

## ARTICLE

# How and when does personal life orientation predict well-being?

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### Abstract

We examined the direct and indirect—as mediated by job satisfaction—effects of personal life orientation on life satisfaction. We also examined whether these direct and indirect associations differed between employees working onsite or remotely. Using data from 432 employees (152 working onsite and 280 working remotely), our results revealed that personal life orientation was positively related to life satisfaction and negatively related to job satisfaction. Moreover, both of these direct associations were stronger among onsite employees than among remote employees. As a result, the indirect effects of personal life orientation on life satisfaction were significantly mediated by job satisfaction among employees working onsite, but not among employees working remotely. This study thus reveals that working remotely may act as a double-edged sword by buffering the negative effects of personal life orientation on job satisfaction, but also by limiting the positive effects of personal life orientation on life satisfaction.

### KEYWORDS

job satisfaction, life satisfaction, mediation, moderation, personal life orientation, remote working

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## INTRODUCTION

At a time when society and organizations tend to value heavy work investment at the expense of other life domains (Gillet et al., 2018), some individuals still strive to achieve a more balanced allocation of their time and resources between their personal and professional lives. These individuals are considered to have a high personal life orientation (PLO). PLO is defined as individuals' inclination to allocate enough time, in their lives, to pursue their own personal interests (e.g., hobbies, learning, arts, and sports) while concurrently engaging in a professional career (Hall et al., 2013). Research shows that individuals high in PLO tend to be more satisfied with their life (Hirschi et al., 2016). However, recent studies have shown that the effects of employees' work-life orientation on their psychological well-being were moderated by a variety of individual and contextual characteristics (e.g., learning goal orientation: Jiang, 2021; learning value of the job: Janssen et al., 2021). Likewise, to fully benefit from a high PLO, individuals need to be able to efficiently manage the boundaries between their multiple life roles. Boundary management involves the ability to act on these personal preferences through the prioritization of the time and energy allocated to one's various life roles (Hall et al., 2013).

The context of the COVID-19 pandemic has forced numerous onsite employees to work remotely (Wang et al., 2021), and has placed boundary management at the forefront of many workers' lives. Indeed, the global shift from working onsite (i.e., working outside of one's personal house, within a formal external workplace or office) to working remotely (i.e., working outside a traditional office environment; e.g., working from home) has contributed to blur the lines between employees' work and personal lives, making it harder for them to efficiently manage these boundaries (Vaziri et al., 2020). As a result, remote work might make it harder for employees to reap the benefits associated with a high PLO. This issue has important theoretical and practical implications regarding how best to support and increase the psychological well-being of remote employees but remains to be formally investigated. The present study was thus designed to examine whether and how work type (i.e., working remotely or onsite), given its likely impact on boundary management, could moderate the associations between their PLO and two components of psychological well-being (i.e., life satisfaction and job satisfaction), while also considering the likely benefits of job satisfaction on life satisfaction. These facets of employees' psychological well-being are important to consider due to their well-documented associations with important outcomes for organizations (e.g., work performance; Bowling et al., 2015) and individuals (e.g., work-family interface; Vaziri et al., 2020).

By demonstrating the potentially positive effects of employees' PLO on their life satisfaction as mediated by their job satisfaction, and by considering whether and how these associations differ between employees working remotely or onsite, this research seeks to further unpack some of the mechanisms and circumstances (i.e., work type) involved in the effects of PLO. By unpacking these mechanisms, our goal is to provide practical guidance for organizations seeking to support employees who value their personal life (i.e., employees high in PLO). Such support would be particularly useful for these employees in navigating the challenges posed by having to work remotely or onsite in relation to their ability to maintain a satisfactory level of professional and personal well-being. In sum, the present study seeks to improve our understanding of the role played by contemporary forms of work arrangements and by the endorsement of nonwork orientations (Wang et al., 2021).

## Theoretical perspectives

Numerous studies emphasize employees' increasing desire to organize their professional and personal lives to allocate to the latter without interfering with the former (Shockley et al., 2021; Vaziri et al., 2020). In the career management research literature (Hall et al., 2013), the concept of PLO has emerged to reflect this tendency and to reinforce the idea that employees must succeed at managing the interface between their professional and nonprofessional roles to achieve a sustainable career.

In line with previous investigations of PLO (Hirschi et al., 2016, 2020), we rely on the Work-Home Resources (W-HR) model (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) as the main theoretical framework for this study. This model provides an integrative framework to explain both desirable and undesirable processes related to the work–family interface. The W-HR model first addresses how the occurrence of conflict (i.e., demands from the work or family domains hinder employees' ability to meet demands from the other domain) and enrichment (i.e., resources gained in the work or family domains help employees fulfill demands from the other domain) between the work and family domains is influenced by individual and organizational factors. Second, this model defines conflict as a process of resource depletion, while positioning enrichment as a process of resource accumulation, in order to explain how one's resources can contribute to improve or deteriorate work and personal outcomes.

