



Original article

“The day the Earth stopped” – How belief in a just world affected emotions and job outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic: Comparison between Brazil and France

“Le jour où la Terre s’est arrêtée” - Comment les croyances dans un monde juste ont affecté les émotions et les résultats professionnels pendant la pandémie de COVID-19: comparaisons entre le Brésil et la France

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: While the measures taken to contain COVID-19 have been criticized in many countries, their emotional impact has encouraged people to draw on organizing principles about the world, such as belief in a just world (BJW). Alongside this, reactions to an exceptional and extreme life event also affect labor relations, and have given rise to a crisis that is still evident today.

Objective: Based on the Affective Event Theory (AET), the study aims to test how behavior at work is affected by an extreme life event as a function of the work environment.

Method: 449 teleworkers in Brazil and 236 in France participated in the study, considering that these two countries had imposed similar periods of mandatory teleworking while adopting different policies. Empirical models were tested using structural equation modeling, and differences between countries were tested using ANOVA.

Results: Low positive emotions tended to decrease perceived job satisfaction when BJW was high in both countries. This also occurred among French teleworkers when they had high negative emotions. BJW directly affected both performance and job satisfaction in Brazil and only job satisfaction in France.

Conclusion: Results offer support for the AET and confirm that the work environment indirectly influences affective experiences and work outcomes. Despite a limited sample, because the respondents were part of the minority of the working population who could stay at home, the study offers a practical contribution. The difference in support perceived by French and Brazilian teleworkers reinforces the idea that attention to ideals and contextual conditions is essential for maintaining emotional health and job performance.

R É S U M É

Introduction: Dans de nombreux pays, des citoyens ont critiqué les mesures prises pour contenir le COVID-19. Devant de telles situations affectives, les personnes

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recourent à des principes organisateurs du monde comme les croyances dans un monde juste (BJW). Ces réactions face à un événement de vie exceptionnel et extrême ont pu également affecter les relations du travail et provoquer une crise encore saillante aujourd'hui.

Objective: En nous appuyant sur la Théorie des Événements Affectifs (AET), l'étude vise à tester dans quelle mesure le comportement au travail est affecté par un événement de vie extrême en fonction de l'environnement de travail.

Méthode: Dans deux pays avec des périodes de télétravail obligatoire similaires mais avec des politiques différentes, nous avons interrogé 449 télétravailleurs au Brésil et 236 en France. Les modèles ont été testés avec des Modélisations Par Equations Structurales et les comparaisons entre pays ont été testées par ANOVA.

Résultats: Ils révèlent que de faibles émotions positives tendent à diminuer la satisfaction professionnelle perçue lorsque le BJW est élevé dans les deux contextes. Parmi les télétravailleurs français, c'est également le cas lorsque les émotions négatives sont élevées. La BJW affecte directement la performance et la satisfaction au travail au Brésil, mais elle n'est valable que pour la satisfaction au travail en France.

Conclusions: Les résultats soutiennent l'AET et montrent comment les environnements de travail influencent indirectement l'expérience affective et les résultats professionnels. Malgré les limites de l'échantillon, parce que les personnes interrogées représentaient une minorité de la population active qui peut vraiment faire le télétravail, il y a des contributions pratiques. La différence de soutien perçue par les télétravailleurs français et brésiliens renforce l'idée que l'attention portée aux objectifs des travailleurs et aux conditions contextuelles est une ressource essentielle pour préserver la santé émotionnelle et les performances professionnelles.

1. Introduction

The title of this paper refers to a song "The day the Earth stopped" released in 1977 by Raul Seixas, a Brazilian artist who was very popular in the 1970s and 1980s. The song that circulated once again during the COVID-19 pandemic is about a dream in which the person describes "the day when everyone on the entire planet decided that no one would leave home, as if the whole planet had agreed. That day nobody left home" [free translation]. Putting aside the prophetic part, the song's description of a world that stops raises important questions: Did people deserve this pandemic? What did it mean? Was it fair to happen?

