38.57
30. Actuary	14.09	180. Social Media Manager	38.60
35. Multimedia Artist	14.40	183. Stockbroker	39.97
39. Hair Stylist	14.59	185. Advertising Account Executive	43.24
40. Meteorologist	14.65	189. Taxi Driver	46.18
42. Loan Officer	14.73	191. Senior Corporate Executive	47.55
47. Biologist	15.10	194. Event Coordinator	49.73
50. Optician	15.57	195. Police Officer	50.81
53. Veterinarian	15.83	196. Airline Pilot	59.12
63. Chemist	17.00	198. Newspaper Reporter	69.67
74. Sustainability Manager	18.50	199. Firefighter	71.64
84. Accountant	19.85	200. Enlisted Military Personnel	74.83

Note: The stress level score is calculated by summing points in 10 categories: deadlines, working in the public eye, competitiveness, physical demands, environmental conditions, hazards, own life at risk, another's life at risk, public encounters, and employment change.

Source: Adapted from L. Krantz and T. Lee. "The Jobs Rated Almanac" (Lake Geneva, WI: iFocus Books, 2015). The stress level score is calculated by summing points in 10 categories: deadlines, working in the public eye, competitiveness, physical demands, environmental conditions, hazards, own life at risk, another's life at risk, public encounters, and employment change.



Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) theory

:Looking at stress from an “environment-driven” perspective

Under JD-R view, all work-related components can fall under two main categories:

- **Job demands**

- Job-related characteristics that require significant and sustained psychological, physical, or social effort
- Generally associated with NEGATIVE outcomes (job strains, low well-being, and low performance)

- **Job resources**

- Job-related characteristics that have potential to help with goal achievement
- Generally buffers the burdening effect of job demands

In short, under the JD-R framework, job demands lead to depletion of energy, whereas job resources reinforce motivation



Examples of job demands?

Examples of job resources?

