

**AUT**

# **Antecedents and Outcomes of Meaningful Work: A Multi-Group Analysis of Age and Gender Differences**

**Professor Jarrod Haar & Dr Rachel Morrison, AUT**



# Outline

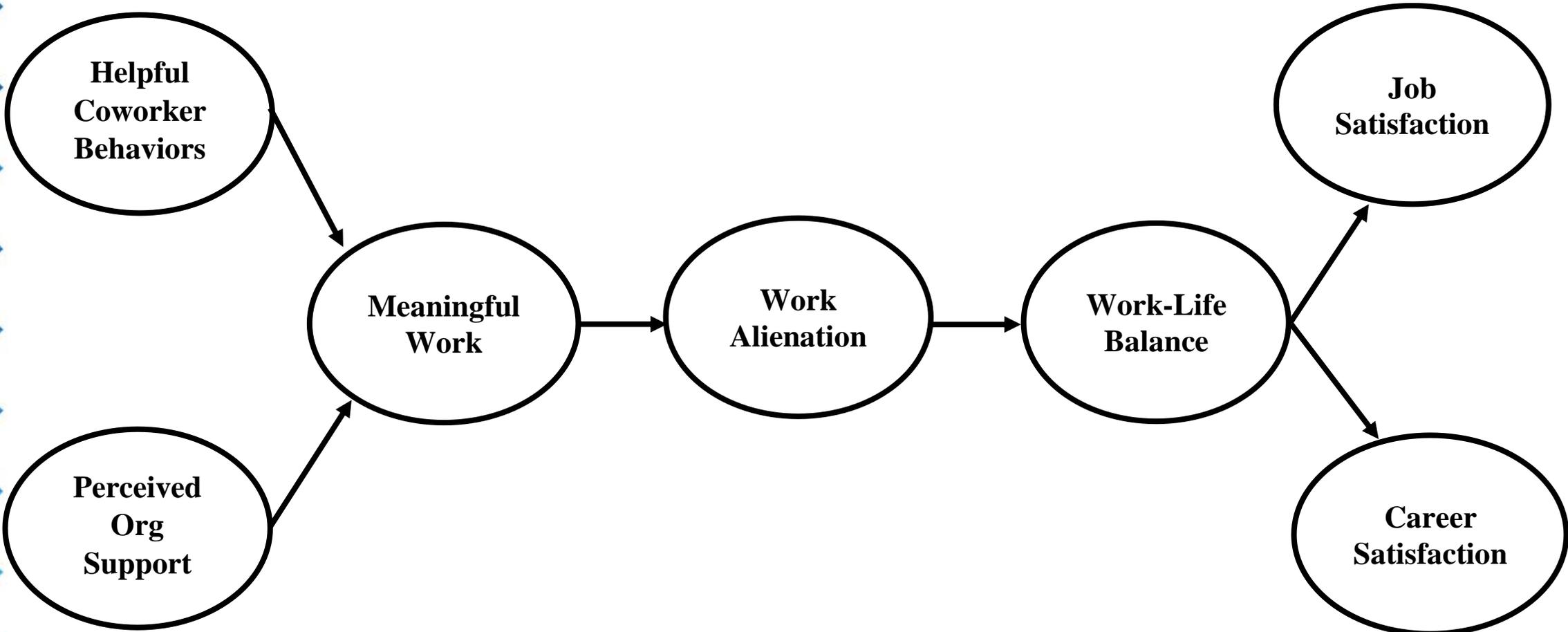
- Theoretical model
- Brief outline of hypotheses
- Then testing differences by age and gender (multi-group analysis)
- Methods
- Model results
- Multi-group model results
- Discussion
- Questions



**"We believe in paying our employees as much as they need.  
Since you'll be at your desk 90 hours a week,  
you won't need much."**



# Study Model



# Hypotheses

- **Meaningful work** defined as “job and other workplace characteristics that facilitate the attainment or maintenance of one or more dimensions of meaning”
- **Work alienation** defined as the separation of a worker from the product they created, the process by which it was created
- ***Antecedents***
- POS and Helpful co-workers behaviours – positively influence meaningful work and negatively influence work alienation.
- Related to beneficial work outcomes – a supportive organization and colleagues makes work more meaningful and less alienation from the work