After the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic in March 2020, different measures were implemented in countries to contain this extreme event (such as lockdowns) and allow the economy to continue (by introducing compulsory telework) (Danker et al., 2022; Maier et al., 2022). Such sudden and unexpected changes affected emotions and made people revisit their beliefs (Belkin & Kong, 2022;

Desrumaux et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2021). The emotional and cognitive impact of the pandemic affected people's everyday life and overall existence (Martínez-Tur et al., 2022; Mishima-Santos et al., 2021). Current post-covid realities show that the crisis also affected people's thoughts about work, such as work centrality or values (Pérez-Nebra et al., 2021). Nevertheless, we still know little about how such unexpected changes and national political decisions affect work and organizational behavior (Van Ootegem et al., 2022).

To deal with this extreme event, European Central and Western countries applied strict social isolation measures. By contrast, less strict measures were adopted in Latin American countries, where many face-to-face services remain authorized. These public health policies affected everyday life and how the work was performed in organizations. Several studies have already demonstrated that overall emotions impact job satisfaction and performance (Kundi et al., 2021; Moscoso & Salgado, 2021; Nimón et al., 2023; Salgado et al., 2019). A recent study also showed that emotions due to the pandemic were related to job

satisfaction and performance (Nemteanu et al., 2021).

Our goal is to examine whether emotions were different depending on the political context, and whether work attitudes and behaviors were affected differently. One belief that can regulate the effect of a political decision on people's psychological experience and behavior is Belief in a Just World (BJW) (Mariss et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021). BJW functions as an adaptive psychological mechanism (Lerner & Miller, 1978) that allows the individual to maintain a sense of control and confidence in the future. By assuming a connection between effort and outcome, the idea behind BJW is that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get (Hafer & Rubel, 2015; Lerner, 1980), and this can then affect their attitudes and behavior in different places and notably the workplace.

Weiss & Cropanzano (1996) Affective Events Theory (AET) explains that affective events (such as emotions at work) predict job outcomes (such as job performance and satisfaction) depending on dispositional variables (such as BJW) and the broad context. They suggest that some variance in individual well-being and performance is accounted for by dispositional traits, and some by the situation, suggesting a model of variable relationships (Junça-Silva et al., 2023). This study aimed to test the AET by analyzing to what extent the work environment has an influence on affective experience and job outcomes. To achieve this, we considered workers in Brazil (a country with lenient public health policies in a weak democratic context) and France (a country with restrictive public health policies in a robust democratic context) who were faced with different strategies for containing the pandemic (ILO, 2020) but similar periods of compulsory telework. In general, we assumed that the measures to contain the pandemic in different countries triggered different work events (such as compulsory teleworking) and a different affective reaction (emotions) which influence job satisfaction and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Salas-Vallina et al., 2021). In addition to this, we consider that belief in a just world is a dispositional personal resource for managing perceived emotions (Christandl, 2013; Pulido-Martos et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021) and job outcomes (Junça-Silva et al., 2022; Kundi et al., 2021).

Fig. 1 represents a fundamental idea of the Affective Events Theory, which is that affective levels fluctuate over time due to endogenous factors (such as dispositions) or exogenous factors (such as relevant events). Work environments are seen as having an indirect influence on affective experience, which is both attitudinal and behavioral.

Traditionally, job performance research has focused on cognitive variables (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015; Queiroga et al., 2021) or on the impact of different types of affective reactions on these outcomes (Moscato & Salgado, 2021; Salgado et al., 2019). However, recent meta-analyses have emphasized the importance of introducing variables from outside the organizational context to understand such constructs, such as the cultural dimension (Salgado & Moscoso, 2022) or, as seen in COVID-19 studies, of considering the economic role of the pandemic

(Nemteanu et al., 2021; Nemteanu & Dabija, 2021). The following sections will explain the different parts of the model: the antecedents, the mediation of affective reactions, and the relationships with job outcomes.

