

Successful aging at work: Aspects of psychological adaptation at the workplace

Bettina Williger
Bernd Rager
Frieder R. Lang

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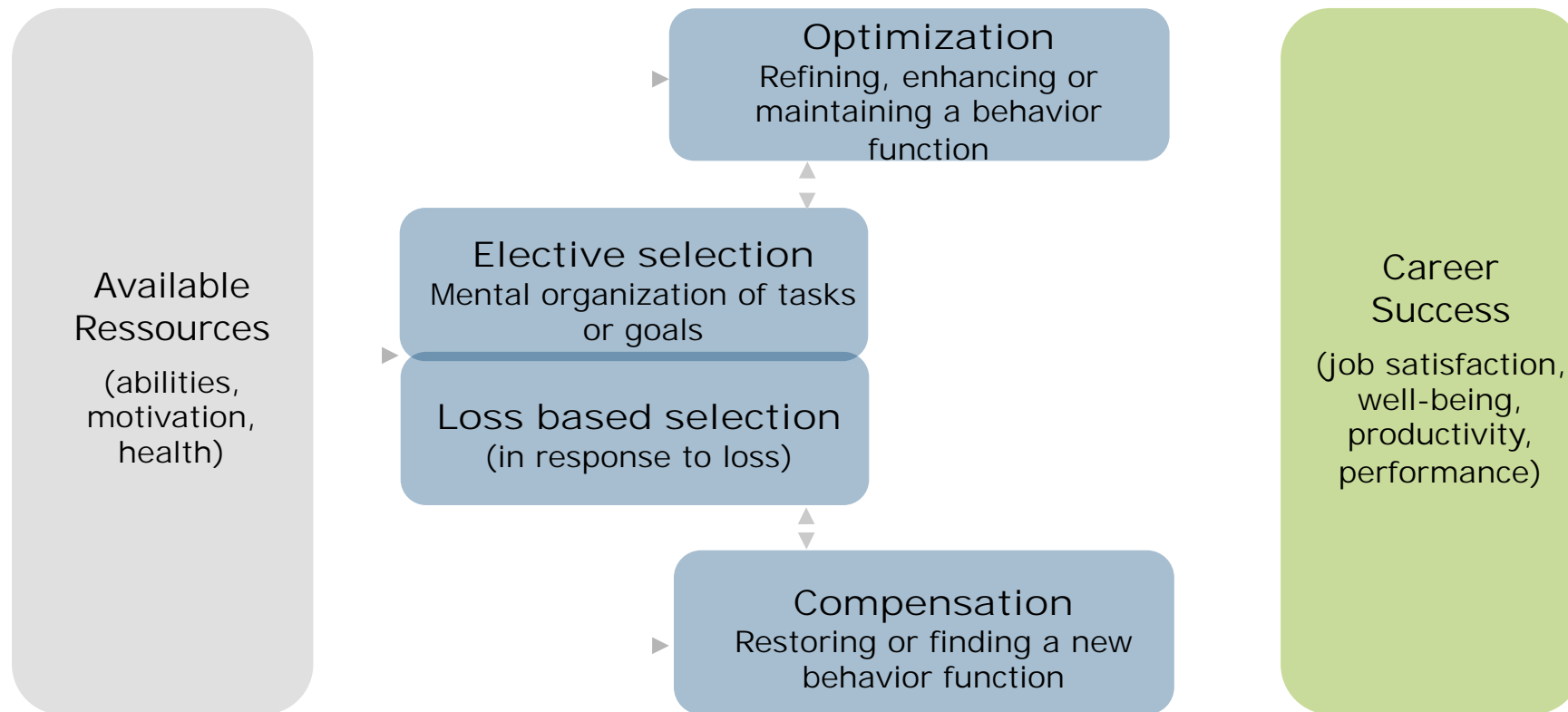
Comparing career success of younger and older workers

- Age related differences in work motivation:
older workers report more socio-emotional goals (i.e. social contacts, generativity)
(Rossnagel & Hertel, 2006; Grube, 2009)
- Job satisfaction is positively correlated with age (and education)
(Hochwarter, 2001; Schulte, 2005)
- Older workers show no differences in job performance –
as far as they are well skilled
(Abraham & Hansson, 1995; McEvoy & Cascio, 1989; Sturman, 2003; Warr, 2000)

