



Traiettorie per l'invecchiamento attivo e in buona salute

Workers Aging and Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration at Work: A Latent State-Trait Examination

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AGING IN THE WORKPLACE



During the last decades, organizational researchers and practitioners have started to increase their effort to deal with the worldwide challenges of an aging population (Beier et al., 2022)

AGING IN THE WORKPLACE

As people age, the percentage of adult/older workers is set to increase in the next future

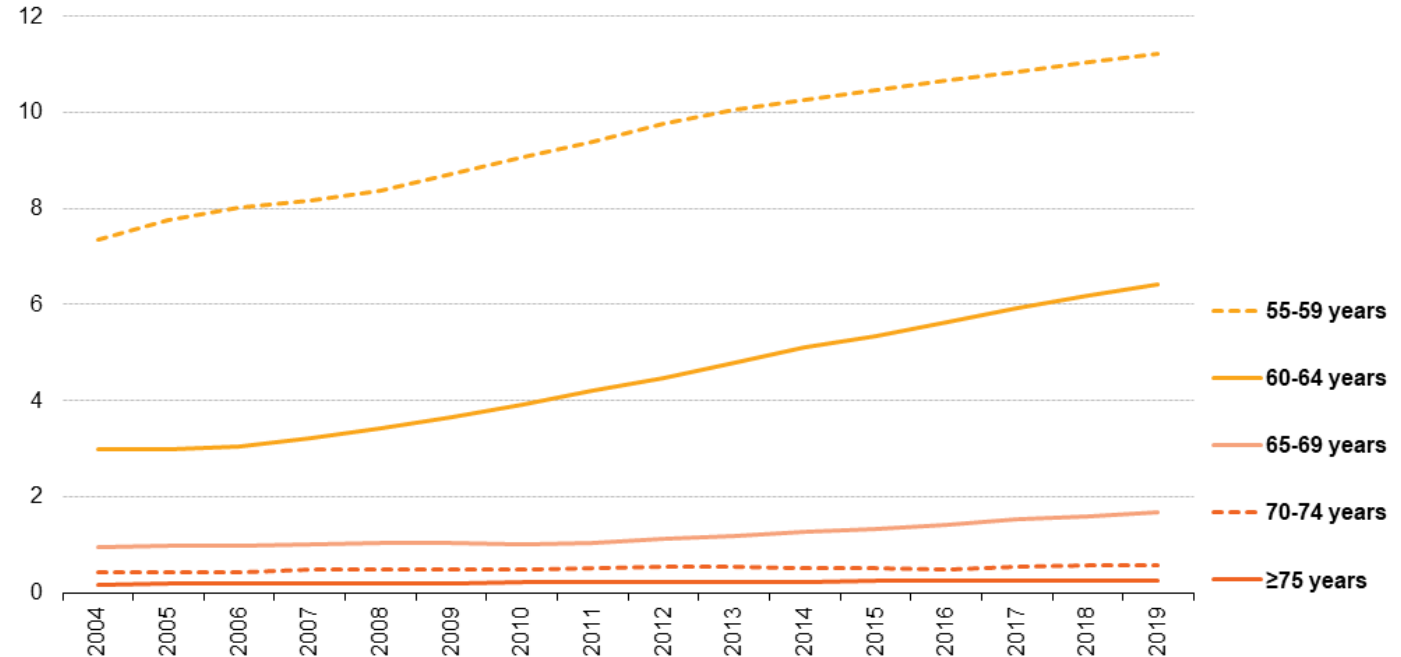
(Deller & Walwei, 2022; United Nations, 2019)

Therefore, it is of outmost importance to find ways to better understand

how workers successfully age in the workplace

(Beier et al., 2022; Truxillo et al., 2015)

Older persons in employment, by age class, EU-27, 2004-2019
(% of total employment)



Note: breaks in series, 2005.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfsa_egan)