1.1. Crisis and the different policies adopted by the two countries

In contrast to other countries in Latin America, Brazil adopted more fragmented policies at the states level than a global orientation at the national level. The Brazilian situation was first revealed in May 2020 in the British journal *The Lancet* (The Lancet, 2020). The country's timid national plan to combat the pandemic and its attitude of denial towards science contributed to place Brazil at the top of COVID-19 death rankings, and caused one of the most severe SARS-CoV-2 variants (Hallal, 2021; Sabino et al., 2021). Consequently, the work environment remains to this day deeply affected and no solid plan for rescuing the economy has been implemented.

Meanwhile, measures to contain the pandemic were more severe and protective for workers in European countries (ILO, 2020). In France, the country's borders were closed until December 2020, when they were gradually opened to other European countries. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) (<https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/imf-and-COVID19/Policy-Responses-to-COVID-19#top>) reports that French authorities introduced four amending budget laws during the period from March to November 2020.

Previous studies have compared the policies adopted in both of these countries (Lopes et al., 2021; National Confederation of Industry, 2020). Brazilian studies have pointed to the need to increase measures to protect workers' health and to provide additional resources such as emotional support (Barbosa et al., 2022; Mishima-Santos et al., 2021). Research in France has demonstrated the influence of crisis-specific variables (such as professional isolation, the telework environment, work increase, and stress) and adjustment to telework (Carillo et al., 2021).

1.2. Belief in a just world and emotional control

Crises are relatively frequent, and people repeatedly face adverse events such as tax increases, inflation, the rising cost of health insurance, or financial crises (Christandl, 2013). The belief in a just world (BJW) is a critical personal resource that has proven helpful when dealing with adverse life events (Lerner & Miller, 1978; Lerner & Simmons, 1966). Individuals who hold this worldview believe that the world is fair, and that people get what they deserve.

People with a strong BJW tend to blame victims for their fate, which helps to restore their worldview when faced with experiences consistent with their belief (Furnham, 2003). Although this is an undesirable and antisocial example of BJW, research has also demonstrated the importance of BJW for improving mental health and well-being (Faccenda & Pantaléon, 2011; Nartova-Bochaver et al., 2019; Yu et al., 2018). BJW was found to be a valuable personal resource in many situations, such as anger, bullying and burnout (Desrumaux et al., 2018), financial crisis (Christandl, 2013). This was also demonstrated in an experimental study where BJW was the control variable and emotions were triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic (Wang et al., 2021).

Alongside this, it has been found that inconsistent policies associated with widespread precarious working conditions (Belkin & Kong, 2022; Pérez-Nebra et al., 2021) tend to increase the climate of insecurity. In these conditions, teleworking becomes an opportunity to protect oneself. Based on the perception of how fair the world is and on the fact that job outcomes may be more positive in contexts such as Brazil, the following hypothesis was proposed.

H1: Brazilian workers have higher levels of Belief in a Just World, job satisfaction, and job performance than French workers.

The COVID-19 pandemic, as a major social disaster, affected how people viewed the world and how they felt and caused psychological

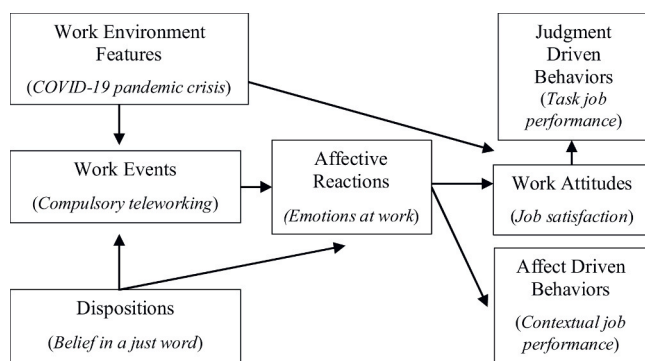


Fig. 1. Conceptual Model – Affective Events Theory: Macro Structure.