# Hypotheses

- *Outcomes*
- Meaningful work negatively related to work alienation and positively related to work-life balance, job satisfaction and career satisfaction – me
- But – a path model, so...
- Work alienation mediating the influence of meaningful work on outcomes
- Work-life balance mediating the influence of work alienation on job satisfaction and career satisfaction

# Hypotheses

- ***Differences***
- Bunderson and Thompson (2009) found that gender was significantly related to willingness to sacrifice but argued that more research was needed with regards to gender and meaningful work and alienation
- Tummers and Knies (2013) found significant correlations with meaningful work with gender and age. Age was negatively related signifying that as workers got older they felt their jobs became less meaningful.
- *Differences by gender and age will exist across the study model. We expect women to have stronger effects from meaningful work and younger workers to have weaker effects.*

# Method

- 1482 work experienced (North American) adults responded to a Qualtrics panel survey.
- Gender evenly split & 92% permanent full-time employees. By age group: there were 27% under 30 years, 36% were in the 30-39 years' group, 21% were 40-49 years and 16% over 50 years.
- Meaningful work (Spreitzer, 1995) & work alienation (Shantz et al., 2014).
- All measures were established constructs and had good reliability ( $\alpha > .70$ )
- Data analysis: CFA in AMOS to confirm measures resulting in a good fit. SEM model a good fit to the data
- Conducted a multi-group analysis testing 8 models across the 4 age groups: <30, 30-39, 40-49, 50+ for both males and females. This allows us to compare relationships across the 8 groups.

# SEM Results

**Table 3. Final Structural Model Path Results**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Path Coefficient</b>
<i>Antecedents</i>	
Coworker Helpful Behaviors → Meaningful Work	.17***
Coworker Helpful Behaviors → Alienation	-.09**
Coworker Helpful Behaviors → Work-Life Balance	.11*
Coworker Helpful Behaviors → Job Satisfaction	--
Coworker Helpful Behaviors → Career Satisfaction	--
POS → Meaningful Work	.22***
POS → Alienation	-.10***
POS → Work-Life Balance	.22***
POS → Job Satisfaction	.10***
POS → Career Satisfaction	.16***

# SEM Results

## *Predictors*

Meaningful Work → Work-Life Balance	.12*
Meaningful Work → Job Satisfaction	.50***
Meaningful Work → Career Satisfaction	.36***
Alienation → Work-Life Balance	-.27***
Alienation → Job Satisfaction	-.39***
Alienation → Career Satisfaction	-.22***