Self regulatory competences and career success

- Psychological adaption predicts younger adults' subjective well-being (global, work-specific) and job satisfaction
(Wiese, Freund, & Baltes, 2000, 2002)
- Optimization strategies directly predict subjective success and are indirectly linked to objective success
(Abele & Wiese, 2008)
- Younger and older adults' performance maintenance depends on strategies of goal selection
(Yeung & Fung, 2007)

Strategies of psychological adaptation



Baltes & Baltes (1990); Lang, Rohr, & Williger (in press)

SOC Questionnaire (Baltes, Baltes, Freund, & Lang, 1999)

- 12 item short version
- Elective selection
I always focus on the most important goal at a given time.
- Loss based selection
When things don't go as well as before, I choose one or two important goals.
- Optimization
I make every effort to achieve a given goal.
- Compensation
When things don't go as well as they used to, I keep trying other ways until I can achieve the same result I used to.

Samples & Variables

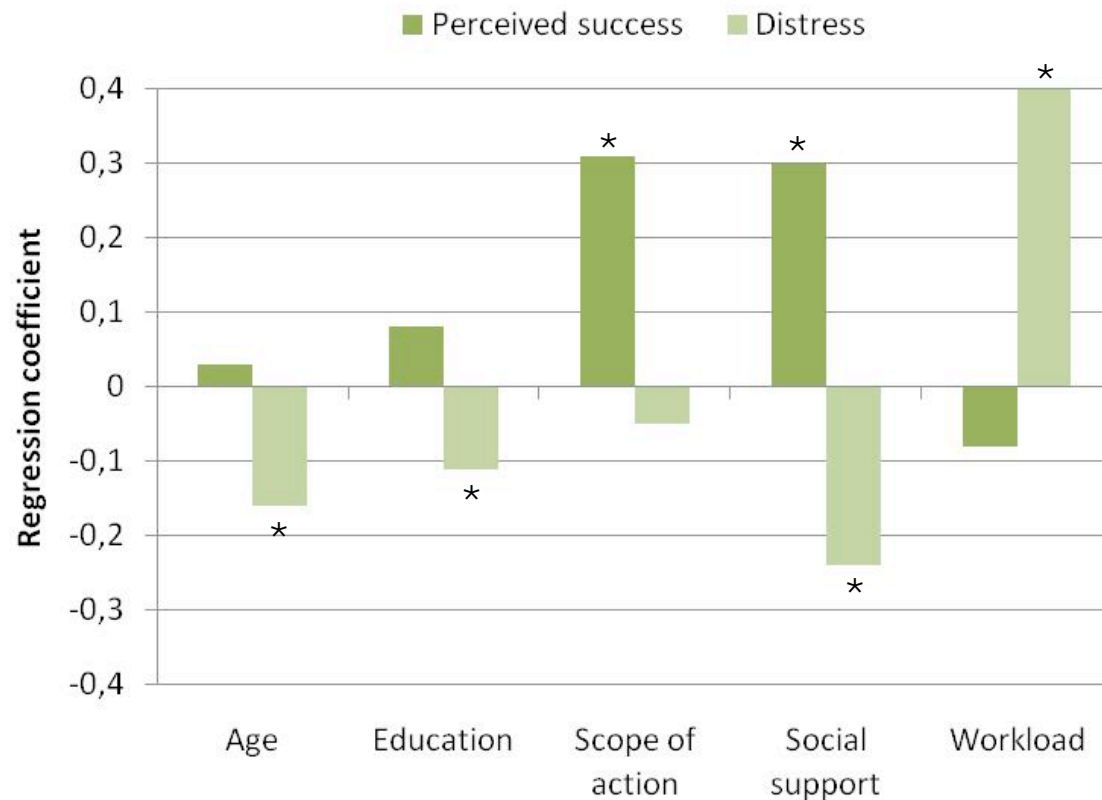
Online study

- $N = 287$ (154 female)
- Age: 37.89 ± 11.96 years
- Education: 11.86 ± 1.45 years
- Instruments
 - SOC Questionnaire ($\alpha = .51$ to $.55$; Baltes et al. 1999)
 - KFZA ($\alpha = .76$ to $.91$, Prümper et al. 1995)
 - SSCS ($\alpha = .91$, Schulz et al. 2004)
 - Perceived Success Scale ($\alpha = .83$)

