

# Young Adults' Exposure to 'Older Workers': Experiences, Beliefs, and Preferences

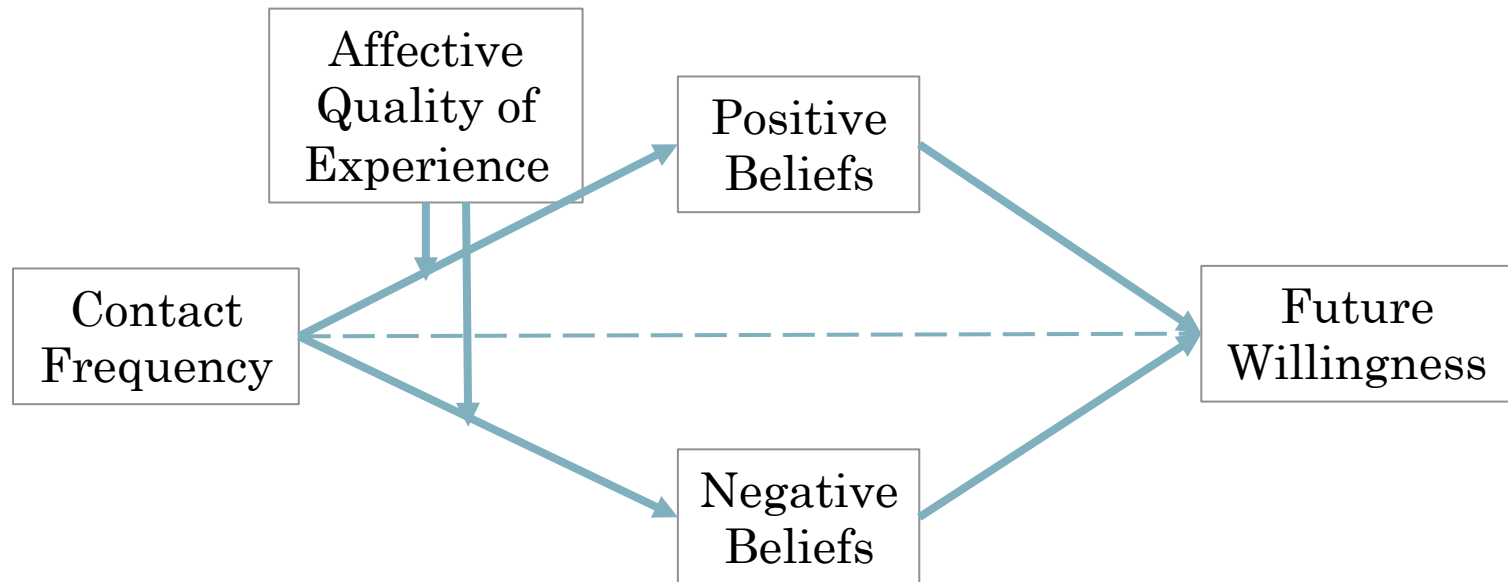
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In G. A. Petery & J. Barnes-Farrell (Co-Chairs), *Perspectives on workplace age discrimination: Prevalence, processes, and outcomes*. Symposium conducted at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the Society for Industrial-Organizational Psychology, Orlando, FL

# Background

- Older worker stereotypes → Workplace age discrimination concerns
- Intergroup Contact Theory
  - Positive contact → Positive outcomes
  - Negative contact → Negative outcomes?



# Method

- Participants

- 580 undergraduate students (58% female; Age:  $M = 19.2$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ )

- Measures

- Age definition of older worker
- Older worker (supervisor and coworker)
  - Contact frequency (never to constant)
  - Quality of experience (negative to positive)
  - Future willingness to work with older worker
- Older worker age beliefs (27-items, 7-point Likert scale)
  - EFA → Two Factors
    - Positive Beliefs (12-items,  $\alpha = .94$ )
    - Negative Beliefs (10-items,  $\alpha = .86$ )

