

## **Meta self-efficacy: its role in enhancing work self-efficacy and occupational well-being in young employees.**

The age range between 18 and 30 years old is often called early adulthood. This period is associated with significant life changes, such as the beginning of a professional career. Various sources of stress at work (called job demands) can lead to mental health issues, including burnout. Research shows that young employees face many potential job demands (e.g., job insecurity or interpersonal conflicts). Moreover, contemporary changes in the workplace may lead to even more such demands. In order for young adults to effectively cope with job demands, organizational changes are needed. However, these changes often occur slowly. Therefore, it is also important to equip young employees with personal psychological resources that can help them cope with difficulties.

One such personal resource is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy beliefs refer to how confident one is in handling specific tasks or situations. For example, an individual might have high self-efficacy in resolving conflicts ("*I handle conflicts with colleagues well*") but low self-efficacy regarding IT transformations ("*I struggle with learning new IT systems at work*"). Countless types of self-efficacy could be enhanced to help employees cope with job demands. Thus, this project proposes a different approach: the concept of meta self-efficacy. *Meta self-efficacy* is the general ability to enhance one's self-efficacy beliefs in the context of various challenges by utilizing the four sources of self-efficacy identified by Bandura (1995): (1) past achievements, (2) observing others, (3) persuasion, and (4) emotional and physiological states.

This project plans to conduct three studies. In the first study, I will develop a questionnaire to measure meta self-efficacy, allowing for a reliable assessment of this psychological resource. In the second study, I will conduct focus groups with young employees to discuss their work-related stressors, meta self-efficacy beliefs, and their needs regarding an online psychological program. The third study will be a so-called *randomized controlled trial*. Based on the results of the previous two studies, I will create an online psychological program aimed at strengthening meta self-efficacy. I will then invite 600 young employees to participate, who will be randomly assigned to either the experimental group (with access to the psychological program) or the control group (placebo program). I will measure which group shows higher levels of work self-efficacy, occupational well-being, as well as meta self-efficacy immediately after the program and in follow-up measurements (after 3 and 6 months). I expect that the experimental group, with access to the psychological program, will show improvements both immediately after the program and in follow-up measurements compared to the control group.

As a result, the project aims to create a reliable tool for measuring the construct of meta self-efficacy, provide insights into meta self-efficacy and occupational well-being of young employees, and test the efficacy of an intervention based on supporting meta self-efficacy. This knowledge is particularly useful in searching for ways to support groups, such as young employees, who face complex stressors and therefore would benefit from universal interventions strengthening their personal resources.