The Mediating Role of Work-Home Interaction in the Relationship Between Self-Control and Job Satisfaction: Evidence from Romanian Employees

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Paper Number: 240460
https://doi.org/10.68089/202609240460

Abstract: *This study examines how self-control relates to job satisfaction and whether the four dimensions of work-home interaction mediate this relationship among Romanian employees. Grounded in the strength model of self-regulation and Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, this study claims that self-control functions as a personal resource that both directly sustains positive job attitudes and shapes cross-domain spillover between work and home. Despite growing interest in self-control at work, few studies have modelled work-home interaction as the mechanism linking self-control to job satisfaction, and evidence from Central and Eastern European labour markets remains scarce. Self-reported data were collected from 751 Romanian employees using three validated instruments: the Survey Work-Home Interaction-Nijmegen (SWING), which distinguishes negative and positive work-to-home and home-to-work influence; the IPIP-VIA self-regulation scale; and the job-satisfaction subscale of the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire. Data were analysed in JASP through descriptive statistics, reliability estimates, correlations, a series of one-way ANOVAs on ten demographic and work-related characteristics, and a covariate-adjusted parallel multiple-mediation model estimated with bias-corrected bootstrapping (5,000 resamples), controlling for age, work seniority and weekly overtime. The model explained 26.2% of the variance in job satisfaction. Self-control exerted a strong positive direct effect on job satisfaction and shaped every work-home dimension in the adaptive direction, reducing both conflict scales and raising both enrichment scales. Three of the four SWING dimensions - negative work-to-home interference, positive work-to-home interaction and positive home-to-work interaction - transmitted significant indirect effects, whereas negative home-to-work interference did not, indicating partial mediation. Notably, the combined positive-impact pathways slightly exceeded the conflict-reduction pathway, underscoring the role of resource gain alongside resource loss. The ANOVA results reinforced these patterns: overtime showed the strongest association with job satisfaction, while older age and longer tenure were correlated with higher self-control and satisfaction and lower work-home conflict. The findings suggest that self-regulation is a meaningful antecedent of job satisfaction, operating through both the reduction of negative impact and the promotion of positive cross-domain resource transfer. In practice, they point to the value of curbing mandatory overtime, offering self-regulation and recovery interventions, and adopting family-friendly policies. Key limitations are the study's cross-sectional design, its dependence on self-reported measures, and a sample composed largely of young female employees.*

Keywords: *conservation of resources, job satisfaction, Romanian employees, self-regulation, overtime, work-family enrichment*

1. Introduction

Job satisfaction remains one of the most consequential attitudes in organisational life, predicting performance, retention and well-being, and it is increasingly understood to depend not only on conditions inside the workplace but also on how work and personal life influence one another. As the boundaries between the two domains have become more permeable, employees' ability to regulate their own attention, emotions and behaviour has taken on renewed importance. Self-control, the capacity to override impulses and align conduct with longer-term goals, has been linked to a range of favourable work outcomes, yet the pathways through which it shapes job satisfaction are still poorly understood. One plausible route runs through work-home interaction: employees with higher self-regulatory capacity may be more able to contain negative impact and to cultivate positive spillover between the two domains, thereby protecting their satisfaction with work. Evidence for such a mechanism is limited, and studies conducted in Central and Eastern European settings, with their distinctive labour-market and cultural characteristics, are especially scarce. The present study addresses these gaps by testing, in a large sample of Romanian employees, a mediation model in which the four dimensions of work-home interaction link self-control to job satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

The following review synthesises the theoretical and empirical literature on self-control, work-home interaction and job satisfaction, and develops the rationale for the mediation model tested in the present study.

Self-control refers to the capacity of individuals to override habitual response tendencies and to steer their thoughts, emotions, and actions toward personal goals and social expectations (Baumeister et al., 1998). This capacity has been theorised through the ego depletion model, which conceptualises self-control as drawing upon a limited energy-like resource that becomes depleted with repeated exertion (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). When this resource is exhausted, individuals exhibit diminished impulse control and poorer decision-making. Complementing this, Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) holds that people are driven to build, preserve, and safeguard the resources they value, among them psychological energy. Depletion of self-regulatory resources constitutes a loss of resources that triggers stress and strain responses at work. Together, these theoretical frameworks predict that individuals with higher dispositional self-control are better equipped to maintain productive work behaviours and positive attitudes toward their employment.

Empirical evidence supports a positive relationship between self-control and job satisfaction. Dou et al. (2016) demonstrated that trait self-control was

positively correlated with job satisfaction among Chinese employees and that job satisfaction mediated the relationship between self-control and life satisfaction. Similarly, Wang et al. (2021) found that trait self-control positively predicted organisational citizenship behaviour and negatively predicted counterproductive work behaviours, with job satisfaction serving as a partial mediator of these associations. Schmidt and Diestel (2012) extended this evidence by showing that self-control demands at work were associated with higher job strain and lower satisfaction, while affective organisational commitment buffered these adverse effects. Collectively, these findings imply that self-control functions as a personal resource that sustains positive work attitudes, consistent with the COR framework (Baumann, Danilov, & Stavrova, 2023).

