Determinants of Job Satisfaction

in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is, firstly, to establish the relationship between personality and job satisfaction and, secondly, to identify the role of online work in this relationship in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The present study is cross-sectional, descriptive and correlational. The study involved 246 people, employees, aged between 19 and 58 years, M = 31.49, SD = 7.98. The instruments used were the Telework Perception Scale, the Generic Satisfaction Scale at Work, the 10-item Neuroticism Scale and the 10-item Extraversion Scale. The results showed that there are significant differences in the perception of the disadvantages of online work by generation, with people in generation X perceiving the disadvantages of online work much more intensely than people in generation Z. Also, the results showed that extraversion is a significant positive predictor of job satisfaction, while neuroticism is a significant negative predictor of job satisfaction. Moreover, the results showed that the perception of the benefits of online work mediates the relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction, while the perception of the benefits of online work fails to mediate the relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction. The conclusions of the study highlighted the need for employees to participate in programs focused on facilitating the process of adapting to the online work system depending on their intrapersonal particularities.

Keywords : *job satisfaction, personality, teleworking, COVID-19*

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to establish relationships between personality and job satisfaction, as well as the role of online work in this relationship in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to achieve the proposed goal, we considered three objectives, namely to establish differences in the level of perception of disadvantages of online work by generations, to determine the intensity and meaning of the relationship between personality and job satisfaction, and, last but not least, to establish the mediating role of the perception of the benefits of online work in the relationship between personality and job satisfaction.

We decided to approach the topic of the determinants of job satisfaction in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, because job satisfaction is a key concept in the process of achieving work performance, an aspect targeted by most companies that want to make profit from the results of the activities carried out by employees. In Romania there are minimal studies in the literature that focus on the topic of the determinants of work satisfaction, most of which focus on external factors such as pay, reward and promotion. After consulting the literature, we noticed the need for a targeted approach on the influence of the intra-personal structure of the employee in the process of determining the level of satisfaction at work in the context of teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic. The intrapersonal structure of the individual (personality traits, age) plays an important role in forming the perception of the advantages or disadvantages provided by the work system, whether physical or online, with employees showing a higher or lower level of job satisfaction depending on it. In this context, intrapersonal factors imply indispensable in order to establish job satisfaction, their neglect by practitioners in the field leading to employee dissatisfaction and, consequently, to a low productivity in relation to targeted expectations. Thus, this study aims to support practitioners in the field of industrial-organizational psychology, providing a solid theoretical basis on the issue of intrapersonal factors determining job satisfaction.

Working online in the context of COVID-19

The crisis triggered by the coronavirus pandemic has left its mark on all sectors of human life, affecting both individuals globally. Thus, both personally and professionally, each person had to face the new restrictions and adapt to the new rules imposed by the authorities on facilitating the spread of the SARS-COV-2 virus.

In this epidemiological context, all non-essential activities have been temporarily suspended in order to minimize physical contact, with most companies around the world having to ask employees to perform their tasks in full in the online environment (telework), where , of course, this

was possible (WHO, 2020; Presidential Decree, 2020). Telework can be defined as the performance of work tasks by employees at a location other than that of the employer' organization or the place where the activities would normally have taken place, which can be done through information and communication technologies (Kerin & Hone, 2001). Although telework was urgently introduced during the pandemic, it is recognized as an unconventional form of work, a flexible one since the pre-pandemic period, the concept being first used in 1973 by Jack Nilles in the middle of the oil / fuel crisis and the inability of employees to commute (Collins, 2005; Kerrin & Hone, 2001; Lim & Teo, 2000; Tortenet et al., 2016).

Although teleworking has been adopted as a protection and prevention measure to combat the spread of the negative effects of the virus, as a strategy to minimize the unemployment rate and maintain the functions of society, it undoubtedly brings a number of benefits both on a personal level, as well as economically and ecologically one. In terms of individual benefits, they focus in particular on the flexibility of the schedule and location, with employees taking control of the two aspects mentioned in most cases. Thus, the mobility of these working conditions also favors situations in which employees are forced to be absent from work in order to meet family or personal needs, such as pregnant women (Chung & van der Horst, 2017). Moreover, the potential of teleworking supports people with disabilities, facilitating their access to the labour sector, as they are more likely to use this form of work compared to people without disabilities (Schur et al., 2020). From an economic point of view, minimizing the costs of renting and maintaining space is an advantage for employers, and in terms of employees we can talk about reducing costs and time on transportation to work (Cuerdo-Vilcheset al., 2021). From an ecological point of view, teleworking is an important tool in the process of sustaining the environment, which has left its mark on air quality, by reducing gas emissions generated by reducing traffic and also on reducing electricity consumption (Giovanis, 2018 ; Guerin, 2021).

Despite the benefits of telework, it also has a number of disadvantages faced by both employees and employers during the pandemic. These include adapting to the home space, with a large part of the population experiencing difficulties. Problems have been reported regarding the non-existence of a space exclusively for work, the employees having to rearrange and even purchase specific furniture items, so that they can carry out their activities in an optimal way. Also, the lack of digital resources proved to be problematic, as in situations where the number of people working from home in the same household was increased, access to electronic devices was prioritized so that household members could complete their tasks (Cuerdo-

Vilches et al., 2021; Cuerdo-Vilches, Navas-Martín & Oteiza, 2021). In addition, other issues such as noise that may come from both external sources and your own home are also a reported difficulty (Current Situation in the Field of Teleworking., 2021).