According to the WH-R model (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), key resources are individual factors that help workers to obtain, retain, protect, and utilize their other personal resources, in turn fostering enrichment. On this basis, we argue that PLO should act as a key resource to help employees utilize their other personal resources in a more optimal manner, thus making them more likely to undergo a gain spiral of resource accumulation, in turn leading them to experience higher levels of life satisfaction. Because they value their personal life and can more optimally use their resources in this life area, employees high in PLO should be more likely to endorse a positive evaluation of their life in general (Diener, 1984; Hall et al., 2013). Yet, prior research suggests that PLO could also interfere with individuals' functioning. Indeed, because they tend to predominantly tap into their limited personal resources to support nonwork activities, individuals high in PLO tend to have less personal resources left available to support their work, which may make their job experience less pleasant and more difficult, leading them to experience a loss spiral of resource depletion (Hobfoll, 2011). With fewer resources to support their work, employees high in PLO may come to feel inadequate in their work role, making them more likely to evaluate their job in a negative light, in the form of lower job satisfaction (Hall et al., 2013). Supporting these differentiated effects of PLO on life and job satisfaction, Hall et al. (2013) noted that PLO tended to be positively related to values-driven (i.e., concerns for making career decisions fitting one's personal values), self-directed (i.e., concerns for personal control and autonomy over career decisions), and protean (i.e., concerns for pursuing interesting and personal career values and goals) career orientations (Briscoe et al., 2006; Hall, 2004). In turn, these career orientations all tend to relate to higher levels of life satisfaction (Zhang et al., 2015) and to lower levels of job satisfaction (Supeli & Creed, 2016). These differentiated effects of PLO on life and job satisfaction are also supported by results from studies examining the effects of constructs conceptually close to PLO. For instance, Adams et al. (1996) found a positive relation between personal role involvement (i.e., people identify with their personal role and the importance of this role in their life; Wittmer & Martin, 2011) and life satisfaction. In contrast, Wei et al. (2018) reported negative associations between personal role involvement and job satisfaction.

Beyond this expected opposite role of PLO on employees' life satisfaction and job satisfaction, numerous studies have also demonstrated a positive effect of job satisfaction on life satisfaction (Bowling et al. 2010; Tait et al., 1989). Indeed, domain-specific satisfaction (i.e., the subjective assessment of the quality and satisfactory nature of one's functioning in specific domains) has been demonstrated to be an important source of information for the subjective assessment of one's global life satisfaction (Heller et al., 2002). Consistent with this bottom-up approach viewing life satisfaction as driven by domain-specific satisfaction, the WH-R model (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) notes that employees should experience a variety of positive outcomes as a result of their exposure to a resource-accumulation process. When experiencing work resource gain, individuals have a tendency to accumulate resources into "resource caravans" (Hobfoll, 2011), thus creating a gain spiral of resources, which should result in better personal functioning (Wayne et al., 2017).

We also consider the possibility that the associations between PLO and employees' job and life satisfaction will be moderated by their work context (remote or onsite). More specifically, we expect that working remotely may act as a double-edged sword able to buffer the negative effects of PLO on job satisfaction, but also to reduce the positive effects of PLO on life satisfaction. Indeed, working

remotely provides higher levels of autonomy and flexibility in the accomplishment of work activities (Wang et al., 2021), which both tended to be valued by employees high in PLO (Hall, 2004). Thus, remote workers high in PLO should feel more in control of when and how they transition between their work and their nonwork roles (Kossek et al., 2012), making it easier for them to schedule their work in a way that matches their PLO and buffering the negative effects of PLO on job satisfaction (Gillet et al., 2019). In contrast, the person-environment fit perspective (Yang et al., 2008) suggests that a lower fit between employees' work orientations (i.e., PLO) and their work characteristics (i.e., working onsite) should be associated with lower levels of job satisfaction (Chen et al., 2016). This lower level of person-environment fit experienced by onsite employees is likely to decrease even more their expectancies of being able to successfully attain their professional goals, thus reinforcing the deleterious effects of their PLO on job satisfaction (Nikitin & Freund, 2008).

Finally, from the perspective of Carver and Scheier's (1990) control theory, the general life satisfaction of employees high in PLO should be weakened in a context (i.e., working remotely) where the boundaries between their work and nonwork lives are blurred (Wang et al., 2021). Indeed, employees high in PLO may see remote work as a threat to their ability to manage the boundaries between their work and nonwork lives, and may thus experience a sense of losing control in their prioritization of the time and energy allocated to their various roles (Hall et al., 2013). Because of this negative spiral, employees who are high in PLO and who work remotely may come to experience their general life in a negative manner (i.e., lower life satisfaction; Hart, 1999).

## THE PRESENT RESEARCH

The present study seeks to examine the: (1) direct and indirect effects of PLO on life satisfaction while considering the mediator role of job satisfaction; and (2) how the associations between PLO, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction differ between employees working remotely or onsite.

