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THE IMPACT OF WORK SETTING, AUTONOMY, AND BELONGING ON EMPLOYEES'
JOB SATISFACTION

SYDNEY M. RISEN

57 Pages

Job satisfaction is one of the most researched outcomes within Industrial/Organizational psychology. The goal of this study was to examine whether the relationship between work setting, specifically, the amount of time an employee works in an office or from home, and job satisfaction is mediated by autonomy and belonging. One hundred and thirty employees were surveyed on Prolific regarding their job satisfaction, work setting, autonomy, and belonging. There were no significant hypothesized relationships between the variables within this study, although there were some significant correlations. This indicates that the relationships between work setting and job satisfaction are not mediated by autonomy and belonging.

KEYWORDS: job satisfaction, work setting, autonomy, belonging, remote work, hybrid work, in-person work

THE IMPACT OF WORK SETTING, AUTONOMY, AND BELONGING ON EMPLOYEES'
JOB SATISFACTION

SYDNEY M. RISEN

A Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Psychology

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2024

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THE IMPACT OF WORK SETTING, AUTONOMY, AND BELONGING ON EMPLOYEES'

JOB SATISFACTION

SYDNEY M. RISEN

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Kimberly Schneider, Chair

Jeffrey Kahn

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S. M. R.

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CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous variables have changed recently regarding the workplace context, and a main catalyst for many changes at work has been the COVID-19 pandemic. When the COVID-19 pandemic came to the forefront of Americans' (and others') lives in March of 2020, many thought the pandemic would last a month or so, and then the world would go back to normal interactions (Redbird et al., 2022). Instead, the years-long pandemic still impacts how people live today, four years later, and much of this impact is seen in the workplace, particularly in how the work setting is defined and how work is performed (Grelle & Popp, 2021). When the pandemic began, organizations that could have employees work remotely (e.g., technology companies, and educational institutions) transferred most interactions online using video platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams (Rudolph et al., 2021). This abrupt change led to many challenges including Zoom fatigue, challenges managing children and other family members along with work responsibilities, and staying motivated to complete work (Parker et al., 2020).

Four years have now passed since the pandemic first began, and with this, many positive changes have come about regarding working from home (WFH), which have made this work arrangement relatively successful and more desirable for many people in terms of increased flexibility. Traveling for work has significantly decreased from before the pandemic which has led to less CO₂ emissions and positive impacts on the environment (Al-Habaibeh et al., 2021). A remote setting can allow more flexibility for employees (Ipsen et al., 2021), and often after initial challenges with working online, many employees say they would prefer to continue working remotely (Parker et al., 2020). Regardless of these positive outcomes, many influential organizations today, including Amazon and Goldman Sachs, (Smith, 2023) have said that they expect employees to return to the office anywhere from a few days a week to every day of the

work week, noting that employees work better together when they can be face to face, and that a strong organizational culture can only be achieved when everyone can be in the same physical space (Smith, 2023). In opposition to this, authors such as Gustavo Razzetti, in his book *Remote Not Distant* (2022) have argued that a strong culture can be built remotely, but not without effort and buy-in from leaders and employees alike. Being in different locations physically does not have to stop an organization from connecting and building a powerful culture. It seems there may be a disconnect between the perceptions of leaders and employees regarding whether remote work is a viable and desirable option for organizations moving forward.

Determining whether employees feel their work setting has impacted their autonomy, sense of belonging, and job satisfaction can help leaders and employees determine which work setting would be most productive in the future. Previous research has examined how working remotely impacts employees' well-being (Fan & Moen, 2023), but there has yet to be much research on potential relationships between work setting, belonging, and autonomy, or job satisfaction is impacted by variations in the amount of time spent working remotely.

Self-determination theory (SDT) proposed by Deci and Ryan (1985) states that individuals have an intrinsic tendency to fulfill their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Trépanier et al., 2013). The need for autonomy and relatedness (which is referred to as belonging within this study) are the mediators in this study between employees' work setting and job satisfaction. When autonomy and belonging needs are met, employees should experience greater psychological well-being. When these needs are ignored, employees feel "highly fragmented, isolated, and reactive" (Chiu, 2021, p. 15). An examination of the intrinsic need for autonomy and belonging to experience well-being or job satisfaction is a driver for this research. I propose that employees need to feel that they have freedom at work and relatedness needs met

within the job, and exploring how work setting impacts these variables is key to improving employees' experiences.

The current research project aimed to examine whether the relationship between work setting, specifically, the amount of time an employee works in an office or from home, and job satisfaction is mediated by autonomy and belonging. Autonomy and belonging individually have large impacts on employee performance and satisfaction and they are also related to turnover and employee well-being. Getting a sense of which work setting or what percentage of time spent working from home versus working remotely predicts higher levels of job satisfaction can help inform business leaders regarding where employees work best and how certain individual differences may play a role in that relationship. These relationships are reviewed in more detail in the sections below.

Work Setting

According to the United States Census Bureau (2022), from 2019 to 2021 the amount of people who worked primarily from home grew from 5.7% (around 9 million people) to 17.9% (27.6 million people). This sizeable increase can be largely attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, which was declared as such by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11th, 2020 (Redbird et al., 2022). Restrictions put in place at the local, state, and nationwide levels led capable organizations to quickly transition to fully remote work or teleworking (Ohu & Dosumu, 2021).

Teleworking is defined by Moon and Stanworth (1997) as “a form of ‘flexible’ work which involves distance work, remote work or telecommuting which is dependent upon the use of information and communication technologies” (p. 338). Telework often requires employees to go to their worksite on occasion, and this is what many organizations allowed their employees to

participate in at the beginning of the pandemic because the impacts of COVID-19 were still unclear (U.S. Department of the Interior, n.d.). Fully remote workers are not expected to report to any specific physical site for their jobs; their assigned worksite is their home, or wherever they choose to work from (U.S. Department of the Interior, n.d.). For this study, *remote work* is the term that will be used to describe this type of fully remote work setting. Another known form of remote work is hybrid work, which involves a combination of working from the office and working remotely (Teevan et al., 2021). This study aimed to examine where people work and how much power they have over this choice, and included on-site workers, hybrid workers, and fully remote workers. Much of the current research on work settings focuses on those who exclusively work at home, or exclusively work on-site. This study conceptualized the work setting variable as a continuum to encompass all work setting combinations and allow a closer examination of how any work setting can impact job satisfaction.

Today, many different arrangements for working remotely and working in an office are common. According to Gallup (n.d.), as of February 2024, among U.S. employees with remote-capable jobs, 27% are completely remote, 54% are hybrid, and 20% are fully on-site at a workplace. Career areas that are often remote or hybrid include positions in management, software engineering, accounting, legal, and graphic design (Van Sambeck, 2024). More than half of the workforce does not have the opportunity to complete their work remotely or in a hybrid fashion (Parker, 2023). Some jobs that can only be performed on-site include jobs that require using machinery or that require in-person interactions with customers. What occurs in terms of work setting is often dependent on what the organization allows, which is why a person's work setting and the amount of time spent working remotely versus in person will be examined as a continuous variable in this study.

Many advantages and disadvantages of a remote work setting have been discovered. A few advantages include improved work-life balance, increased productivity, decreased costs and environmental impact, and more flexibility (Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020). Ergotron surveyed 1,000 full-time employees in the United States and found that 40% of respondents said they work more hours now that they work remotely or in a hybrid work setting than they did when they went to work in person (Ergotron, n.d.). Ergotron found that even though employees may work longer hours when working remotely, they feel they have more flexibility and can fit work in around other aspects of their lives more easily than when working in person (Robinson, 2022). In terms of productivity, data from over 105 million Prodoscore (employee productivity monitoring software) users demonstrated a 5% increase in productivity during the pandemic. Prodoscore president David Powell noted that employees who are productive in person will continue to be productive remotely (Robinson, 2022).

Other advantages of remote work are even greater in terms of longer-term impacts. Eliminating the commute to work positively impacts urban carbon reduction and decreases employees' carbon footprints (Zhang et al., 2023). Global CO₂ emissions were reduced by 17% in April 2020 in comparison to 2019 levels (Shreedhar et al., 2022).

