

The Experience of O*Net Work Experiences as Demands and Resources



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Introduction

The major objective of this project is to document whether job characteristics (from O*NET) should be interpreted as possibly vacillating between resources and demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). We further present descriptive information regarding which job characteristics are deemed the strongest as well as most variable resources and demands across jobs and by type of employee (knowledge or skill worker classification).

Hypothesis 1: Job characteristics differ in variability/stability regarding subjective worker perception as a demand or resource.

Hypothesis 2: Job characteristics are not uniquely categorized as a resource or demand, but rather, some job characteristics are rated highly as both a resource and a demand.

Hypothesis 3a-c: Some of the variability in evaluation as (a) resources, (b) challenge demands, and (c) hindrance demands may be attributable to the type of work being done.

Methods

Participants & Procedure

- 568 respondents, 13.57% had been in their referent job less than 6 months, 19.20% between 6 months and a year, 49.12% between one and five years, 13.27% between 5 and 10 years, and 4.87% more than 10 years.
- Ages ranged from 18 to 65 with an average of 28.18 years old (SD = 7.53).
- Gender: female (52.58%) or male (46.83%).
- Job classifications: International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) via the package **labourR** (Kouretsis, 2020), and further categorized into “knowledge” (n = 320) versus “skilled” (n = 214) occupations with knowledge workers being identified via ISCO classifications of: 1) professionals, and 2) managers.

The data for this study were collected through Prolific sample, 18 or older and holding a full-time or part-time job. Participants were asked to think about their primary job while answering the survey, and upon completion each participant was compensated in the amount of six US dollars.

Materials

We used 98 statements taken directly from O*NET’s “activity” and “context” classifications. Each of the 98 descriptors has potentially unique response categories, but scaling was

consistently 1 (low) to 5 (high). Subsequent to these self-evaluations, respondents were asked to rate elements in terms of 1) ...this aspect of your job is a resource that can be functional in achieving work goals, reduce job demands, or stimulate personal growth/development, 2) ...this aspect of your job is a challenge that can promote mastery, personal growth, or future gains, and 3) ...this aspect of your job is a hindrance that can inhibit personal growth, learning, and work goal attainment.

Results

H1: Resources and challenges are agreed upon (range of lowest 10 resource SDs is 0.70-0.88; challenge 0.79-0.87). Hindrances varied more: SDs 1.32-1.41, providing support for H1.

H2: There is some overlap between the highest rated resource and job challenge categories (7 of 10 of the highest rated resources and challenge demands across workers were shared) We do not see such a pattern regarding hindrance stressors, generally suggesting support for H2.

H3: There is overlap between those reported by knowledge and skilled workers. Of the top 10, 8 of the challenge demands, 9 of the hindrance demands, and 7 of the resources overlapped by both knowledge and skilled workers. Independent-samples t-tests revealed the top 3 resources and challenge demands were rated higher by skilled workers, whereas the top 2 hindrance demands were rated higher by knowledge workers. In sum, these results suggest partial support for H3a-c.