Individuals high in PLO tend to be strongly involved in their nonwork roles, and are thus more likely to build psychological (e.g., self-esteem), personal (e.g., new skills), and social (e.g., community) resources within these nonwork domains (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). These resources can then be used to meet challenges in their personal life (e.g., to maintain high-quality relationships with one's family and friends). As a result, these individuals may come to experience higher levels of positive affect in their nonwork roles, which are likely to spillover and benefit their functioning in their other life roles (e.g., family-work-enrichment: Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), leading them to experience higher levels of life satisfaction (Hirschi et al., 2016). In contrast, they have fewer resources available to invest in their work role (e.g., Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), making them more likely to experience lower levels of job satisfaction (Hirschi et al., 2016). Based on these considerations and prior findings (e.g., Supeli & Creed, 2016; Zhang et al., 2015), we propose that:

*Hypothesis 1.* PLO will be positively related to life satisfaction and negatively related to job satisfaction.

According to the bottom-up representation of life satisfaction, global life satisfaction should be influenced by domain-specific types of satisfaction, such as job satisfaction (Diener, 1984). Job satisfaction may contribute to a better internalization of one's work role, leading to higher satisfaction with one's life in general (Heller et al., 2002; Judge & Watanabe, 1994), leading us to propose that:

*Hypothesis 2.* Job satisfaction will be positively related to life satisfaction.

The associations considered in this study describe a partial mediation model according to which: (1) PLO is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction and with lower levels of job satisfaction (Hypothesis 1); and (2) job satisfaction is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction

(Hypothesis 2). In line with past research demonstrating similar indirect effects of career orientations on employee's well-being at work (Ngo & Hui, 2019; Stauffer et al., 2019), we propose that:

*Hypothesis 3.* Job satisfaction will partially mediate the effect of PLO on life satisfaction.

Employees high in PLO consider their personal interests as central and working remotely makes these activities more salient. More precisely, the remote work setting gives them far more flexibility in scheduling these personal activities without also having to make work-related sacrifices, thus allowing them to experience higher levels of job satisfaction (Gillet et al., 2019; Kossek et al., 2012). In contrast, employees high in PLO are not ready to spend an excessive amount of time and effort at work at the expense of their other nonwork roles (e.g., family), thus interfering with their ability to complete their work tasks efficiently, and decreasing their chances of experiencing job satisfaction when working onsite (Alessandri et al., 2017). As a result, we propose that:

*Hypothesis 4.* PLO should be negatively associated with job satisfaction among employees working onsite and positively associated with job satisfaction among employees working remotely.

Although employees high in PLO tend to prioritize time for themselves and value their personal life (Hall et al., 2013), they may have difficulties working efficiently when working remotely due to the interference of their personal life with their work (e.g., family emergencies that they may prioritize over work, because of their PLO). Indeed, these demands interfere with their ability to meet work requirements promptly and efficiently, which is a condition for them to be able to switch off from work and engage in their personal interests (Vaziri et al., 2020). As a result, we propose that:

*Hypothesis 5.* The positive association between PLO and life satisfaction will be stronger among employees working onsite and weaker among employees working remotely.

## METHODS

### Participants

The sample included 432 participants with 54.6% of females. Of those, 152 reported working onsite (35.2%), and 280 reported working remotely (64.8%). Participants working remotely often (57.5%) or sometimes (37.5%) had other people present at home when working (partner: 90.4%; children: 43.6%). Participants lived and worked in the UK (74.3%) or the United States (25.7%), and 94.9% held a bachelor's degree. Their age ranged between 23 and 69 years, with a mean age of 40.06 years ( $SD = 10.44$ ) and a mean tenure in their current position of 6.27 years ( $SD = 5.64$ ). The majority of the participants held a permanent (93.5%) full-time (89.4%) position. Participants mainly worked in the private sector (60.6%), including nonmarket services (50.0%), market services (35.2%), industry (10.0%), construction (2.1%), agriculture (0.7%), or other sectors (2.1%).

### Procedure

Participants were invited to complete an online questionnaire via the Prolific Academic crowdsourcing platform between December 2 and 5, 2020. The United States and UK were not on national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic (the second national lockdown in the UK ended on the day data collection started). Yet, most of the remote working participants (58.6%) did not use to work remotely prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Before completing the questionnaire, participants were

communicated information about the objectives of the research, were informed that participation was voluntary and confidential, and were ensured that they would be able to freely withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were compensated £0.60 for completing the questionnaire (5 min).

Recruitment was limited to participants: (1) who lived with a spouse or partner (prior studies have shown that remote workers' experience and functioning may be impacted by marital status; e.g., Vaziri et al., 2020); (2) for whom English was the first language; and (3) who were employed by an organization and not self-employed. The survey also included two questions assessing participants' attention (e.g., "It is important that you pay attention to our survey, please tick strongly disagree"), and one final question verifying "for scientific reasons," if they really worked in an organization. Only respondents who successfully completed all of those verifications were included in the study.