As for employers, they were forced to focus on improving information processes and systems, acquiring and implementing information security systems (Silva-C et al., 2019). Also, in relation to employees, employers faced insecurities regarding their involvement, commitment and productivity, as they were unable to monitor the work process, the focus being shifted to meeting deadlines and results (Groenet et al., 2018). In this context, the V-5 model (the 5 elements of the commitment - value, voice, variety, virtue and vision) came to support employers in maintaining and even increasing the involvement of employees in the necessary tasks, specific to the job description. The value is the recognition of employees as an important, vital part of the organization, with an emphasis on their efforts and commitment. The voice is an opportunity for employees to express their own views on certain issues without being sanctioned. Variety involves designing a job that makes use of a variety of skills and knowledge in order to develop imagination and innovation. Virtue is the moralistic system of the organization that upholds the ethical values of all members involved (employers, employees, customers, collaborators). The vision is the goal of the organization set out clearly and comprehensively so that it can be achieved in the near future (Kumar, 2021). Thus, each employer had to rethink its work strategies in the context of the pandemic, relying to a greater or lesser extent on the elements contained in model V - 5, in order to maximize employee potential and results. Under these conditions, employee productivity was not significantly affected by the shift to teleworking, with only about a third of employees reporting lower levels of efficiency (George et al., 2021; Shi et al., 2020).

As soon as we get out of the state of emergency, the employers had to make a decision regarding the resumption of the physical activity of the employees. Although teleworking has a number of advantages and benefits that both employees and employers can enjoy, the executives of the companies have also considered the disadvantages that this entails. Thus, the Netflix CEO supports the resumption of activities exclusively physically, while the Rite Aid CEO supports the resumption of remote work, while the Apple CEO supports the resumption of activities in the hybrid system (Barrero et al., 2021). In accordance with their choices and the availability and specificity of the activity, each company communicated to employees the adoption of one of the three forms of work specified above, such as physical, hybrid or telework. With regard to employees, it seems that there is a prevalence in terms of availability and desire to work from home, however, accepting a hybrid work

arrangement, in which there is the possibility to work at least two days per week from distance (Barbour et al., 2021; Americans' Return to the Workplace, 2021).

However, it is important to note that with the advent of the vaccine, an adjuvant tool in the fight against Sars-Cov - 2 virus, employers have begun to limit the physical access of employees to the company based on the green certificate / proof of non-infection (PCR test) / evidence of disease (antigen test). Currently, however, according to the Decision of the National Committee for Emergency Situations no. 16 of 08.03.2022 at the level of the Romanian Presidency, the restrictions were lifted (including the restriction of access based on the green certificate) which had in view the diminution of the possibility of spreading the virus (MAI, 2022). This created a favorable environment for organizations to adopt a work system that benefits all employees of the company, without considering discrimination against those who did not hold the green certificate.

In terms of physical work, in general, it supports the weaknesses found in the format of distance work, satisfying most of the shortcomings of this system set out and detailed above. Thus, of course, it brings a number of benefits at the social level and beyond. Employees are able to relate and interconnect much more easily, which responds to one of the human needs in Maslow's pyramid, such as the need for affiliation, which conduct to diminish the issue of social isolation (Maslow, 2013). Also, the constant support of colleagues and the manager, the positive feedback regarding the process of accomplishing work tasks can lead to a low level of organizational stress, which is mainly found in the physical work environment as opposed to the online environment in which employees report their absence. In addition, companies have ergonomic furniture that does not cause musculoskeletal disorders or back pain and problems, professional digital devices whose screen minimally affects vision, which contributes to the physical health of employees (Buomprisco et al., 2021).

In terms of disadvantages, we can consider the lack of flexibility of the program and location, the lack of independence and autonomy in terms of work tasks and, last but not least, the presence of forms of aggression that can lead, over time, at the onset of depression (Madsen et al., 2021; Müller & Niessen, 2019). In the physical workplace, employees sometimes face various forms of violence, such as verbal and social violence (physical violence rarely occurring in companies) which often leads to deteriorating mental health and the intention to leave the company (Shen Hsiao et al., 2021). In terms of employee preferences, it appears that males, older people who have difficulty adapting and using digital devices, people with a lower level of education, are dependent on the support and guidance of other colleagues or the manager encounters impediments to

remote work, preferring mainly physical work (Raišienė et al., 2020).

In terms of hybrid work, it responds to both the shortcomings found in the online system and those found in the physical work system, both employers and employees benefiting from the advantages of both forms of work execution. Thus, it seems that people who work in a hybrid system and adopt a work style based on self-management report a higher level of independence / autonomy from work tasks on the days when they have to work from home or another place outside the company's headquarters unlike the days when he works in the office, which leads to higher satisfaction (Müller & Niessen, 2019). Moreover, the mixed work system offers employees the opportunity to avoid non-essential, trivial social interactions that contribute to burnout at work, but has provided a favorable context for improving the quality of social interactions, which greatly reduces exhaustion and contributes to employee well-being (Windeler et al., 2017). In other words, the hybrid work system diminishes various forms of violence, including verbal and social violence, by providing a balance between face-to-face contact and online-only contact (Buomprisco et al., 2021).

In conclusion, the coronavirus pandemic has affected the entire labor sector, with both employees and employers having to adapt to new trends. Although before the pandemic, in Romania, only a small part of the companies had adopted online and hybrid forms of work, now more and more companies choose to require employees to work in this way, giving up the exclusively physical format. As far as employees are concerned, opinions remain divided, there are appropriate employees who prefer to perform tasks exclusively online, employees who tend more towards the exclusively physical work system and employees to whom the hybrid work system comes in support their own needs. Of course, there are advantages and disadvantages to all three forms of work, but the particularities and abilities of each employee make him want to work with prevalence in one of them.

