



Navigating the return to the office

An ecological momentary assessment of stress, work pleasure and relatedness in older office workers

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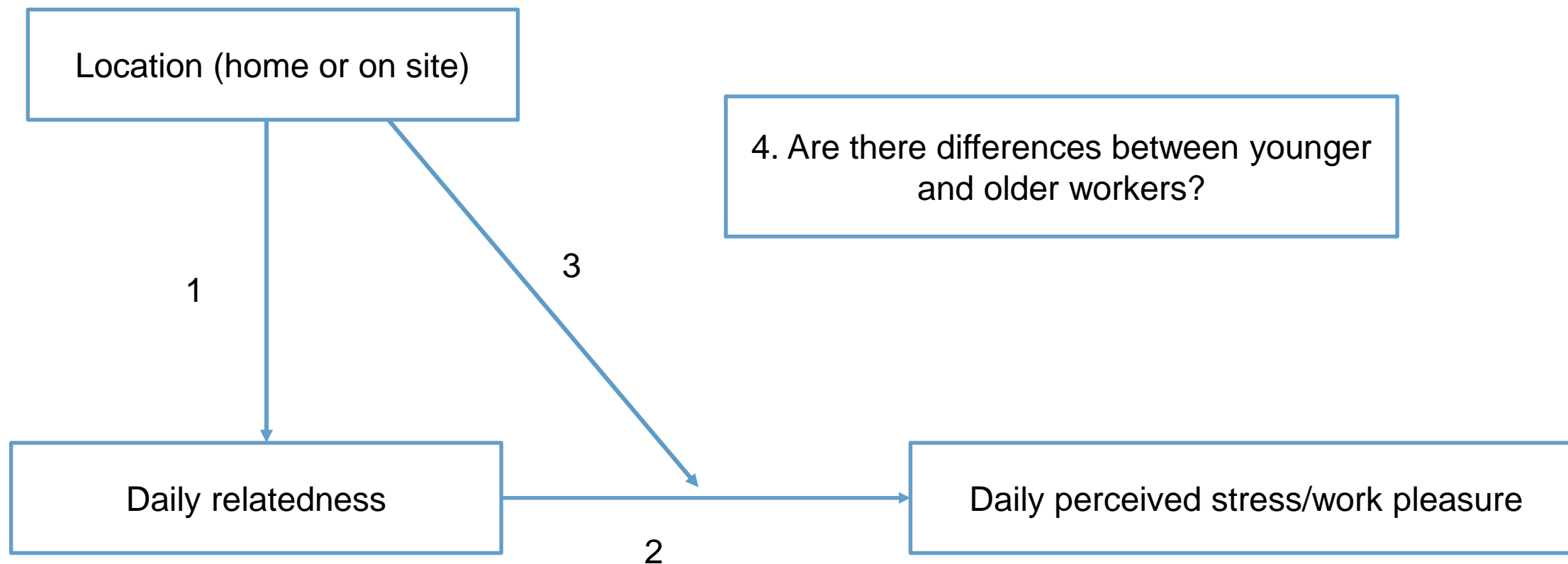
I have no conflicts of interest to disclose

BACKGROUND

- Remote working increased after the pandemic. Hybrid working (i.e., remote and on-site) is becoming common.
- The Netherlands has nowadays the highest percentage of remote workers in Europe (12,7% most of the time, 39,2% sometimes).
- Little research has been done on the impact of hybrid working on employee health and wellbeing.

This study's objective is to observe how work location (home or office) affects the daily well-being (i.e., daily perceived stress and daily work pleasure) particularly regarding the role of relatedness with co-workers. And to explore whether this differs between younger and older workers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS



METHODS

- **Study design**
 - Daily diary design with Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA)
- **Data collection**
 - Every working day of the first week of the month for three months
 - April 2022 to June 2022
- **Population**
 - 109 older office workers (age ≥ 45), 828 observations
 - 87 younger office workers (age <45), 590 observations