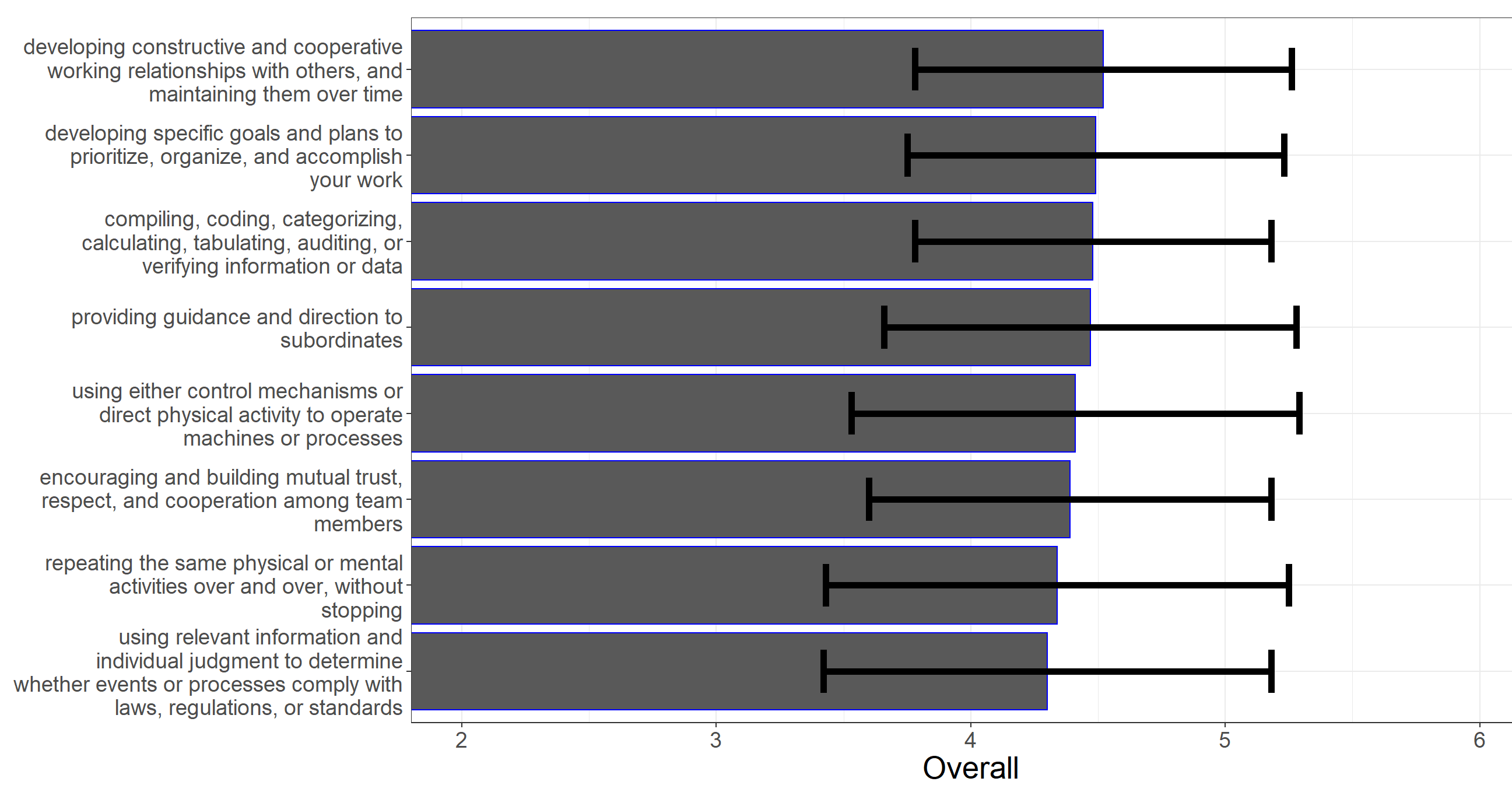


Figure 1: Overall Top 8 Resources

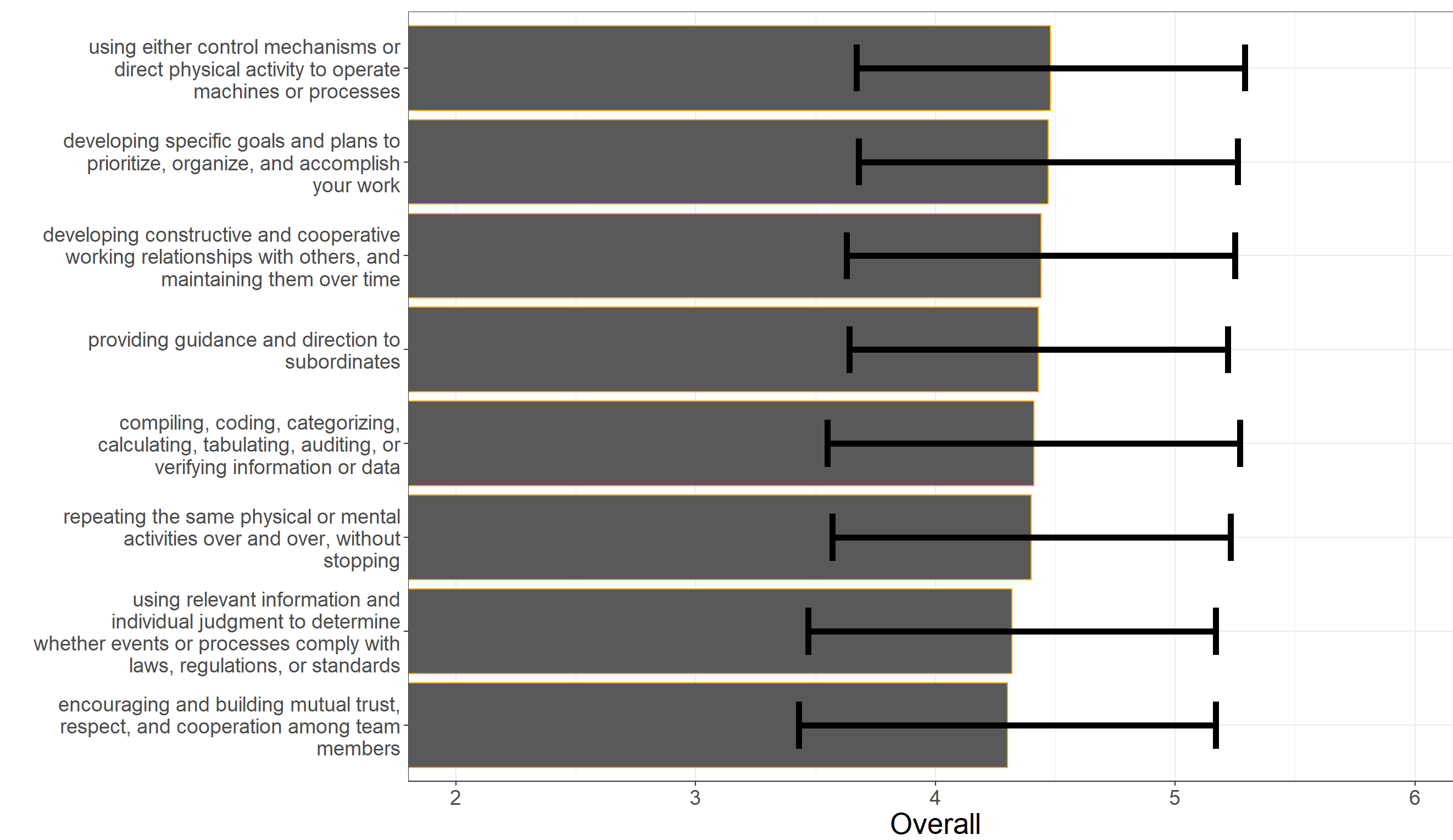


Figure 2: Overall Top 8 Challenge Demands

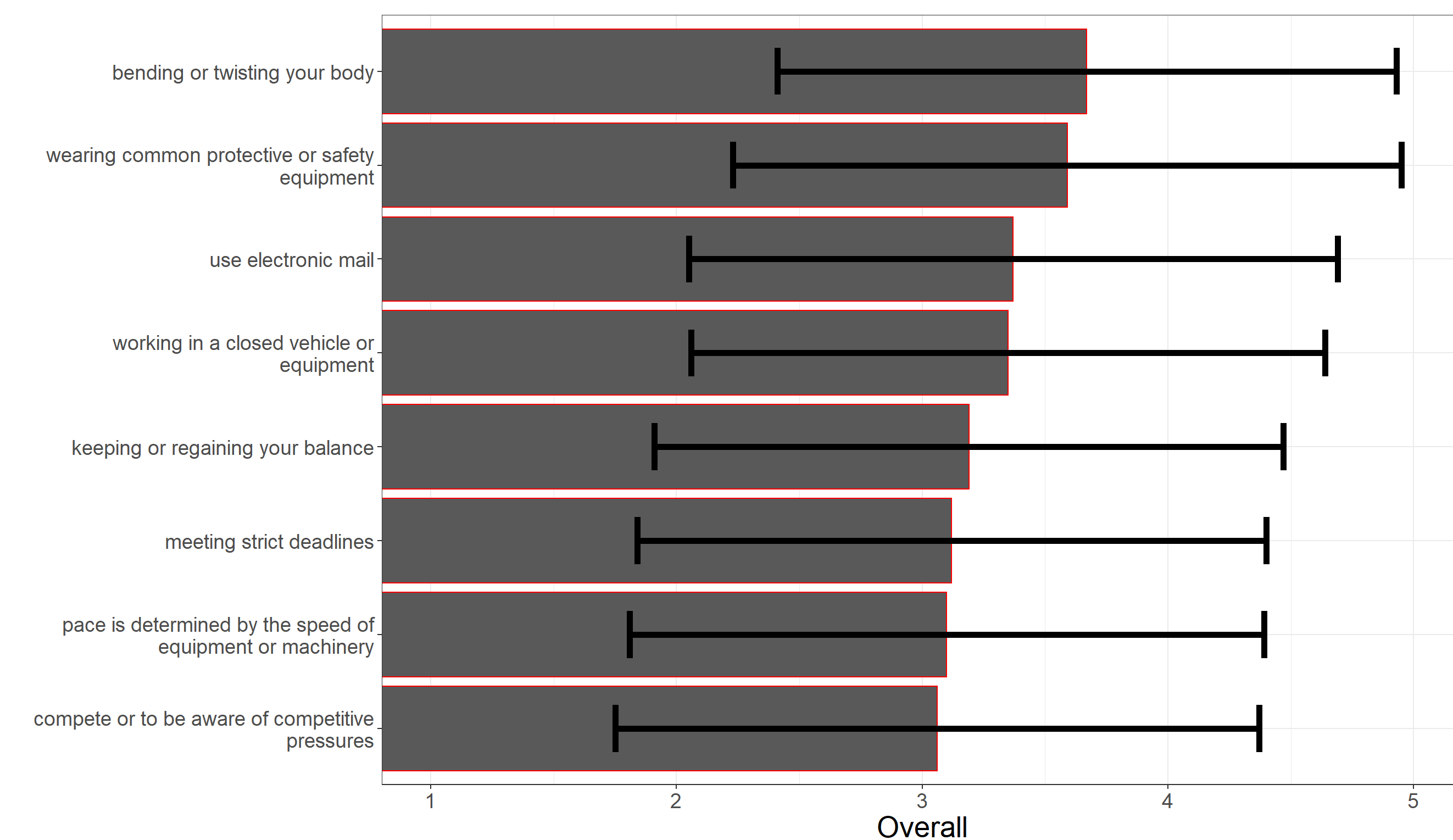


Figure 3: Overall Top 8 Hindrance Demands

Discussion

The findings generally suggest there is greater consensus/less variability regarding ratings of job characteristics deemed resources and challenge demands, but much greater variability in those characteristics rated as hindrances. There was considerable overlap in the top 10 resources that emerged from those classified as knowledge and skill workers.

These findings provide support for moving away from the a priori classification of job characteristics as either demands or resources. Moreover, demands should be further delineated as challenges or hindrances. This suggests that overcoming or managing challenge demands may serve the same purpose as a resource, such as increasing motivation and engagement with their work. The overlap between the classification of resources suggests that there might be job characteristics that universally serve as resources to varying degrees depending on the type of work.

