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Examination of the instantaneous relationship between perceptions of workload on emotions in the context of a longitudinal study.

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Abstract

The overall aim of this research thesis was to explore the instantaneous relationship between perceptions of workload employees experience on a daily basis in the working environment and emotions they may be experiencing over a period of time in the context of a longitudinal study. This may seem as an expected relationship, as emotions form part of basic human anatomy, and are often dictated by daily activities. It is crucial to understand this process as a dynamic process hence the need to assess the relationship over a period of time, instead of in a cross-sectional nature. In doing so the study aimed to understand the concepts of workload and emotions as found in the context of various literatures. An understanding was gained of the concepts of workload and emotion that would allow the current study to find a foundation for a better investigation and exploration. The study was performed in a longitudinal manner, which assisted in accommodating the dynamic relationship presented by the variables at hand.

The study was conducted online via a survey engine, where the instruments were administered to the sample collected, over a three week period on alternated days, three times a day. The instruments used consisted of a biographical questionnaire, a workload questionnaire comprised of selection and open ended questions and the single item Affect Grid to measure emotions along with open ended questions. A final sample of 60 participants was collected, consisting of 26 females and 34 men.

The results of this study showed for the emotion arousal, time of day was significant. The study identified that the afternoon period is when the arousal was at its highest, thus participants felt most aroused towards this time of day. Workload also had no significant influence on the emotion arousal. The results also showed that for the emotion pleasure, workload had a significant influence; however pleasure had no significance to the time of day