Source: Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996

Note: Variables operationalized in the study are in brackets.

stress. Following the outbreak of the pandemic, people experienced high negative and low positive emotions (Wang et al., 2021). In turn, these natural responses can further reduce individuals' positive emotions and subjective well-being and increase their negative emotions (Diener et al., 2020). In addition, the policies implemented in different countries to contain the disease could have contributed to different levels of stress. This may have had a differentiated effect not only on workers' performance in the imposed telework but also on their perception of how fair the world is. These elements provide support for the second hypothesis.

H2: French workers had more positive emotions at work than Brazilian workers.

An additional factor to be considered is that French policies were more agile and robust in protecting the population, positively affecting job-related variables. Thus, the French had better conditions than the Brazilians to organize their telework, an element that contributes to positive experiences during mandatory telework (Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés, 2020; Carillo et al., 2021; Latorre et al., 2021). In this scenario, it is also reasonable to consider that the higher the level of BJW, the higher the self-perception of positive job outcomes, which is the scope of the third hypothesis.

H3: Job performance and job satisfaction are predicted directly by BJW in each country.

1.3. Affective reactions at work and job outcomes

Whether measured by satisfaction or performance indicators, the literature has shown the symbiotic relationship between affects and job outcomes (Moscato & Salgado, 2021; Peiró et al., 2019). However, after more than three decades of empirical research on emotions at work and job outcomes since the Affective Revolution (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017; Moscoso & Salgado, 2021; Wright et al., 1993), results still show contradictory relationships between them. A large body of literature considers emotions at work as an essential variable (Ashkanasy & Dorris, 2017; Nimón et al., 2023). Positive emotions appear to influence well-being, whereas negative emotions signal to the individual that a challenging situation must be solved (Diener et al., 2020).

The first work outcome we examine is performance, which can be viewed from different angles. The management perspective views performance in terms of the results achieved (Huselid, 2011). The psychological viewpoint defines individual performance as behaviors aligned with organizational goals (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015). The literature has also examined whether the focus of behavior is task-oriented, contextual, or counterproductive (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015; Koopmans et al., 2011). Another consideration is how performance is rated, whether it is self-reported or management-reported (Moscato & Salgado, 2021). In this study, the individual performance perspective is considered.

The second work outcome is job satisfaction. It is one of the job attitudes (Judge et al., 2017; Judge, Zhang, & Glerum, 2021) most frequently considered as a predictor of performance and is sometimes moderated by affects like well-being (Wright et al., 2007). This has been systematically observed in the literature (Judge et al., 2017). However, job satisfaction has also been studied as a product of other attitudes such as work commitment (Indarti et al., 2017), emotions (Diener et al., 2020), and job resources such as social support (Zhao et al., 2020).

The measures implemented to mitigate the pandemic made it necessary to abruptly introduce teleworking and reopened discussions about the relationship between affect and performance (Junça-Silva et al., 2022). The introduction of teleworking to varying degrees led many employees to transform their psychosocial work environment and to acquire new job and personal resources (Pulido-Martos et al., 2021). The challenge of adapting to change affected employees' emotions (Nemteanu et al., 2021) and also placed the burden on managers to keep these levels high by expecting these resources to ensure positive performance levels (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Pulido-Martos et al., 2021; Salas-Vallina et al., 2021). These elements provide support for our

fourth and fifth hypotheses.

H4: Job performance and satisfaction are predicted directly by positive emotions and inversely by negative emotions at work.

H5: Job satisfaction positively explains job performance.

Furthermore, considering the role of beliefs already demonstrated in previous studies (Jiang et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2021), we also posit a fifth hypothesis.

H6: BJW can moderate the relationship between emotions and job outcomes (performance and satisfaction).