Some disadvantages of working remotely include greater social and physical isolation for employees and difficulties within the manager-employee relationship (Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020). Communication regarding organizational news and events can be more difficult with remote work, and this can negatively impact employees' identity within the organization (Diab-Bahman & Al-Enzi, 2020). These advantages and disadvantages hinge on an employee's individual differences, including how much communication, trust, and dependence is necessary within the manager-employee relationship (Razzetti, 2022), as well as the opportunities afforded

to them through their organization, notably how much autonomy they have within their position, which is described in more detail below.

Autonomy

Autonomy at work is becoming increasingly more important, especially when considering the change in what a typical work setting looks like today. Autonomy is defined as how much freedom and independence an employee has over their work (i.e., scheduling) and over how they complete it (Hornung & Rousseau, 2007). A few decades ago, for many jobs, most people a person might collaborate with at work, including a manager or supervisor, would be physically located in the same office during the work week. This allowed for easy collaboration and made managers very accessible to employees. Today, many teams have members spread throughout the world, and a person's manager is often not in the same location as them during the workday. Because of this, managers cannot check in on employees as easily as they could when everyone worked together in an office, so they need to understand how to best empower employees to accomplish work through the use of autonomy (Razzetti, 2022).

Even though managers can use autonomy to empower employees and improve the work experience, technology is often used to facilitate employee supervision through more frequent online surveillance (Ewers & Kangmennaang, 2023). However, employees' awareness of this monitoring can lead to "decreased job satisfaction, increased stress, decreased organizational commitment, and increased turnover propensity" (Ball, 2021, p. 7). These downsides create a feeling of having less autonomy or control over one's actions, regardless of employees' locations (Vitak & Zimmer, 2023). Giving employees autonomy involves risks, and knowledge of what level of autonomy is suitable for the situation. However, providing autonomy can strengthen the

relationship between the manager and employee when both parties feel the amount of autonomy provided is appropriate. (Wiatr & Skowron-Mielnik, 2023).

The amount of freedom employees feel they have can largely impact how satisfied they feel with their work (Chung-Yan, 2010), and today, many say they want flexibility (Reisinger, & Fetterer, 2021). When given flexibility, people have more autonomy over their decisions, and employees report being more satisfied with higher levels of autonomy (Langfred, & Moye, 2004). Many employees seek out remote or hybrid jobs because of the flexibility and autonomy they can attain, In the current study, flexibility will be examined as a facet of autonomy. Having autonomy over one's work includes having flexibility in how, when, and where work is completed. Many employees seek out remote or hybrid jobs because of the flexibility and autonomy they can attain, as well as the benefits of a stronger work-life balance (Haan, 2023).

Work-life balance is often considered when discussing flexibility. Work-life balance concerns the expectations and demands an employee faces at work, and how those compare to the demands and obligations one has to their family and friends within their private life (Feeney & Stritch, 2019). During the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people had to shift to fully remote work, and with this change came challenges with managing work-life balance, especially when everyone in the family unit was forced to stay home to stay safe (Adisa et al., 2022). Many people were unable to have a separate space for work, so distractions from family members occurred more frequently than before the pandemic (Lyttelton et al., 2021).

Striking a balance between work and home life can be challenging, and employers who offer more flexibility in this arrangement may see improvements in the well-being of their workforce (Vyas, 2022). Feeney and Stritch (2019) found that policies aimed at creating work-life balance through family leave, sick leave, alternative work hours, and flexible scheduling

positively impacted work-life balance for state employees. Giving employees autonomy over their work can benefit organizations greatly and is facilitated by creating trust and understanding between managers and employees. Razzetti (2022) cited Douglas McGregor's Theory Y approach as the best way to manage employees and build trust, even though today many organizations lead with Theory X, meaning they employ the assumptions of Theory X into the work style of the organization. Theory X assumes employees do not enjoy working, need to be supervised, and are only motivated by money, while Theory Y assumes people want to work, enjoy working, want independence, and can be self-motivated (Razzetti, 2022). Theory Y involves autonomy and trust in employees, and many organizations are afraid to exercise autonomy and trust because of unconscious assumptions about how people may have behaved in the past. Some organizations assume these untrustworthy attitudes are still held today by the majority of people, when that may not be the case for the employees within their organization (Razzetti, 2022).

Using self-determination theory, Trépanier et al. (2013) investigated the impact of workplace bullying on the needs of employees in Canada, and they found that workplace bullying leads employees to have unsatisfied needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, predicting a lack of satisfaction of employees' need for autonomy. Self-determination theory highlights the need for employees' freedom in their work and their need for belonging in the workplace to obtain job satisfaction. Self-determination theory also has a large focus on the different types of motivations that may guide a person's goal pursuit (Deci & Ryan, 2000), including intrinsic and external motivations. Intrinsic motivation is when a person wants to engage in a behavior because they find it interesting or enjoyable, while external motivation is guided by a tangible reward like a raise or approval from others (Slemp et al., 2018). Self-

determination theory posits that more internal forms of motivation drive individuals toward their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Employees want to experience autonomy and belonging deeply within themselves, and not experiencing this may negatively impact how satisfied they feel, especially in the context of their job position.

Sense of Belonging

In addition to employees' work settings and levels of autonomy, their sense of belonging also greatly impacts their job satisfaction (Miller & Giblin, 2024). Sense of belonging is "the feeling of connectedness with or involvement in a social system or environment of which a person feels an integral part" as defined by Videbeck (2011, p.123). Creating feelings of belongingness at work can help lower turnover intentions and impact employees' well-being (Bilginoğlu, & Yozgat, 2022), and these factors have an impact on job satisfaction (Henke et al., 2016). It is possible that belonging at work may now be experienced differently with the increase of remote workers. Employees often feel isolated because of the lack of face-to-face interaction and informal chats with coworkers when working remotely (Jaiswal & Prabhakaran, 2023). The void created by the lack of casual run-ins and exchanges in the workplace (Jaiswal & Prabhakaran, 2023) must be addressed in the remote work setting. Remote work often leads to more feelings of isolation, which results in reduced productivity and this can impact a person's sense of belonging and negatively affect their job satisfaction (Buonomo et al. 2023, Toscano & Zappalà, 2020). Buonomo et al. (2023, p. 7) surveyed 635 remote workers and found that relationships can "trigger a gain spiral" within an organization using remote work. Being able to work through the steps of a project with other employees can create a sense of job satisfaction for those who work remotely (Buonomo et al., 2023). Employees who lack this type of collaboration in a remote work setting may experience reduced feelings of belonging. For

example, Toscano and Zappalà (2020) administered questionnaires to 265 Italian employees who worked exclusively from home in April and May of 2020. They found that social isolation was negatively related to work satisfaction for employees who worked remotely.

The Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM, 2021) reported that 67% of supervisors believe remote workers are more easily replaceable than onsite workers, 42% of supervisors sometimes forget about remote workers on their team, and 34% of remote workers believe that permanently working remotely would lower their opportunities for career advancement. The lack of face-to-face interaction can lead to proximity bias, where those in the office are more well-liked and receive more work opportunities and chances for promotion than remote workers simply because they are more visible than their remote counterparts (Bachrach et al., 2023). There are also group differences in access to remote work and these may impact interactions and career prospects. Fewer white men prefer to work remotely than women and people of color (Agovino, 2022), and more men can work in person because they often have fewer familial responsibilities outside of the office. Because remote workers are frequently forgotten about by managers (SHRM, 2021), this can allow white men, who prefer to be in the office, to experience greater or faster career progression than women or people of color (Agovino, 2022). This can also stifle minorities' feeling of belonging in the office when these patterns are recognized.

