Antecedent Conditions

Lifelong development is essentially a process of selective adaptation and transformation.

Additional ontogenetic selection pressure derives from the fact of finite internal and external resources as well as addition of and changes in context demands.

Further selection pressure derives from age-related changes in plasticity and associated losses in internal and external resources.

Orchestrating Processes

**SELECTION: GOALS/OUTCOMES**
- Identification of goal domains and directionality of ontogenetic process
- Narrowing of pool of potentialities

**OPTIMIZATION: MEANS/RESOURCES**
- Acquisition/orchestration of means
- Enhancement of goal-directed means
- Search for enhancing contexts

**COMPENSATION: RESPONSE TO LOSS OF MEANS**
- Acquisition of new goal directed internal and external means due to:
  - (a) loss of available means and resources
  - (b) changes in adaptive contexts
  - (c) readjustment of goal structures

Outcomes

Maximization of objective and subjective gains and minimization of losses

Successful development (growth) as attainment of salient goals or states of functioning

Maintenance of function including resilience/recovery

Regulation of loss

![Lifespan model of selection, optimization and compensation (SOC)](image)

**Figure 1. The lifespan model of selection, optimization and compensation (SOC).**

The essentials of the model are proposed to be universal, but specific phenotypic manifestations will vary by domain, individual, socio-cultural context, and theoretical perspective (adapted from PB Baltes 1987, 1997, PB Baltes & Baltes 1990, Marsiske et al 1995).
### Table 1. SOC-15 item examples for each of the SOC regulatory processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOC Process</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
<th>SOC-15 Item Examples</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Elective</td>
<td>Specification of goals, goal system (hierarchy), contextualization of goals and goal commitment</td>
<td>“When I think about what I want in life, I commit myself to one or two important goals”</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Loss-based</td>
<td>Focusing on most important goals, reconstruction of goal hierarchy, adaptation of standards, search for new goals</td>
<td>“When things don’t go as well as before, I drop some goals to concentrate on the more important ones”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Optimization</td>
<td>Attentional focus, seizing the right moment, persistence, acquiring new skills/resources, practice of skills, modelling successful others</td>
<td>“I keep trying until I succeed at a goal”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>Substitution of means; use of external aids/help of others; use of therapeutic intervention; increased effort, energy and time allocation; modelling successful others who compensate</td>
<td>“When I can’t do something as well as before then I find out about other ways and means to achieve it”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### References