METHODS

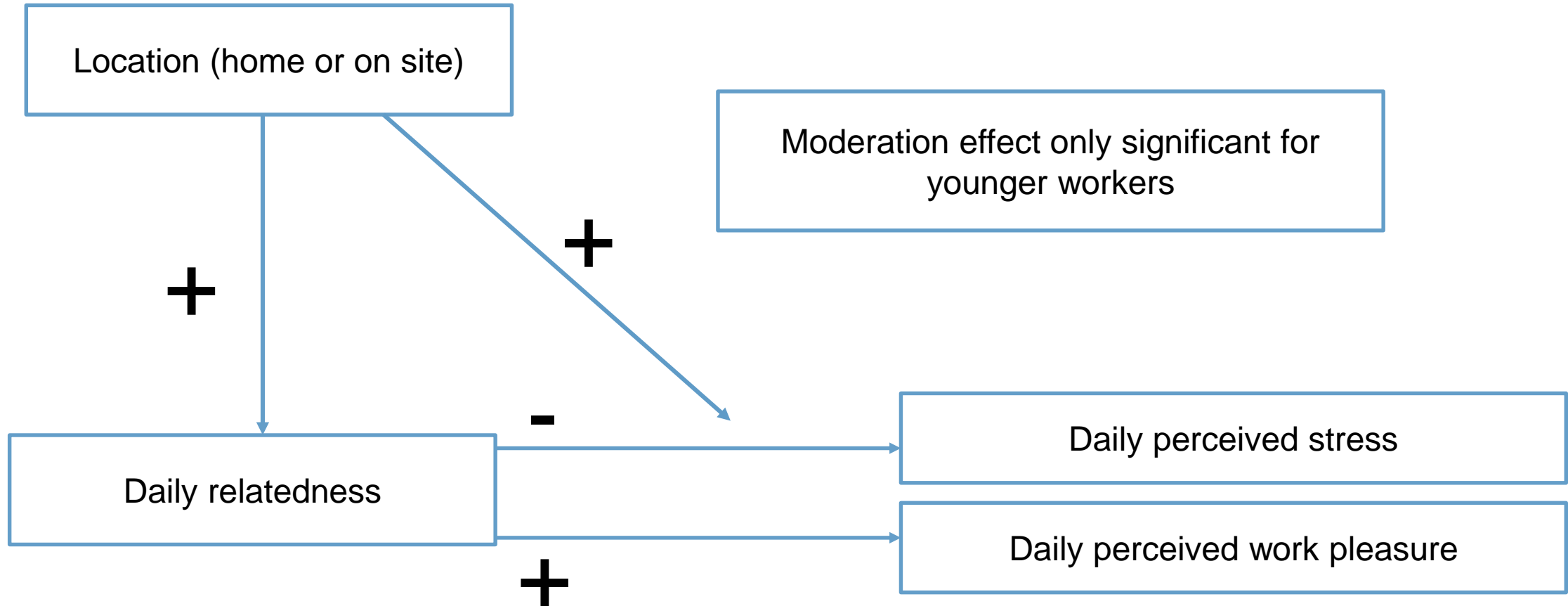
- **Questionnaires**

- Baseline (i.e. age, gender, job tenure)
- Daily questionnaire:
 - Daily work location
 - Daily relatedness ('today I felt connected to other people at work')
 - Daily work stress ('stress is a state in which a person feels tense, restless, nervous and anxious. Have you experienced this kind of stress today?')
 - Daily work pleasure (I enjoyed working today)

- **Analyses**

- Multilevel regression analyses
- Moderation analyses

RESULTS



DISCUSSION

- Work location is relevant for relatedness for both younger and older workers
- Associations between relatedness and employee wellbeing fluctuate from day to day
- Part of the fluctuation is attributed to differences in work location, especially for younger workers
- Expectations of relatedness (on a day at the office) may play a role

- In future research
 - (unmet) expectations and quality of contact with colleagues at the office should be measured

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

Strengths:

- Daily diary study allows for minimum recall bias and investigation of dynamics within person process in a real world setting

Limitations:

- Homogenous research sample (highly educated workers in large company)
- Despite the very short daily questionnaire we do have missing observations
- We did not explicitly measure the underlying assumptions to our exploratory hypotheses

KEY MESSAGES

In hybrid working it is good to take into account:

- ✓ Relatedness is important, and working at the office can increase relatedness
- ✓ But not experiencing relatedness has a greater negative effect when you are in the office than when you are at home, especially for young workers.
- ✓ It is therefore good to pay attention to 'how working at the office is organized' in order to enable workers to relate to others.

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS & REFERENCES



Roy Peijen

Irene Niks

Marianne van Zwieten

Karen Oude Hengel

Peijen, R. Niks, I.M.W., van Zwieten, M.H.J., Oude Hengel, K.M., Wiezer, N
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Submitted and under review



Palais des Congrès Marrakech - Maroc
www.icoh2024.ma