Online work and job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a concept that has been intensely studied over time, with various authors offering multiple connotations, in terms of measuring it from not just one, but several points of view. For some authors, job satisfaction is the attitude towards their own experiences at work and also towards their own evaluations, an attitude that can have two valences, namely a positive and a negative one (Locke & Latham, 1990). Other authors, however, argue that job satisfaction is the result of how the job characteristics meet the expectations and needs of employees about them (Bhardwaj et al., 2021). Job satisfaction, however, is the emotional / cognitive response to the many aspects involved in the work process, such as supervision, interpersonal

(college) relationships, promotion, rewards, pay and job security (Vuong et al., 2021).

In the literature, the relationship between online work and job satisfaction has been intensively studied in the last period in which many employees were forced to work in the online environment, taking into account the new conditions imposed by the evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the relationship between physical work and job satisfaction should not be neglected either, as, in this context, essential activities continued to be carried out in physical format. Thus, I will further address both relationships in order to present the current state of knowledge.

According to Abilash and Siju (2021) and Karácsony (2021) there is a positive correlation between teleworking and job satisfaction. Most employees perceive online work as advantageous and report a higher level of job satisfaction according to the benefits it provides, such as program flexibility, task autonomy, and so on.

The relationship between teleworking and job satisfaction was studied by Kwon and Jeon (2018). The study was conducted on a sample of 6 372 participants, all working online, in the public sector. The results of the study state that both the involvement of management and the performance-oriented organizational culture are determinants of job satisfaction. Employees report a higher level of job satisfaction in the context in which the leader provides the necessary support and assistance in order to solve the problems that arise both at work and on a personal level. Also, the performance-oriented organizational culture leads to a higher level of job satisfaction, with employees benefiting from the advantages of a system focused on achieving performance. For example, they value reward systems as incentives to achieve performance, constructive feedback from the leader, and also training sessions that undoubtedly lead to performance by meeting needs and diminishing the lack of skills or lack of necessary information in the workplace.

Also, Petcu et al. (2021) conducted a study that considers the relationship between remote work and job satisfaction. The study involved 228 participants, all working online. The results of the study also highlight the fact that work autonomy, competence and organizational climate are determinants of job satisfaction in terms of employees working in telework. However, we must take into account gender differences. Thus, the correlation between competence and job satisfaction is stronger for women, as they are more willing to improve their skills, to develop their self-efficacy, which leads to the strengthening of beliefs about managing and solving difficult tasks. Regarding the correlation between job satisfaction and autonomy, the results of the study support the fact that men mainly appreciate autonomy in exercising control over tasks and how they are performed, while women appreciate more

autonomy in organizing the program. The organizational climate is a determining factor of job satisfaction regardless of gender, the employee must resonate with the values and principles of the company in which he works in order to develop and maintain the level of job satisfaction.

A study on the relationship between job location, quality of work and job satisfaction was conducted by Wheatley (2020). The results of the study show that working from home has specific characteristics of a high level of quality and also, through the benefits it offers, such as flexibility, which is associated with a high level of job satisfaction. In the case of self-employed employees who work from home, they report a high level of job satisfaction in terms of work autonomy and flexible hours, so as to benefit from a balance in terms of work-family conflict. Hybrid jobs have the characteristics of a high level of quality of work, providing both flexibility in terms of schedule and location, and well-being of employees, which leads to a high level of job satisfaction.

In contrast, a study which aimes the relationship between teleworking and job satisfaction claims that the lack of qualitative communication with colleagues and manager in terms of social presence and also the limited interactions offered by the lack of opportunities to develop solid relationships lead to a low level of job satisfaction in the case of employees working remote (Zhang, 2016). Fortunately, however, the social isolation that we find mostly in online system employees can be diminished or even combated through a series of good practices adopted by companies. Thus, we intend to encourage face-to-face interactions (whether they take place on various social platforms with the camera and microphone on, or take place physically), constant information of employees (online communication groups, invitations to special events, communications and, last but not least, to allow employees to share knowledge with others (informal meetings in which to carry out structured activities that create cohesion), which will undoubtedly lead to a higher level of job satisfaction (Even, 2020).

However, several studies examining differences in job satisfaction for employees working in a hybrid system claim that employees reported a higher level of job satisfaction in the days they worked online, as opposed to the days they worked physically, from the office. They reported a higher level of task autonomy and also improved relationship quality as determinants of job satisfaction (Müller & Niessen, 2019; Windeler et al., 2017).

A study by Caranto et al. (2020) takes into account the differences in job satisfaction among employees working in the hybrid system. The study involved 85 people between the ages of 20 and 30, all of whom were employed by the same company. Most of them benefit from working online 2-3 days a week. The results of the study claim that employees perceive higher job satisfaction on the days they work online

than on the days they work physically, taking into account a number of factors such as reducing work-family conflicts, but also the relationship with management, communication, etc.

Also, a study on intergenerational differences in the relationship between online work and job satisfaction supports the results of the previous study (Raišienė et al., 2020). The study was conducted on a sample of 436 participants, all of whom were employed by companies operating in the online environment. The results of this study show that people in Generation X have a low level of job satisfaction when it comes to online work, in contrast to people in Generations Y and Z who report a high level of job satisfaction in the context of online work. The results are attributed to the fact that Generation X people face various problems, including poor communication with the manager and colleagues, information overload, problematic use of new technologies. As for people in generations Y and Z, the challenges presented above are not problematic, they manage to easily adapt to the online work environment, focusing on the advantages it provides, such as flexibility, autonomy, etc.

