

School-based outdoor education (OE) is a pedagogical approach aiming to promote pupils' learning and well-being. OE with its action-oriented and cooperative learning approach can inspire teachers to develop their teaching and may also have a positive impact on their work well-being.

According to self-determination theory, satisfaction or frustration of employees' basic psychological needs – need for autonomy, competence and relatedness – are important facilitators or impediments of work well-being.

We explored possible associations between OE use and teachers' a) satisfaction/frustration of basic needs at work and b) work engagement.

Method: The study, part of the LärMiljö study, used data collected among teachers in Swedish-language primary schools in Finland in 2022 (N= 134 teachers from 44 schools). Main measures:

- Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Need Frustration at Work Scale (24 items)
- Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (9 items)

Data were analyzed by means of descriptive statistics (i.e. Mann-Whitney U-test, Spearman correlation).

Table 1. Characteristics of respondents

	Teachers using OE (regularly or occasionally)	Teachers not using OE	All	<i>p</i>
	69%	31%	100%	
Gender, %				<i>p</i> > 0.05
- Female	86.8	76.2	83.5	
- Male	<u>13.2</u>	<u>23.8</u>	<u>16.5</u>	
	100	100	100	
Age in years, mean (SD)	44 (11)	48 (10)	45 (11)	<i>p</i> > 0.05
Teaching experience in years, mean (SD)	15 (10)	17 (11)	16 (10)	<i>p</i> > 0.05

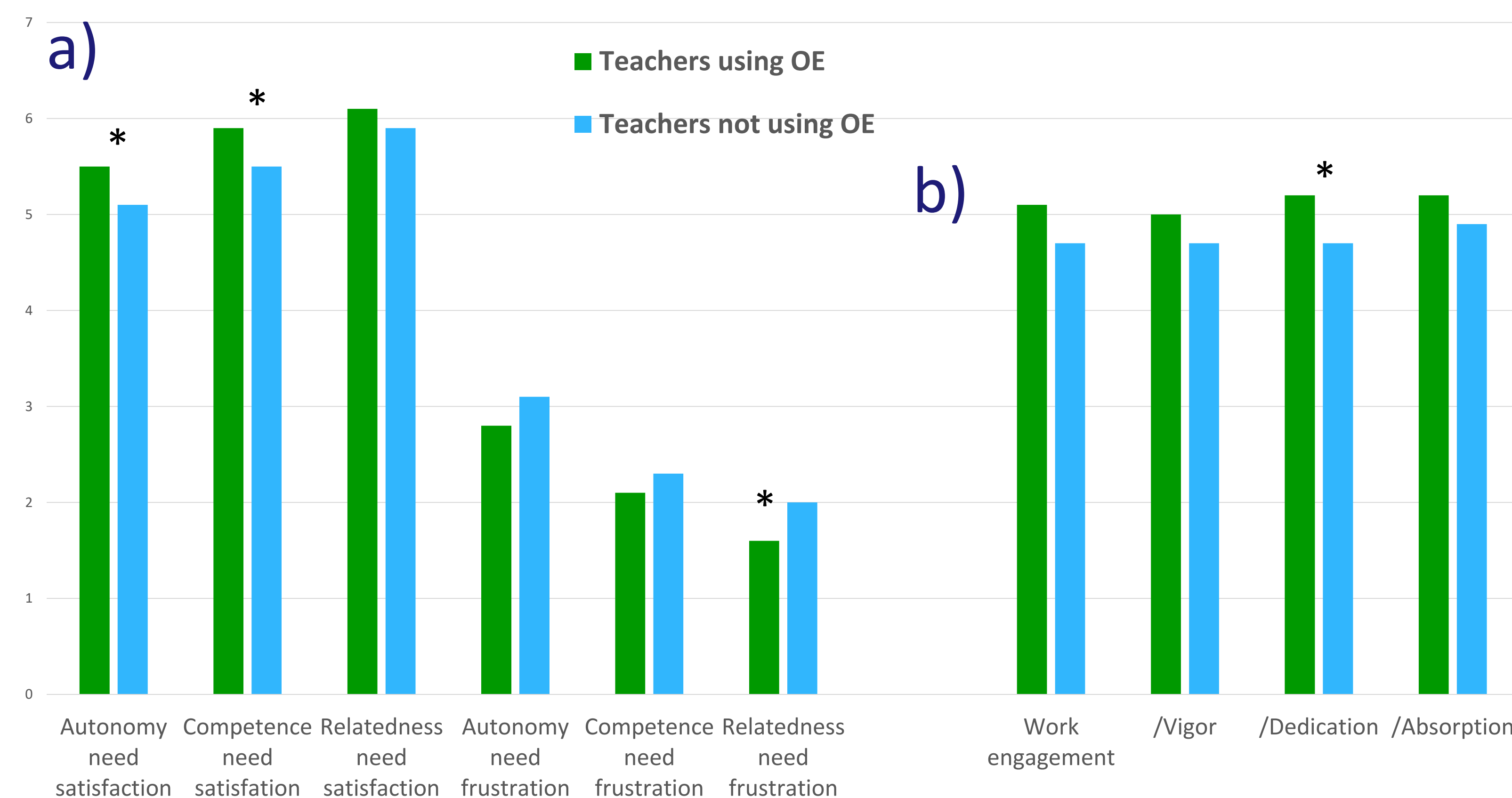


Figure 1. Means for a) Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Need Frustration at Work (1-7), and b) overall Work engagement and its subdimensions (0-6) across primary school teachers using or not using outdoor education (OE). Mann-Whitney U-tests (* *p* < .05)

Main results:

❖ The vast majority was female (84%), classroom teachers (75%) and had a master's degree (82%).

Preliminary findings show that:

- ❖ 69% practiced OE (regularly or occasionally) and 31% did not; both groups were similar in terms of teaching experience, age and gender (Table 1)
- ❖ OE teachers had higher autonomy and competence need satisfaction, and lower relatedness need frustration than teachers not using OE (*p* < 0.05; Fig. 1)
- ❖ OE teachers had higher dedication to work than teachers not using OE (*p* < 0.05), but there was no difference in overall work engagement (*p* = 0.07; Fig. 1)
- ❖ Satisfaction of basic needs at work was positively, and frustration of needs negatively, associated with work engagement (*p* < 0.001)

Conclusions:

Practicing OE appears to have positive associations with teachers' dedication to work and satisfaction of need for autonomy and competence, and a negative association with relatedness need frustration. More studies are needed to confirm and examine the direction of these associations.