Socioeconomic Panel (Pretest 2005)

- $N = 312$ (168 female)
- Age: 40.30 ± 10.73 years
- Education: 10.71 ± 1.56 years
- Instruments (selection)
 - Job satisfaction
 - Work-related issues
 - Social background
 - Personality

Correlates of work-related well-being



Gerotest ($N = 287$), controlled for covariates, * $p < .05$

- Age and education reduce distress at the workplace
- Work characteristics predict positive as well as negative indicators of work-related well-being

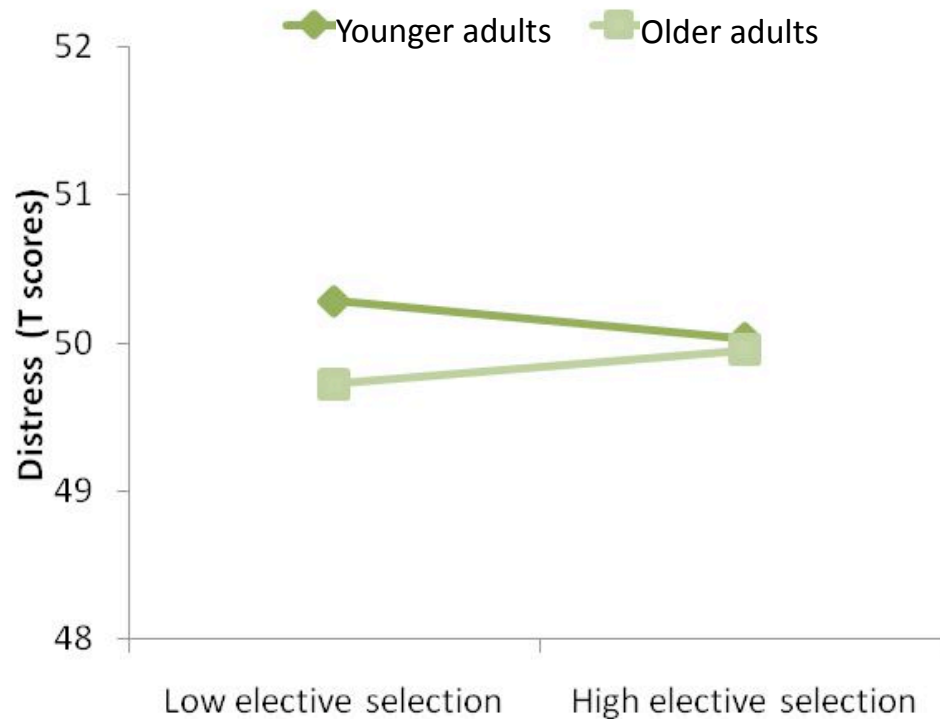
SOC and work-related well-being



Gerotest ($N = 287$), controlled for covariates, * $p < .05$

- Use of compensatory strategies influences work related well-being
 - increased perceived success
 - reduced distress