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

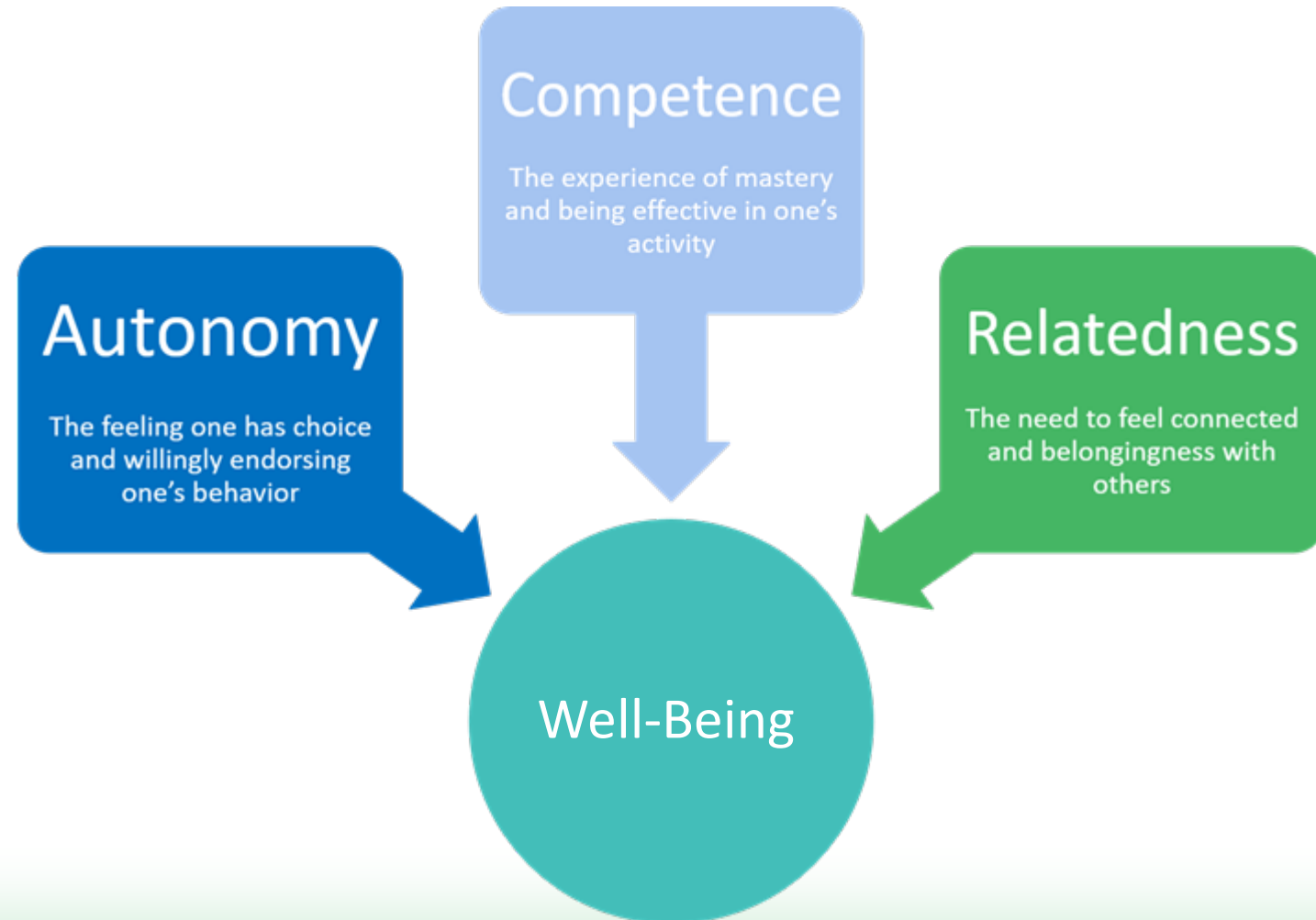
Self-Determination Theory

(SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017)

represents a comprehensive theoretical framework which encompasses the important role that basic psychological needs have in fostering adjustment and well-being in the workplace

(Deci et al., 2017; Van den Broeck et al., 2016)

As long as **psychological needs** are supported, workers' motivation, productivity and well-being may be fostered and maintained (Van den Broeck et al., 2016)



THERE MANY ARE AGE-RELATED DIFFERENCES...

We already know that there may be important differences among **junior** and **senior** workers:

- Physical
- Cognitive
- Affective
- Personality
- Motivational



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...but what about basic psychological needs at work?



... ARE THERE AGE DIFFERENCES IN PSYC. NEEDS?