Work-home interaction captures the bidirectional effect between work and personal life areas. Early conceptualisations framed this interaction primarily as conflict, with work and family roles seen as incompatible demands competing for finite time and energy (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Subsequent theoretical developments recognised that interactions can also be enriching, whereby positive experiences, skills, or resources gained in one field facilitate functioning in the other (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). The Survey Work-Home Interaction - Nijmegen (SWING; Wagena & Geurts, 2000) operationalises this bidirectionality through four subscales: negative work-home interaction, positive work-home interaction, negative home-work interaction, and positive home-work interaction. The SWING has been translated and validated across multiple cultural contexts (Marais et al., 2009), demonstrating consistent factorial validity (Ispas & Iliescu, 2019) and meaningful relationships with work demands, resources, and well-being indicators (Colasanti et al., 2022; Geurts et al., 2005).

Research consistently shows that negative work-home interaction is associated with reduced job satisfaction (Bai & Zhou, 2025; Shi, Chen, & Cheung, 2023). Oosthuizen et al. (2016) found that both negative and positive work-home interaction significantly predicted job satisfaction among information technology employees, with negative interaction lowering satisfaction and positive interaction increasing it; job satisfaction in turn predicted turnover intention. These results align with COR theory, as negative spillover represents a resource loss process in which work demands deplete the psychological resources available for recovery and re-engagement with the job. When employees are unable to detach from work during non-work hours, their capacity to maintain positive job attitudes is compromised (Blake et al., 2025; Sonnentag, Cheng, & Parker, 2022).

By contrast, positive work-home interaction represents a resource gain process that supports job satisfaction. According to Greenhaus and Powell (2006), enrichment occurs when resources acquired in one role - such as

skills, perspectives, or positive affect - improve performance and well-being. Positive work-to-home interaction signifies that work experiences and resources generalise beneficially to home functioning, which in turn may sustain motivation and satisfaction upon returning to work (Geurts et al., 2005; Oosthuizen et al., 2016).

Self-control may serve as a predictor of the relationship between work-home interaction and job satisfaction. Individuals higher in self-control are better able to disengage from work stressors (Blake et al., 2025; Sonnentag, Cheng, & Parker, 2022), manage boundary-crossing demands, and maintain role separation, behaviours that are essential for preserving positive work-home interaction (Baumeister et al., 1998; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). When self-control resources are sufficient, employees can prevent negative consequences from undermining job satisfaction; conversely, depleted self-control may exacerbate the impact of negative work-home interaction on job attitudes (Hobfoll, 1989).

Despite growing evidence linking self-control and work-home interaction independently to job satisfaction, relatively few studies have examined a mediation model in which work-home interaction explains the pathway from self-control to job satisfaction. Prior research has typically positioned job satisfaction itself as the mediator between self-control and downstream work behaviours (Wang et al., 2021), or treated self-control as the mediator of the work-family conflict-satisfaction link (Fu & Li, 2025), whereas studies that model work-home interaction as a mediating mechanism have generally predicted life rather than job satisfaction (Dughi et al., 2025). Moreover, research in the Romanian organisational context remains limited (Ispas & Iliescu, 2019; Patrichi et al., 2025), warranting investigation of whether these relationships generalise to Central and Eastern European samples with distinct cultural and labour market characteristics. The present study addresses these gaps by testing a mediation model in which the four SWING-measured dimensions of work-home interaction mediate the relationship between self-control and job satisfaction in a Romanian employee sample.

3. Research Methodology

Self-reported data were collected from Romanian employees by means of a survey. The questionnaire, created in Microsoft Forms, was distributed online, and data collected was analysed in JASP, an open-source statistical package. The questionnaire comprised three validated instruments. Work–home interaction was assessed with the “Survey Work-Home Interaction-Nijmegen” (SWING; Wagena & Geurts, 2000), administered in its Romanian adaptation (Ispas & Iliescu, 2019). The SWING distinguishes four dimensions: work negatively influencing home (WNH), home negatively influencing work (HNW), work positively influencing home (WPH), and home positively influencing work

(HPW;). Self-regulation/self-control (SEL) was measured with the corresponding IPIP–VIA scale (IPIP, 2026), likewise adapted into Romanian (Iliescu, Popa & Dimache, 2015). Job satisfaction (JS) was assessed using the job-satisfaction subscale of the "Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire" (Tepper, 2017). All items were rated on a four-point frequency scale ranging from 0 to 3 (0 = never, 1 = sometimes, 2 = often, 3 = always).

4. Results

This section reports the empirical findings. It opens with a profile of the sample, followed by the descriptive statistics, internal-consistency reliability of variables, and correlations of the study dimensions. The demographic comparisons are then presented through one-way ANOVA effects, the group means for the strongest effects, and a narrative account of the significant findings. Finally, the mediation path model linking self-control, work-home interaction, and job satisfaction is presented.