## Measures

### Personal life orientation

PLO was measured using a 5-item scale (e.g., "Making time for pursuing personal interests is a big priority for me"; Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.88$  in the current study) developed by Hall et al. (2013). Items were rated on a 5-point scale ("Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree"). Evidence supporting the reliability and validity of scores obtained on this measure has been reported in prior studies (Hall et al., 2013; Hirschi et al., 2016, 2020).

### Job and life satisfaction

Job and life satisfaction were each measured by one item recommended by Fisher et al. (2016; also see Wanous et al., 1997) as providing an accurate measure of these constructs, and asking participants to report the extent to which they were satisfied with their current job and life in general. For both items, responses were provided on a 4-point scale ranging from "Dissatisfied" to "Satisfied." Importantly, prior research has established the relevance, reliability, and validity of single-item measures of job and life satisfaction (similar and identical to those used in this study), which also have the advantage of being easier and quicker to complete, while retaining face validity (Fisher et al., 2016; Wanous et al., 1997). Likewise, additional studies have also supported the validity of similar single-item measures of job and life satisfaction in relation to various measures of individual and contextual characteristics (e.g., Beutell, 2010; Gillet et al., 2022).

## ANALYSES

We used Mplus 8.5's (Muthén & Muthén, 2020) robust maximum likelihood estimator, which is robust to non-normality, for all analyses. Due to the online nature of the data collection, there were no missing data. We first estimated a confirmatory factor analytic (CFA) model encompassing the multi-item construct considered in the present study (i.e., PLO), defined by its a priori indicators (five items), together with participants' observed scores reflecting job and life satisfaction as well as work type (coded 0 for onsite workers and 1 for remote workers), which were simply allowed to correlate with one another and with the factor representing PLO.

This model was then converted to our a priori predictive structural equation model (SEM) in which PLO was specified as having a direct effect on job and life satisfaction. Job satisfaction was also specified as having a direct effect on life satisfaction, in line with Hypothesis 1 and based on the aforementioned theoretical rationales and empirical findings (Hall et al., 2013; Hirschi et al., 2016, 2020). As a result, PLO (the predictor) was also assumed to have an indirect effect on life satisfaction



TABLE 1 Predictive results

Predictors	Life satisfaction		Job satisfaction	
	b (s.e.)	$\beta$	b (s.e.)	$\beta$
Personal life orientation	0.177 (0.050)**	0.240	-0.186 (0.068)**	-0.213
Work type	0.008 (0.068)	0.005	0.123 (0.090)	0.067
Job satisfaction	0.408 (0.037)**	0.485		
Orientation $\times$ Work type	-0.189 (0.063)**	-0.123	0.224 (0.089)*	0.123
$R^2$	0.238 (0.040)**		0.022 (0.015)	
	a	b (s.e.)	a	b (s.e.)
<i>Personal life orientation: Simple slope analyses</i>				
Onsite workers	1.962	0.177 (0.050)**	2.987	-0.186 (0.068)**
Remote workers	1.970	-0.013 (0.037)	3.110	0.038 (0.057)

Note: Work type: 0 = Onsite workers and 1 = Remote workers;  $R^2$ : Squared multiple correlation (reflecting the proportion of explained variance); a: Regression intercept (used in drawing the simple slope graphs); b: Unstandardized coefficient; s.e.: Standard error of the coefficient;  $\beta$ : Standardized coefficient.

\* $p \leq 0.05$ .

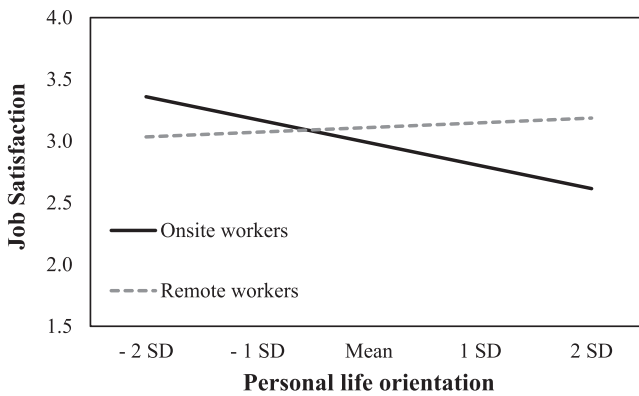
\*\* $p \leq 0.01$ .

(the outcome) through job satisfaction (the mediator). Due to the testing of latent interactions involving work type, this variable was also allowed to predict the mediator and the outcome. We note, however, that none of the associations differed between a model including, or excluding, work type. Finally, to test the extent to which the effects of PLO on job and life satisfaction differed (i.e., were moderated) between onsite and remote workers, latent interactions between work type (0: Onsite workers; 1: Remote workers) and PLO were estimated with the latent moderated SEM approach (Klein & Moosbrugger, 2000) and allowed to predict job and life satisfaction. Significant interactions were plotted following simple slope analyses conducted by recoding the work type variable (1: Onsite workers; 0: Remote workers) (Marsh et al., 2013). SEM made it possible to obtain more accurate estimates of associations corrected for unreliability (Bollen, 1989; Marsh et al., 2013).