Creating a sense of belonging for everyone in a remote or hybrid work setting is possible but requires more effort than if everyone were in the same location. Razzetti (2022) discussed the importance of building culture remotely and that organizations have to be much more diligent in promoting a sense of belonging for all workers regardless of their work location. For management to be effective, managers must maintain strong relationships and build trust with all

of their team members, determine the best way to communicate effectively with geographically dispersed employees, and allow employees flexibility as well as show flexibility with their own management style (Wiatr, 2023). Much of this is easier to accomplish when workers are all co-located; however, it is still possible in a remote or hybrid work setting. Managers' jobs can be more difficult when teams are hybrid or remote because of the additional challenges involved when managing remote workers (Parker et al., 2020), and this can challenge an organization's ability to create a sense of belonging for all employees. Employees who spend more time working in a central office location on-site with others experience often experience a stronger sense of belonging than those who work remotely (Kitterman, 2023); therefore as the hypothesized model in the current study predicts, it is expected that those who spend more time working on-site with others will experience greater belonging leading to great job satisfaction in relation to people who spend more time working remotely.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction can be interpreted as the overall judgment one has about their job, and how favorably one views their job (Judge et al., 2017). Job satisfaction is widely studied within Industrial/Organizational psychology and is the attitudinal outcome variable being examined within this study. The goal of this study is to investigate the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction mediated by autonomy and belonging.

Job satisfaction has been tied to numerous factors, including turnover intentions, well-being, organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB), counterproductive work behaviors (CWB), and life satisfaction (Spector, 1997). Job satisfaction is important to organizations because employees who are more satisfied have decreased turnover intentions and are more productive than those who are less satisfied (Rumage, 2023). Replacing an employee can cost organizations

one and a half to two times the employee's annual salary (McFeely & Wigert, 2019) not to mention the time it takes an employee to be fully trained in their position. Employee turnover costs organizations a lot of time and money, and job dissatisfaction is a leading cause of turnover. Employees value having autonomy over how and where they do their work (Reisinger, & Fetterer, 2021) and this may be a factor in boosting job satisfaction. Not providing employees flexibility can cause frustration and may be one predictor of decreased job satisfaction.

Belonging is strongly connected to job satisfaction, and culture has been said to be a strong driver of employee satisfaction and performance in the workplace (SHRM, n.d.). Organizational culture encompasses "the values cultivated within an organization and serves to guide the behaviors of its members" (Azmy et al., 2023, p. 2). Organizational culture is closely tied to belonging, as it helps build bonds between employees, and better organizational performance (Azmy et al., 2023). Spehar et al. (2016, p. 19) noted two studies found "positive, secure and reciprocal social bonds" are instrumental to job satisfaction, while the absence of these bonds can be harmful to job satisfaction. One study found that individuals who experienced feelings of belonging displayed optimal psychological functioning compared to those with weaker feelings of belonging (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The second study Spehar noted by Lynch et al. (2005) surveyed workers in a psychiatric hospital and noted the importance of autonomy and relatedness for the employees. When these needs were fulfilled, based on self-determination theory, employees experienced improved well-being and job satisfaction. Azmy et al. (2023) studied employees in automotive component manufacturing companies, and found that organizational culture explained 45.3% of variance in job satisfaction, supporting their hypothesis that organizational culture affects job satisfaction. They also found that organizational culture significantly enhanced employee performance by 31.1% when mediated by job

satisfaction, and these findings are similar to other studies demonstrating the positive impact organizational culture can have on employee performance through job satisfaction (Azmy et al., 2023) Having a strong sense of belonging at work has been shown to impact job satisfaction, which has been demonstrated to be vital to a healthy organization, leading to the following hypotheses that will be examined in the current study. These specific hypotheses are being assessed because investigating the impact of work setting on job satisfaction can help employees and organizations determine which work setting or mix of settings will be most beneficial for employees' well-being and productivity. Autonomy and belonging shape employees' job satisfaction, especially since levels of the two factors have been previously shown to be predicted by work setting. Exploring how these factors interact can emphasize how these factors can affect job satisfaction, and being knowledgeable about the impact of employees' needs may help organizational leaders determine which work setting will be best for each individual. A visualization of these hypotheses and the proposed mediation paths can be found in Figure 1. Each path in the figure that relates to a hypothesis below is labeled.

Proposed Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: On-site work time will be negatively correlated with job satisfaction.

Employees who spend more time working from home will be more satisfied with their jobs in relation to those who spend more time working in a central office location on-site with others.

Ninety-eight percent of American workers in a 2023 study indicated they would like to work remotely, at least part of the time (Haan, 2023). The strong desire for flexibility and work-life balance that can be obtained by working from home informs this hypothesis that employees will be more satisfied when they spend more time working remotely.

Hypothesis 2: On-site work time will be negatively correlated with autonomy. Employees who spend more time working from home will perceive they have more autonomy in relation to those who spend more time working in a central office location on-site with others.

Self-determination theory notes that employees have a need for autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Employees seek out remote jobs to obtain the flexibility and work-life balance that is afforded there, which may not be available with an in-person position.

Hypothesis 3: On-site work time will be positively correlated with belonging. Employees who spend more time working on-site with others will feel a stronger sense of belonging in relation to those who spend more time working from home.

Isolation and a lack of belonging are commonly experienced by remote workers (Jaiswal & Prabhakaran, 2023). Employees who spend more time working in person have more opportunities for interaction and can experience a strong sense of belonging.

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between work setting and job satisfaction will be mediated by autonomy. Those who score lower on the work setting scale (spend more time working from home) will experience greater autonomy leading to greater job satisfaction in relation to employees who score higher on the work setting scale (spend more time working on-site with others).

Remote or hybrid jobs are now often sought after because of the flexibility, autonomy, and work-life balance that can be achieved (Haan, 2023). This hypothesis posits that employees who prefer working remotely will have higher job satisfaction because they experience more belonging in relation to those who spend more time working remotely.

Hypothesis 5: The relationship between work setting and job satisfaction will be mediated by belonging. Those who score higher on the work setting scale (spend more time working on-site with others) will experience greater belonging leading to great job satisfaction in relation to employees who score lower on the work setting scale (spend more time working from home).

Employees who spend more time working in person often experience a stronger sense of belonging than those who work remotely (Kitterman, 2023). Belonging can be hard to cultivate in remote settings but more naturally occurs in an in-person work setting. Employees who experience a sense of belonging will likely want to work in person because they recognize the ease with which it can exist in that setting compared to a remote setting.

CHAPTER II: METHOD

Participants

Participants in this study were recruited via online convenience sampling using the platform Prolific. Prolific allows researchers to pay to survey diverse audiences in a relatively quick manner. Requirements for participation in this study included being a full-time employee (32 or more hours) who worked either full-time in an office, in a hybrid setting, or fully remote. Participants were not self-employed. This study surveyed employees who worked in knowledge-based positions (e.g., engineering, accounting, and management positions) since these jobs tend to have more flexibility in their work settings, as opposed to service or skill-based positions that can often only be performed in person. Another requirement for participation in this study was that participants be within the age range of 18 - 65 to capture working adults employed in full-time positions. This study aimed to reach diverse audiences which is why Prolific was used instead of conducting research in a specific geographic area or organization, so employees of different backgrounds throughout the United States could be reached.

A power analysis was conducted using the Monte Carlo Power Analysis for Indirect Effects developed by Schoemann et al. (2017). Target power was 0.80, and the confidence level was 95% using the two parallel mediators model. To input correlations into the power analysis, correlations for each of the variable pairings were researched. If correlations were found, an average of the correlations was input into the Monte Carlo Power Analysis. No correlations were found from published literature examining work setting and autonomy, work setting and belonging, or work setting and job satisfaction. This is likely due to the nature of the work setting variable in the current study. The work setting variable is on a continuum and includes

both remote work and in-person work, whereas most research examined each work type separately.

Three correlations were found between autonomy and job satisfaction in published research. A study by Mohammed et al. (2022) examined how subjective work autonomy, work-family conflict, and anxiety related to the pandemic impacted job satisfaction. From this study, the correlation between work autonomy and job satisfaction was retrieved ($r = .42$). Zurmehly (2008) reviewed the relationship between educational preparation, autonomy, critical thinking, and nursing job satisfaction. From Zurmehly's work a correlation of .538 between job satisfaction and autonomy was found. The last correlation found for the relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction was from Sahan and Özdemir (2023) which was .384 for the relationship between professional autonomy and job satisfaction for nurses. The average of these three correlations was .449.