4.1. Sample characteristics

Table 1 describes the 751 respondents across the demographic and work-related variables collected in the survey. The sample is predominantly female (60.7%; 36.5% male) and young: over half are aged 18–25 (57.7%), with the share shrinking steadily across older bands to just 2.5% over 55. It is also early-career: 61.0% have five years or less of total work experience and 63.4% have been with their current employer for three years or less. Educationally, the sample is bimodal, split between high school (38.1%) and bachelor's-level (40.2%) completed studies, while roughly half are not currently enrolled in further study (48.1%) and about a third are pursuing an undergraduate degree (31.3%). Most respondents are individual contributors: 69.2% hold no managerial position and 62.7% lead no employees. Overtime is common, although 40.9% report none; the majority work at least some, most often two hours per week (30.9%). These skews matter for the group comparisons that follow: the youngest and least-senior categories are heavily represented, whereas some contrasted groups (e.g. over-55, doctorate holders, 4-hours overtime) are small, so their means rest on few cases and should be read with that in mind.

4.2. Descriptive statistics, reliability and correlations

Before the group comparisons, Table 2 summarises the six variables: number of items, mean, standard deviation, and internal consistency (Cronbach's α). All scales are scored on a 0 - 3 response range. Negative impact is low overall, and work intrudes on home (WNH = 1.26) more than home intrudes on work (HNW = 0.81, the lowest mean in the set). Positive spillover is higher on both sides (HPW = 1.85; WPH = 1.66), so on average employees report more positive than negative cross-domain influence, and more of it flowing from home to work than the reverse. Self-control (1.88) and job satisfaction (2.10) fall in the

moderate-to-high range, with self-control showing the least dispersion (SD = 0.41).

The four SWING scales are reliable, from good to excellent (α = .86 - .91). The remaining two fall below the conventional .70 threshold: self-control is borderline (α = .69) and job satisfaction is the weakest (α = .63). Because Cronbach's alpha increases with the number of items, the short 3-item job-satisfaction scale is expected to score lower, and values near .60 are often treated as acceptable in exploratory work; nonetheless, results involving job satisfaction and self-control should be read with mild caution (Cortina, 1993).

Table 1: Demographic and work characteristics of respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	456	60.70
	Male	274	36.50
	Other	7	0.90
	Prefer not to say	14	1.90
Age	18-25 years	433	57.70
	26-35 years	120	16.00
	36-45 years	86	11.50
	46-55 years	93	12.40
	over 55 years	19	2.50
Currently studying	Not studying	361	48.10
	College	24	3.20
	Undergraduate	235	31.30
	Master	122	16.20
	Doctorate	9	1.20
Completed studies	High School	286	38.10
	College	63	8.40
	Bachelor's	302	40.20
	Master's	94	12.50
	Doctorate	6	0.80
Total work seniority	0-5 years	458	61.00
	6-10 years	99	13.20
	11-15 years	55	7.30
	over 15 years	139	18.50
Seniority in this company	0-3 years	476	63.40
	4-6 years	115	15.30
	7-10 years	55	7.30
	over 10 years	105	14.00
Managerial Position	yes	231	30.80
	no	520	69.20

No. of employees led	0 employees	471	62.70
	1-5 employees	173	23.00
	6-10 employees	42	5.60
	over 10 employees	65	8.70
Overtime hrs/week	0 hrs	307	40.90
	2 hrs	232	30.90
	4 hrs	25	3.30
	6 hrs	75	10.00
	8 hrs	85	11.30
	over 8 hrs	27	3.60

Source: Authors' compilation

The correlation matrix confirms the two theoretically expected clusters. The two negative-conflict scales move together (WNH - HNW r = .49, p < .001) and the two positive spillover variables are very strongly linked (WPH - HPW r = .71, p < .001), while the negative and positive dimensions are largely independent of each other (e.g., WNH - WPH r = -.03, not significant; WNH - HPW r = .01, not significant). Self-control and job satisfaction pattern, as the study's model predicts, correlates negatively with both conflict scales (WNH r = -.27; HNW r = -.36, p < .001) and positively with both enrichment scales (WPH r = .17; HPW r = .23, p < .001), thus, employees with stronger self-regulation report less work–home conflict and more positive spillover. Job satisfaction shows the same signs, lower with conflict (WNH r = -.28; HNW r = -.21) and higher with enrichment (WPH r = .32; HPW r = .31), and is most strongly tied to self-control itself (r = .38, p < .001). The associations are modest in size, but their directions are uniform and highly significant, supporting the premise that self-control links favourable work-home balance to job satisfaction.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics, internal consistency and correlations

Variable	**k**	**Mean**	**SD**	**α**	**WNH**	**HNW**	**WPH**	**HPW**	**SEL**
WNH	9	1.26	0.69	0.91					
HNW	6	0.81	0.63	0.87	0.491***				
WPH	6	1.66	0.71	0.87	-0.029	0.125**			
HPW	6	1.85	0.68	0.86	0.007	0.039	0.71***		

SEL	13	1.88	0.41	0.69	-0.267***	-0.356***	0.166***	0.229***	
JS	3	2.1	0.66	0.63	-0.278***	-0.214***	0.319***	0.313***	0.376***

*Note. N = 751, Sig.2-tailed, k = items no., SD = standard deviation, a = Cronbach's alpha, * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.*

Source: Authors' compilation

4.3. One-Way ANOVA Results

A series of one-way ANOVAs (Welch / Games-Howell post-hoc) tested whether ten demographic characteristics produced mean differences on six psychological outcomes measured in the sample of 751 Romanian employees (Table 3).