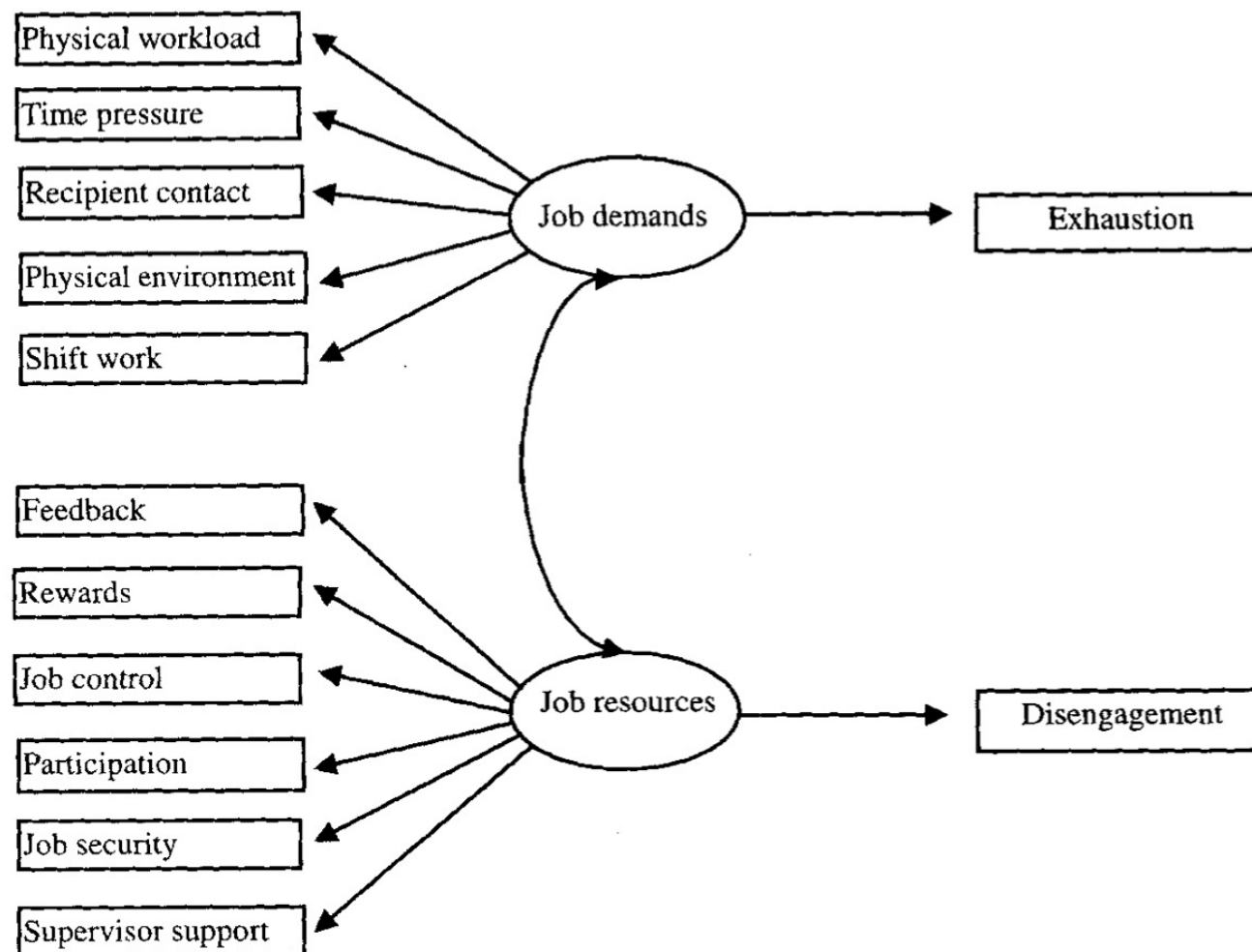


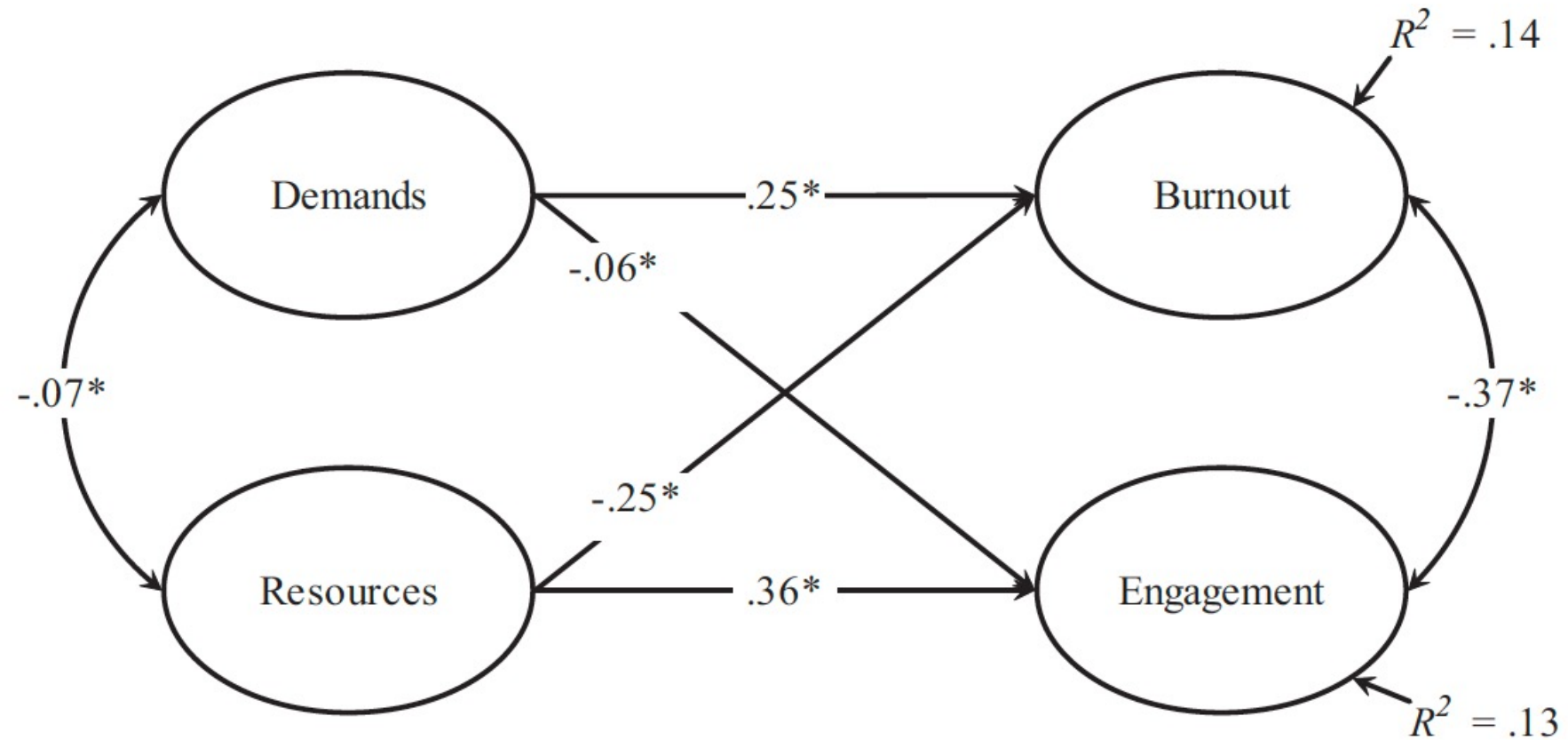
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Let's revisit this table.
Is there a noticeable pattern between
"stressful jobs and less stressful jobs"
in terms of job demands ?