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The participants comprised 449 respondents in Brazil and 236 respondents in France. We collected data using a snowball procedure. Participants had to be working remotely at the time of the data collection and be more than 18 years old. In both countries, the proportion of women (over 60%) and individuals with a university education (over 50%) was high. The average age was very similar between the two countries, Brazil = 40.8 (SD = 11.6) and France = 40.8 (SD = 11.7). Other similarities and differences were observed in the participants' profiles as shown in Table 1.

It is also important to highlight several characteristics that usually affect teleworking conditions. The percentage of people who indicated living alone in the two countries was similar (BR = 14.5%; FR = 17.8%). However, most respondents mentioned that they had children: 46.5% of the Brazilians reported that they had between 1 and 5 children living with them ($M_o = 1$ and 2 children), while 50.0% of the French participants affirmed having between 1 and 4 children in the same condition ($M_o = 1$ and 2 children). Regarding the number of people living at home with the respondent, households seemed to be smaller in France: respondents reported living with up to five people ($M_o = 2$ and 3 people). In Brazil, 84% of the Brazilian respondents claimed to be living with up

Table 1
Profile of respondents in Brazil (N = 451) and France (N = 236).

Descriptive	BR		FR	
	%	N	%	N
Sex				
Male	33.9%	153	30.9%	74
Female	66.1%	298	69.1%	162
Marital Status				
No marriage	33.0%	149	50.8%	120
Marriage	53.4%	241	42.9%	101
Divorced	13.3%	60	5.9%	14
Widower	0.3%	1	0.4%	1
Educational Level				
Elementary School	0.4%	2	0.4%	1
High School	6.0%	27	11.4%	27
University Education	25.8%	116	55.6%	131
Post-Graduate Education	67.8%	306	32.6%	77
Sum of Household Income*				
Less than 1,000.00	1.1%	5	2.6%	6
Between 1,000.00 and 2,000.00	4.4%	20	24.6%	58
Between 2,001.00 and 3,000.00	5.5%	25	24.6%	58
Between 3,001.00 and 5,000.00	12.5%	56	34.7%	82
Between 5,001.00 and 10,000.00	27.5%	124	11.4%	27
More than 10,000.00	49.0%	221	2.1%	5
Hours per day dedicated to work (besides housework)				
Less than 4 h	8.9%	40	4.2%	10
Between 4 and 8 h	39.9%	180	44.9%	106
Between 8 and 12 h	40.8%	184	46.2%	109
Between 12 and 16 h	6.2%	28	3.4%	8
More than 16 h	4.2%	19	1.3%	3

* For household income, we used the same intervals but with the currency of each country, i.e., Brazilian Reais for Brazil (R\$) and Euros for France (€) since the minimum salary is equivalent (1000 reais and 1000 euros).

to 5 people, and this was not the maximum number, which means that some respondents were living with up to 10 people.

At the time of the survey, 62.4% of the Brazilians indicated that they were working at home every day, but in France, the proportion was almost half that (31.8%). The French reported that they were working at home between 2 and 3 days a week (33.5%). Regarding the teleworking experience, 72.9% of Brazilians indicated they had never tried this type of work before COVID-19. In France, the number dropped to 53.3%, and almost 30% of the French respondents reported that they had already worked remotely, although not regularly.

2.2. Instruments

To measure job performance, participants answered a short adapted version of the General Job Performance Self-Assessment Scale – EGDT (Andrade et al., 2020) that assesses two aspects of performance (core task and contextual performance) and can be used with a single factor (General Cronbach's α and $\omega = 0.88$) in its 10-item version. Examples of an item are: "I perform hard tasks properly"; "I try to update my technical knowledge to do my job"; "I seize opportunities that can improve my results at work." (all instruments in both languages and details are available in the appendix).

Job satisfaction was measured by a single item: "How do you feel about the job you have now?" inspired by Quinn et al., 1974. Participants responded on a 5-point scale ranging from "absolutely not satisfied" to "absolutely satisfied."