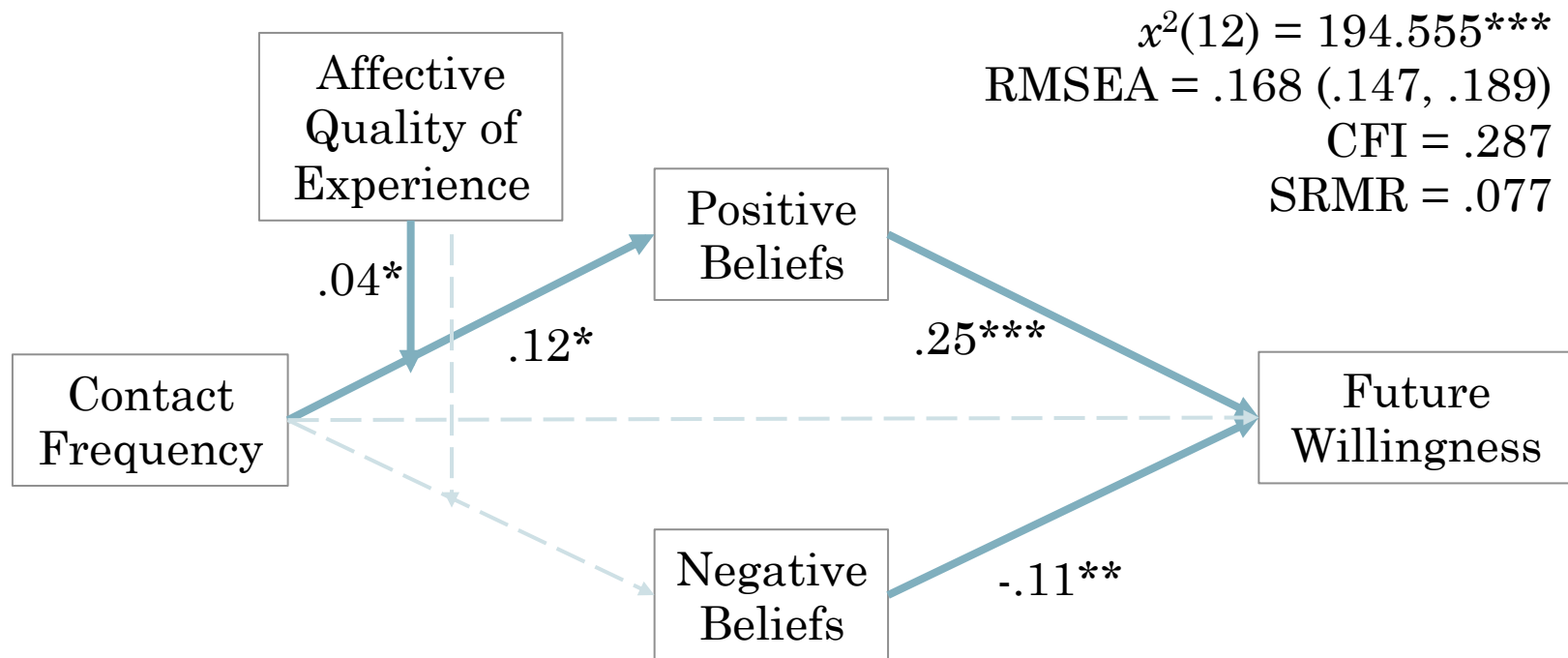
- Covariates

- Non-work exposure to older persons

# Correlation Matrix

		M	SD	N	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Positive Age Beliefs	4.87	.97	572											
2	Negative Age Beliefs	4.12	.88	574	.10*										
3	Sup Frequency	3.69	1.15	580	.17***	.06									
4	Sup Experience	4.15	1.09	580	.11**	-.08*	-.03								
5	Sup Future	3.61	1.02	580	.28***	-.08	.26***	.44***							
6	Coworker Frequency	3.32	1.33	580	.05	.03	.41***	-.04	.14***						
7	Coworker Experience	4.28	1.16	580	.21***	-.06	.03	.37***	.28***	-.30***					
8	Coworker Future	3.45	.98	579	.30***	-.11**	.27***	.22***	.56***	.22**	.36**				
9	Older Worker Age	52.11	12.41	580	.16***	.07	-.07	.00	-.06	-.17***	.11**	.00			
10	Lived with old person	3.58	1.44	576	.09*	-.03	.03	.02	.06	-.03	-.02	-.01	.01		
11	Communicate with old person	2.86	1.60	577	.07	.01	-.09*	-.05	-.04	-.09*	.02	-.05	.10*	.11**	
12	Age	19.20	1.48	580	-.01	-.08	-.01	-.03	.00	-.01	.04	.04	.00	-.10*	.02