A study on the relationship between online work and job satisfaction claims that teleworking leads to a high level of job satisfaction, supporting the psychological needs of employees (Brunelle & Fortin, 2021). The study was conducted on a sample of 448 participants, and the results highlighted the psychological needs, such as autonomy at work (autonomy in performing tasks, autonomy in choosing the location where they carry out activities, etc.) and competence (the need to feel able to perform the most difficult tasks in the allotted time) are mostly satisfied by employees working in the online environment, while the need for affiliation is mostly met by employees in the physical environment. In this context, online employees reported a higher level of job satisfaction in line with met psychological needs.

Also, a study that addresses the differences in job satisfaction in the case of the two categories of people, namely employees online and employees in the physical environment, argues that the form of work and its specific working conditions influence job satisfaction. (Alfaleh et al., 2021). The study involved 124 participants, of which 77 were employees online and 47 were physically employed, all belonging to the same organization. The results of the study show that employees in the online environment have a higher level of job satisfaction compared to employees in the physical environment in terms of work autonomy, while employees in the physical environment have a higher level of job satisfaction compared to employees in the online environment in terms of supervision and the nature of the job.

Moreover, a study aimed at the moderating role of telework in the relationship between discrimination in family responsibilities and the intention to leave work claims that

the preventive effects of telework lead to a decrease in job dissatisfaction and, consequently, the intention to resign (Mullins et al., 2020). The results of this study show that employees who benefit from the advantages of telework, succed in managing the work-family conflict much more efficiently, responding and satisfying family needs, which leads them to refuse to return to the traditional work system, namely work in the format physical. In this context, they report a higher level of job satisfaction compared to employees who work physically.

In the context in which more and more employers have been forced by the current conditions imposed by the pandemic to adopt telework as a form of work, it is imperative to study the relationship between telework and job satisfaction, as it is well known that the latter leads to a higher level of work performance, a goal targeted by most organizations. Although this relationship is intensively studied abroad, in Romania there are minimal studies to examine it. Moreover, most studies consider only certain factors, especially external ones, that determine job satisfaction for people working online, not providing a broad picture of the specific, intrapersonal factors that facilitate a higher level of job satisfaction. Thus, the contribution of the present study in terms of knowledge in this field is precisely to provide an overview that takes into account exactly the factors determined by intrapersonal practicalities, such as age and personality traits that lead to a certain level of job satisfaction in the case of people working online.

Taking into account the above, we presume that there is a significant relationship between teleworking and job satisfaction.

The role of online work in the relationship between personality and job satisfaction in the context of COVID-19

The facets of personality, as set out in the NEO-PI-R model, neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness, undoubtedly contribute to determining the level of job satisfaction of an employee, whether we are talking about a job that involves activity in the online or physical environment, influencing various factors involved in the process of its evaluation, such as inter-collegiate relations, relations with the manager and even the work environment, as mentioned above. In this paper I will address only two facets of personality, namely neuroticism and extraversion. According to Iliescu and Sulea (2015), people with high scores of neuroticism are characterized by "emotional instability, insecurity, worry, irritability, egocentrism and negligence." They are also "sensitive, emotional people who tend to feel predominantly negative emotions and perceive ordinary situations as threatening situations." As for people with high extraversion scores, they are "friendly, sociable, open to developing interpersonal relationships, confident, energetic, optimistic."

Also, these people "tend to spend time in the company of other people" to the detriment of a more intimate setting that involves the presence of only closer friends.

From my point of view, the relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction, as well as between extraversion and job satisfaction is mediated by the perception of the specific work environment, as the specific factors of the adopted work system represent advantages or disadvantages that employees, regardless of personality structure, take them into account in determining the level of job satisfaction. In this context, the work environment can be considered advantageous or disadvantageous depending on the personality structure of the person concerned, which causes him to focus only on certain aspects provided by that environment, leading to a higher or lower level of job satisfaction.

A study conducted by Rukh et al. (2020) based on the relationship between personality, lifestyle and job satisfaction argues that neuroticism negatively correlates with job satisfaction. The study was conducted on 73 296 participants, European, white, all with the status of employees. The results of the study suggest that people who scored heavily on neuroticism reported a low level of job satisfaction, regardless of education level or lifestyle, intrapersonal factors that may influence job satisfaction.

A study conducted by Smith et al. (2015) based on the relationship between personality and job satisfaction in employees working online argues that extraversion correlates positively with job satisfaction in the case of these employees, contrary to the results of previous studies that addressed this issue. The study was conducted on a sample of 384 participants, all carrying out their work tasks mainly online, but not exclusively. The results of the study suggest that people who scored heavily on the side of extraversion reported a high level of job satisfaction, but this may be due to the fact that some participants work rather in a mixed system, still benefiting from opportunities to communicate with colleagues. Regarding the neurotic facet, the results of the study do not support a statistically significant relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction, although previous studies have shown that people who score strongly on the neurotic facet have a higher level of job satisfaction when working online due to the autonomy and control it provides (Clark et al., 2012, cited in Smith et al., 2015).

A study conducted by Farfán et al. (2020) aims at the moderating effect of personality on the relationship between work autonomy, burnout and job satisfaction. The study was conducted on a group of 971 people, and the results of the study suggest that extraversion moderates the relationship between work autonomy, burnout and job satisfaction, people who score heavily on the facet of extraversion and enjoy high autonomy in performing work activities report a lower level of burnout and, consequently, a higher level of job satisfaction. This may be due to the fact that extroverts

express their needs and emotional states more accurately, which leads to a higher level of job satisfaction. Regarding neuroticism, the results of the study claim that it does not have a moderating effect on the relationship between work autonomy, burnout and job satisfaction.

In the study conducted by Berglund et al. (2015) the relationship between personality traits and job satisfaction supports the results of the previous study. The study was conducted on a sample of 5125 people with both employee and self-employed status. The results of this study support the fact that self-employed people who are highly extroverted have a higher level of job satisfaction compared to people with employee status. This may be because self-employed people enjoy a high level of independence and satisfaction at work, leading to a higher level of job satisfaction among highly extroverted people.