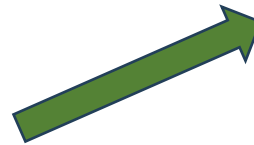
Although the large body of results accumulated till now (e.g., Ryan, 2023), lingering questions about the age differences among basic psychological needs remain...

... ARE THERE AGE DIFFERENCES IN PSYC. NEEDS?

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

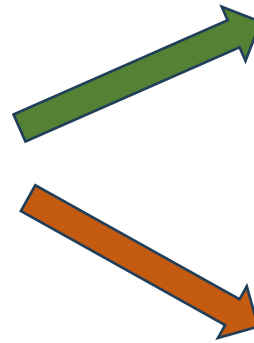
Does the perception of the satisfaction and frustration of basic psychological needs differ across workers' age?

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RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Does the perception of the satisfaction and frustration of basic psychological needs differ across workers' age?

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

Do the satisfaction and frustration of basic psychological needs have different effects across workers' age?

OUR STUDY

Sample

$N = 509$ workers (46.60% women) from various sectors aged between 18 and 67 years ($M_{age} = 44.67$, $SD_{age} = 13.93$)

Design

4-wave longitudinal data, which was collected once a week for four consecutive weeks, covering an entire work month

Measures

- *Psychological Need at Work-Scale* (Huyghebaert-Zouaghi et al., 2021)
- *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale* (Schaufeli et al., 2006)
- *Emotional Exhaustion –Burnout Subscale* (Maslach et al., 1996)
- *Covariates*: gender, household income, educational level

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Statistical Analyses

We analyzed data using a series of *Latent MultiState-MultiTrait models* within the Single- and Multi-level Structural Equation Modeling framework (Geiser et al., 2013; Steyer et al., 2015) to decompose *traits* and *states* components of each constructs we considered

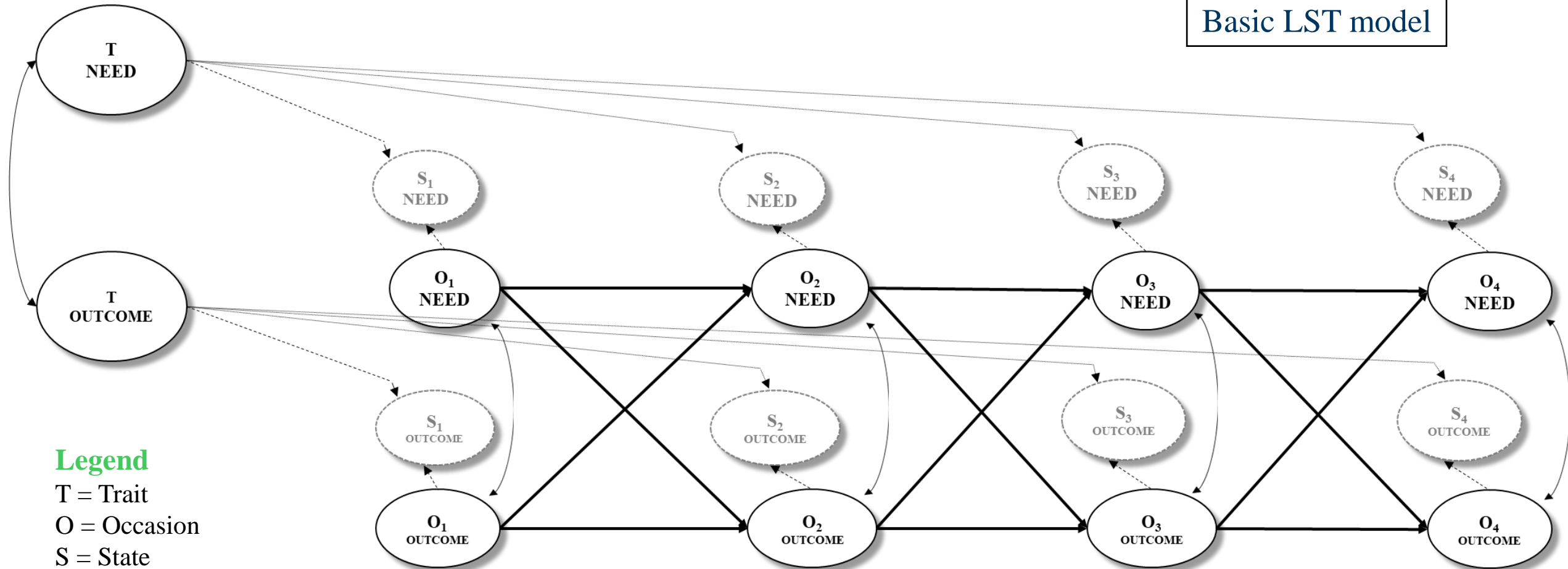
We used the *Mplus* v8.3 software (Muthen & Muthen, 2018)