The next correlation examined for the power analysis was between belonging and autonomy. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021) explored teacher autonomy, belonging, and job satisfaction. The correlation between autonomy and belonging in this study was .34. Next, Mahomed et al. (2022) explored employee well-being for remote workers during the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa. The correlation found was .86 between social support and job autonomy. Tian et al. (2023) examined students' negative emotions and academic procrastination during COVID-19 using life autonomy and school belonging. The correlation between life autonomy and school belonging was .546. Ding et al. (2023) examined how organizational support and job autonomy impacted performance pressure in junior faculty within universities. The correlation between perceived organizational support and job autonomy was .346. The average of the four correlations between autonomy and belonging was .523.

Finally, correlations between belonging and job satisfaction were examined. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021) found a correlation between those variables of .42. Another study from Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) examined teacher job satisfaction in relation to feelings of belonging and emotional exhaustion. A correlation of .39 between belonging and job satisfaction was reported. The average correlation between these two studies for belonging and job satisfaction was .405.

After these correlations were found they were input into the Monte Carlo Power Analysis. The correlations between work setting and autonomy, work setting and belonging, and work setting and job satisfaction were input as .3 because that is considered a medium effect. After the correlations were inputted, the power analysis was run, and the participant number associated with .80 power was 126. Based on this analysis, 140 participants were recruited for this study to account for those who may not pass attention checks. A total of 130 participant responses were included in analyses after reviewing attention checks and incomplete survey responses.

Procedure

Before data collection began, the procedure for this study was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board. The Qualtrics survey was administered online via Prolific, and informed consent was obtained before respondents began completing the survey. Participants responded to the work setting questions (described below), and then to the following scales: The Factual Autonomy Scale (FAS), The Organizational Belonging Scale, and the Job Descriptive Index. Demographic questions regarding age, gender, and job category were asked for exploratory data analyses. There were two attention checks (e.g. "To ensure you are paying attention, please select agree") to maintain the integrity of the data retrieved. The total number of survey items was 106, and participants were each financially compensated \$2 for participating. It

took three hours for the necessary sample size to be reached, and after this, the survey was closed.

Measures

Work Setting

For the current study, it was important to assess the work setting of participants, and more specifically, the amount of time they worked remotely or in person. It was also important to assess participants' preferred work setting, to determine if that would predict their job satisfaction in exploratory analyses. Two items were developed and used within the study. The first item was "What is your typical work setting/location on any given week?" and the second item was "What is your preferred work setting/location on any given week?". The preferred work setting item was included to explore any discrepancies between work setting and preferred work setting, and if this discrepancy would impact the correlations between variables. The responses to both items were on a sliding scale from 0 to 100, with 0 representing participants who worked from home 100% of the time, and 100 representing participants who work in a physical location with others (i.e., "in-person") 100% of the week. A score of 50 represents people who work from home 50% of the time and work in the office 50% of the time. These descriptors were used as anchors for the '0%', '50%', and '100%' points on the continuous scale. Participants were able to choose any percentage in the 0 to 100% range.

This scale was chosen to account for the different number of days participants may work. A typical work week is five days, but because we did not know the participants' work schedules before administering the survey, percentages can more accurately describe how much time participants spend in the various work settings.

Autonomy

The Factual Autonomy Scale (FAS) by Spector (2003) was used to assess participants' autonomy. This scale includes 10 items. 7 items follow the question "In your present job, how often do you have to ask permission...". For example, an item in this scale is "In your present job, how often do you have to ask permission to change the hours you work?". The remaining three items follow the question "How often do the following events occur in your present job". An example item in this scale is "How often does someone tell you how you are to do your work?". The response scale for the first 7 items is a 5-point scale, with the responses of the first seven items being *never*, *rarely*, *sometimes*, *quite often*, and *extremely often or always*. The last three items' responses include *never*, *once or twice*, *once or twice per month*, *once or twice per week*, and *every day*. This scale was created to decrease the subjectivity in responses by asking for factual information on the employee's workplace experience. The items in this scale are reverse-scored, so a higher score represents higher autonomy in the workplace. The scale is available for free for noncommercial use. Spector and colleagues found internal consistency reliability estimates (coefficient alpha) for three samples. The coefficient alpha values found range from .81 to .87 (Spector, 2024). Spector combined all 10 items for a total score given that both response scales are 5-point frequency scales. A participant's overall score ranged from 10 to 50.

Belonging

Sense of belonging was measured in this study using The Organizational Belonging scale created by Blau et al. (2023). The scale used in this study includes 16 items provided by Blau. The Organizational Belonging scale is relatively new and is still being adapted to most accurately capture belonging. After analyzing the 27-item scale in multiple studies, Blau

determined that 16 items had the strongest loadings, which is why this study used the 16-item version of this scale (Blau et al., 2023). The item responses are on a 6-point scale, where 1= *strongly disagree*, 2= *disagree*, 3= *slightly disagree*, 4= *slightly agree*, 5= *agree* and 6= *strongly agree*, with no neutral point. The scale includes four factors. Factor 1 is “Be Myself” (coefficient alpha = .89) which includes 7 items, and the questions are related to comfortability and authenticity at work. Factor 2 is “Acceptance” (coefficient alpha .84) which includes 4 items. The questions are related to feeling valued and respected at work. The third factor is “Diversity Valued” (coefficient alpha = .71) which includes 3 items, and questions centered around whether diversity is a priority and is valued in the workplace. Factor 4 is “Connection” (coefficient alpha = .83) and includes 2 items with questions related to how closely aligned one feels with coworkers and the organization. The 16 items were combined to obtain a total Organizational Belonging score. Although this organizational belonging scale is fairly new, many other related scales focus on similar facets of organizational belongingness (OB). This scale results in a measurement of a more overarching sense of belonging in the workplace (Blau et al., 2023). Higher scores indicate stronger organizational belonging.

Job Satisfaction

The Job Descriptive Index (JDI) was used to assess participants’ job satisfaction (Bowling Green State University College of Arts and Sciences, 2020; Smith et al., 1969) as revised by Roznowski (1989). This scale includes 72 items, with 5 facets. The facets include coworker satisfaction (18 items), work satisfaction (18 items), pay satisfaction (9 items), opportunities for promotion (9 items), and supervision satisfaction (18 items). For all JDI facets, participants were asked to think about the facet and then respond to an adjective or short phrase with a “Yes” if that item describes that facet, “No” if that item does not describe that facet, and

“?” if they cannot decide (Bowling Green State University College of Arts and Sciences, 2020). The validity coefficients for each facet of the JDI as a measure of overall job satisfaction are as follows: work: 0.63, pay: 0.42, promotion: 0.42, supervision: 0.49, and coworkers: 0.79. Higher scores indicate higher job satisfaction (Brodke et al., 2009). Following the published recoding instructions, responses of “yes” to negatively-worded items were scored as ‘0’ and responses of “no” to negatively-worded items were scored as ‘3’. Responses of “no” to positively-worded items were recoded as ‘3’, and responses of “yes” to positively-worded items were recoded as ‘0’. Responses of “?” to all items were recoded as ‘1’. The range of possible scores on the JDI is 0 to 216.

Analysis Procedure

Mediation analyses using the PROCESS Procedure (Hayes, SPSS Version 4.2) were used to test all five hypotheses. The direct effects and each variable’s path were evaluated. The coefficients, *p*-values, and bootstrapped upper and lower confidence intervals were analyzed to determine significance of that path. A *p*-value of less than .05 indicates statistical significance, and a confidence interval that does not include zero also indicates statistical significance. The hypotheses were supported if the relationship paths and direct effect were found to be statistically significant.