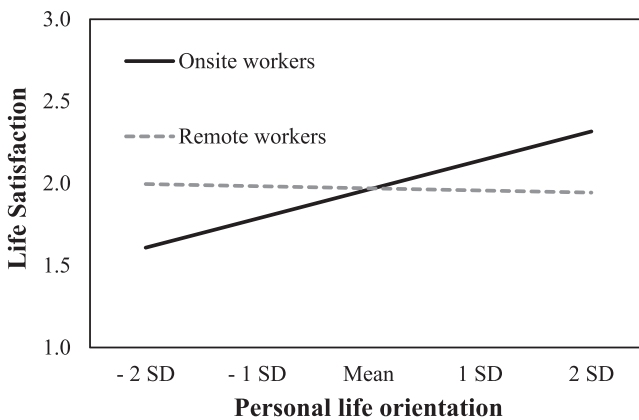
To verify the adequacy of our CFA and SEM solutions, we relied on model fit indices, where higher values (i.e.,  $\geq 0.90$  and  $\geq 0.95$ ) on the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) and the comparative fit index (CFI), and lower values ( $\leq 0.08$  and  $\leq 0.06$ ) on the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were taken to reflect adequate (respectively, acceptable and excellent) levels of fit to the data (Marsh et al., 2005). It is important to note that the fit of the SEM model was estimated in a solution excluding the latent interaction effects, as model fit information is not available for models including latent interactions. In addition, the statistical significance of the indirect effects (IE) of PLO on life satisfaction was calculated using bias-corrected bootstrap (10,000 bootstrap samples) confidence intervals (CI; Cheung & Lau, 2008), which indicate statistical significance when the CI excludes 0.

## RESULTS

The model fit of the CFA ( $\chi^2 = 29.926$ ,  $df = 17$ ; CFI = 0.986; TLI = 0.976; and RMSEA = 0.042 [0.014; 0.066]) and SEM ( $\chi^2 = 30.343$ ,  $df = 18$ ; CFI = 0.986; TLI = 0.979; and RMSEA = 0.040 [0.011; 0.064]) solutions was satisfactory, supporting their ability to provide an accurate representation of the data. These results revealed well-defined, reliable, and well-differentiated constructs. The parameter estimates related to the predictive part of the SEM solution, including the latent interactions, are reported in Table 1. These results indicated that PLO was associated with higher levels of life satisfaction and with lower levels of job satisfaction, thus supporting Hypothesis 1. Likewise, job satisfaction was associated with higher levels of life satisfaction, thus supporting Hypothesis 2.



**FIGURE 1** Simple slope analysis of the effects of personal life orientation on job satisfaction among onsite and remote workers



**FIGURE 2** Simple slope analysis of the effects of personal life orientation on life satisfaction among onsite and remote workers

Finally, on its own, work type was not associated with job or life satisfaction. Without considering the latent interaction effects, the indirect effect of PLO on life satisfaction was not significantly mediated by job satisfaction ( $IE = -0.017$ ;  $CI = -0.054$  to  $0.019$ ), thus failing to support Hypothesis 3.

The results also revealed that PLO and work type interacted in the prediction of job and life satisfaction. However, these interactions only resulted in minimal increases in the proportion of explained variance (2%), although this increase is aligned with the explanatory power of interaction effects typically observed in social sciences (Marsh et al., 2013). Simple slope analyses are reported in the bottom section of Table 1 and graphically represented in Figures 1 (job satisfaction) and 2 (life satisfaction). These analyses revealed that the negative effect of PLO on job satisfaction was significant among onsite workers but not among remote workers. Moreover, the positive effect of PLO on life satisfaction was significant among onsite workers but not among remote workers. These results partially support Hypotheses 4 and 5. Importantly, simple slope analyses also revealed that the indirect effect of PLO on life satisfaction was mediated by job satisfaction among onsite workers ( $IE = -0.076$ ;  $CI = -0.136$  to  $-0.019$ ) but not among remote workers ( $IE = 0.016$ ;  $CI = -0.031$  to  $0.061$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The present study sought to investigate the direct and indirect (as mediated by job satisfaction) associations between PLO and employees' life satisfaction while considering how these associations might differ for employees working remotely or onsite. Our results revealed that PLO was associated with lower levels of job satisfaction and with higher levels of life satisfaction. Moreover, we found that



these associations were stronger among employees working onsite than among employees working remotely. Our results also indicated that the indirect effects of PLO on life satisfaction were mediated by job satisfaction, but only among employees working onsite.

