



Call for Papers for a Special Issue
“Mental Health, Well-being, and Entrepreneurship”
Submission deadline: January 31, 2024

Guest Editors: Daniel Lerner, Ana Pérez-Luño, Ute Stephan, Johan Wiklund.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TOPIC

Entrepreneurship is an important driver of economic activity, change, and well-being. Globally, there are worldwide ambitions to “promote well-being for all at all ages” (United Nations, Sustainable Development Goal #3) and to track well-being in assessing a nation’s level of development alongside economic performance (European Commission, 2016). Similarly, the interest in mental health and well-being in entrepreneurship is growing (Stephan, 2018; Wiklund et al., 2019). This includes, among other issues, understanding entrepreneurship as a career choice for those with mental health conditions (e.g., Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity (ADHD)), as well as exploring entrepreneurship’s potential for both great stress and fulfilment, and thus for both mental illbeing and well-being. The Covid-19 pandemic, the current energy crisis, the rising cost of living, and armed conflict have further fueled such research interest: Entrepreneurial action in the face of adversity can help individuals and communities to safeguard their well-being and build resilience, while the challenges of crises have also highlighted how precarious entrepreneurs’ mental health and well-being is (Stephan, et al., 2022).

Well-being and ill-being (negative well-being) are anchored in different research traditions on the origins of health versus disease (Ryan & Deci, 2001; for entrepreneurship: Stephan, Rauch, & Hatak, 2022). For instance, in examining well-being at work, organizational behavior focuses on positive wellbeing and its motivational effects (Judge et al., 2017), whereas distress and health impairments are typical outcomes studied in occupational health (Ganster & Rosen, 2013), and mental disorders are the focus of clinical psychology and psychiatry (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

The parallel nature of these bodies of research is unfortunate, leading to siloed knowledge. We suggest that entrepreneurship has the potential to bridge and fuse these parallel traditions. Entrepreneurship is considered as relatively “extreme work” because it entails both richer wellbeing resources and more intense stressors than conventional employment (Baron, 2010; Rauch, Fink, & Hatak, 2018).

Considering positive and negative well-being simultaneously opens new avenues for empirical inquiry as well as theory building by providing a more systematic way to

consider psychological mechanisms and outcomes. Such work is well underway. For example, a recent review of the papers on entrepreneurship and well-being in *Journal of Business Venturing Insights* shows that the journal's first paper on the topic was published in 2016. After single papers in 2017 and 2018, an additional 20 papers have been published between 2019 and 2022. Similarly, a recent meta-analysis shows a rapidly accelerating publication trend with only 12 studies published before 2000 (1975 to 1999), 22 studies between 2000 and 2009, and 60 studies after 2010 (Stephan, Rauch & Hatak, 2022). Only 6% of the 94 studies in the meta-analysis assessed positive and negative well-being simultaneously.

Examining the research carried out to date, it is clear that scholars interested in well-being and entrepreneurship ask bold and interesting research questions. On the other hand, it is equally clear that research on well-being and illbeing develops in silos, and that often methodological rigor lags behind standards applied in fields more accustomed to examining well-being, such as clinical psychology, organizational behavior, and studies of occupational health.

THE NEED FOR A SPECIAL ISSUE WITHIN THE MANAGEMENT DOMAIN

For understandable reasons, hitherto most published work on entrepreneurship and well-being has prioritized interesting research questions and the development of theory that can help us understand the unique well-being challenges in entrepreneurship. Less emphasis has been placed on methodological rigor. To some extent, this focus signifies the management field more generally (cf. Hambrick, 2007), as illustrated by the recent editorial announcing the winners of the AMJ 2021 Best Paper Award and 2022 Research Impact Award.

We believe the time is ripe for recalibrating this trajectory by instead showcasing and discussing intriguing empirical findings derived with robust methods. That is the focus of this special issue.