CHAPTER III: RESULTS

Descriptive Analyses

A total of 140 participants completed the survey and responses from 130 participants were included after removing respondents who did not pass the attention checks or had incomplete responses. Of the 130 participants, 61.5% ($n = 80$) were male, 36.2% ($n = 47$) were female, and 2.3% ($n = 3$) were non-binary/third gender. The age range was from 24 to 66, and the average age was 39.4 ($SD = 8.76$). Regarding job category of participants, 30.8% ($n = 40$) worked in information technology, 20.0% ($n = 26$) worked in finance, 16.9% ($n = 22$) worked in education or training, 13.1% ($n = 17$) worked in science, technology, engineering or mathematics, 10.8% ($n = 14$) worked in business management or administration, 6.2% ($n = 8$) worked in government or public administration, and 2.3% ($n = 3$) worked in the legal field.

Work setting scores were analyzed, and a histogram of all work setting scores can be found in Figure 3. Although the distribution of scores is bimodal with 30 people who work fully remote and 28 people who work fully in person, the distribution includes a large number of scores ($n = 42$) that fall between the the fully remote or fully in-person groups. The discrepancy in work setting preference variable was also created by subtracting work setting scores from preferred work setting scores. Negative scores on this variable indicate the participant worked remotely but preferred to work in person, and positive scores indicate the participant worked in person but preferred more time in a more remote or hybrid setting.

The zero-order correlations, means, coefficient alpha reliability, and standard deviations between all variables in the study can be found in Table 1. One important correlation to note in Table 1 is the significant correlation between work setting discrepancy and job satisfaction. This was a significant correlation ($r = -.22, p < .05$) indicating that a greater discrepancy in preferring

to work remotely but actually working in-person was related to lower job satisfaction. Although this was not a hypothesis in the study, it may be an important construct to examine in more detail in additional research.

Hypothesis Testing

Testing for all five hypotheses was done using PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 by Andrew F. Hayes (2022). PROCESS allows mediation with bootstrapping. Model 4 in PROCESS was used with 10,000 bootstrap samples, at a 95% confidence level. Figure 2 illustrates that relationship paths with betas and significance level included.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that on-site work time would be significantly negatively correlated with job satisfaction. The direct effect of work setting on job satisfaction was not significant, $b = -.07$, $t(128) = -.93$, $p = .29$. This suggests that employees' work setting was not directly related to their job satisfaction while controlling for the mediators.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that on-site work time would be negatively correlated with autonomy. The unstandardized path between work setting and autonomy was nearly significant, $b = -.04$, $t(128) = -1.93$, $p = .05$. This suggests that employees' work setting may not be directly related to their autonomy.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that on-site work time would be positively correlated with belonging. The unstandardized path between work setting and belonging was not significant, $b = .03$, $t(128) = 1.06$, $p = .29$. This suggests that employees' work setting is not directly related to their belonging.

The unstandardized path between autonomy and job satisfaction was not significant, $b = .05$, $t(128) = -.14$, $p = .89$. This indicates that employees' autonomy is not directly related to their job satisfaction. The unstandardized path between belonging and job satisfaction was highly

significant, $b = 2.27$, $t(128) = 10.45$, $p < .001$. This suggests that employees' belonging is directly related to their job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction would be mediated by autonomy. The indirect effect of autonomy on the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction was not significant. The effect was $-.001$, with a confidence interval of $(-.03, .04)$. This suggests that the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction is not mediated by autonomy.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction would be mediated by belonging. The indirect effect of belonging on the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction was not significant at $.08$, with a confidence interval of $(-.06, .22)$. This suggests that the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction is not mediated by belonging.

Exploratory Analyses

The relationship between preferred work setting and job satisfaction as mediated by autonomy and belonging was also analyzed. This relationship was explored to determine if employees' work setting compared to their preferences would predict how satisfied they were with their job and whether autonomy and belonging played a part in this relationship. This mediation was also done through PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2. Model 4 in PROCESS was used with 10,000 bootstrap samples, at a 95% confidence level. The average preferred work setting score was 35.69. The results were similar to the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction as mediated by autonomy and belonging. The direct effect of preferred work setting on job satisfaction was not significant, $b = .08$, $t(128) = .93$, $p = .35$. The unstandardized path between preferred work setting and autonomy was not significant, $b = -.00$,

$t(128) = -.12, p = .91$. The unstandardized path between preferred work setting and belonging was nearly significant, $b = .06, t(128) = 1.89, p = .06$. The unstandardized path autonomy and job satisfaction was not significant, $b = .13, t(128) = .36, p = .72$, and the unstandardized path between belonging and job satisfaction was significant, $b = 2.21, t(128) = 10.11, p < .001$. The significance of the path between belonging and job satisfaction indicates that employees' belonging does have a large influence on how satisfied they are at work. The other nonsignificant findings indicate that the variables within those paths are likely not directly related.

An additional exploratory analysis included separate analyses for males and females as there may have been gender differences due to work-life balance issues. The relationship between work setting and job satisfaction as mediated by autonomy and belonging was analyzed. Mediation was completed through PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 using Model 4 with 10,000 bootstrap samples at a 95% confidence level. The results were similar to the findings from the original hypotheses. The only significant finding for both males and females was for the unstandardized path between belonging and job satisfaction, as noted above.

Next, each job category was analyzed separately, and the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction as mediated by autonomy and belonging was examined. Mediation was completed through PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2, using model 4 with 10,000 bootstrap samples at a 95% confidence level. Statistics are only reported for statistically significant results.

For participants who worked in information technology ($n = 40$), there were no statistically significant pathways besides the unstandardized path between belonging and job satisfaction, $b = 2.14, t(38) = 5.35, p < .001$.

For participants who worked in finance ($n = 26$), the only significant pathway was between belonging and job satisfaction, $b = 1.97$, $t(24) = 2.99$, $p < .01$.

For those working in education or training ($n = 22$), the relationship between belonging and job satisfaction was significant, $b = 2.86$, $t(20) = 6.23$, $p < .001$. Regarding the relationship between work setting and autonomy, the relationship was significant for participants who worked in education or training ($n = 22$), $b = -.12$, $t(20) = -2.91$, $p < .01$, indicating that those who spent more time working remotely experienced greater autonomy. The indirect effect between work setting and job satisfaction mediated by autonomy for those who work within education and training was significant; the effect was .20, with a confidence interval of (.01, .49).

For participants who worked in science, technology, engineering or mathematics ($n = 17$), the relationship between work setting and belonging was significant, $b = .21$, $t(15) = 2.71$, $p < .05$.

For participants who worked in business management and administration ($n = 14$), the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction was significant, $b = -.64$, $t(12) = -3.11$, $p < .05$. For this group the relationship between autonomy and job satisfaction was significant, $b = -2.18$, $t(12) = -2.54$, $p < .05$. The relationship between belonging and job satisfaction was also significant, $b = 1.30$, $t(12) = 3.89$, $p < .01$, indicating that those who spent more time working in-person reported more satisfaction. The direct effect of work setting on job satisfaction was significant with an effect of $-.64$, $t(12) = -3.11$, $p < .05$, and the indirect effect of autonomy on the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction was significant with an effect of .25, and a confidence interval of (.02, .73).

For participants who worked in government or public administration ($n = 8$), the relationship between belonging and job satisfaction was significant, $b = 4.33$, $t(6) = 2.94$, $p < .05$.

The sample size was too small for participants who worked in the legal field to run the PROCESS model, so no information for that group was available.

Within the exploratory analyses of each job category, there were numerous significant findings. Out of the eight job categories, five of them had a significant relationship between belonging and job satisfaction. This indicates that belonging positively predicts job satisfaction across job categories within knowledge-based job positions. The relationship between work setting and job satisfaction as mediated by autonomy was significant for the business management and administration category, as well as the education and training category.