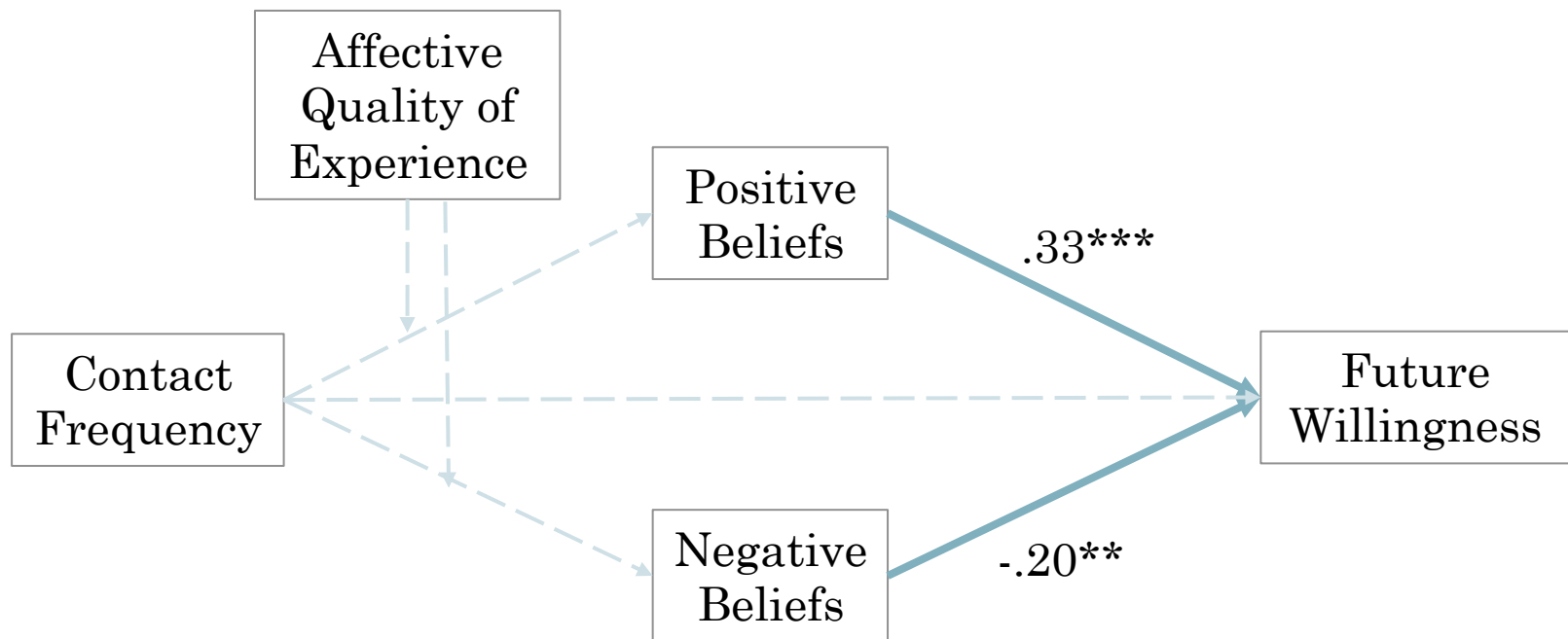
# Results – Older Supervisor ( $n = 541$ )



Mediated-Moderation Indirect Effects with Positive Beliefs  
(Bootstrap 90% C.I.)