In short, we seek high quality empirically rigorous papers on the topic. We also welcome conceptual papers that discuss how methodological rigor could be enhanced. Akin to papers in leading psychology journals, papers should be based on and discuss relevant extant research; yet rather than extensive theory and hypotheses, authors should focus conducting and communicating well-executed rigorous studies. (Authors unfamiliar with the approach and style of articles at leading psychology journals are encouraged to examine such for illustration). We also welcome papers that use abduction to explain novel patterns uncovered through rigorous analysis of quantitative data that a-priori hypotheses would not have predict.

Given the rapidly growing number of studies, authors are encouraged to consult:

- 1) recent editorials on the topic (e.g. Williamson et al., 2021; Gish et al, 2022);
- 2) recent review and research-agenda papers (e.g. Stephan 2018; Wiklund et al., 2019);
- 3) meta-analyses (e.g. Lerman, Munyon & Wiliams, 2021; Stephan, Rauch, & Hatak, 2022); and
- 4) recent and forthcoming studies in entrepreneurship journals, other journals, and research conference proceedings.

SAMPLE TOPICS

Examples of inspirational avenues to contribute to this special issue include, but are not limited to, the following:

Entrepreneurship well-being and ill-being

- Entrepreneurship is a uniquely flexible and adaptable work setting that individuals with mental health issues and disabilities can tailor to their needs (Wiklund et al., 2018; 2020). Considering concurrent wellbeing, illbeing, and entrepreneurial outcomes – specifically when/how/to what extent is entrepreneurship a good or poor career choice for those with mental health conditions (including ADHD, dyslexia, among others)?
- Do entrepreneurs with mental health issues help to increase workplace inclusion and diversity? Do they help to create a more inclusive society?
- Entrepreneurship is an ‘extreme’ work setting (e.g., Baron, 2010) with heightened responsibility, self-reliance, uncertainty, loneliness, and workload. How could research on the stresses of entrepreneurship help to design work for the future so that it allows individuals to flourish? How could entrepreneurs redesign their own work to minimize stresses? Does the stressful characteristics of entrepreneurship enhance or harm creativity? How might accelerators, funders and other stakeholders be able to support entrepreneurs in doing so?
- The well-being of entrepreneurs and strategic leaders can have positive spillovers on others and communities. Individuals who feel well are more likely to engage in prosocial actions, while those who are stressed are more likely to cut corners and behave unethically. This opens new insights on the micro-foundations of corporate social responsibility and social issues in management. Therefore, could the understanding of entrepreneurship and mental health/well-being help us to ‘create a better world together’?
- How can well-being and illbeing (e.g. distress) co-exist in entrepreneurship?
- How do physiological biomarkers align with positive and negative well-being? What additional insights do they offer?

The Wellbeing and Illbeing of Different Types of Entrepreneurs

- What are the relative well-being benefits and costs of different types of entrepreneurship? When and how do women, minorities, and those from low-status backgrounds experience high wellbeing in entrepreneurship? What wellbeing costs are associated with types of entrepreneurship typically conceived of as ‘valuable’ such as high-growth, innovative and opportunity entrepreneurship?

Contexts, Adversity and Entrepreneurs’ Mental Health and Well-being

- In which community, regional and country contexts do entrepreneurs thrive? Which contexts enable their well-being, and which are enabling individuals with mental health problems to engage in entrepreneurship?
- How can entrepreneurs achieve well-being in adverse context and during crisis?
- Can entrepreneurial action in the face of adversity help individuals and communities to safeguard their well-being and/or build resilience?

- Is entrepreneurs' mental health and well-being more precarious under crises contexts?
- Does current digitalization increase illbeing problems in entrepreneurship?
- How could entrepreneurs take advantage of digitalization to cope with the current context?

SUBMISSION PROCESS AND DEADLINES

The deadline for paper submission is January 31, 2024.

Completed papers should be submitted online at <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/brq>.

Please follow the manuscript submission guidelines for BRQ Business Research Quarterly at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/BRQ>.

Papers will be reviewed according to the BRQ double-blind review process.

Publication of the Special Issue is scheduled for January of 2025 (tentative).