Next, each of the individual facets of job satisfaction was examined in place of the overall JDI score, to determine whether any of the facets would show a significant relationship within the mediation analysis. The facets of the JDI include satisfaction with coworkers, satisfaction with work itself, satisfaction with pay, satisfaction with opportunities for promotion, and satisfaction with supervision. For each facet, the relationship between autonomy and the facet, belonging and the facet, the direct effect of work setting on the facet, the mediation path between work setting, autonomy, and the facet, and the mediation path between work setting, belonging, and the facet were analyzed. The results from this exploratory analysis were similar to those from the original hypotheses. For each facet, the relationship between belonging and the facet was highly significant, $p < .001$. For the promotion facet, the relationship between work setting and promotion was nearly significant, $b = -.04$, $t(128) = -1.93$, $p = .05$. According to SHRM (2021), this finding could be explained by considering that those who work remotely may be more easily forgotten than those who work in person according to SHRM (2021), so an employees' chance of promotion might be predicted by their work setting. These relationships

were the only significant findings within the exploratory analyses using each facet of the Job Descriptive Index.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

General Discussion

The goal of this study was to examine whether the relationship between work setting (i.e., the amount of time an employee works in an office or from home) and job satisfaction is mediated by autonomy and belonging needs of employees. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way work is done, specifically regarding where people work (Grelle & Popp, 2021). Analyzing how work setting, autonomy, and belonging predict employees' job satisfaction can help inform organizational policies and can help employees determine what work setting leads to the highest job satisfaction.

The first hypothesis of this study predicted that on-site work time would be negatively correlated with job satisfaction. The correlation was negative as predicted, but was too small to be significant.

The second hypothesis was that on-site work time would be negatively correlated with autonomy. The relationship between work setting and autonomy was negative, and the p-value was .0556, which is close to the cutoff significance value of .05. With a larger sample size, this relationship could be shown to be significant. To determine power for this study, the Monte Carlo Power Analysis was used. The range of the correlations from previously published research that were used as input into this analysis was from .3 to .523. If a .3 medium effect was input for all correlations, the power analysis with .80 power and a 95% confidence level would have yielded a participant number of 200. Using a larger sample size may have demonstrated a significant effect on this hypothesis.

The third hypothesis within this study was that on-site work time would be positively correlated with belonging. The correlation between work setting and belonging was positive, but

not at a significant level. Work setting and belonging are likely not directly related based on the findings of this mediation.

The fourth hypothesis within this study was that the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction would be mediated by autonomy. The indirect effect of autonomy on the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction was not significant. The fifth hypothesis within this study predicted the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction would be mediated by belonging. This relationship was not significant.

Although the hypotheses were not significant, this study still provides information about the relationship between these variables. When examining the variables through the lens of self-determination theory, there are a few things to consider. First, employees may not have a strong intrinsic need for autonomy and belonging at work when compared to their life outside of work. Today, many employees view work as a means to make money, and less as a place to make a difference or connect with others. This could explain why the relationships between work setting and job satisfaction are not mediated by autonomy and belonging. Ryan and Deci (2000) also discuss the relationship of autonomy and relatedness to motivation, performance, and well-being. The facets of job satisfaction may not equate to the ideals of performance and well-being. One can perform well at work and not be satisfied, or one could use emotional regulation to separate their well-being from their job satisfaction at work and not let their dissatisfaction at work alter their well-being. This could be a reason why there are so few significant findings within this analysis.

One highly significant finding ($p < .001$) was the relationship between belonging and job satisfaction. This indicates that if employees have a stronger sense of belonging at work, they may report higher job satisfaction. In turn, if employees do not feel a strong sense of belonging,

they are likely to feel less satisfied with their jobs. This is a well-established finding that was verified in this sample with a diverse set of knowledge-based jobs.

There were also some significant findings within the exploratory analyses particularly when taking a closer look at each job category. However, the sample size for each of these groups was small, especially when compared to the overall participant number of 130 which was determined to be necessary to get a power of .80. The education and training occupational group had significant findings corresponding to two hypotheses within this study. This group had a significant finding for Hypothesis 2; work setting and autonomy were negatively correlated. There was also a significant finding for Hypothesis 4; the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction was significantly mediated by autonomy. The education and training group may have had more significant findings than the other occupational groups because they may have experienced more tangible results within their position. They often can see if their work paid off in whether the person they are educating or training learned the material, or put what they were teaching into practice, especially if an assessment was involved. Having tangible results can impact job satisfaction positively or negatively since they can see the effectiveness of the teaching. The nature of the job may allow for more autonomy since educators often work alone or in small groups. They may also experience belonging since educators often discuss the highs and lows of their teaching experience with each other, which allows for both belonging and improvement in their teaching.

Strengths and Limitations

One strength of this study was that a diverse sample was obtained using the Prolific platform for participant recruitment. There did not appear to be any ceiling or floor effects for any of the variables but there was a large range of responses. Prolific also allows one to survey

people all over the world. In this study, employees within the United States were targeted specifically. There is a benefit to sampling from across the country rather than recruiting participants within a specific geographical area. This allows for a more culturally diverse sample, instead of having a sample of participants who could be more demographically similar to each other, which could lead to less diversity within survey responses. A more diverse sample also allows for a diverse range of ages within the range I screened for, and a range of genders including those who identify as nonbinary or third gender. It also allowed me to reach respondents within each job category I was screening for, which may not have been possible within a local population.

This study contributes to research in the field of Industrial/Organizational psychology regarding work setting, job satisfaction, autonomy, and belonging. These variables have not been studied in any published research in this combination post-COVID, so any new information about the relation of these variables may be helpful to practitioners in the field. There was a highly significant relationship between belonging and job satisfaction. This relationship was not part of the hypotheses, but it was a part of the mediation path between work setting and job satisfaction (i.e., mediated by belonging). Diving deeper into the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction as mediated by belonging could help determine whether work setting plays a part in the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction. Looking at different variables besides autonomy and belonging such as work environment, interaction with customers, and personality may provide more information about the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction.

A limitation of this study is that there were limited statistically significant hypotheses within this study, with a few additional significant effects that were found in exploratory

analyses. As previously mentioned, a larger sample size could lead to significant hypotheses. Inputting medium-sized effects into the Monte Carlo Power Analysis would lead to a larger sample size required to reach a confidence level of 95% and .80 power. However, the non-significant findings may indicate that work setting and job satisfaction are not related, or that the relationship between the two variables is not mediated by autonomy or belonging. Other variables may mediate this relationship, which could be examined in future analyses. Another limitation of this study is not knowing how accurate and truthful participants were when filling out the online survey. There were screeners in place to filter out participants who were not candidates for this study based on inclusion criteria, but it is not guaranteed that the participants were truthful. One inclusion criterion was that participants be in the age range of 18 to 65. People within this age range were sought out since this is the typical working age range in the U.S., and many people retire around 65. However, one participant aged 66 was included in this study. This may mean that participants did not fill out the screener information accurately, which could weaken the integrity of this study.

Future Directions

To further research on this topic within Industrial/Organizational psychology, a few things can be done to improve a potential follow-up study. First, a larger sample size may be needed, especially since there was a significant relationship between belonging and job satisfaction, and the relationship between work setting and autonomy was close to being significantly significant. A larger sample could lead to even more diversity within work settings and experiences, so there is potential for greater variability, which may help boost significant results.

Future researchers may also consider testing one mediation path instead of two. Looking more specifically at how autonomy predicts the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction or how belonging predicts the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction, could potentially simplify the study. There are a few variables that would be interesting to study when examining the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction in future studies. Work environment, meaning the friendliness, competitiveness, or general nature and atmosphere of the workplace could impact employees' job satisfaction. Customer interaction could also be examined and can occur in remote, hybrid, and in-person jobs. How much customer interaction a job has could impact how satisfied a person is with their work. If they enjoy customer interaction they may be more satisfied, and difficult customers may lead to more dissatisfaction. Personality may also be interesting to examine within the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction. Personality may impact disposition to satisfaction, meaning that those who are higher in conscientiousness and agreeableness may be more even-keel and less likely to be dissatisfied than those who are higher in neuroticism or low in openness (Perera et al., 2018). Although the results from this study were not significant, future research on the relationship between work setting and job satisfaction can better employees' experiences at work, which can, in turn, improve organizational success.