Table 3: One-way ANOVA F values

Demographic factor	WNH	HNW	WPH	HPW	JS	SEL
Age	**6.33*** **	**6.06*** **	1.65	**2.82***	**9.96*** **	**7.81*** **
Currently studying	**6.10*** **	**8.92*** **	0.69	0.32	1.65	**2.52***
Completed studies	0.44	1.93	**4.03****	**3.42****	1.75	0.57
Gender	2.58	1.71	0.48	0.45	0.17	**3.10***
Total work seniority	**4.56****	1.82	0.88	2.49	**8.01*** **	**5.88****
Seniority in this company	**3.07***	0.91	1.45	**4.71****	**9.36*** **	**4.46****
No. of employees led	0.50	**4.12****	**5.88****	**2.89***	**3.25***	1.75
Managing position	0.12	1.52	**7.89****	**4.61***	**9.26****	1.04
Overtime	**8.11*** **	**7.86*** **	1.77	1.47	**39.39*** **	**9.61*** **

*Note. N = 751. Bold values are statistically significant: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.*

Source: Authors' compilation

Age was significant for five of six outcomes (Table 3). Both directions of negative influence between work and home declined with age (WNH F = 6.33; HNW F = 6.06, both p < .001), while Self-Control (F = 7.81) and Job Satisfaction (F = 9.96) increased, peaking in the 46–55 group (Table 4). The home-to-work positive effect was also weakly significant (HPW F = 2.82, p = .024).

Table 4: Mean scores by age

Age group	WNH ↓	SEL ↑	JS ↑
18–25 (n=433)	1.34	1.82	2.00
26–35 (n=120)	1.30	1.89	2.08
36–45 (n=86)	1.11	1.99	2.34
46–55 (n=93)	1.00	2.03	2.37
Over 55 (n=19)	1.13	1.83	2.16

Source: Authors' compilation

Tenure variable mirrors the age variable (Table 5). Total work seniority significantly raised Job Satisfaction (F = 8.01, p < .001) and Self-Control (F = 5.88, p = .001) and lowered WNH (F = 4.56, p = .004). Seniority within the current company was significant for Job Satisfaction (F = 9.36), Self-Control (F = 4.46), HPW (F = 4.71), and WNH (F = 3.07) (Table 3).

Table 5: Mean scores by total years of work experience

Work seniority	WNH ↓	SEL ↑	JS ↑
0–5 years (n=458)	1.31	1.83	2.02
6–10 years (n=99)	1.34	1.96	2.10
11–15 years (n=55)	1.13	1.90	2.22
Over 15 years (n=139)	1.10	1.96	2.31

Source: Authors' compilation

Overtime showed the strongest effect on Job Satisfaction, $F = 39.39$, $p < .001$. Employees who work no overtime report the highest Satisfaction and Self-Control and the least Work-Home conflict. But both negative scales increase with the increase of overtime hours per week (WNH $F = 8.11$; HNW $F = 7.86$, both $p < .001$), Self-Control collapses ($F = 9.61$, $p < .001$), and Job-Satisfaction breaks down once overtime begins (Table 3 & 6).

Table 6: Mean scores by weekly overtime hours

Overtime hrs/week	WNH ↑	HNW ↑	JS ↓	SEL ↓
None (n=307)	1.08	0.65	2.40	1.99
2 hrs (n=232)	1.35	0.93	1.76	1.77
4 hrs (n=25)	1.50	0.85	1.40	1.73
6 hrs (n=75)	1.38	1.01	2.09	1.83
8 hrs (n=85)	1.40	0.83	2.21	1.86
Over 8 hrs (n=27)	1.55	0.95	1.96	1.78

Source: Authors' compilation

Holding a managing position significantly raised Work influencing Positive Home ($F = 7.89$, $p = .005$), Job Satisfaction ($F = 9.26$, $p = .002$), and Home influencing Positive Work ($F = 4.61$, $p = .032$). The number of employees led was significant for HNW ($F = 4.12$), WPH ($F = 5.88$), HPW ($F = 2.89$), and Job Satisfaction ($F = 3.25$) (Table 3).

4.4. Mediation Model

Beyond the group comparisons, a mediation model was estimated in JASP to test how self-control relates to job satisfaction through the four work–home interaction dimensions. Self-control is the exogenous predictor; the four SWING scales (WNH, HNW, WPH, HPW) act as parallel mediators; and job satisfaction is the outcome. The model includes a direct path from self-control to job satisfaction and four indirect paths, one through each work–home dimension ($N = 751$).

In the model, the four mediators are allowed to covary (correlated residuals); age, work seniority, and weekly overtime are included as covariates (confounders of the self-control → job-satisfaction relationship); and all confidence intervals are obtained by bias-corrected bootstrapping (5,000 resamples).