We welcome informal enquiries on proposed topics and potential fit with Special Issue objectives. Please direct questions to the Guest Editors:

Daniel Lerner: daniel.lerner@ie.edu

Ana Pérez-Luño: anaperezluno@upo.es

Ute Stephan: ute.stephan@kcl.ac.uk

Johan Wiklund: jwiklund@syr.edu

REFERENCES

- American Psychiatric Association. 2013. American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5). American Psychiatric Association. <https://www.appi.org/products/dsm-manual-of-mental-disorders>.
- Baron, R. A. 2010. Job design and entrepreneurship: Why closer connections = mutual gains. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 31(2–3): 370–378.
- Bencsik, P., & Chuluun, T. 2021. Comparative well-being of the self-employed and paid employees in the USA. *Small Business Economics*, 56(1): 355–384.
- Cardon, M. S., Foo, M.-D., Shepherd, D. A., & Wiklund, J. 2012. Exploring the Heart: Entrepreneurial Emotion Is a Hot Topic. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 36(1): 1–10.
- European Commission. 2016. Beyond GDP: Measuring progress, true wealth, and well-being. http://ec.europa.eu/environment/beyond_gdp/index_en.html.
- Ganster, D. C., & Rosen, C. C. 2013. Work Stress and Employee Health: A Multidisciplinary Review. *Journal of Management*, 39(5): 1085–1122.

- Gish, J., Lerner, D., McKelvie, A., Wiklund, J. & van Witteloostuijn, A. (2022/forthcoming). Entrepreneurship as an auspicious context for mental health research. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, doi forthcoming.
- Hambrick, D. C. (2007). The Field of Management's Devotion to Theory: Too Much of a Good Thing? *The Academy of Management Journal*, 50(6), 1346–1352. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20159476>
- Judge, T. A., Weiss, H. M., Kammeyer-Mueller, J. D., & Hulin, C. L. 2017. Job attitudes, job satisfaction, and job affect: A century of continuity and of change. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 102(3): 356–374.
- Lerman M. P., Munyon T. P., Williams D. W. (2021). The (not so) dark side of entrepreneurship: A meta-analysis of the well-being and performance consequences of entrepreneurial stress. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, 15, 377–402.
- Rauch, A., Fink, M., & Hatak, I. 2018. Stress Processes: An Essential Ingredient in the Entrepreneurial Process. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 32(3): 340–357.
- Rauch, A., & Frese, M. 2007. Let's put the person back into entrepreneurship research: A meta-analysis on the relationship between business owners' personality traits, business creation, and success. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 16(4): 353–385.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. 2001. On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1): 141–166.
- Stephan, U. 2018. Entrepreneurs' Mental Health and Well-Being: A Review and Research Agenda. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 32(3): 290–322.
- Stephan, U., Rauch, A., & Hatak, I. 2022. Happy entrepreneurs? everywhere? A meta-analysis of entrepreneurship and wellbeing across institutional contexts. *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/10422587211072799>.
- Stephan, U., Zbierowski, P., Pérez-Luño, A., Wach, D., Wiklund, J., et al. 2022. Act or Wait-and-See? Adversity, Agility, and Entrepreneur Wellbeing across Countries during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10422587221104820>
- Wiklund, J., Hatak, I., Lerner, D. A., Verheul, I., Thurik, R., et al. 2020. Entrepreneurship, clinical psychology and mental health: an exciting and promising new field of research. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, amp.2019.0085.
- Wiklund, J., Hatak, I., Patzelt, H., & Shepherd, D. A. 2018. Mental Disorders in the Entrepreneurship Context: When being different can be an advantage. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 32(2): 182–206.
- Wiklund, J., Nikolaev, B., Shir, N., Foo, M.-D., & Bradley, S. 2019. Entrepreneurship and well-being: Past, present, and future. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 34(4): 579–588.

Williamson, A. J., Gish, J. J., & Stephan, U. 2021. Let's Focus on Solutions to Entrepreneurial Ill-Being! Recovery Interventions to Enhance Entrepreneurial Well-Being. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 45(6):1307-1338.