Belief in a Just World was measured by its short version with five items (Modesto et al., 2017) that assess personal beliefs about justice in the world. The single factor showed good reliability (General Cronbach's α and $\omega = 0.90$). Examples are: "In general, the events of my life are fair"; "I believe that I generally get what I deserve."

Emotions at work were assessed using another brief version of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule – PANAS (Demo & Paschoal, 2016). The scale measures positive emotions (4 items; General Cronbach's α and $\omega = 0.88$) and negative emotions (5 items; General Cronbach's α and $\omega = 0.87$). An example of a positive emotion item is "when I think about my current job, I feel happy," and negative emotion is "when I think about my current job, I feel upset."

The response scale was a 5-point agreement scale for all instruments, except job satisfaction. All instruments had already been validated in Brazilian-Portuguese and did not require a translation. For the French language, we translated the instruments ourselves.

2.3. Ethics statement

Considering ethical recommendations, we followed the general principles regarding human research in the Helsinki Declaration (available online: <https://www.wma.net/what-we-do/medical-ethics/declaration-of-helsinki>, accessed on April 19, 2021) when collecting data. Anonymity and voluntary participation were guaranteed. When interpreting results, the data obtained were analyzed in aggregate form and never as individual responses.

2.4. Procedures of analysis

This cross-sectional study was carried out between April 26 and June 18, 2021, during the second strong wave of COVID-19 and the second lockdown to prevent virus dissemination. At this time, people started working remotely again (especially in Europe), one year after the first lockdown. The study was a web-based survey disseminated through a snowball procedure. The inclusion criterion was to be working remotely at the time of data collection.

The preliminary analysis (descriptive and analysis of variance – ANOVA) and the main analysis (Structural Equation Modeling – SEM and moderation analysis) were conducted using Jamovi (version 1.8) to test H1 and H2. The *psych* package was used for the reliability analysis,

and the empirical models were tested in multigroup SEM with the *PATHj* and *lavaan* packages to offer evidence for the other hypotheses.

3. Results

The first hypothesis was that Brazil and France would show differences in BJW, job performance, and job satisfaction. Significant differences ($p < .001$) were observed for all variables. Figs. 2A, 2B and 2C show the ANOVA for BJW ($M_{BR} = 3.61$; $SD_{BR} = .84$; $M_{FR} = 3.31$; $SD_{FR} = .79$), job performance ($M_{BR} = 4.19$; $SD_{BR} = .62$; $M_{FR} = 4.03$; $SD_{FR} = .55$) and job satisfaction ($M_{BR} = 3.63$; $SD_{BR} = 1.09$; $M_{FR} = 3.44$; $SD_{FR} = 1.09$).

In line with what was predicted in H1, the Brazilian workers had more positive BJW, job performance and satisfaction perceptions. We hypothesized that the governmental measures to contain the pandemic, more inconsistent in Brazil than in France, provided a more insecure environment, driving positive perceptions of the mandatory teleworking situation. However, it is important to add other factors to gain a better understanding of the results. When we asked how much support workers had received from their employers, more French workers (33%) mentioned that they had received *no support* for teleworking than the Brazilians (29%). When support was received, 29% of French teleworkers claimed that they had received *support with equipment*, compared to only 11% of the Brazilians. However, more Brazilian (10%) than French respondents (6%) indicated that they received *support in taking care of their health* (physical or psychological). This information also helps us interpret the differences between Brazil and France and re-opens the discussion about the importance of psychosocial support and its direct repercussion on workers' outcomes (Kundi et al., 2021).

Significant differences ($p < .001$) were also observed between Brazil and France in positive and negative emotions, as shown in Figs. 3A and 3B.

