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Flexibility as a job condition: conception, impact and research methods

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Outline

1

Two-dimensional conception of working-time flexibility

- ▶ Conceptualizing Flexible Working Times
- ▶ Integrating flexibility in the JD-R model

2

Results from an employee-survey

- ▶ Two-dimensional structure
- ▶ Explaining work-nonwork conflict, exhaustion and performance

3

Outlook for future research topics and methods

1 Conceptualizing Flexible Working Times

- ▶ **There is a broad variety of definitions**
 - ▶ from limited contracts to part-time, tele-work and trust-based work
 - ▶ Smallest common denominator: non-standard employment relationship

- ▶ **Mapping the dimensions of flexible work**
 - ▶ variations in the amount of working time
 - ▶ temporal distribution (e.g. flextime)
 - ▶ allocation of power to vary the time-schedule (Costa et al. 2003)
 - ▶ ... and in whose interest?

1 Starting point for our research

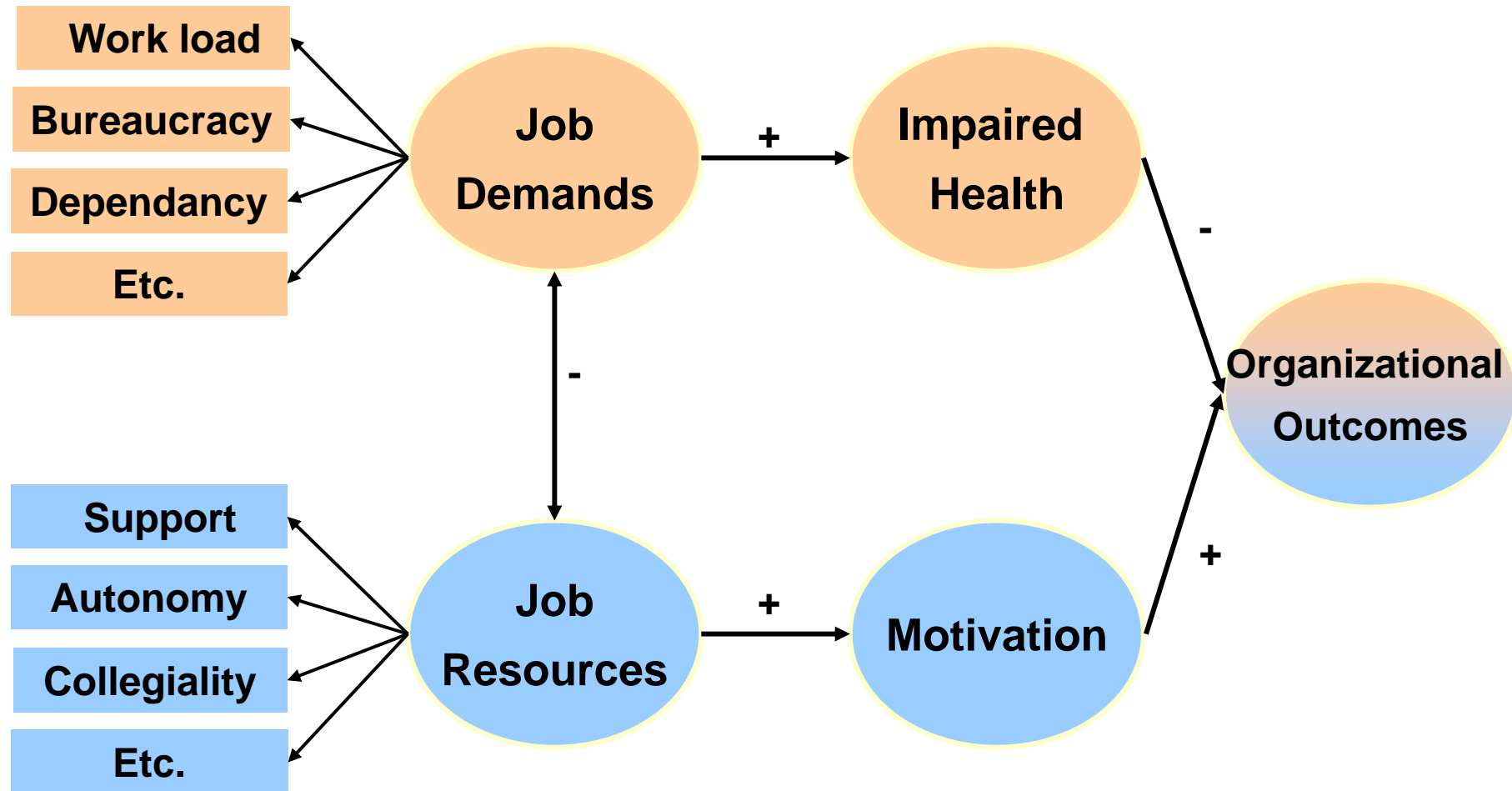
- ▶ **Assuming a two-dimensional structure**