This is a more reliable approach (better than using only one-shot cross-sectional data; Maxwell & Cole, 2007)

Useful to inspect potential age differences in the weekly *mean levels* and *variability* of the needs, their *cross-lagged effects* on organizational outcomes *moderated* by age (latent interaction Between x Within; Speyer et al., 2023)

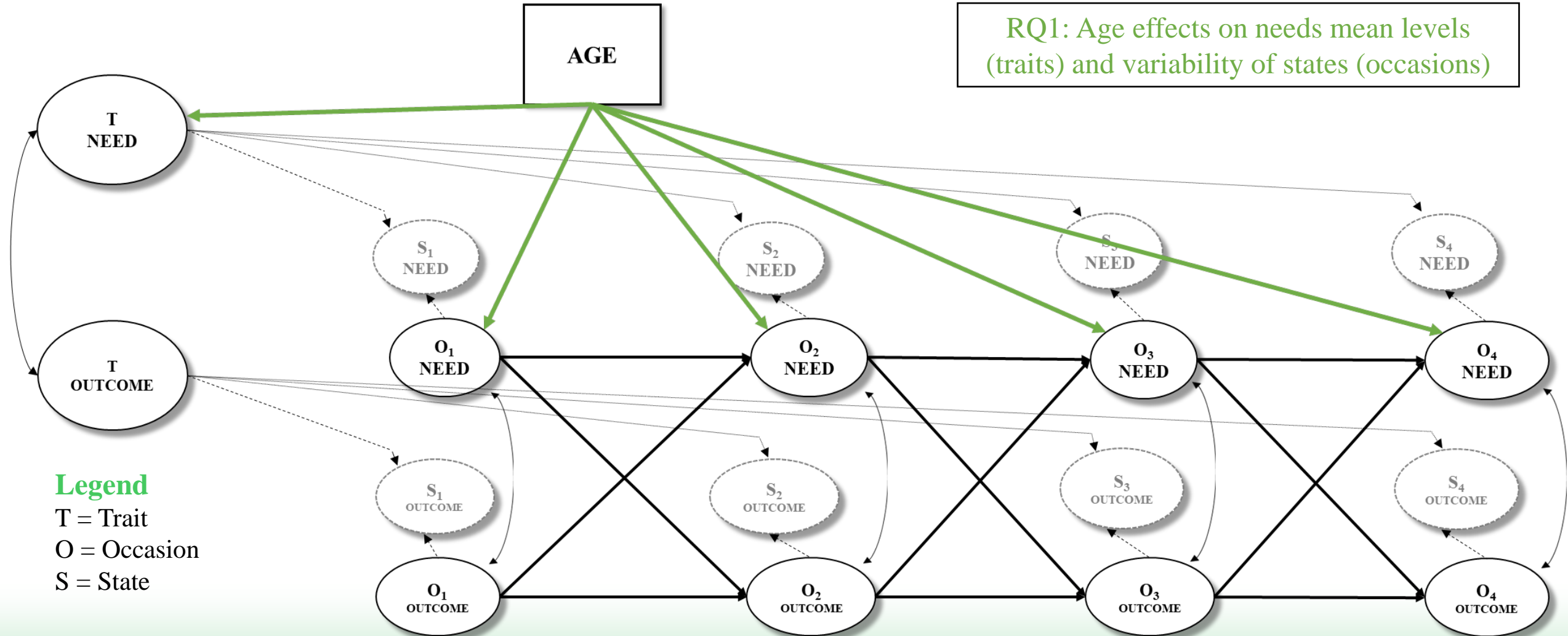
TESTED MODELS

Basic LST model

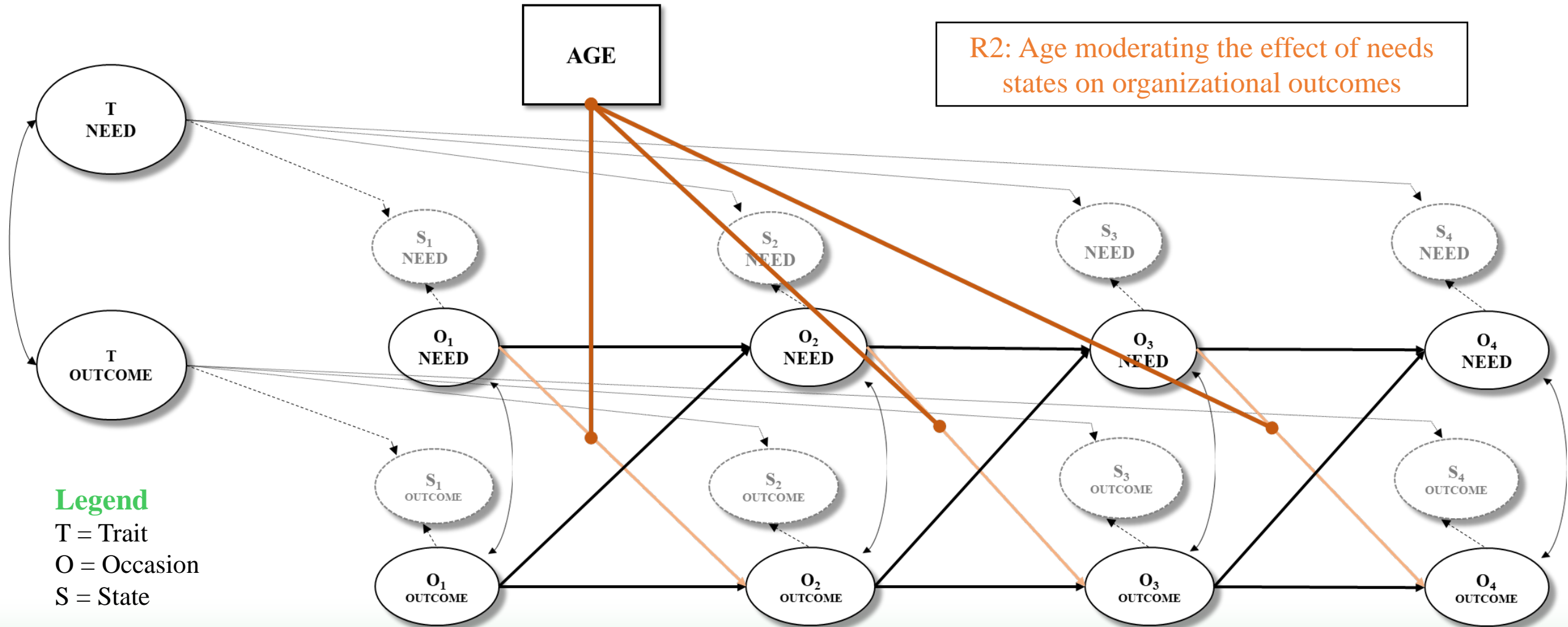


TESTED MODELS

RQ1: Age effects on needs mean levels (traits) and variability of states (occasions)



TESTED MODELS



BRIEF OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Does the perception of the satisfaction and frustration of basic psychological needs differ across workers' age?



1. We found age differences in the frustration of psychological needs
2. No differences for need satisfaction
3. Older workers (vs younger) reported
 - a. lower mean levels of need frustration
 - b. less variability over time

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

Do the satisfaction and frustration of basic psychological needs have different effects across workers' age?



4. Workers' age moderates the effect of need satisfaction and frustration on organizational outcomes

CONCLUSION

Results are in line with Socioemotional Selectivity Theory (SST; Carstensen et al., 1999; Carstensen, 2021), according to which, the perception of time, especially the perception of the approach of an ending (whether due to aging or other endings, like retirement) induces motivational changes in which emotionally meaningful goals are prioritized over exploration

At work, all of this leads to a selection and pursuit of social goals, such that older workers tend to focus more on positive work experiences (positivity effect; Reed & Carstensen, 2012) while younger workers on the negative ones

Our results may represent useful practical cues to implement job intervention oriented to improve the management of age differences at work, to promote diversity and inclusion in the work context, and to adjust work design to the different employees' needs



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The views and opinions expressed are only those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the European Commission can be held responsible for them.

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