A study on the relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction was conducted by Harari et al. (2018). The study was conducted on a sample of 152 people, with a minimum age of 18 and working at least 20 hours per week. The results of the study claim that one of the facets of extraversion, namely enthusiasm is a determinant of job satisfaction, while assertiveness, another facet of extraversion determines job satisfaction depending on the situation to which the person is exposed. In this context, when we talk about assertiveness we must take into account the congruence between environmental factors and the goals we must achieve that involve the influence of personality traits. In conclusion, extraversion undoubtedly influences job satisfaction, but it is necessary to take into account the characteristics of the person-environment relationship.

A study by Seltzer et al. (2017) focuses on the relationship between facets of personality and job satisfaction. The study gathered data from over 20 samples used in studies aimed at the relationship between the two concepts for meta-analytical purposes. The results of the study support the results of the previous study, arguing that both extraversion and neuroticism influence the level of job satisfaction. In terms of extraversion, it seems that high scores of the dominant facet lead to a high level of job satisfaction. Although the dominance facet involves the tendency to take control of others and to lead them, in this context we speak of dominance as part of the general social competence. Thus, the most socially competent people also manage to obtain material and contingent rewards to the detriment of the less competent people, which leads to a high level of job satisfaction. However, we must not neglect the facets of extraversion, such as activism and assertiveness and extraversion (as a global factor) which also lead to a high level of job satisfaction. Regarding neuroticism, both low self-esteem scores and high neuroticism scores (as a global factor) lead to generally negative emotionality, which leads to a low level of job

satisfaction. Under these conditions, we can conclude that people who score strongly on the side of extraversion and low on the side of neuroticism have a high level of job satisfaction.

A study addressing the relationship between psychological climate diversity, personality traits, human resources department practices, and job satisfaction in multicultural companies was conducted by al Doghan et al. (2019). The results of the study suggest that people who score heavily on the facet of extraversion have a higher level of job satisfaction in the context of working in multicultural companies, as they have characteristics such as sociability, assertiveness, enthusiasm that help them develop positive intercollegiate relationships. Regarding neuroticism, the results of the study support the fact that people who score poorly on this facet also have a high level of job satisfaction. Emotional stability facilitates a better understanding of behavioral, circumstantial diversity, and effective management of temperament and pressure, leading to a significant diminish in conflict situations (that can lead to high levels of stress and tension). Therefore, people who score poorly on the neurotic side and strongly on the extraversion side easily adapt to the multicultural physical work environment.

A study on the relationship between personality traits, work space and job satisfaction was conducted by Cheung et al. (2022). The study was conducted on a sample of 1 162 participants, all of whom worked in office buildings in Singapore. The results of the study show that employees with a high level of extraversion prefer noisy open-space workspaces, where inter-collegial interaction takes precedence over introverted employees who have a lower tolerance for environmental noise, preferring more intimate. Regarding the neurotic side, the results of the study are inconclusive, contrary to previous studies which claim that people with a high level of neuroticism are concerned about the work environment in order to establish and know the sources of anxiety that could create discomfort (Graham et al, 2013, cited in Cheung et al., 2022). In this context, we can conclude that people who score heavily on the facet of extraversion prefer the physical environment as a system of work activities, as opposed to people who get lower scores on this facet whose preferred work environment is the online one.

In conclusion, the two facets of personality, namely extraversion and neuroticism, influence the perception of the factors involved in the work process, leading to lower or higher levels of employee job satisfaction, both in the case of online employees and in the case of employees in the physical environment. Thus, according to the literature, predominantly people who score strongly on the facet of neuroticism have a higher level of job satisfaction in the online environment due to perceived autonomy and control over the work process and environmental factors, while

people who score poorly at the facet of neuroticism has a higher level of job satisfaction in the physical environment, managing to adapt easily due to emotional stability that facilitates the reduction of conflict situations, intercollegiate problems or manager-subordinate that may occur. However, it is important to note that people who score heavily on this facet usually have a lower level of job satisfaction compared to people who score poorly, with emotional and mental instability affecting their perception of the factors provided by the working environment in which they operate, their focus being predominantly on the disadvantageous factors. With regard to extraversion, opinions are divided, with both studies claiming that people who score heavily on the side of extraversion have a higher level of job satisfaction in the online environment due to the perception of work autonomy that this work system offers, as well as studies that claim that people who score heavily on the side of extraversion have a higher level of job satisfaction in the physical environment due to intercollegiate interaction and, consequently, the satisfaction of social needs. However, in both cases, people who score heavily on this facet have in

most cases a higher level of job satisfaction compared to people who score poorly, focusing more on the benefits of the job.

Therefore, in accordance with the above, we consider the following hypothesis:

H1. *Personality is a significant predictor of job satisfaction*

H1a. *Extraversion is a significant positive predictor of job satisfaction.*

H1b. *Neuroticism is a significant negative predictor of job satisfaction.*

H2. *The perception of the benefits of working online mediates the relationship between personality and job satisfaction.*

H2a. *The perception of the benefits of working online mediates the relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction.*

H2b. *The perception of the benefits of working online mediates the relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction.*

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2. METHODOLOGY

Participants and procedure

The study involved 246 people aged between 19 and 58 years, M = 31.49, SD = 7.98. Among them, 126 are female (51.22%) and 120 are male (48.78%). Regarding the level of education, 45 graduated secondary education (18.29%), 121 graduated higher education (49.19%), and 80 have postgraduate studies (32.52%). Regarding the work experience, it is between 1 and 40 years, M = 9.47, SD = 7.45. The professions of the participants were classified into four categories, namely 67 with socio-human professions (27.24%), 66 with economic professions (26.83%), 99 with technical professions (40.24%) and 14 with military professions (5.69%). Out of the total number of participants, 201 state that they hold executive positions (81.71%) and 45 state that they hold management positions (18.29%). Also, of these, 145 work online (58.94%) and 101 work physically (41.06%). The inclusion criterion is represented by minimum working age of 1 year. The sampling method is one of convenience.

