# Effectiveness of strengths use interventions in organizations:
# a pre-registered meta-analysis of controlled trials

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# **Objectives**

- Identify where we stand and where we are headed regarding the effectiveness of **strengths use interventions** in the **workplace**

- *RQ1:* Are strengths use interventions effective in enhancing personal strategies, personal resources, well-being, and performance?

- *RQ2/3:* Does the effectiveness of strengths use interventions vary as a function of the intervention type/length?

## Concepts



# Strengths ➡️ # Strengths use ⬅️ # Strengths use intervention

= trait-like individual characteristics that allow a person to perform at his/her personal best (Wood et al., 2011)
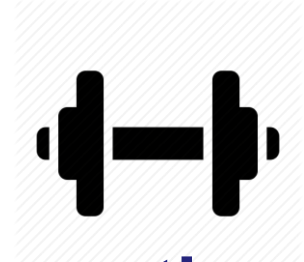
- e.g., curiosity, humor, perseverance

= the individuals' initiative to exercise his/her strengths more often at work (van Woerkom et al., 2016)

- individual strategy within the Job Demands-Resources theory

= process designed to
(1) identify
(2) develop
(3) use strengths
to increase well-being or other desirable outcomes (Meyers & van Woerkom, 2017

# Literature on strengths use + interventions

- **Strengths use interventions positively impact employees**

**(1) general well-being** (Quinlan et al., 2012; Miglianico et al., 2020) **(2) proactive individual strategies** (Bakker & van Wingerden, 2021; Kooij et al., 2017)
**(3) personal resources** (Littman-Ovadia et al., 2014; Pelaez et al., 2020b; van Woerkom & Meyers, 2019)
**(4) work engagement / workplace well-being** (Akkermans et al., 2015; Michel et al., 2021; van Dorseen-Boog et al., 2021)
**(5) performance** (Ghielen et al., 2018; Pang & Ruch, 2019; Pelaez et al., 2020a, 2020b)

- **Synthesis & literature review on strengths use interventions** (Miglianico et al., 2020) <u>BUT NO QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS + CORRELATIONAL STUDIES</u> => **gap the present meta-analysis addresses**