The model is over-identified ($df = 12$; AIC = 14910, BIC = 15060, log-likelihood = -7421) and accounts for 26.2% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = .262$).

Self-control explains 7.1% and 12.7% of the variance in the two negative work-home scales (WNH, HNW), and 2.8% and 5.3% of the two positive scales (WPH, HPW); the covariates, in turn, explain 4.1% of the variance in self-control.

Model equations

The structural model is a system of regression equations (unstandardized coefficients shown). Self-control is itself predicted by the covariates; each mediator is predicted by self-control; and job satisfaction is predicted by self-control, the four mediators, and the covariates:

$$SEL = 0.056 \cdot Age - 0.017 \cdot Overtime - 0.000 \cdot Seniority + \varepsilon_0 \quad (1)$$

$$WNH = -0.446 \cdot SEL + \varepsilon_1 \qquad HNW = -0.545 \cdot SEL + \varepsilon_2 \quad (2)$$

$$WPH = 0.288 \cdot SEL + \varepsilon_3 \qquad HPW = 0.381 \cdot SEL + \varepsilon_4 \quad (3)$$

$$JS = 0.370 \cdot SEL - 0.150 \cdot WNH - 0.069 \cdot HNW + 0.180 \cdot WPH + 0.114 \cdot HPW + (\text{covariates}) + \varepsilon_5 \quad (4)$$

The effect of self-control on job satisfaction is decomposed into a direct effect (c') and the indirect effects carried by the mediators ($a_j \times b_j$), using the covariate-adjusted coefficients:

$$\text{Indirect}_j = a_j \times b_j \quad (\text{WNH } 0.067,\ \text{HNW } 0.038 \text{ ns},\ \text{WPH } 0.052,\ \text{HPW } 0.043) \quad (5)$$

$$\text{Total indirect} = \Sigma\, a_j b_j \approx 0.20 \quad (6)$$

$$\text{Total effect} = c' + \Sigma\, a_j b_j \approx 0.370 + 0.20 \approx 0.57 \quad (7)$$

Model design and effects

Figure 1 summarises the refined model visually. Self-control is linked to job satisfaction both directly, the curved arrow along the bottom (c'), and indirectly, through the four work–home interaction dimensions in the centre. Each arrow is labelled with its standardized coefficient (β). The covariates (age, work seniority, and weekly overtime) are controlled for but, to keep the figure legible, their paths are not drawn.

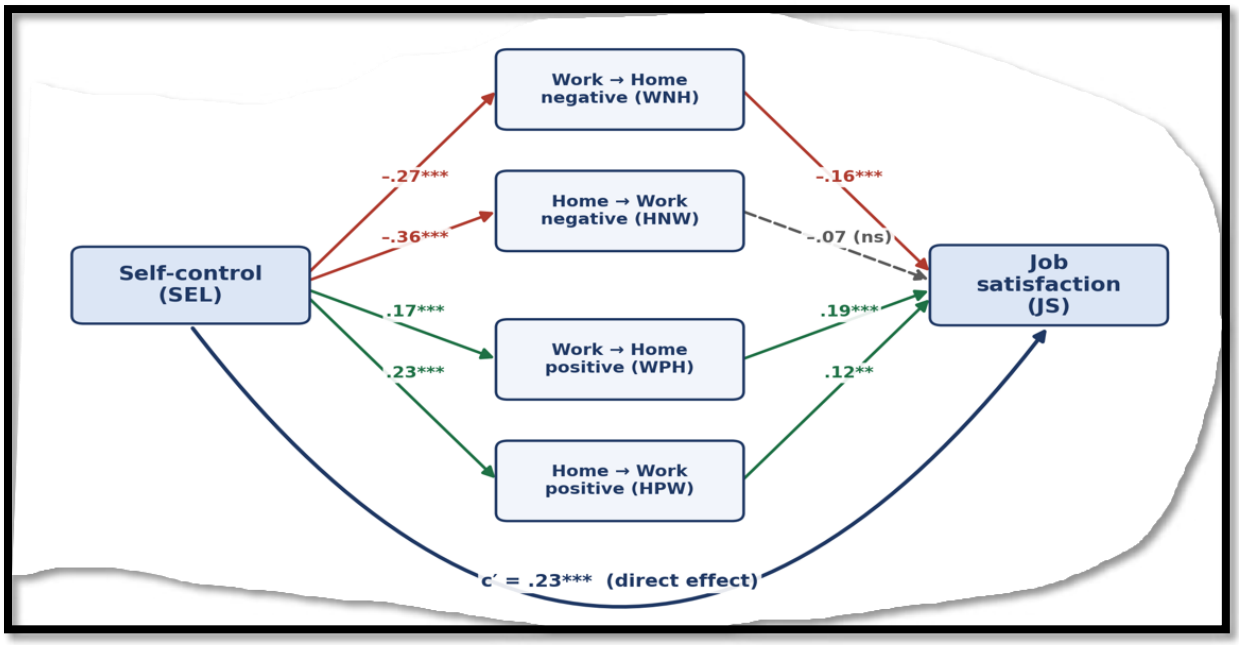

Figure 1: Mediation Model Path Diagram

*Note: Standardized coefficients (β) from bias-corrected bootstrap (5,000 resamples); red = negative, green = positive, grey dashed = non-significant. Adjusted for age, work seniority and weekly overtime (paths not shown). ** p < .01, *** p < .001.*