The ANOVA described in Figs. 3A and 3B shows that French teleworkers had more positive emotions ($M_{FR} = 2.85$; $SD_{FR} = .84$) than Brazilian teleworkers ($M_{BR} = 2.62$; $SD_{BR} = .99$), which would confirm H2. Nevertheless, French teleworkers also perceived negative emotions more intensely ($M_{FR} = 2.72$; $SD_{FR} = 1.02$; $M_{BR} = 2.45$; $SD_{BR} = .94$), which implies that H2 is partially confirmed.

Despite the differences between the two countries, one of the core research questions was to understand how affect, especially BJW – a dispositional variable –, can predict job outcomes in a mandatory teleworking situation triggered by COVID-19 measures. Using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), we examined the effect of BJW and emotions on job performance and job satisfaction simultaneously as consequent variables. Table 2 shows the model tests and fit indices for SEM considering Brazil and France.

The fit indices and the residual values show that the multigroup model is acceptable, and the relationship between the variables points to empirical consistency of the model. Brazil and France presented different relationships among the variables, especially regarding the role of emotions in explaining the perception of work performance.

Belief in a just world has a direct effect on job performance and satisfaction in Brazil ($\beta_{\text{performance}} = .15$; $\beta_{\text{satisfaction}} = .11$; $p < .01$), but it is only true for job satisfaction in France ($\beta_{\text{satisfaction}} = .21$; $p < .01$). Because of this, the assumption in H3 is partially confirmed. Another contradictory result is observed when we examine the role of emotions, when testing for H4. Emotions explain job satisfaction in both Brazil ($\beta_{\text{positive emotion}} = .43$; $\beta_{\text{negative emotion}} = -.36$; $p < .001$) and France ($\beta_{\text{positive emotion}} = .43$; $\beta_{\text{negative emotion}} = -.18$; $p < .01$).

For job performance, we only found a significant effect for positive emotions in France ($\beta_{\text{positive emotion}} = .25$; $p < .001$). Thus, H4 was not completely confirmed.

In addition, despite the contradictory relationship with job outcomes, i.e., job performance and satisfaction (Moscoso & Salgado, 2021; Wright et al., 1993), the results confirm the dual role of job satisfaction: it is an outcome that can be explained by emotions arising from work

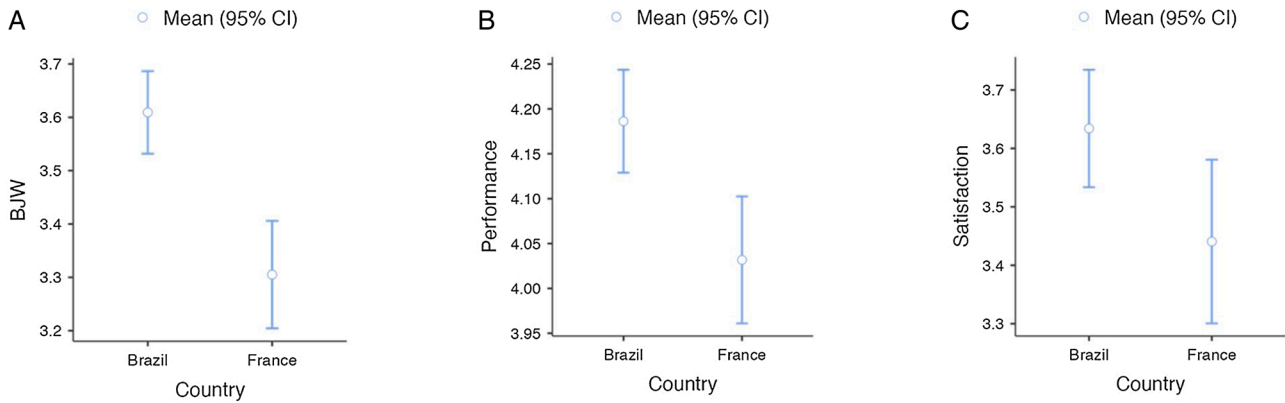


Fig. 2. **A:** Teleworkers' means considering Brazil and France – Belief in a Just Word. **B:** Teleworkers' means considering Brazil and France – Job Performance. **C:** Teleworkers' means considering Brazil and France – Job Satisfaction.