Participants were contacted online through several social networks, namely Facebook, Instagram, Reddit and LinkedIn. They were given a short presentation of the study and were invited to participate by completing a set of questionnaires. Each set of questions was accompanied by instructions on how to complete the items. The first section of the online form contained the informed consent and agreement of the GDPR. Participants agreed to participate and also to process their data for academic purposes by ticking the "Yes" button. Out of the total of 300 participants

contacted, only 246 agreed to participate by the end by completing the questionnaire (82%). Participants were not rewarded.

The conditions regarding the ethics of data processing and interpretation and the monitoring of safety conditions have been met. The data were originally organized in encrypted Excel tables to which only the author of the present study had access. No participant names or other data were requested that could link the participant's identity to the data provided by the participant.

Instruments

Socio-demographic variables were collected through a list of questions on gender, age, level of education, work experience, occupation, field of activity and type of job.

Perception of telework. In order to measure the perception of telework, the Scale of Perception on Telework was used (Chiracu & Pîrvu, 2021). The scale includes 15 items and measures two aspects: the perception of the advantages of telework and the perception of the disadvantages of telework. The scale also obtains information on the type of work in which it operates, namely online, physical and mixed. Item example: "I can't develop and maintain trusting relationships with colleagues." The answers are given on a five-step Likert scale, where 1-strongly disagree and 5-strongly agree.

Job satisfaction. The Generic Job Satisfaction Scale (Macdonald & MacIntyre, 1997) was used to measure employee job satisfaction. The tool contains 10 items and generically measures job satisfaction. Example item: "Overall, I believe that my workplace activity has a positive

effect on my health." The answers are given on a five-step Likert scale, where 1-strongly disagree and 5-strongly agree. The questionnaire was translated into Romanian by Drăgoiu, not being vaidated on the Romanian population.

Neuroticism. In order to measure neuroticism, the 10-item Neuroticism Scale (NEUROTICISM 10-item) was used (Goldberg et al., 2006). The scale contains 10 items and measures neuroticism. Example item: "I don't like my own person". The answers are given on a five-step Likert scale, where 1-strongly disagree and 5-strongly agree. The questionnaire was translated into Romanian by Iliescu, Popa and Dimache (2015), being validated on the Romanian population.

Extraversion. The Extraversion 10-item Scale (EXTRAVERSION 10-item) was used to measure

neuroticism (Goldberg et al., 2006). The scale contains 10 items and measures neuroticism. Example item: "I don't like my own person". The answers are given on a five-step Likert scale, where 1-strongly disagree and 5-strongly agree. The questionnaire was translated into Romanian by Iliescu, Popa and Dimache (2015), being validated on the Romanian population.

Research design

The present study is a cross-sectional, descriptive and correlational one. IBM.SPSS.24 (IBM Corp, 2016) and medmod module of Jamovi (The jamovi project, 2022) were used to organize the data and test the hypotheses.

3. RESULTS

Descriptive statistics

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics*

	M	SD	α	AVON	DEON	EXT	NEV	JS
AVON	25.63	5.63	.70	1				
DEON	17.25	5.49	.73	.06	1			
EXT	32.16	7.29	.81	.13*	.06	1		
NEV	25.66	7.79	.84	-.08	.03	-.31**	1	
JS	38.01	7.23	.66	.28**	-.04	.32**	-.31**	1

**. $p < .01$, *. $p < .05$.

AVON – The perception of the advantages of teleworking, DEON – The perception of the disadvantages of teleworking, EXT – Extraversion, NEV – Neuroticism, JS – Job satisfaction

It is observed that the average of the scores obtained by the participants in the perception of the advantages of online work is high, M = 25.63, SD = 5.63, while the average of the scores obtained in the perception of the disadvantages of online work is low, M = 17.25, SD = 5.49. The level of extraversion is above average, M = 32.16, SD = 7.29, the level of neuroticism is below average, M = 25.66, SD = 7.79, and the level of job satisfaction is relatively high, M = 38.01, SD = 7.23.

Skewness and kurtosis are in the range (-1, 1), which shows a normal data distribution. There were no missing cases and no cases were removed from any of the statistical analyzes.

Hypotheses testing

H1. *Personality is a significant predictor of job satisfaction*
H1a. *Extraversion is a significant positive predictor of job satisfaction*.
H1b. *Neuroticism is a significant negative predictor of job satisfaction*.

In order to test this hypothesis, the multiple linear regression analysis was performed, having extraversion and neuroticism as predictors and job satisfaction as dependent variable.

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Table 2. *Multiple linear regression analysis for personality as a predictor of job satisfaction*

	B	SE	β	t	Sig.
Extraversion	.24	.08	.24	3.91	.00
Neuroticism	-.22	.06	-.24	-3.81	.00

$R_2 = .15$

It is observed that the personality is responsible for 15% of the variation in job satisfaction, the regression equation being statistically significant, F(2, 243) = 21.49, p <.01.

Extraversion is a significant positive predictor of job satisfaction, β = .24, t (246) = 3.91, p <.01, and neuroticism

is a significant negative predictor of job satisfaction, β = -.24, t (246) = -3.81, p <.01.

Given this result, we can say that hypothesis H1 is supported by the analyzed data.