Source: Authors' compilation

Table 7 reports the numerical estimates behind Figure 1. It is organised into blocks: the direct effect of self-control on job satisfaction; the b-paths from each mediator to job satisfaction; the a-paths from self-control to each mediator; the effects of the covariates on self-control; and the covariates' total and indirect effects on job satisfaction. For every path it gives the unstandardized estimate, the z-value and p-value, the 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval, and the standardized coefficient (β). An interval that excludes zero indicates a statistically significant path.

Table 7: Model direct, indirect, and total effects

Path/effect	Estimate	z	p	95% CI (BC bootstrap)	β
Direct effect of self-control					
SEL → JS	**0.370**	**6.49**	**< .001**	**[0.252, 0.494]**	**.23**

Path/effect	Estimate	z	p	95% CI (BC bootstrap)	β
Mediator → JS (b-paths, adjusted for covariates)					
WNH → JS	-0.150	-4.27	< .001	[-0.226, -0.076]	-.16
HNW → JS	-0.069	-1.73	.084	[-0.154, 0.012]	-.07
WPH → JS	0.180	4.27	< .001	[0.088, 0.272]	.19
HPW → JS	0.114	2.59	.010	[0.021, 0.209]	.12
Self-control → mediator (a-paths)					
SEL → WNH	-0.446	-7.58	< .001	[-0.569, -0.329]	-.27
SEL → HNW	-0.545	-10.44	< .001	[-0.654, -0.433]	-.36
SEL → WPH	0.288	4.62	< .001	[0.162, 0.415]	.17
SEL → HPW	0.381	6.46	< .001	[0.260, 0.497]	.23
Covariates → self-control					
Age → SEL	0.056	2.77	.006	[0.015, 0.098]	.16
Overtime → SEL	-0.017	-3.06	.002	[-0.029, -0.007]	-.11
Work seniority → SEL	< 0.001	-0.02	.986	[-0.041, 0.039]	≈.00
Covariate total effects on JS (and indirect via SEL)					
Age → JS (total)	0.063	2.07	.038	[0.004, 0.123]	.11
Age → SEL → JS (indirect)	0.032	2.68	.007	[0.009, 0.060]	.06
Overtime → JS (total)	-0.021	-2.47	.013	[-0.039, -0.005]	-.08
Overtime → SEL → JS (indirect)	-0.010	-2.94	.003	[-0.017, -0.004]	-.04

Note. Covariate-adjusted path model with bias-corrected bootstrap 95% CIs (N = 751; 5,000 resamples). Estimates are unstandardized; β = standardized.

Source: Authors' compilation

Direct paths. Self-control has a strong positive direct effect on job satisfaction (b = 0.370, β = .23, 95% CI [0.252, 0.494]). It also shapes every work-home dimension in the adaptive direction: it reduces both negative-conflict scales (WNH b = -0.446; HNW b = -0.545, both p < .001) and raises both positive-spillover scales (WPH b = 0.288; HPW b = 0.381, p < .001). In turn, three of the four mediators predict job satisfaction with the expected sign and bootstrap CIs excluding zero, work-to-home conflict lowers it (WNH b = -0.150), while both enrichment scales raise it (WPH b = 0.180; HPW b = 0.114). The home-to-work conflict path is the exception.

Indirect paths. Multiplying the a- and b-paths gives the covariate-adjusted indirect effects of self-control: via WNH (0.067), WPH (0.052) and HPW (0.043), each carried by two significant paths, plus a fourth route through HNW (0.038) whose b-path is no longer significant, so it should not be treated as a reliable channel. The three robust routes are all positive: stronger self-control improves the work-home balance, and better balance raises satisfaction. The total indirect effect is about 0.20.

Total effect and mediation. Combining the direct and indirect components, the total effect of self-control on job satisfaction is roughly 0.57. The direct effect accounts for about two-thirds (0.370) and the mediated routes for about one-third (≈ 0.20). Because the direct effect remains strong and significant with the mediators and covariates in the model, the work-home dimensions provide partial (not full) mediation.

Covariates matter and act partly through self-control. Consistent with the ANOVA, age predicted higher self-control (b = 0.056, p = .006) and overtime predicted lower self-control (b = -0.017, p = .002). Both carried significant indirect effects on job satisfaction through self-control (age +0.032, p = .007; overtime -0.010, p = .003), while work seniority was unrelated to self-control once age was controlled. In other words, part of why older employees are more satisfied, and why heavy-overtime employees are less satisfied, runs through their level of self-regulation, tying the mediation model back to the group differences found in the ANOVA.

5. Discussions and Recommendations

This section interprets the study's findings in light of its aims and the existing literature, considering first what the demographic group comparisons reveal

and then what the mediation model contributes to understanding how self-control shapes job satisfaction.