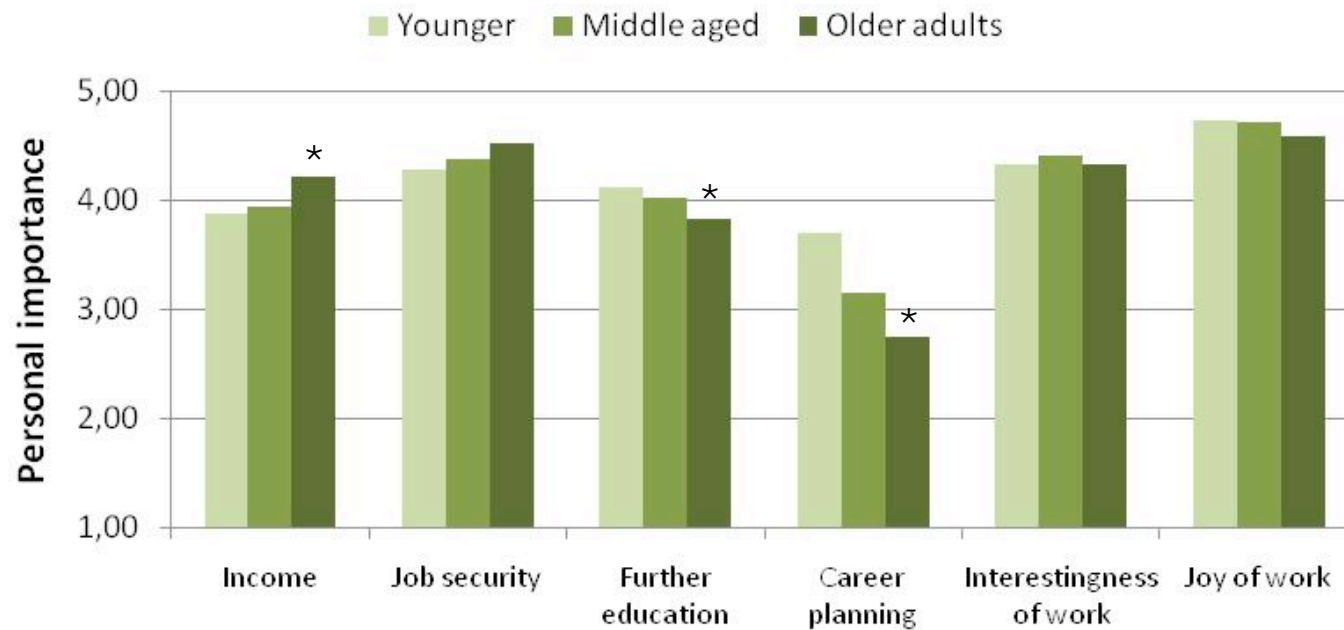
Age related differences in the functionality of SOC strategies



Gerotest ($N = 287$), $p < .05$

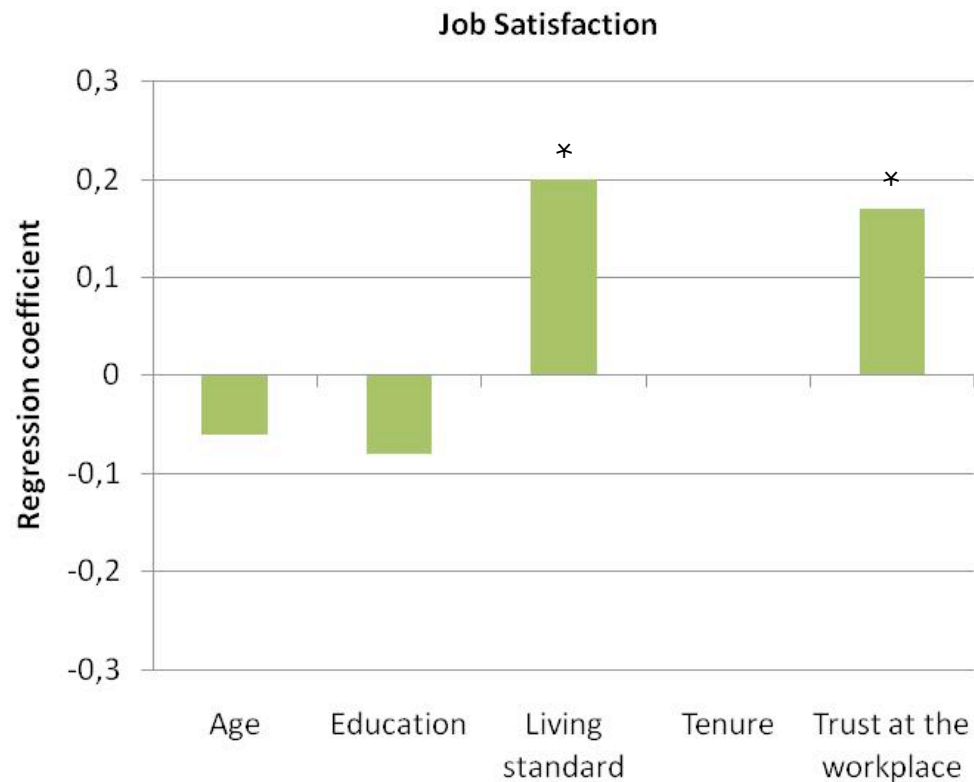
- Younger adults' well-being is increased by elective selection strategies
- Older adults reporting high elective selection face more distress
- Elective selection is dysfunctional in older workers