H2. *The perception of the benefits of working online mediates the relationship between personality and job satisfaction.*
H2a. *The perception of the benefits of working online mediates the relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction.*

H2b. *The perception of the benefits of working online mediates the relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction.*

In order to test this hypothesis, two mediation analyzes were performed having as predictors, alternatively, extraversion and neuroticism, as a dependent variable job satisfaction and as a mediating variable the perception of the advantages of working online.

Table 3. *Mediation estimates for the perception of the advantages of online work in the relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction*

Effect	Label	Estimation	SE	95% CI Min.	95% CI Max.	Z	p	% Mediation
Indirect	a × b	.03	.02	.01	.06	1.82	.04	10.00
Direct	c	.28	.06	.17	.39	4.82	< .001	90.00
Total	c + a × b	.31	.06	.19	.43	5.22	< .001	100.00

Table 4. *Path estimates for the perception of the benefits of online work in the relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction*

			Label	Estimation	SE	95% CI Min.	95% CI Max.	Z	p
EXT	→	AVON	a	.09	.05	.01	.19	2.03	.04
AVON	→	JS	b	.32	.07	.16	.46	4.18	< .001
EXT	→	JS	c	.28	.06	.17	.39	4.82	< .001

EXT – Extraversion, AVON – The perception of the advantages of teleworking, JS – Job satisfaction

It is observed that the perception of the advantages of online work mediates the relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction, the percentage of mediation being 10%, β = .03, CI95% (. 01, .06), z = 1.82, p <.05. Extraversion is positively associated with the perception of online job benefits, β = .09, CI95% (.01, .19), z = 2.03, p <.05, and the perception of online job benefits is positively associated with job satisfaction, β = .32, CI95% (.16, .46), z = 4.18, p <.01.

Table 5. *Mediation estimates for the perception of the benefits of online work in the relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction*

Effect	Label	Estimation	SE	95% CI Min.	95% CI Max.	Z	p	% Mediation
Indirect	a × b	.02	.02	-.05	.01	-1.14	.26	6.26
Direct	c	.27	.06	-.38	-.16	-4.99	< .001	93.74
Total	c + a × b	-.29	.06	-.40	-.18	-5.14	< .001	100.00

It is observed that the perception of the benefits of online work fails to mediate the relationship between neuroticism

4. DISCUSSION

This study makes an important theoretical contribution to the field of industrial-organizational psychology in Romania, as there are minimal studies addressing the issue of determinants of job satisfaction, most focusing mainly on specific external factors such as pay, interpersonal relationships, etc., without presenting a broad picture of the specific intrapersonal factors involved in the process of determining the level of job satisfaction. Thus, most studies in Romania focus mainly on external factors, neglecting the importance of demographic data, such as age, and also personality traits and perceptions of the benefits of telework (Petcu et al., 2021). It is well known that intrapersonal particularities play an important role in the cognitive / emotional response to the factors involved in determining the level of job satisfaction (Gopinath, 2021; Karácsony, 2021; Seltzer et al., 2017). Depending on the intrapersonal structure, employees may predominantly consider, on the one hand, the advantages or disadvantages provided by a particular work system, reporting, where appropriate, a higher level of job satisfaction or, consequence, a lower one.

Regarding the relationship between personality and job satisfaction, in the literature we find a multitude of studies that claim that high levels of extraversion lead to high levels of job satisfaction (Smith et al., 2015), while high levels of neuroticism leads to low levels of job satisfaction (Rukh et al., 2020). People with a high level of extraversion are "sociable people, open to develop and maintain close intercollegiate relationships, enthusiastic about engaging in professionally challenging situations," which leads to assertion within the company and in consequence of obtaining material and contingent rewards (Seltzer et al., 2017). These traits undoubtedly lead to a high level of job satisfaction, and the association between these traits and the factors involved in determining the perception of job satisfaction is obvious.

On the other hand, people with high levels of neuroticism are "people with high emotional instability", which often causes intercollegiate conflicts or conflict situations such as manager-subordinate, "people with low self-esteem", which significantly diminishes work performance and also with a high need to control external factors that could contribute to personal destabilization (Doghan et al., 2019). This is difficult in an unpredictable work environment, characterized by a major flow of change, such as today's work system. In this context, people with high levels of neuroticism have low levels of job satisfaction. Thus, in accordance with the literature, the hypotheses I2a which assumes that "extraversion is a significant positive predictor of job satisfaction" and I2b which assumes that "neuroticism is a

significant negative predictor of job satisfaction" are fully supported by results current study.

Regarding the mediating role of the perception of the advantages of online work in the relationship between personality and job satisfaction, some of the specialized studies addressing this topic claim that extroverts consider the positive aspects, the benefits that telework provides to the detriment of the negative aspects of which leads to an increased level of job satisfaction (Farfán et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2015). Although contrary to the results of other studies that claim that extroverts have a higher level of job satisfaction in the context in which they perform their physical activity (meet their social needs, affiliation, developing and maintaining fruitful intercollegiate and subaltern-manager relationships), they also seem to report a high level of job satisfaction and in the context of telework. This is due to the positive perception of the advantages of teleworking, such as autonomy in carrying out work tasks, flexibility of the program, independence in how to perform tasks, advantages that capitalize on the potential of the employee. It is also important to consider the programs adopted by the organizations in which they work, programs that meet the social needs of employees, such as feedback sessions with the manager, encouraging non-formal interactions between employees, creating the context for non-formal physical meetings (parties, teambuildings) etc. (Even, 2020).