ANOVA established association, not causation, and several grouping variables were correlated (age, seniority, tenure), so their effects should not be treated as independent. Some significant groups are small (e.g. over-55, n = 19; 4-hours overtime, n = 25), which widens their confidence intervals; the study's use of Games-Howell post-hoc tests appropriately guards against unequal variances. Age, total seniority and company tenure all point the same way: older, more experienced employees experience less work-to-home interference and report both stronger self-regulation and greater job satisfaction. Because these three variables overlap, they likely capture one underlying maturation process: as people accumulate experience, they develop better boundary-management and self-control resources, which buffer work-home conflict and support satisfaction. This echoes evidence that older employees tend to report higher job satisfaction and fewer work-family strains (Ng & Feldman, 2010). The job-satisfaction effect of overtime ($F = 39.39$) dwarfs every other result, and overtime simultaneously increased work–home conflict and eroded self-control. Employees doing no overtime scored highest on satisfaction (2.40) and self-control (1.99) and lowest on conflict, whereas even modest overtime shifted all three unfavourably. This fits a resource-depletion reading (Hobfoll, 1989; Baumeister, Vohs, & Tice, 2007): extra hours drain the self-regulatory capacity people need to protect their home domain, and dissatisfaction follows; this accords with recent evidence that longer working hours depress job satisfaction (Jin, et al., 2024; Zheng et al.,2023). Self-control varied significantly with age, both tenure measures, study status, gender, and overtime, the same factors that drive conflict and satisfaction. The conditions that strengthen self-control (maturity, experience, manageable hours) are also those that reduce conflict and raise satisfaction (Baumeister et al., 2007). Managerial role and span of control were tied to positive spillover and higher satisfaction but not to lower negative conflict. Managers appear to gain enrichment and meaning from their roles without a matching reduction in work–home strain, consistent with work-family enrichment theory, in which resources originated in one role improve functioning in the other (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), while the conflict pathway (Allen, et al., 2000; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) remains unchanged.

Furthermore, the study examined the relationships among self-control, the four work-home interaction dimensions of the SWING instrument, and job satisfaction in a sample of Romanian employees (N = 751), using a multiple mediation framework. The model explained 26.2% of the variance in job satisfaction ($R^2 = .262$), confirming that self-control and work-home interaction together constitute meaningful antecedents of how employees evaluate their jobs. The pattern of results is consistent with partial mediation:

three of the four SWING dimensions (WNH, WPH, and HPW) transmitted a significant portion of the self-control - job satisfaction association, while the direct path from self-control to job satisfaction also remained significant (b = 0.370, β = .23, p < .001).

The significant direct effect of self-control on job satisfaction aligns with the strength model of self-regulation proposed by Baumeister et al. (1998) and extended by Muraven and Baumeister (2000), which postulates that self-regulatory capacity is a finite resource that, when available, enables effective goal pursuit and resistance to workplace stressors. Employees with higher self-control may be better equipped to maintain positive task engagement, manage interpersonal demands, and avoid impulsive responses that erode satisfaction, independent of how work and home life interact. The moderate effect size (β = .23) suggests that approximately one-fifth of the variance in job satisfaction attributable to self-control operates through pathways not captured by the SWING dimensions.

Three SWING dimensions emerged as significant mediators. The negative work-to-home interference path (WNH) carried the largest indirect effect (0.067): higher self-control reduced the degree to which work intruded negatively on home life (a-path: b = -0.446, β = -.27, p < .001), and lower work-home conflict in turn predicted higher job satisfaction (b-path: b = -0.150, p < .001). This pattern is consistent with Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) work-family conflict model, whereby employees who experience reduced role conflict report greater satisfaction with both their jobs and their lives. The positive enrichment channels were equally noteworthy: WPH generated an indirect effect of 0.052 (a-path: b = 0.288, p < .001; b-path: b = 0.180, p < .001) and HPW an indirect effect of 0.043 (a-path: b = 0.381, p < .001; b-path: b = 0.114, p = .010), consistent with the work-family enrichment model of Greenhaus and Powell (2006), in which resources acquired in one domain enhance performance and satisfaction in the other.

The home-to-work negative interference path (HNW) did not emerge as a significant mediator (indirect effect = 0.038, p = .084), despite a strong association between self-control and HNW (a-path: b = –0.545, β = -.36, p < .001). The breakdown appeared in the b-path: negative home-to-work interference did not significantly predict job satisfaction (b = -0.069, p = .084). This asymmetry may reflect the characteristics of the sample: with 57.7% of participants aged 18-25 and a predominantly female, early-career composition, few respondents are likely to carry heavy domestic obligations that translate into measurable job dissatisfaction. Home-to-work interference may require stronger domestic demands, such as those associated with caregiving responsibilities, before it meaningfully reduces satisfaction with the job itself (Bian & Mohd Sukor, 2024).