## Theoretical implications

Prior research has emphasized the need to further investigate the effects of PLO, already known to be linked to positive (e.g., high life and career satisfaction) and negative (e.g., low job satisfaction) outcomes (Hirschi et al., 2016, 2020). By revealing that higher levels of PLO tend to be associated with lower levels of job satisfaction and with higher levels of life satisfaction, the present results support and enrich these previous observations. The negative association between PLO and job satisfaction can be explained by the fact that individuals high in PLO are more inclined to invest their personal resources in their nonwork roles, leaving them with fewer resources available to support their work roles. As a result, they are able to allocate less time, energy, and persistence to their professional goals (i.e., higher levels of family–work conflict; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), leading them to experience lower levels of job satisfaction (Hirschi et al., 2016). In contrast, because of their higher level of involvement in their nonwork roles, employees high in PLO are more likely to experience higher levels of positive affect when involved in these roles. This positive effect is then likely to spill over into their other life roles (family-work enrichment; e.g., to achieve personally valued goals; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), resulting in higher levels of life satisfaction (Hirschi et al., 2016).

In addition to these effects of PLO, our results also replicated the results from previous studies (Bowling et al. 2010; Tait et al., 1989) in which positive associations have been reported between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. This relation is consistent with the idea that job experiences can spillover into one's personal life (i.e., work-family enrichment; Wayne et al., 2017), leading employees satisfied with their job to be more satisfied with their life in general (Heller et al., 2002; Judge & Watanabe, 1994).

When more specifically considering how the implications of PLO differed between employees working onsite or remotely, our results revealed that the direct effects of PLO on job satisfaction and life satisfaction were both more pronounced among employees working onsite than among employees working remotely, for whom these effects were not statistically significant. Indeed, employees high in PLO and working onsite may come to experience a lower level of fit between their individual work orientation (i.e., PLO) and their work setting (i.e., onsite). This discrepancy is likely to decrease their expectancies of being able to successfully attain their professional goals, in turn leading them to become even less engaged in the pursuit of these goals (Parker et al., 2012) and less satisfied with their job (Nikitin & Freund, 2008). Likewise, because employees high in PLO tend to expand most of their personal resources outside of the work setting, they may come to adopt defensive strategies to protect themselves from further loss of resources when working onsite (Hobfoll, 2011). As a result, they may become even less likely to invest time and effort at work at the expense of their nonwork roles, thus interfering with their ability to complete their work tasks efficiently (i.e., higher levels of family–work conflict; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), and decreasing their job satisfaction (Alessandri et al., 2017).

More generally, the present findings suggest that remote work, because it contributes to blur the boundaries between employees' professional and personal lives (Vaziri et al., 2020), can impede employees' functioning. The fact that participants working remotely most often worked while other people were present at home (e.g., partner and children) could explain their lower levels of job satisfaction. Indeed, this situation is likely to come with more interruptions and intrusions from family members, which might interfere with the work process (Derks et al., 2021). By having to simultaneously juggle the demands of their work and personal roles, remote workers might be more inclined to experience role conflict (Kahn et al., 1964), which could deteriorate their assessment of their work experience. Moreover, most participants working remotely were not used to work remotely prior to the COVID pandemic, which may have made it harder for them to effectively cope

with such situations. Indeed, the less experience people have working remotely, the more they lack self-discipline and tend to procrastinate (Wang et al., 2021), which could contribute to feelings of inadequacy and overwhelmingness, fueling a loss cycle of resource depletion and negative assessment of their job (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

In contrast, employees high in PLO working remotely tend to feel more in control of when and how they transition between their work and nonwork roles (Kossek et al., 2012). As a result, it might be easier for them to determine their work schedule, allowing them to find more time for themselves and, in turn, to experience higher levels of job satisfaction (Gillet et al., 2019). This greater sense of control may also contribute to increase their ability to use the resources gained at work in order to enrich their nonwork roles (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Indeed, according to the affective pathway of the work-family enrichment model (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), employees experiencing high levels of work-family enrichment should come to experience higher levels of psychological well-being (e.g., job satisfaction) as a result of the resources gained from their work (e.g., self-esteem, sense of accomplishment, motivation, positive affect, and vitality). In turn, they may also come to adopt more positive work-related attitudes, including higher levels of job satisfaction, as a way to reciprocate their ability to benefit from these positive work experiences (McNall et al., 2010).