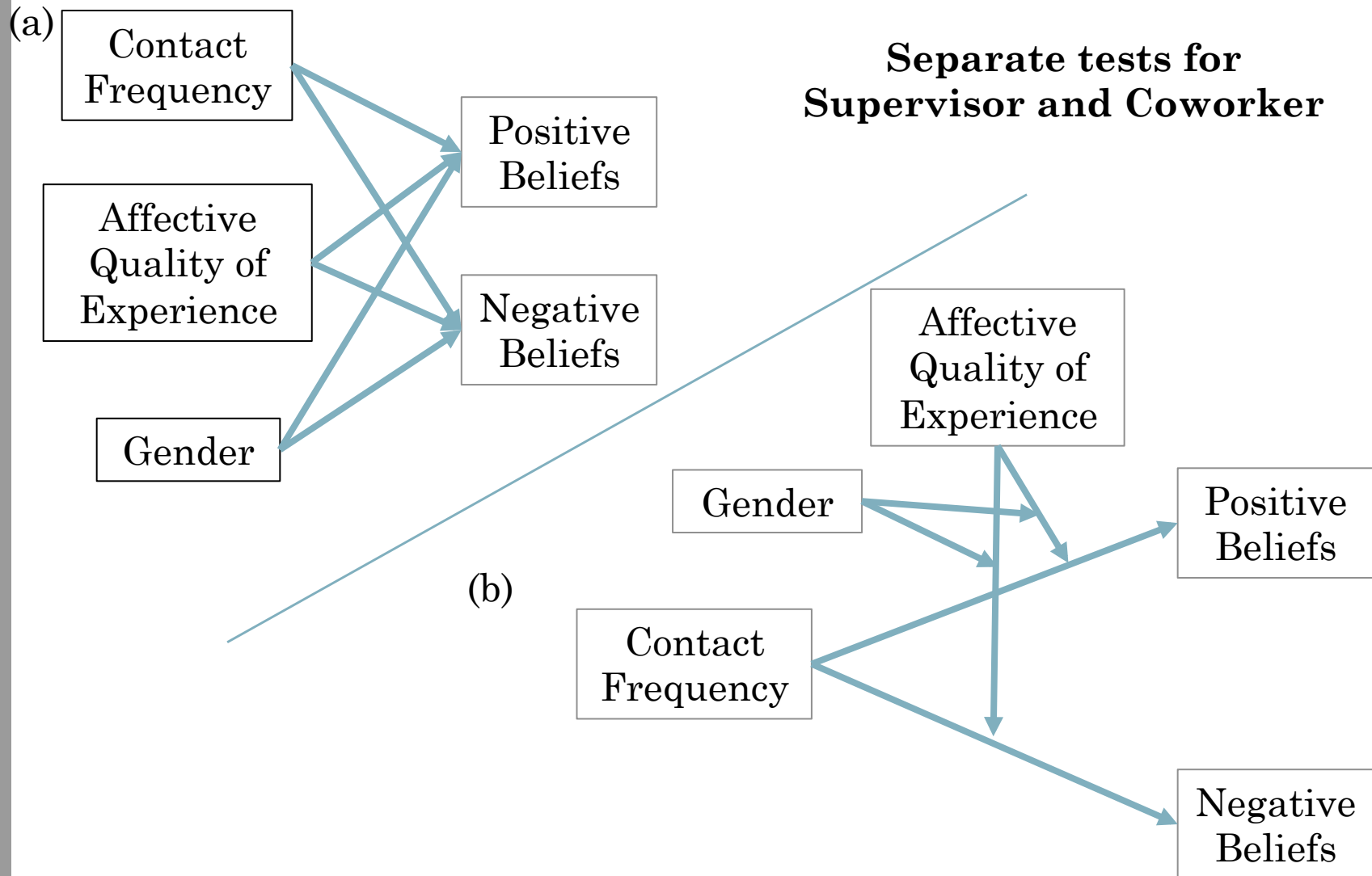
- Mid-level Quality of Experience: .03 (.011, .056)
- High-level Quality of Experience: .04 (.020, .071)