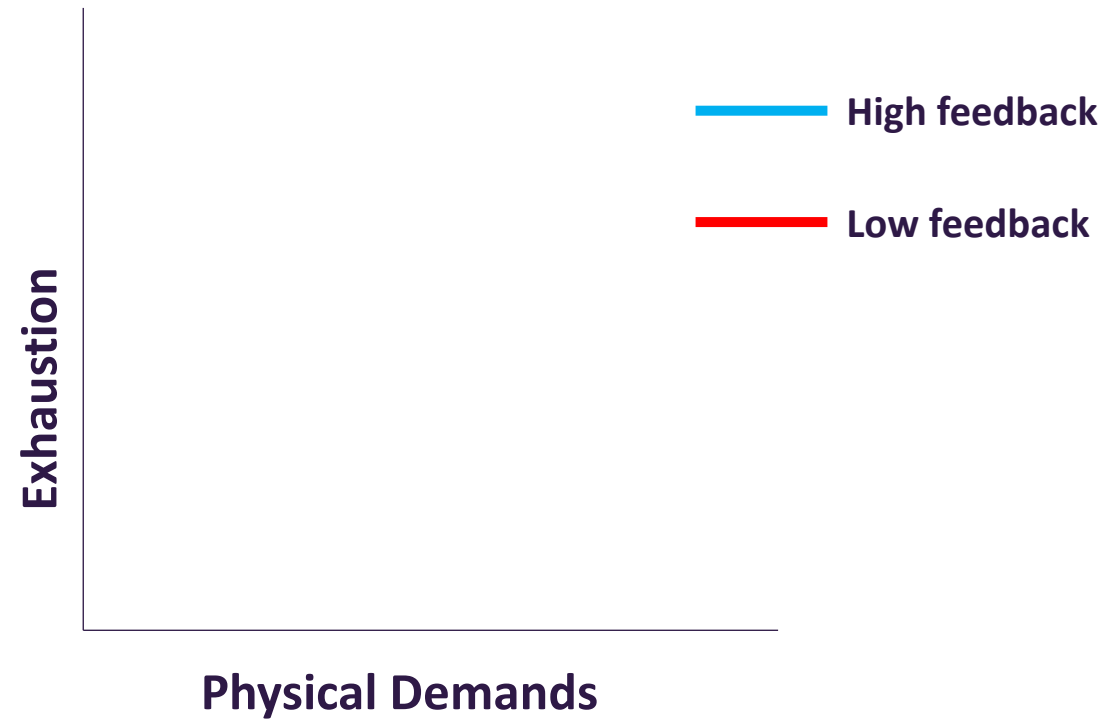
Example of job demands/resources







The buffering effect of job resources





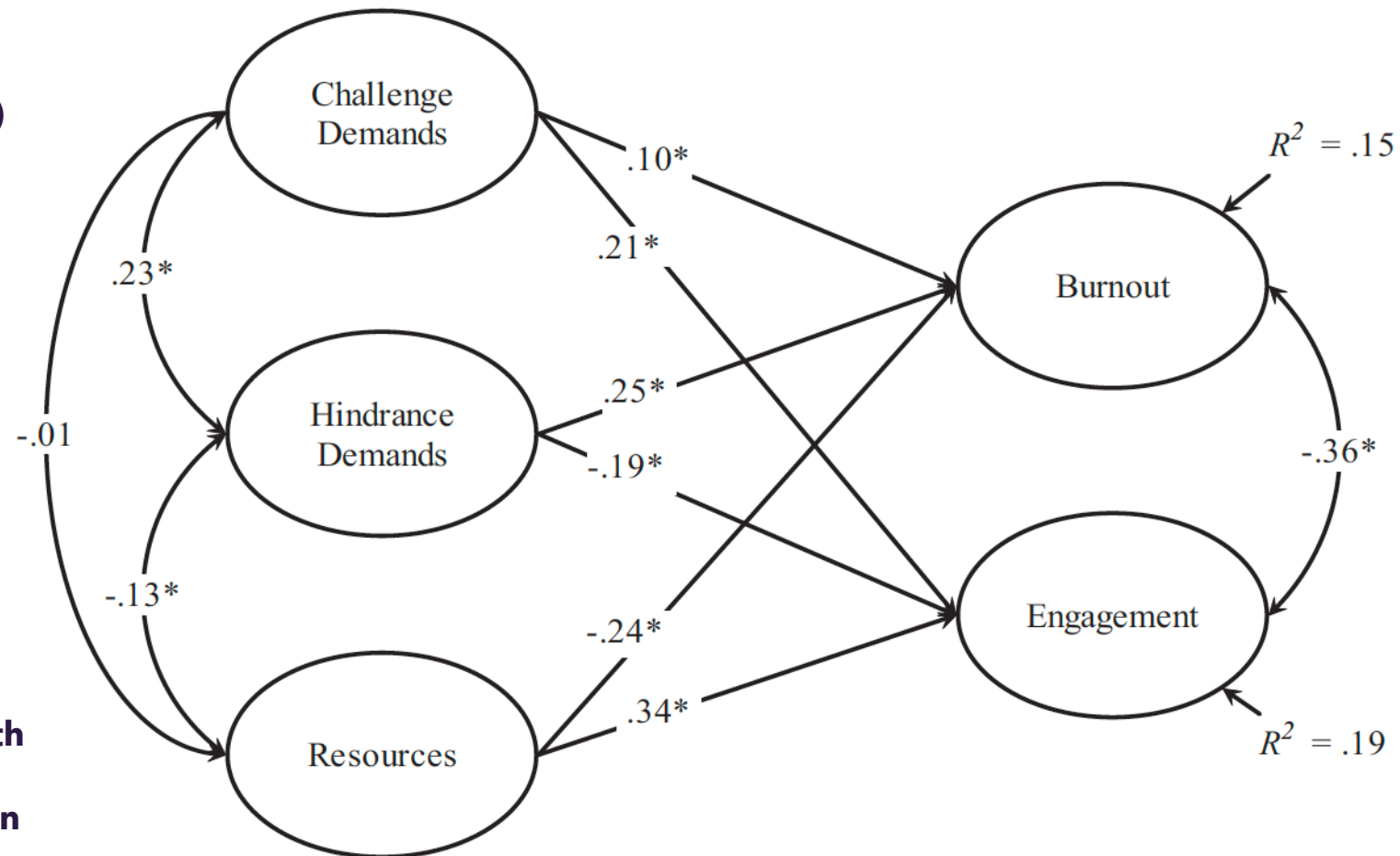
Researchers have attempted to combine the two separate frameworks:
“challenge-hindrance stressors” (from transactional theory) and
“job resource-demands” (from JD-R theory)



- **Job responsibility**
- **Time urgency (pressure)**
- **Workload**

- **Administrative hassles**
- **Emotional conflict**
- **Organizational politics**
- **Role conflict**
- **Role overload**

- **Autonomy**
- **Feedback**
- **Opportunities for growth**
- **Positive work climate**
- **Rewards and recognition**
- **Social support**
- **Job variety ...**





Coping

The behaviors and thoughts that people use to manage both stressful demands.