However, employees high in PLO may experience less life satisfaction when working remotely, as this context can blur the temporal boundaries between their work life and personal life, resulting in a decrease in their personal time (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Wang et al., 2021). When working remotely, these employees may also experience difficulties in being efficient at work due to the normative demands stemming from their personal life (family-work conflict; e.g., family emergencies, such as homeschooling during lockdown) occurring during their work time. By reducing their ability to efficiently meet their work requirements, these interruptions may thus also contribute to postponing their after-work personal time, leading them to experience decreased levels of life satisfaction (Hart, 1999). Furthermore, the otherwise positive effects of PLO on life satisfaction typically observed among onsite employees may also be reduced when work is accomplished remotely. In this context, it may be harder for employees to benefit from supportive social interactions with their supervisors and colleagues (Kirk & Belovics, 2006), known to be positively associated with life satisfaction (Goh et al., 2015). More generally, the results from the present study emphasize that working remotely may be experienced as a job demand (an organizational aspect of the job that requires sustained psychological effort and is, therefore, associated with certain psychological costs) by employees high in PLO, and thus as something that may be detrimental for their life satisfaction (Gillet et al., 2020). This underscores the need to examine more extensively the specific nature of organizational job demands within different work settings (working remotely or onsite), a perspective that has so far been neglected in job demands-resources-based studies.

Our findings thus highlight a contingency perspective that helps to clarify and unpack several conditions under which PLO may differently influence employees' job and life satisfaction. Thus, our results indicate that working remotely seems to act as a double-edged sword for employees high in PLO by buffering the negative effects of PLO on their job satisfaction but also by limiting the positive effects of PLO on their life satisfaction. Finally, when considering the whole explanatory chain of associations, our results further indicated that PLO had indirect effects on life satisfaction through job satisfaction, but only among employees working onsite (i.e., not among employees working remotely). These results are congruent with those from previous studies demonstrating that the influence of some individual factors (such as PLO) on various outcome variables (e.g., life satisfaction) may be mediated by job satisfaction (Tang et al., 2019; Zhang, 2020). However, although job satisfaction may contribute to explain the impact of PLO on life satisfaction, it is noteworthy that the mediating effect found in the present research was only partial, as PLO also shared a direct association with this outcome among onsite workers. The fact that PLO did not have indirect effects on life satisfaction through job satisfaction among remote workers suggests that job satisfaction may not be as important for life satisfaction within less traditional work settings (i.e., remote work). This could be due to the fact that the work role is made less salient when working outside of a traditional office, therefore, contributing less to one's

general life satisfaction. In contrast, this result suggests that other domain-specific forms of satisfaction (e.g., marital or personal life satisfaction) may be more salient when working remotely, and may thus play a more important role in explaining the effects of PLO on life satisfaction among remote workers. Future investigations could also consider additional explanatory mechanisms, such as work recovery experiences (i.e., meaningful off-job time activities allowing employees to rest and detach from work, but also to build new resources), rumination (i.e., a cognitive preoccupation about adverse work-related events during off-job time), and sleep quality (Bennett et al., 2016; Gillet et al., 2020). More generally, future research is needed to replicate the present results, and to investigate the mechanisms (e.g., work–family interface) involved in the influence of PLO on the well-being of employees working remotely.

## Limitations and research perspectives

When considering our results, some limitations have to be considered. First, although shared method biases are unlikely to play a role in multivariate analyses (Siemsen et al., 2010), the fact that this study relied solely on self-report measures increases the risk of other forms of social desirability and self-report biases. To alleviate these concerns, it would be interesting for future studies to consider the incorporation of objective measures (e.g., organizational data on work performance and biological measures of psychophysiological activation) and informant ratings of employees' functioning (e.g., colleagues, supervisors, and spouse). Second, we did not assess the reasons for which employees ended up working remotely (e.g., whether it was a choice made by the employees, imposed by the pandemic, or imposed by the organization) or the context in which this remote work occurred (e.g., access to childcare or a proper home office, whether employees were trained, supported, and provided resources to support their work). It would thus be important for future research to consider how these characteristics might influence the likely impact of remote work on employees' professional and global experiences. Third, although our variables were conceptualized as a predictor (i.e., PLO), a mediator (i.e., job satisfaction), or an outcome (i.e., life satisfaction) on the basis of theoretical considerations (Hall et al., 2013), our cross-sectional design makes it impossible to confirm the directionality of these associations. It would, therefore, be fruitful for future studies to explore the issue of directionality through longitudinal research designs. Fourth, this study was conducted among employees recruited solely from the United States and the UK. Further research is thus needed to assess the generalizability of our results to different countries, languages, and cultures. Fifth, although our data collection did not take place during the national lockdowns occurring in the United States and the UK, it still took place in the midst of a global pandemic which significantly affected individuals' psychological and social functioning, as well as their work and general experiences (Vaziri et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021). This context could have influenced our results, whose generalizability should thus be verified. Finally, PLO was the only individual characteristic of interest in our research. It would be interesting to examine how other personal resources (e.g., self-efficacy) as well as hindrance (e.g., role conflict) and challenge (e.g., role responsibility) demands relate to employees' well-being, and their interplay with work setting (i.e., working remotely or onsite).