- ▶ Time use in the interest of the employer
- ▶ Employee-oriented time-use

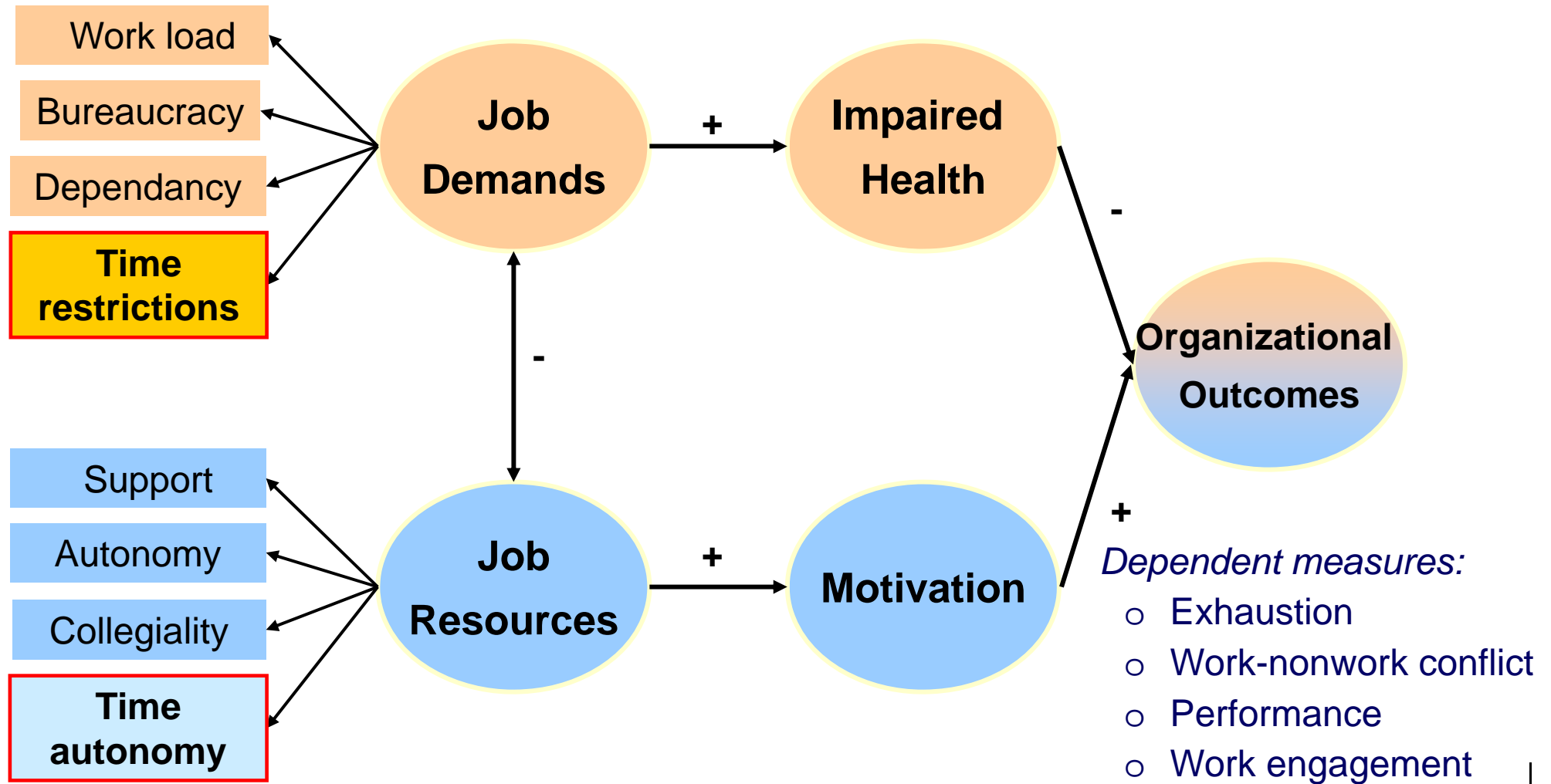
- ▶ **Consideration of flexible working-times in models that explain the impact of job conditions**

 **Measuring the impact of flexible working-times on well-being, work-nonwork conflict and performance based on the Job Demands-Resources Model**

