**Title**: Stigma resistance as a moderator of the effect of weight stigma on perceived organisational climate and personal wellbeing in higher-weight individuals

**Lay summary**:

Previous research has looked into the influence of weight discrimination and stigma and found it to reduce individuals’ psychological wellbeing. A growing body of evidence has also shown that weight stigma is prevalent in the workplace at every stage, including in hiring, pay rates, and promotion. Discrimination literature has focussed on the influence of age and sex prejudice and how it negatively affects wellbeing and career aspirations when looking at a corporate context. However, the negative influence of discrimination on wellbeing and career aspirations in an organisational setting has not been investigated in relation to weight stigma. This study will test the effects of weight-related stigma in an employment setting. use a workplace wellbeing paradigm, we will recruit participants who self-classify as “overweight”. Participants will read about workplace wellness programmes that companies are introducing to improve the health of their workers. They will then be randomly assigned to read about a company that is thinking of introducing either free weight management classes or free stress management classes for its workers. We predict that “overweight” participants will respond negatively to a company that is sending the message that their body is a problem in the work setting, but no such effect will be seen in those participants who read about a stress-management programme. Additionally, wider stigma research shows how people who resist societal stigma tend to experience better psychological wellbeing than those who accept their stigmatised status. We will test this effect in a weight-stigma context with a novel weight stigma resistance scale. We predict that participants who demonstrate higher levels of weight stigma resistance will experience less negative outcomes than participants with lower levels of resistance.

**Methodology**:

We will carry out a two-stage survey at two time points, one week apart. Participants will be recruited using Prolific, an online survey site. In order to avoid recruitment bias, the cover story will state that we are interested in attitudes and opinions about current issues in society. Stage one will collect demographic information, levels of weight stigma resistance, and questionnaires about a number of other current societal issues (charitable giving, modern sexism and a food and environment questionnaire), which will serve to disguise the true aims of the experiment as well as the stigma resistance scale (SRS). The second stage will be implemented one week later to minimise the risk that answering questions about stigma resistance (or other forms of societal action) will influence the findings from the experimental manipulation. The second stage will involve participants completing questions relating to their current employment, followed by the experimental manipulation. Participants will first read about workplace wellness programmes that companies are introducing to try to improve the health of their workers. They will then be randomly assigned to read about a company that is thinking of introducing either free weight management classes (experimental condition) or free stress management classes (control condition) for its workers.

Participants will be asked to imagine that they work for this company and to give their opinions on the proposed programme and their opinions of the company. They will then complete measures of their self-esteem and mood. Finally, participants will be asked what they think the study was about before being debriefed as to the true goals of the study. They will also be provided with a free-entry text box where they may share any thoughts or comments relating to the study with the researchers. Participants will also be provided with additional resources for further information regarding health and weight stigma in society. Finally, we will provide a link to a mood-lifting music video (Pharell Williams’ *Happy*).

**Participants**:

Equal numbers of male and female adults aged 18-50 from the UK who are native or fluent English speakers and who have previously self-identified as being ‘overweight’, will be recruited using the Prolific platform.  In response to the manipulation, participants are asked to imagine they work for the company described and answer questions about their fit with the company, including how they feel the company would support their ambitions and what future they could see for themselves in the company. As such, we didn’t want to include people too close to retirement age. Therefore, the age range 18-50 years old was selected to exclude individuals closer to retirement age.A power calculation indicated a minimum of 201 participants would be needed to detect a small effect size (5% of variance explained) with 80% power at an alpha level of .017 (Bonferroni correction for 3 outcomes). We will recruit 240 participant to allow for 10% attrition and exclusion of data from any participants who fail a manipulation check. Participants will be paid £0.45 for completing Part 1 of the study and £0.85 for completing Part 2.

**Ethical considerations:**

Based on previous work, this study is not expected to cause psychological distress to participants. In order to ensure maximal utility of collected data, and therefore research integrity, participants will be required to answer all questions, but sensitive questions (demographic information, e.g. gender, ethnicity) will have a “prefer not to answer” option.

Participant information will include details of the study, procedures for withdrawal, transparent information about data handling and storage, and contact details for the lead researcher, the chair of the School of Psychology Ethics Committee, the University of Exeter Research Ethics and Governance Manager, and the University’s Data Protection Team in case of any questions or concerns. A four-step opt-in consent procedure will be used. Participants will be fully debriefed at the end of the study, or on withdrawal, and resources will be provided surrounding the issues of health and weight stigma in society should the study raise any concerns among participants in the experimental condition. Participants will be ethically rewarded for their time, equivalent to £5/hr, pro rata.