Broadly, coping strategies depend on **"the people" and the "circumstances."**

2 main dimensions to remember

- **Method of coping (behavioral and cognitive)**
- **Focus of coping (problem and emotion)**



Coping Strategies

Method of coping

- **Behavioral coping**

- Physical activities that are used to deal with a stressful situation
 - Faced with "time pressure," coping by working faster

- **Cognitive coping**

- Thoughts that are involved in trying to deal with a stressful situation
 - Faced with "time pressure," coping by thinking about ways to finish the work *more efficiently*



Coping Strategies

Focus of coping

- **Problem-focused coping**

- Behaviors and cognitions intended to manage the stressful situation itself
 - Faced with "time pressure," coping by working faster or by thinking about strategies

- **Emotion-focused coping**

- Ways in which people manage their own emotional reactions to stressful demands
 - Faced with "time pressure," convincing yourself that it's not a big deal or leaving work for an hour to create distance from the stressor



Coping Strategies in the Workplace: **Method and Focus**

	PROBLEM-FOCUSED	EMOTION-FOCUSED
Behavioral Methods	• Working harder • Seeking assistance • Acquiring additional resources	• Engaging in alternative activities • Seeking support • Venting anger
Cognitive Methods	• Strategizing • Self-motivating • Changing priorities	• Avoiding, distancing, and ignoring • Looking for the positive in the negative • Reappraising



Summary of coping using the example of time pressure

- 1) When you engage in Behavioral Coping, **you cope by doing.**
- 2) When you engage in Cognitive Coping, **you cope by thinking.**
- 3) When you engage in Problem-focused Coping, **you cope by focusing on how to resolve.**
- 4) When you engage in Emotion-focused Coping, **you cope by focusing on emotion management.**



Q. Jeremiah attempts to address the stress that he experiences due to time pressure by working harder and seeking assistance in devising a strategy for accomplishing the work more efficiently. In the example, Jeremiah uses:

- a) cognitive coping
- b) problem-focused coping
- c) organizational coping
- d) authentic coping
- e) emotion-focused coping