Conclusion

The correlations found in this study were compared to those found within the Monte Carlo Power analysis for indirect effects. All of the correlations with work setting, including the correlation between autonomy and work setting (-.17), belonging and work setting (.09), and job satisfaction (.00) were all smaller than the medium correlation (.3) that was proposed. Using a measure of work setting on a continuum from 0% to 100% in-person may have contributed to

this issue. Past literature often examines work settings as a categorical variable, meaning that groups are created for employees who work fully remotely, in a hybrid fashion, or fully in person. Merging these groups could have impacted the findings especially since the distribution of work setting scores was somewhat bimodal.

The correlation between belonging and autonomy in the present study was .18 and was significant at $p < .05$. The correlation used within the power analysis between belonging and autonomy was .523. This correlation is much greater than what was found in this study. This may be because the Factual Autonomy Scale didn't capture autonomy in the same way as the studies examined (Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021), Mahomed et al. (2022), Tian et al. (2023), Ding et al. (2023)). The average correlation between job satisfaction and autonomy in the studies (Mohammed et al. (2022), Zurmehly (2008), Sahan and Özdemir (2023)) was .449. Within this study, the correlation was .15. The correlation between belonging and job satisfaction was also explored. Within the studies examined in past literature (Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2021), Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011)) the correlation between belonging and job satisfaction was .405. The correlation between these variables in the current study was .69, and it was highly statistically significant at $p < .001$. The correlation found within this study was greater than what was found within the literature. This adds to research on belonging and job satisfaction and asserts that there is a strong relationship between these two variables.

The main contributions of this study include the findings related to the strong relationship between belonging and job satisfaction. This study also explored work setting on a continuum which has seldom been done in past literature. This approach to measuring the work setting variable approach may work better with a sample that is more likely to have a normal distribution of responses if the study is replicated. Job category may impact how much

autonomy, belonging, and job satisfaction employees experience regardless of work setting.

This study demonstrated that work setting may not be strongly linked to autonomy, belonging, and job satisfaction, and future research should examine these relationships future to truly understand how work setting impacts autonomy, belonging, and job satisfaction.

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TABLES

Table 1

Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations among Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Work Setting	—				
2. Discrepancy between Work Setting and Preferred Work Setting		—			
3. Autonomy	-.17	-.22*	—		
4. Belonging	.09	-.08	.18*	—	
5. Job Satisfaction	.00	-.22*	.15	.69***	—
<i>M</i>	51.98	16.28	36.64	77.08	154.60
<i>SD</i>	39.23	28.58	8.36	13.92	45.73
Coefficient Alpha Reliability	—	—	.85	.95	.96

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

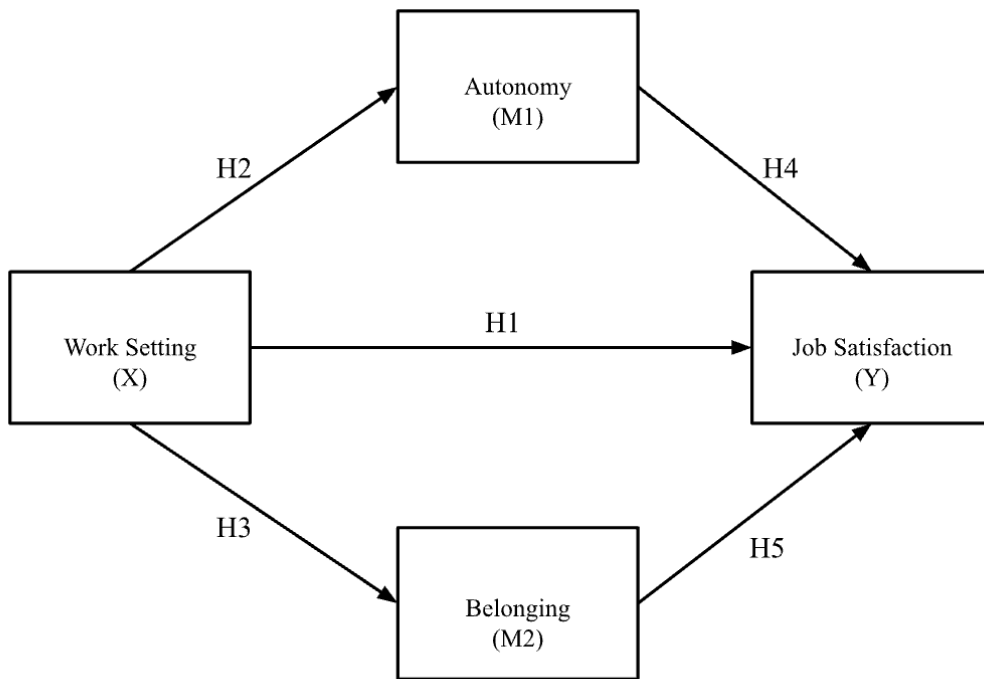
Lower work setting scores represent more time spent working from home

Negative scores on the discrepancy between work setting and preferred work setting variable indicate the participant worked remotely but preferred to work in person, and positive scores indicate the participant worked in person but preferred more time in a more remote or hybrid setting. Higher scores indicate a greater preference for remote work when working in-person.