In relation to people with high levels of neuroticism, the results of the studies suggest that they focus more on the positive aspects of teleworking, such as autonomy at work and implicitly control over external factors that could lead to various contexts generating anxiety otherwise leading to a high level of job satisfaction (Clark et al., 2012, cited in Smith et al., 2015). In the case of people with low levels of neuroticism, they can easily adapt to any environment due to mental and emotional stability that helps reduce conflict situations that could weaken intercollegiate relationships or subaltern-manager relationships. Thus, these people have a high level of satisfaction both in the context in which they work in the online environment and in the physical environment (Doghan et al., 2019). Consistent with the literature, hypothesis I3, which assumes that "the perception of the benefits of online work mediates the relationship between personality and job satisfaction" is partially supported by the results of this study. In this context, hypothesis I3a, which assumes that "the perception of the benefits of online work mediates the relationship between extraversion and job satisfaction" is supported by both the results of previous studies and the results of the current study, while hypothesis I3b assumes that the benefits of

online work mediate the relationship between neuroticism and job satisfaction "is not supported by the results of the current study, contrary to the results of other studies in the literature. This may be due to the fact that the level of neuroticism, in the case of the present study, is below average, which indicates that the participants have a low level of neuroticism, being able to easily adapt to both the online and physical working environment, developing and maintaining healthy intercollegiate relations, which moderates and even diminishes conflict situations. Thus, these people report high levels of job satisfaction both in the context of telework and in the context of physical work, neglecting the specific factors generated by the work system in which they work.

Limitations and future research directions

A limitation of this study is the use of an instrument which was not validated on Romanian population. In our future studies we may validate this instrument or we may use another instrument for measuring the perception of advantages and disadvantages of teleworking.

Another limitation is the high number of relatively low work experience participants (several years), which leads to a possible distortion of the perception of teleworking and job satisfaction, failing to form a broad, clear picture of the work system in general, and on the job itself, in particular. Our future studies will take into account participants with more work experience in order to obtain a more concise and comprehensive picture of the perception of telework and job satisfaction and, consequently, in order to obtain more rigorous results.

Moreover, the relatively small number of participants is another limitation, as it does not ensure the generalization of the results, as the sample is not representative for the whole population. The participants are employees working in 4 fields of activity, namely socio-human, economic-trade, technical and military, failing to incorporate a clear picture of the perception of employees of all sectors of activity. In this context, I recommend to future studies the choice of a larger and more diverse sample, so as to obtain an overview of the topic proposed for study and, consequently, the generalization of the results.

Also, another limitation is the participation of people employed in both online and physical work system, the respondents in the physical work system failing to have a clear perspective on telework, being conditioned by the lack of experience in this system. Thus, their answers may have been distorted by their current condition, namely their physical presence in order to perform their work tasks. I suggest as a future direction to consider the exclusive participation of employees working in the online environment in order to obtain more accurate results.

Practical implications

In terms of practical implications, the results of the study raise awareness of the need to implement programs that support employees at the organizational level. The development and implementation of a company-wide platform that facilitates fast communication and, consequently, immediate problem solving should be targeted by practitioners in the field. Thus, employees could report the impediments they encounter in their work and could seek the help of colleagues or the manager in real time. Once the issue is reported on the platform, an automatic email will be sent to all colleagues in order to find an available colleague to provide the necessary help. Then the available colleagues would access the platform and get in touch with the employee who needs support in an online meeting. Thus, the work activity is carried out as optimally as possible, without time lags that would affect productivity.

Another important program to consider is stress reduction, as stress is a factor that favors reporting a low level of job satisfaction, especially for employees with a high level of neuroticism. In this context, employees focus rather on the disadvantages provided by the online work system, facing difficulties in noticing the benefits generated by this work system (Alrawashdeh et al., 2021). Thus, the considerable reduction of stress at work and highlighting the importance of psychological well -being could be favored by the implementation of a program that focuses on developing and maintaining fruitful, quality intercollegiate relationships and also subalter-manager ones. Thus, employees would learn to communicate assertively, to solve their relationship problems immediately in a way beneficial to both the partners involved and the cohesion of the group. They would also be able to overcome the obstacles they face in the activities they have to carry out in order to achieve the company's goals, with the help of colleagues. Consequently, the expected results of the program would lead to high levels of job satisfaction reported by employees (Ayça, 2019).

Conclusions

This study is one of the few studies in Romania that addresses the issue of determinants of job satisfaction from the perspective of intrapersonal factors related to age, personality traits (facet neurotism and extraversion facet) and, last but not least, the perception of the benefits of telework, trying to provide a rigorous, clear picture of the role of intrapersonal structure in the process of determining job satisfaction. Although most studies consider the role of external factors in the process of determining job satisfaction, the factors related to the intrapersonal structure of the individual are equally important, being necessary to study and know them in order to establish job satisfaction.

The results of the study may represent a relevant theoretical basis for the development and implementation of programs designed to contribute to improving the level of job

satisfaction reported among employees in Romania. This would lead to a considerable increase in productivity, which is the goal of most organizations that want to make a profit. Thus, I expect practitioners in the field to consider developing programs aimed at reducing the technological problems faced by older employees with no experience in using new technologies, coming to their aid and even programs aimed at intercollegiate support for real-time impediment resolution. They could also aim to implement programs focused on reducing stress at work. Stress has negative effects on satisfaction and efficiency by destabilizing employees and removing them from the perceived benefits of the job. It targets both employees with

a high level and employees with a low level of extraversion, but especially employees with a high level of neuroticism, requiring a high control of the action of external factors in order to function optimally.

In this context, I believe that it is important for each company to focus on creating and providing favorable conditions for the work environment, for interpersonal relationships. Also, maintaining the optimal state of physical and mental health of employees is essential, as only in this context could employees reach their full potential in carrying out work tasks designed to meet the goals and objectives proposed by employers and managers

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