# Investigated variables – the "If", the "What", the "When", and the "Whom"?
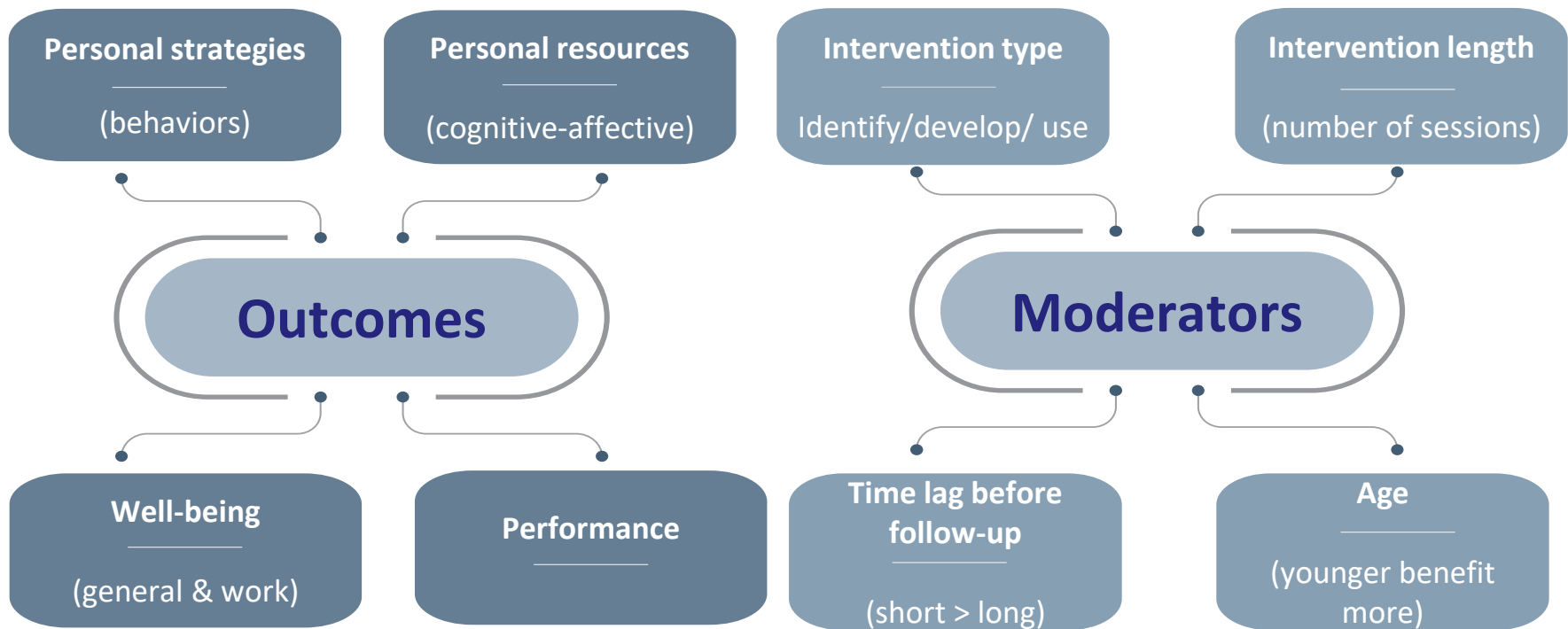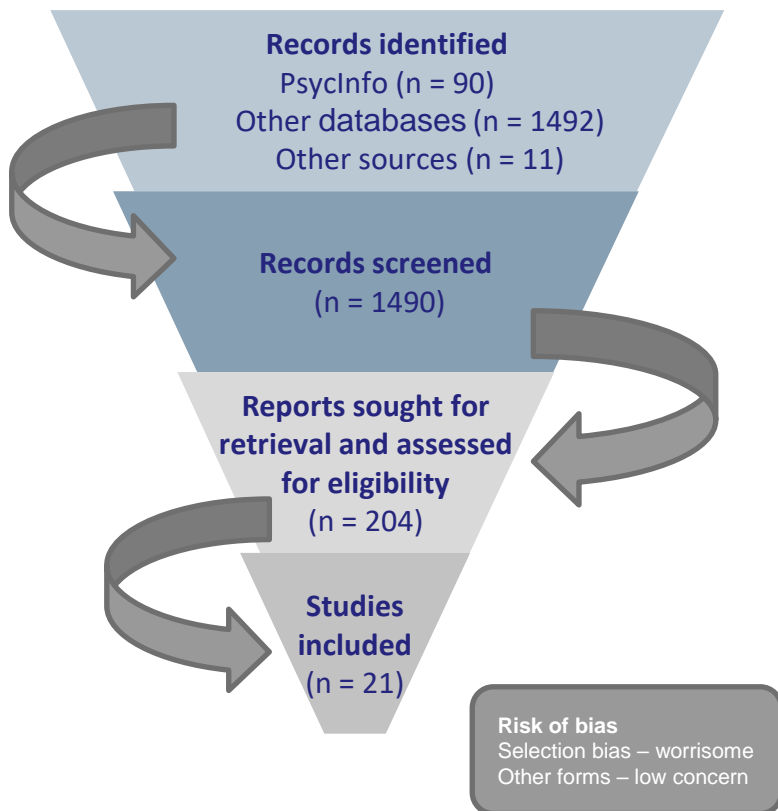
# Method

- ❑ **pre-registered**
  - PROSPERO database + PRISMA statement

- ❑ **information sources**
  - (1) electronic databases; (2) reference lists reviews; (3) special issues; (4) abstract volumes

- ❑ **Search strategies**
  - APA PsycInfo database + others (e.g., ProQuest; PubMed) / keywords: e.g., "personal strengths", "intervention", "workplace"

- ❑ **Standard selection / collection / bias assessment process**

# Eligibility criteria
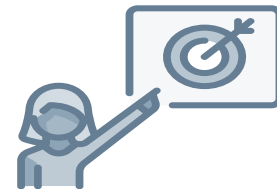
**01. Population**

Employees – part/full time

**02. Intervention**

Developed to identify, develop, use strengths in the workplace

**03. Comparison**

Passive (e.g., waitlist) or active (e.g., placebo)