FIGURES

Figure 1

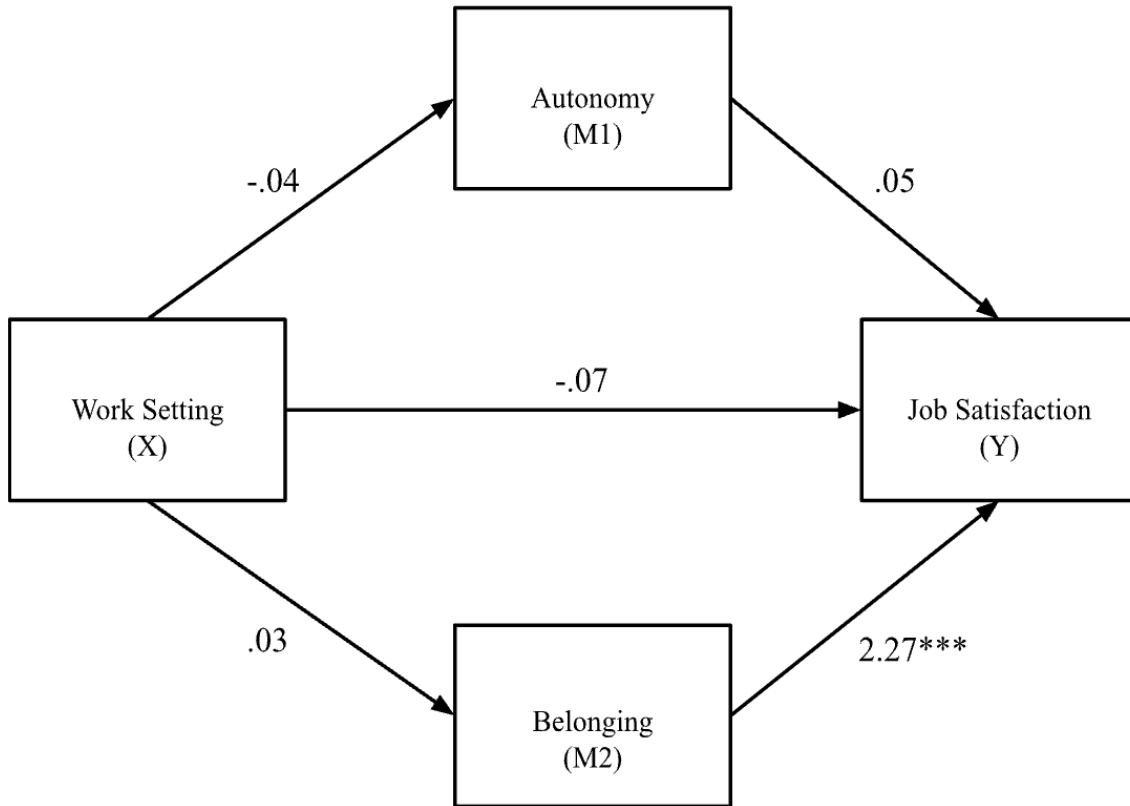
Hypothesized Model Paths



FIGURES

Figure 2

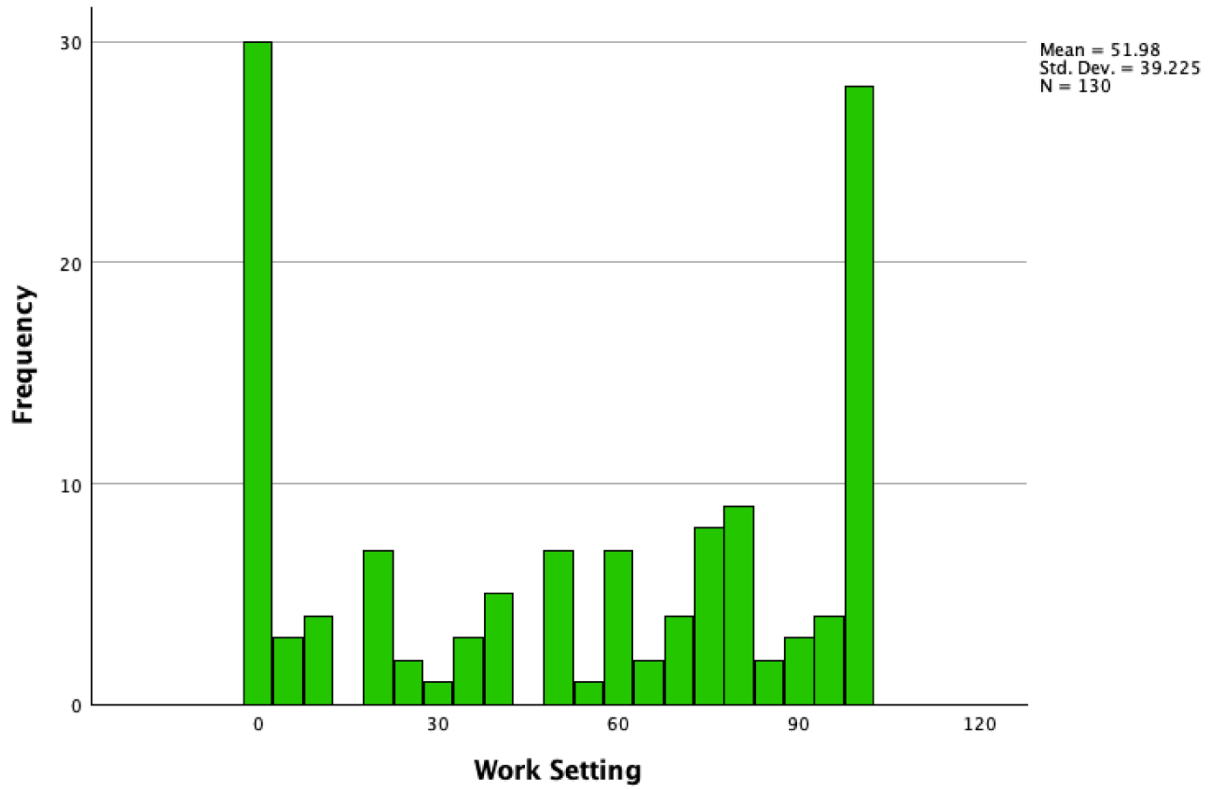
Model with Path Effects



*** $p < .001$.
 β (betas) are shown between relationship paths

Figure 3

Histogram of the Distribution of Work Setting Scores



Note. 0 indicates participants who work fully remotely, and 100 indicates participants who work fully on-site with others. Scores in between work in a hybrid fashion.

APPENDIX A: FACTUAL AUTONOMY SCALE

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In your present job, how often do you have to ask permission...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Quite often	Extremely often or always
... to take a rest break?					
... to take a lunch/meal break?					
... to leave early for the day?					
... to change the hours you work?					
... to leave your office or work station?					
... to come late to work?					
... to take time off?					
How often do the following events occur in your present job?	Never	Once or twice	Once or twice per month	Once or twice per week	Every day
How often does someone tell you what you are to do?					
How often does someone tell you when you are to do your work?					
How often does someone tell you how you are to do your work?					

APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONAL BELONGING SCALE

Gary Blau (2023)

Scoring, all 16-items below used a 6-point response scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = agree and 6 = strongly agree (no neutral point).

Factor 1, Be Myself, 7 items, reliability, coefficient alpha = .89

1. I can be successful as my authentic self (who I am, regardless of position)
2. My contributions in team meetings are valued
3. I feel comfortable with being myself at work
4. I can voice a contrary opinion without the fear of negative consequences
5. When I speak up at work, I feel my opinion is valued
6. I feel like my colleagues understand who I truly am
7. My company enables me to balance my work and personal life

Factor 2, Acceptance, 4 items, reliability, coefficient alpha = .84

1. Employees are treated fairly, regardless of differences (e.g., race, gender)
2. People of all cultures and backgrounds are respected and valued
3. When I am with people from my organization, I feel included
4. I feel accepted by others in the organization

Factor 3, Diversity Valued, 3 items, reliability, coefficient alpha = .71

1. Employees of different backgrounds interact well in our company
2. Racial, ethnic, religious jokes are not tolerated
3. The norms (e.g., dress code, appearance, behavior) are clearly understood

Factor 4, Connection, 2 items, reliability, coefficient alpha = .83

1. I feel a sense of belonging in this organization
2. I feel connected to others in my organization

APPENDIX C: JOB DESCRIPTIVE INDEX

People on Your Present Job

Think of the majority of people with whom you work or meet in connection with your work. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe these people? In the blank beside each word or phrase below, write

- Y for "Yes" if it describes the people
with whom you work
N for "No" if it does not describe them
? for "?" if you cannot decide

.....

- Stimulating
- Boring
- Slow
- Helpful
- Stupid
- Responsible
- Likeable
- Intelligent
- Easy to make enemies
- Rude
- Smart
- Lazy
- Unpleasant
- Supportive
- Active
- Narrow interests
- Frustrating
- Stubborn

Work on Present Job

Think of the work you do at present. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe your work? In the blank beside each word or phrase below, write

Y for "Yes" if it describes your work
N for "No" if it does not describe it
? for "?" if you cannot decide

.....

- Fascinating
- Routine
- Satisfying
- Boring
- Good
- Gives sense of accomplishment
- Respected
- Exciting
- Rewarding
- Useful
- Challenging
- Simple
- Repetitive
- Creative
- Dull
- Uninteresting
- Can see results
- Uses my abilities

Pay

Think of the pay you get now. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe your present pay? In the blank beside each word or phrase below, write

Y for "Yes" if it describes your pay
N for "No" if it does not describe it
? for "?" if you cannot decide

.....

- Income adequate for normal expenses
- Fair
- Barely live on income
- Bad
- Comfortable
- Less than I deserve
- Well paid
- Enough to live on
- Underpaid

Opportunities for Promotion

Think of the opportunities for promotion that you have now. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe these? In the blank beside each word or phrase below, write

- Y for "Yes" if it describes your opportunities for promotion
- N for "No" if it does not describe them
- ? for "?" if you cannot decide

.....

- Good opportunities for promotion
- Opportunities somewhat limited
- Promotion on ability
- Dead-end job
- Good chance for promotion
- Very limited
- Infrequent promotions
- Regular promotions
- Fairly good chance for promotion

Supervision

Think of the kind of supervision that you get on your job. How well does each of the following words or phrases describe this? In the blank beside each word or phrase below, write

- Y for "Yes" if it describes the supervision you get on the job
- N for "No" if it does not describe it
- ? for "?" if you cannot decide

.....

- Supportive
- Hard to please
- Impolite
- Praises good work
- Tactful
- Influential
- Up-to-date
- Unkind
- Has favorites
- Tells me where I stand
- Annoying
- Stubborn
- Knows job well
- Bad
- Intelligent
- Poor planner
- Around when needed
- Lazy