Considered together, the two positive SWING dimensions contributed a combined indirect effect of approximately 0.095, slightly exceeding the work-to-home conflict-reduction path (0.067). This result challenges the prevailing emphasis on conflict as the dominant mechanism linking self-control and work outcomes, and highlights the role of positive cross-domain resource transfer. In line with Greenhaus and Powell (2006), employees with higher self-regulatory capacity not only reduce the negative work-to-home spillover that erodes satisfaction, but also generate and transmit positive resources, skills, energy, and positive affect across the work-home boundary in both directions. Organizations that invest in developing employee self-regulation may therefore benefit from this dual-mechanism pathway.

The persistence of a significant direct effect alongside the three indirect pathways confirms partial mediation and suggests that self-control influences job satisfaction through mechanisms beyond work-home interaction. COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) provides a complementary framework: individuals with a larger resource pool, including cognitive and emotional regulatory capacities, are better positioned to protect against resource loss during work and to invest resources in ways that directly increase satisfaction, such as setting and achieving task goals or maintaining supportive collegial relationships (Albalá-Genol, Díaz-Fúnez, & Mañas-Rodríguez, 2023). The total indirect effect (approximately 0.200) is comparable in magnitude to the direct effect (b = 0.370), suggesting that both the mediated and direct mechanisms are practically meaningful.

The covariate analyses revealed several meaningful boundary conditions. Age positively predicted self-control (b = 0.056, p = .006), with both self-control and job satisfaction peaking in the 46-55 age group, consistent with developmental accounts of increased self-regulatory maturity across adulthood (Baumeister et al., 1998). Overtime work exhibited the most pronounced effect on job satisfaction of all tested group differences (F = 39.39, p < .001), with mean satisfaction declining sharply from M = 2.40 (no overtime) to M = 1.76 (two extra hours) and M = 1.40 (four or more extra hours), reflecting the resource-depleting cost of extended working hours (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Overtime working hours also directly reduced self-control (b = -0.017, p = .002), indicating a bidirectional depletion cycle. Holding a supervisory or managerial position was associated with higher positive work-home interaction (WPH and HPW) and greater job satisfaction, consistent with COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989): managerial roles may confer additional autonomy and role resources that offset depletion demands.

Several limitations should be noted. The self-report design inhibits causal inference and can expand associations through common-method variance. The job satisfaction (α = .63) and self-control (α = .69) scales fell below the conventional .70 threshold (Cortina, 1993), potentially attenuating the

estimated paths. Finally, the sample skewed young (57.7% aged 18–25) and female (60.7%), and the specific features of the Romanian labour context may limit generalizability.

Future research should adopt longitudinal designs, such as daily diary or experience-sampling methods, to establish the temporal order of self-control depletion, work-home influence, and job satisfaction, and should recruit more demographically diverse samples (e.g., older employees, fathers, and non-office sectors) to broaden generalizability. Moderator analyses of gender, family structure, sector, and organizational culture could reveal boundary conditions for each pathway, particularly the non-significant HNW route, which may strengthen in samples with heavier domestic demands. Incorporating objective performance and physiological measures alongside self-report would further reduce common-method variance.

The findings carry practical implications for organizations and HR practitioners, particularly within the Romanian labor market, where young and early-career employees constitute a sizeable segment of the workforce. First, the strong gradient in job satisfaction across overtime conditions suggests that even modest reductions in obligatory overtime could meaningfully improve employee well-being at a population level. Second, the role of self-control as a direct and mediated predictor of job satisfaction suggests that organizations would benefit from self-regulation training and recovery interventions that help employees maintain and restore regulatory resources. Third, the significance of positive enrichment pathways, particularly the HPW path reflecting home resources enriching work, implies that supporting employee life outside work through flexible scheduling or family-friendly policies may yield returns in terms of in-role satisfaction, performance, and employee retention.

6. Conclusions

This study set out to clarify how trait self-control relates to job satisfaction and whether work-home interaction accounts for that relationship in a large sample of Romanian employees. The results support a dual-pathway account. Self-control was directly and positively correlated with job satisfaction and, at the same time, shaped the cross-domain interface in an adaptive direction, reducing both forms of work-home conflict and strengthening both forms of positive interactions. Three of the four work-home dimensions carried significant indirect effects, so that work-home interaction partially, but not fully, mediated the self-control-job satisfaction link. Importantly, the positive-spillover channels contributed at least as much as the reduction of work-to-home conflict, indicating that self-regulation raises satisfaction not only by preventing resource loss but also by enabling resource gain across the work-home boundary. These findings extend the strength model of self-regulation

and Conservation of Resources theory to a Central and Eastern European context that has received little empirical attention, and they show that mechanisms observed elsewhere generalise to Romanian employees. The demographic analyses situate these processes within the life course and the organisation of work: self-control and satisfaction increase with age and tenure and decrease sharply with overtime, which emerged as the single strongest correlate of dissatisfaction.

Taken together, the evidence suggests that organisations can support job satisfaction by strengthening employees' self-regulatory resources, moderating obligatory overtime, and adopting policies that allow positive experiences to flow between work and home. Because the design is cross-sectional and the data are self-reported, causal claims remain provisional; longitudinal and diary-based studies, together with more demographically diverse samples, are needed to confirm the temporal ordering of self-control, work-home spillover and job satisfaction, and to test the boundary conditions of each pathway.

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