**04. Outcome**

Strengths use/personal strategies, personal resources, well-being, performance

**05. Study type**

Experimental design (e.g., RCT) / quasi-experimental

# PRISMA flow

# Main characteristics

**Records identified**
PsycInfo (n = 90)
Other databases (n = 1492)
Other sources (n = 11)

**Records screened**
(n = 1490)

**Reports sought for retrieval and assessed for eligibility**
(n = 204)

**Studies included**
(n = 21)

**Risk of bias**
Selection bias – worrisome
Other forms – low concern

**Europe** ($k$ = 12)
**North America** ($k$ = 2)
**Australia** ($k$ = 3)

**Medical staff** (e.g., healthcare workers; $k$ = 2)
**Educational context** (e.g., teachers; $k$ = 2)
**Other industries** (e.g., shared services; $k$ = 7)
**Mixed industries** ($k$ = 7)

**Identification** ($k$ = 4)
**Identification & use** ($k$ = 2)
**Identification & development & use** ($k$ = 8)
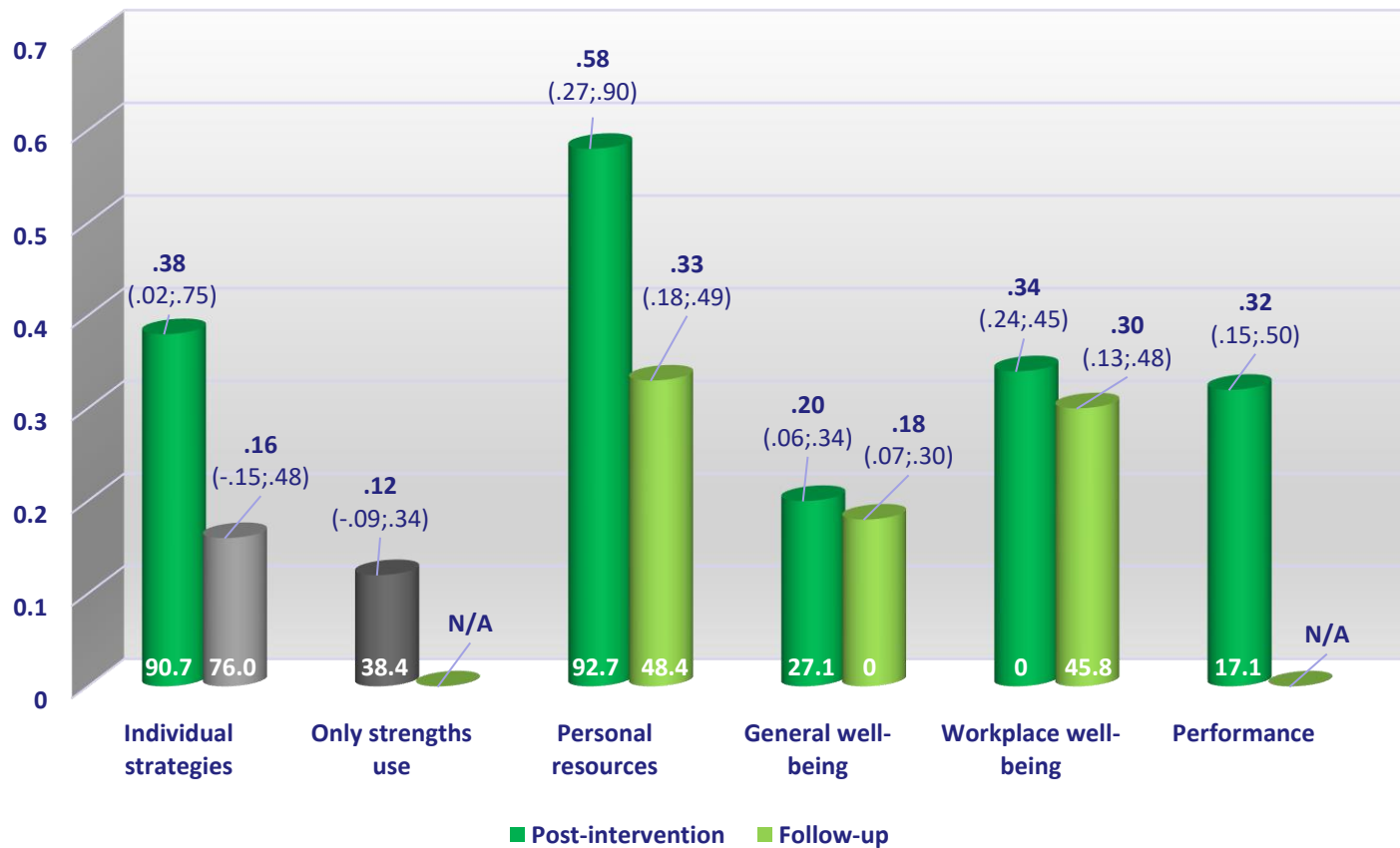
**One-on-one sessions** ($k$ = 8)
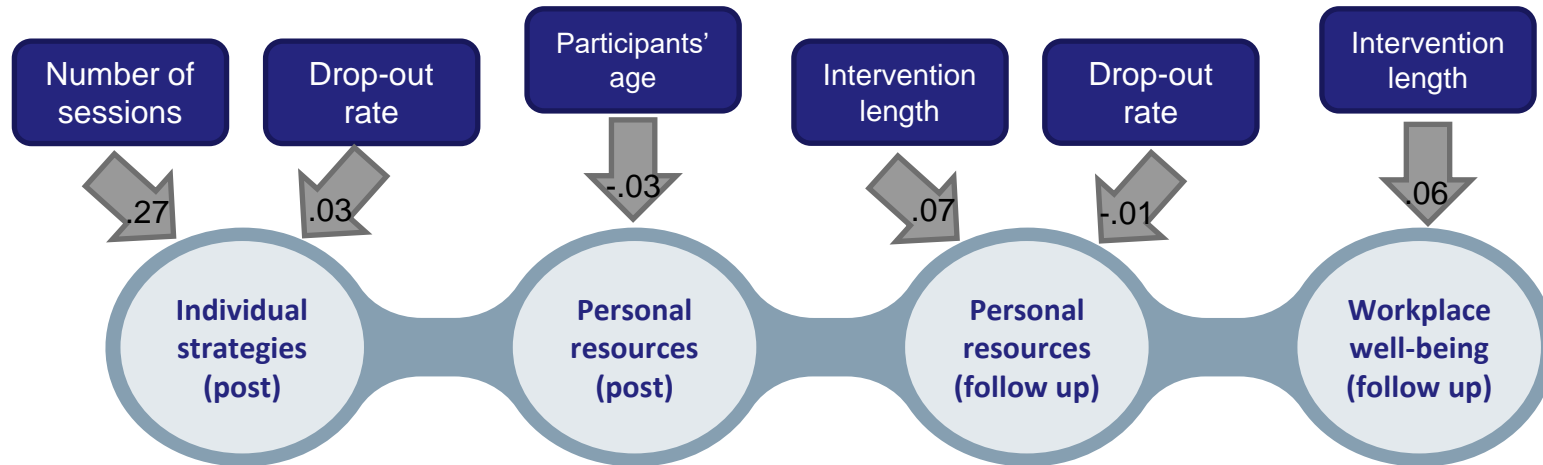**Group format** ($k$ = 7)
**Mixed** ($k$ = 4)