# Results – Older Coworker ( $n = 484$ )



- No Mediation or Moderation

# Post-Hoc Analyses



# Results: Supervisor

## Positive Beliefs ( $n = 535$ )

Model	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\Delta F$	$df$
1: Covariates	.008	.008	2.133 <i>ns</i>	(2, 532)
<b>2: + Gender</b>	<b>.034</b>	<b>.027</b>	<b>14.607 ***</b>	<b>(1, 531)</b>
<b>3: + Contact Frequency &amp; Quality</b>	<b>.078</b>	<b>.043</b>	<b>12.357***</b>	<b>(2, 529)</b>
4: + Gender*Contact Frequency Gender*Contact Quality Contact Frequency*Quality	.080	.002	.397 <i>ns</i>	(3, 526)
5: + Gender*Frequency*Quality	.081	.002	1.004 <i>ns</i>	(1, 525)

## Negative Beliefs ( $n = 537$ )

Model	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\Delta F$	$df$
1: Covariates	.003	.003	.904 <i>ns</i>	(2, 534)
2: + Gender	.066	.001	.513 <i>ns</i>	(1, 533)
<b>3: + Contact Frequency &amp; Quality</b>	<b>.017</b>	<b>.013</b>	<b>3.522*</b>	<b>(2, 531)</b>
4: + Gender*Contact Frequency Gender*Contact Quality Contact Frequency*Quality	.023	.006	1.000 <i>ns</i>	(3, 528)
5: + Gender*Frequency*Quality	.023	.000	.144 <i>ns</i>	(1, 527)



# Results: Coworker

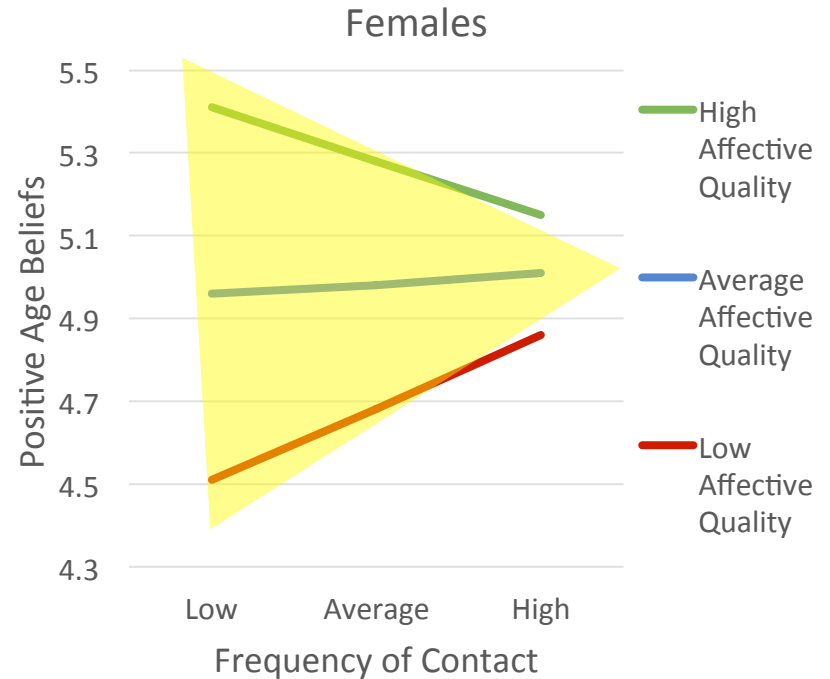
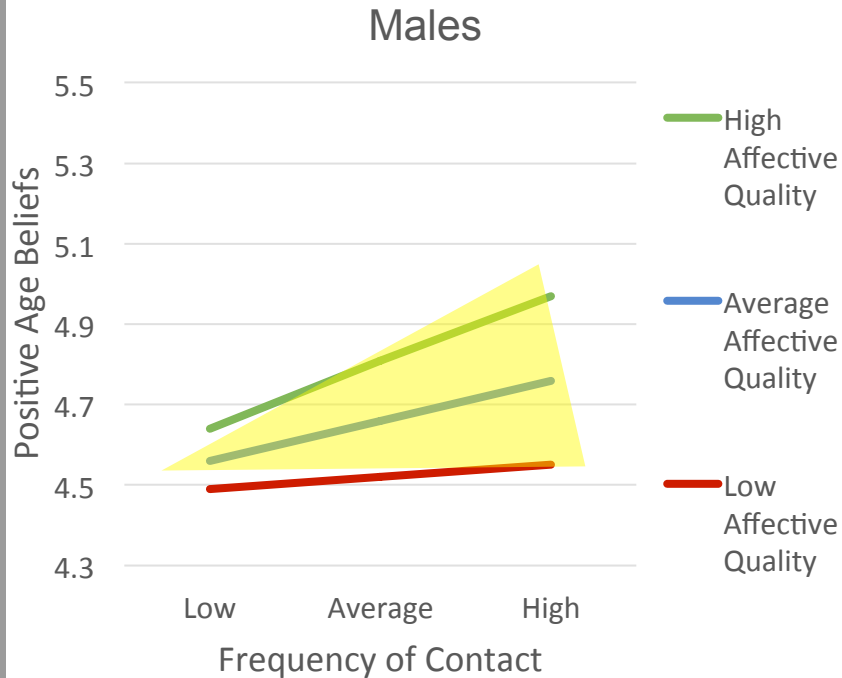
## Negative Beliefs ( $n = 479$ )