1 The Job Demands-Resources Model (Demerouti, 2001)



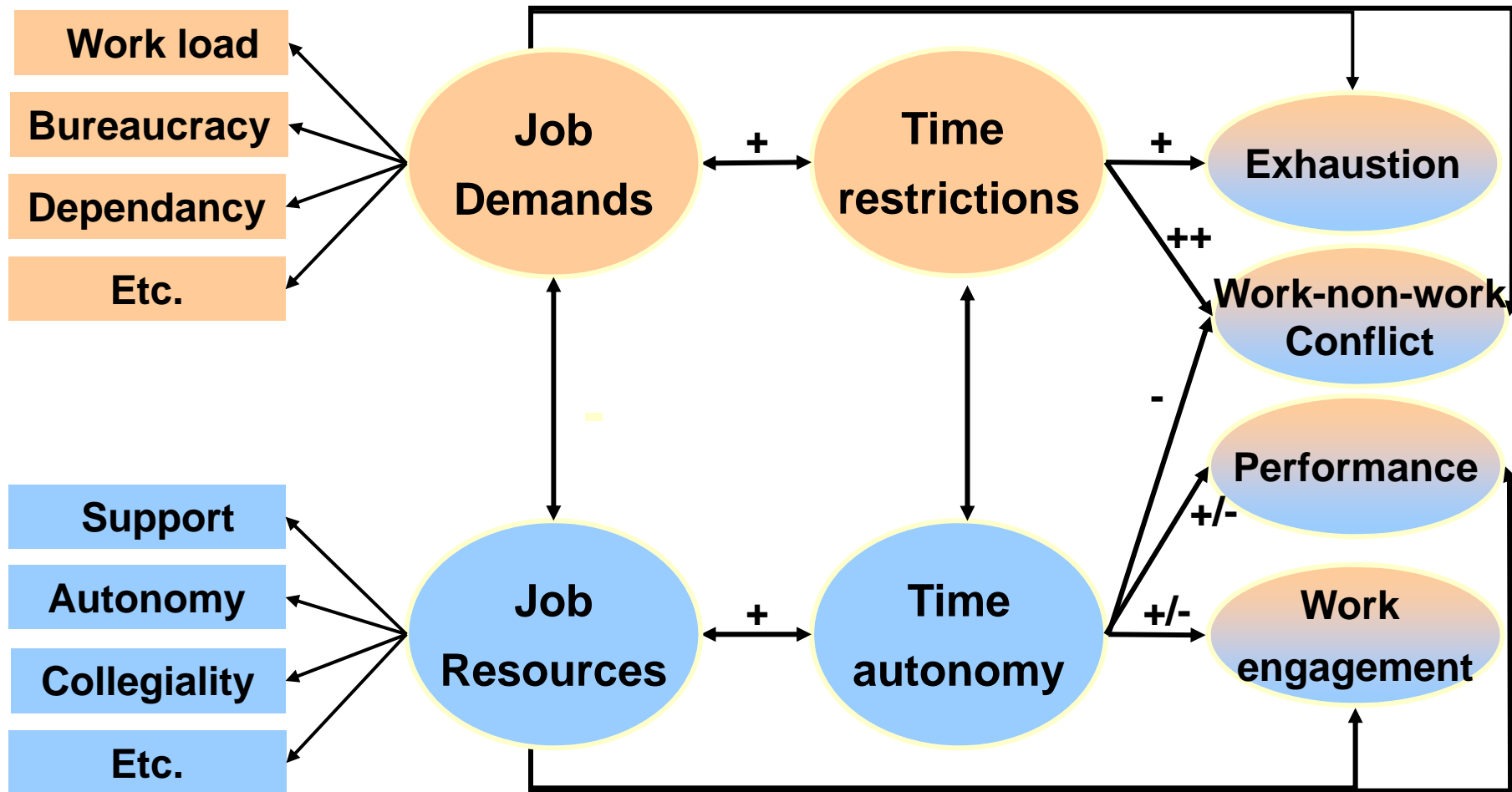
1 Expanding the JD-R model to working-time facets



2 Results: Two-dimensional structure (factor loadings)

	Time autonomy	Time restrictions
Autonomy in the length of the work day	.84	-.00
Variable shift begin	.83	.00
Variable shift end	.82	-.00
Autonomy in the length of the work week	.77	.00
Possibility to stop earlier	.66	-.34
Possibility for breaks	.58	-.22
Amount of overtime per month	-.12	.78
Frequency of ,emergencies‘	.15	.75
Required planning of a free day	-.23	.74
Variance explained (in %)	39.17	20.87

3 Results of an employee survey



4 Future research topics and methods based on the JD-R

▶ Further differentiation of time-demands:

- ▶ Dependency (time bureaucracy and dependency on colleagues)
- ▶ Unpredictability (on-call duty and unforeseeable work assignments)
- ▶ Fluctuations in time-pressure (frequency and amplitude)

▶ ...and resources:

- ▶ Short-term autonomy (amount and location over days and weeks)
- ▶ Long-term flexibility (life-cycle oriented reduction of hours, sabbatical)
- ▶ Support in planning of work hours and controlling of WLB

4 Future research topics and methods based on the JD-R

- ▶ **Unclear relationship between time autonomy and performance**
 - ▶ Potential versus real flexibility
 - ▶ Intra-personal fluctuations in work hours and performance
 - ▶ Suggestion: quantitative diary-study using an experimental design

- ▶ **Inclusion of individual disposition and characteristics as mediators**
 - ▶ Interaction between job conditions and personality
 - ▶ Effects of an entrepreneurial attitude (e.g. need for autonomy)
 - ▶ Suggestion: Comparing occupational groups

Thank you !