Older adults report different work-related goals



Gerotest (N = 287) * p < .05

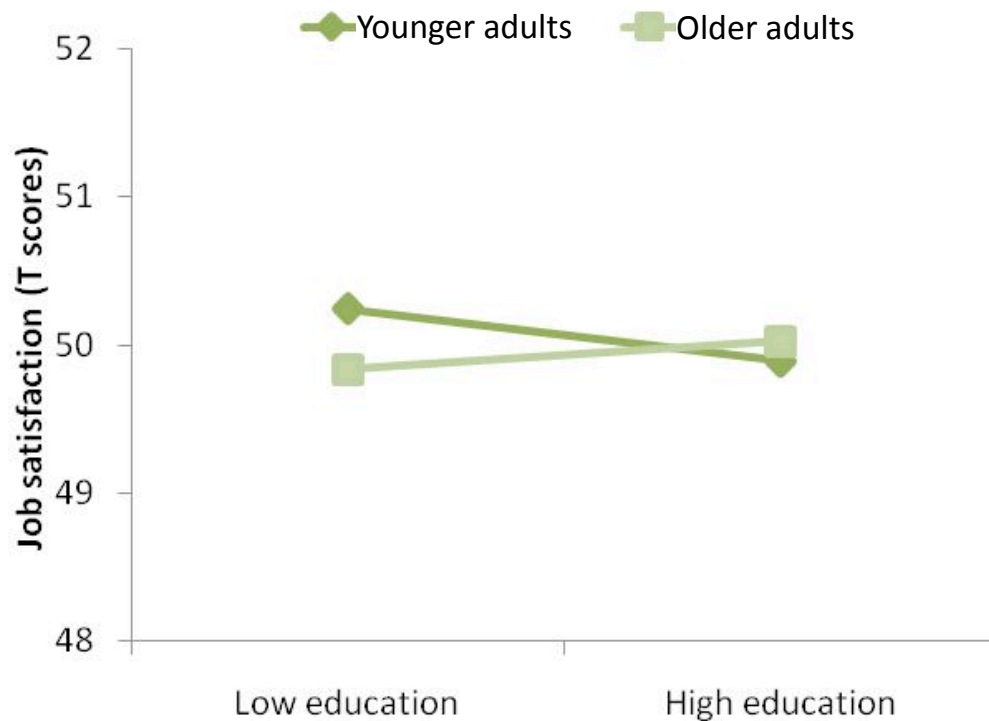
SOEP findings are in line with previous results



SOEP Pretest 2005 ($N = 312$), controlled for covariates, * $p < .05$

- Satisfaction with living standard (income as an important work-related goal!) predicts job satisfaction
- Work characteristics (*social support*) play a significant role for job satisfaction

Further evidence for age-related differences



SOEP Pretest 2005 ($N = 312$), * $p < .05$

- Highly educated older adults report higher job satisfaction
- Education as an important resource for successful aging at work

- Results reveal new insights into the work-related well-being of younger and older adults
 - Older adults report different work-related goals
 - Functional use of SOC strategies (elective selection, compensation) predicts subjective job success
- Subjective job success depends on work characteristics
- Further analysis need to consider for
 - different work segments (i.e. blue collar workers)
 - objective variables (criteria of success, indicators of job demands)
 - longitudinal data

Thank you for your attention!

Bettina Williger
Frieder R. Lang
Institute of Psychogerontology
University of Erlangen-Nuremberg

bettina.williger@geronto.uni-erlangen.de
frieder.lang@geronto.uni-erlangen.de

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