**Half-day (several hours) to 3 months**

# Results – main analyses



Chart showing Post-intervention (dark green) and Follow-up (light green) values across six categories.

| Category | Post-intervention | Follow-up |
|---|---|---|
| Individual strategies | .38 (.02;.75), 90.7 | .16 (-.15;.48), 76.0 |
| Only strengths use | .12 (-.09;.34), 38.4 | N/A |
| Personal resources | .58 (.27;.90), 92.7 | .33 (.18;.49), 48.4 |
| General well-being | .20 (.06;.34), 27.1 | .18 (.07;.30), 0 |
| Workplace well-being | .34 (.24;.45), 0 | .30 (.13;.48), 45.8 |
| Performance | .32 (.15;.50), 17.1 | N/A |

Legend: ■ Post-intervention ■ Follow-up

# Results – single-predictor meta-regression analyses

# Synthesis of findings and recommendations

## Main findings & implications

**(1) Strengths interventions are effective:**

- Enhance personal resources (aligns with JD-R)
- Provide additional individual strategies to ensure integration
- Expansive repertoire of positive emotions (well-being)
- Coaching-based interventions are best for increasing performance

**(2) Intervention aim** – identify = develop = use

**(3) Lengthy interventions + many sessions**

**(4) Focus on younger employees + personal factors** (JD-R theory)

## Limitations

- **Low number of studies**
- **High/unclear risk of bias for sequence generation**

## Future directions

- **How to achieve a larger effect?**
  - Increase the number of sessions?
- **Relevance of participants' characteristics**
  - Age (Kooji et al., 2017) / growth mindset (Dweck, 2012)?
- **Organizational boundary conditions**
  - Support for strengths use (van Woerkom et al., 2016)
- **Better ways to randomize participants -> RCTs**

# Thank you!

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