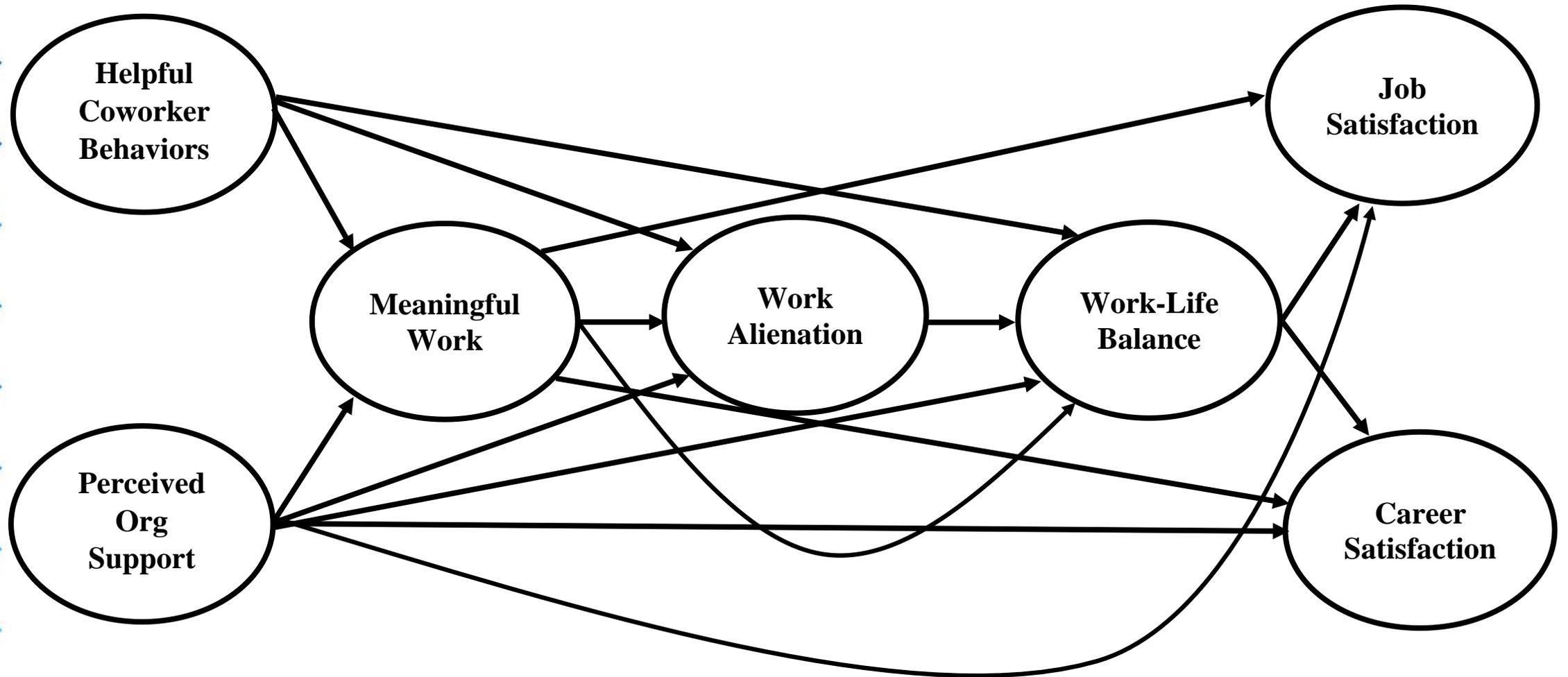
## *Mediator*

Work-Life Balance → Job Satisfaction	.17***
Work-Life Balance → Career Satisfaction	.24***

## *r<sup>2</sup> Values:*

Meaningful Work	.23
Alienation	.43
Work-Life Balance	.36
Job Satisfaction	.84
Career Satisfaction	.51

# SEM Results Model



# SEM Results Summary

- Overall, most hypotheses supported
- Antecedents predict meaningful work and work alienation
- POS still predicts outcomes (partially mediated only)
- Helpful co-workers behaviours fully mediated to outcomes
- Meaningful work and work alienation predict outcomes – hence partial mediation effects only (from work alienation on influence of meaningful work) and partial mediation effects only from work-life balance (influence of work alienation)
- Work-life balance makes a useful new contribution to the literature

# Multi-Group Results

- POS predicts meaningful work. For all ages and both genders! 😊
- Helpful co-worker behaviours predicts meaningful work. But, the effect stops for men (aged 30-39 years), and then stops for both genders for ages 40-49 years and 50+ years
- Meaningful work is negatively related to work alienation: for all ages of men, and all women age groups except women 50+ years
- Meaningful work predicts work-life balance...but only for young men and women (aged under 30 years) [mostly mediated by alienations]
- Meaningful work predicts job satisfaction. Both genders and all age groups except men aged 50+ years (non-sig effect)
- Finally, meaningful work predicts career satisfaction for both genders and all age groups.

# Discussion

- The SEM showed a nice consistent effect – as we'd expect. However, not a 'clean' path model as expected...
- However, it was when a multi-group analysis was conducted on age and gender groups that some differences were shown, with co-worker helpful behaviour becoming less important for older workers and for 50+ years males, there was no influence from meaningful work to job satisfaction. Also, women 50+ years had no sig relationship between meaningful work and work alienation
- This might reflect the notion that this group may have other factors influencing their job satisfaction. As this finding did not hold for women in the same age group, it suggests that multi-group analysis of age and gender might provide the key to better understanding meaningful work on outcomes.

# Limitations and Conclusions

- Single source data
- But large sample and broad range of occupations
- We are exploring this model longitudinally 😊
- The large sample also allows for the multi-group analysis via age and gender –which makes a nice contribution to the literature
- Without a large sample, analyses are typically restricted to age or gender but not age and gender!

Questions?