Model #	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\Delta F$	$df$
1: Covariates	.002	.002	.371 <i>ns</i>	(2, 476)
2: + Gender	.002	.000	.017 <i>ns</i>	(1, 475)
3: + Contact Frequency & Quality	.012	.010	2.375 <i>ns</i>	(2, 473)
4: + Gender*Contact Frequency Gender*Contact Quality Contact Frequency*Quality	.021	.009	1.462 <i>ns</i>	(3, 470)
5: + Gender*Frequency*Quality	.023	.003	1.230 <i>ns</i>	(1, 469)

## Positive Beliefs ( $n = 477$ )

Model #	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\Delta F$	$df$
1: Covariates	.007	.007	1.739 <i>ns</i>	(2, 474)
<b>2: + Gender</b>	<b>.031</b>	<b>.024</b>	<b>11.656 ***</b>	<b>(1, 473)</b>
<b>3: + Contact Frequency &amp; Quality</b>	<b>.097</b>	<b>.066</b>	<b>17.147***</b>	<b>(2, 471)</b>
4: + Gender*Contact Frequency Gender*Contact Quality Contact Frequency*Quality	.106	.009	1.618 <i>ns</i>	(3, 468)
<b>5: + Gender*Frequency*Quality</b>	<b>.118</b>	<b>.012</b>	<b>6.369*</b>	<b>(1, 467)</b>

# Results – Three-way Interaction of Frequency, Affective Quality, and Gender



# Encouraging Take Away

- Generally positive beliefs about older workers
- Willingness to work with older workers in the future
  - Supervisors and coworkers
- Positive beliefs > Negative beliefs
- Gender may play a role
- Applying finding
  - Promote intergenerational contact

# Questions?

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# Age Bias Items

## “Older workers...”

### Positive Age Bias Items

- 1) Are productive
- 2) Often have creative ideas
- 3) Will take on additional responsibilities
- 4) Really concentrate on their work
- 5) Have good attendance records
- 6) Really try to do their best
- 7) Have a strong work ethic
- 8) Are satisfied with their work
- 9) Have good interpersonal skills
- 10) Keep at a task until it is finished
- 11) Are dependable
- 12) Put a lot of effort into their work

### Negative Age Bias Items

1. Get rattled when rushed
2. Do not keep up with changing methods of work
3. Complain about their jobs
4. Are stubborn and stuck in their ways
5. Need training and development
6. Want all the credit themselves
7. Need a lot of time to learn new operations
8. Are critical of their fellow workers
9. Have accidents at work
10. Feel like they know it all