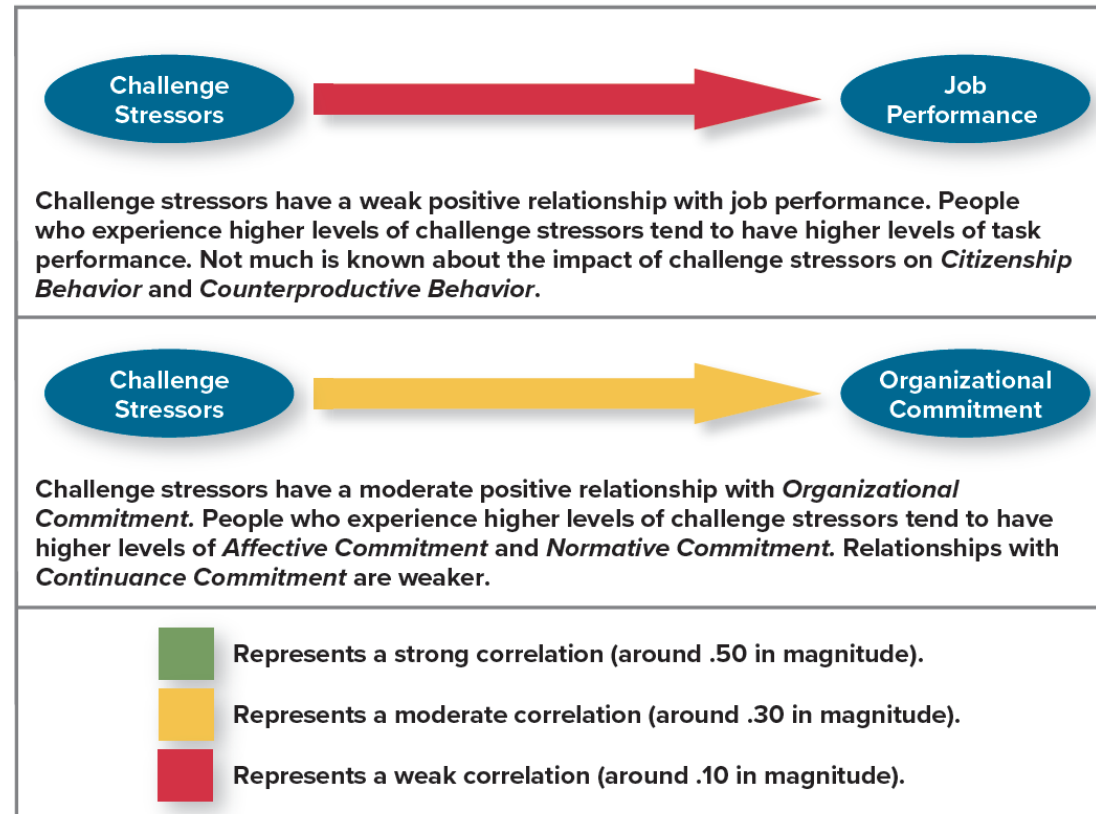


What employee coping strategies do you think managers tend to prefer?

Can you confidently say one is more effective than the other?

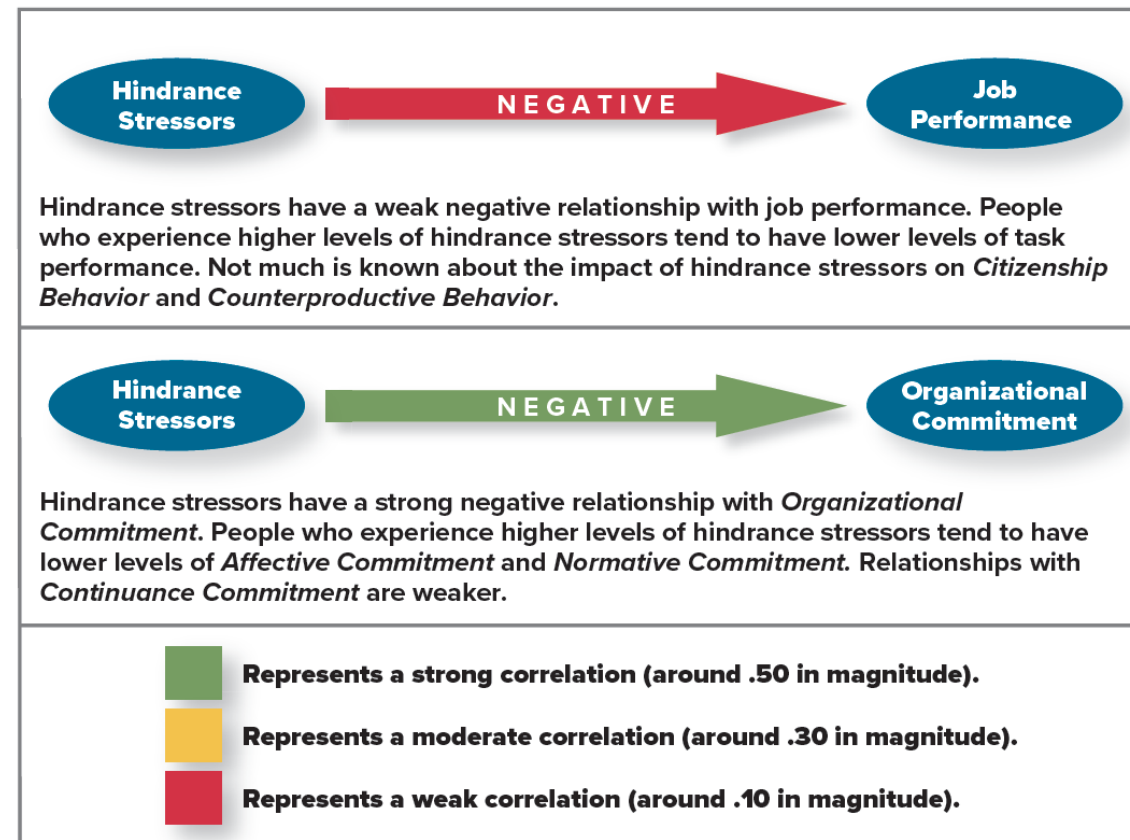


Challenge Stressors and Company's Profitability





Hindrance Stressors and Company's Profitability





In conclusion:

- Both challenge stressors and hindrance stressors are relatively _____ related to *job performance*.
- Both challenge stressors and hindrance stressors are relatively _____ related to *commitment*.
 - Challenge stressors are _____ related to job performance/commitment.
 - Hindrance stressors are _____ related to job performance/commitment.