## Practical implications

Modern societies, organizations, and individuals tend to value heavy work investment (Gillet et al., 2018). Yet, our findings highlight the need to promote PLO to increase employees' life satisfaction. Although life satisfaction, in and of itself, might be of limited interest for organizations, it is important to consider the multiple benefits of nonwork factors for employees, and the fact that personal problems often tend to spill over into the work domain (Du et al., 2018). PLO could be promoted at the individual level through coaching or counseling (e.g., developing new habits and replacing one's

old malfunctioning behaviors; Van Gordon et al., 2017). The present results also offer several relevant insights for career development practice. More specifically, because we found that employees high in PLO displayed higher levels of life satisfaction, career counselors could encourage individuals to actively consider nonwork roles when setting career goals and making career plans. For instance, counselors may help individuals to consider work and nonwork goals in their career planning, and make them aware of the fact that their career goals might influence their nonwork roles (Hirschi et al., 2020). Counselors may also help individuals to imagine action strategies aligned with their available resources and to overcome existing barriers in order to jointly attain their work and nonwork goals (Hirschi et al., 2019).

However, caution is needed in relation to the implementation of interventions seeking to increase employees' PLO, as this individual characteristic also carries risks in terms of job satisfaction. Thus, rather than directly acting on the promotion (or reduction) of PLO, it might be useful to encourage more efficient work recovery processes to protect employees' professional well-being and facilitate positive spillover between their family and work roles (Gillet et al., 2020). Prior research has shown that a higher need for recovery was associated with a lower ability to extend working careers, while poor recovery experiences posed a serious threat to individuals' career progression because they are associated with higher levels of fatigue and lower levels of work performance (Gillet et al., 2020; Huyghebaert et al., 2018). We argued that this was likely to occur because employees high in PLO tend to tap into their personal resources mostly for nonwork activities, leaving fewer resources available for work, which may make their job experiences harder, less pleasant, and thus place them in a loss spiral of resource depletion (Hobfoll, 2011). As such, employees high in PLO may benefit from reattachment to work interventions (i.e., actively rebuilding a mental connection to work before starting work; Sonnentag et al., 2020) to rebuild their connection between the personal and work domains. Reattachment typically occurs while transitioning from the nonwork to the work role and is largely under employees' control. Career counselors may thus help employees high in PLO to better transition from the nonwork to the work role by advising them to rely on anticipatory planning before starting to work (e.g., planning activities and mental simulations), allowing them to tune into their work role and to bring work into their attentional focus in advance. For instance, career counselors may suggest to employees high in PLO to take a close look at their to-do lists before starting to work and decide about the most important work goals that need to be achieved. Organizations could develop routines to implement these low-effort strategies (e.g., setting quiet or uninterrupted periods during the workday) to help employees high in PLO to transition more smoothly from their personal life to their work life. Indeed, efficient ways to achieve recovery can be developed and trained, and approaches to successfully train work recovery have proved to be efficient in previous studies. For instance, participants involved in a recovery training program (e.g., time management techniques and self-reflection) were characterized by better recovery experiences (e.g., relaxation) and higher levels of sleep quality after the training, in comparison to those not involved in this training (Hahn et al., 2011).

Our results also suggest that for remote work to be maximally efficient, organizations should train managers on the best practices to supervise their employees working remotely, as this type of work comes with new communication and coordination challenges (Shockley et al., 2021). For instance, research based on self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017) has shown the importance of managers' interpersonal behaviors to help nurture employees' psychological needs for autonomy (feeling ownership of one's actions), competence (feeling efficient in accomplishing personally important tasks), and relatedness (feeling secure and accepted in one's relationships), in turn leading to higher levels of life and job satisfaction (e.g., Huyghebaert-Zouaghi et al., 2021). In addition, psychological need satisfaction is associated with positive career outcomes, such as career satisfaction (Yang et al., 2020), career success (Dose et al., 2019), and career commitment (Onyishi et al., 2019).

While the need for competence is unlikely to be importantly modified by working remotely (as long as proper resources and support remain available), this type of work is likely to interfere with employees' need for relatedness, thus creating new challenges as to how work-related socialization experiences can be maintained remotely to ensure the provision of adequate levels of social

support. Furthermore, while working remotely may constitute a fertile ground to promote employees' autonomy (Wang et al., 2021) and for managers to encourage subordinates' self-initiation (autonomy support), managers' mistrust toward their teleworking subordinates (Cascio, 1999) could also take the form of compensatory controlling behaviors (autonomy thwarting). In this regard, research suggests that managers ought to reconsider how they traditionally supervise their subordinates (Shockley et al., 2021). For instance, performance-based management, which has proven to be beneficial in general work settings (Pritchard et al., 2008), could be relevant when working remotely (Mahler, 2012). Although these managerial approaches can help employees better navigate their careers, managers and human resource representatives should also be encouraged to discuss and potentially change their behaviors to provide employees with career growth opportunities. Perhaps even more importantly, the current results also suggest that PLO might be worth considering by career counselors as a variable that may possibly influence the suitability of alternative career paths involving the more or less frequent need to work remotely or onsite.

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