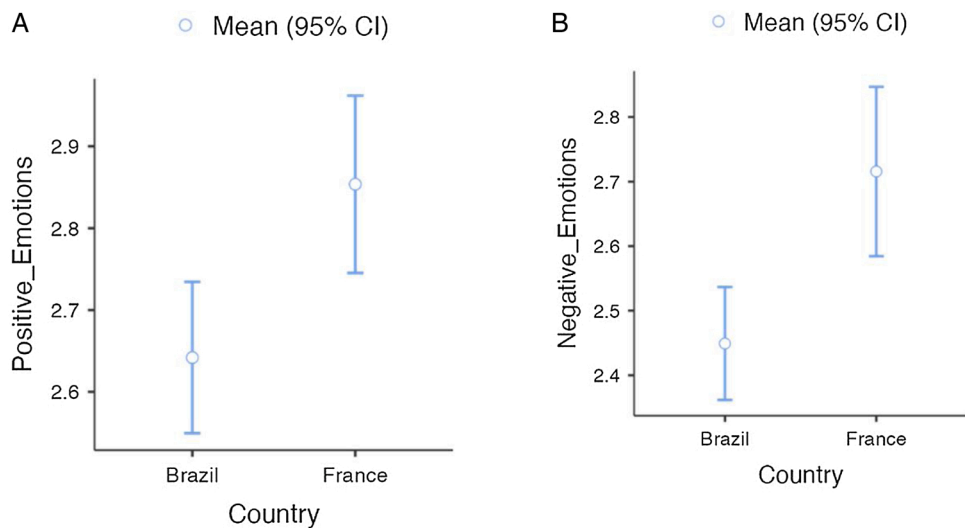


Fig. 3. **A:** Teleworkers' means considering Brazil and France – positive emotions. **B:** Teleworkers' means considering Brazil and France – negative emotions.

Table 2

Model tests and Fit Indices for SEM considering multigroup factor analysis, for Brazil and France.

Model Tests				Fit Indices - 95% Confidence Intervals						
Label	X ²	df	p	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA	Lower	Upper	RMSEA p
User Model	1506	524	< .001							
Baseline Model	8717	552	< .001	.880	.873	.066	.078	.073	.082	< .001

and is a potential predictor of performance ($\beta_{BR} = .26$ and $\beta_{FR} = .21$; $p < .01$), which confirms H5. An overview of the SEM model is presented in Figs. 4A and 4B.

The variance observed for job performance ($R^2_{BR} = .123$; $R^2_{FR} = .203$) is lower than for job satisfaction ($R^2_{BR} = .448$; $R^2_{FR} = .383$) in Brazil and in France. Despite the direct effect between the variables, our interest is to understand the moderating role of emotions in the relationship between BJW and job outcomes, in line with our last hypothesis (H6). These relationships were tested in the regression analyses presented below. In Figs. 5A and 5B, we observe the moderation of job performance as a predicted variable.

In the Brazilian context, no moderating effect can be seen on job performance, whereas in the French context the effect is clear. Positive emotions improve job performance when BJW is high, and negative emotions experienced at work tend to decrease this perception. For job satisfaction, the effect of the interaction with emotions is also different

in the two countries (Figs. 6A and 6B).

In the Brazilian context, low positive emotions tend to decrease perceived satisfaction when BJW is high, but negative emotions have no significant effect. Among French teleworkers, low positive emotions and high negative emotions reduce the perception of satisfaction when BJW is high. This allows us to say that H6 has been partially confirmed. These results will be discussed below in light of the literature examined in this study.

4. Discussion

As this manuscript is being reviewed for submission to this journal, i. e., in March 2024, we remember that four years ago WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic. The repercussions of the measures implemented to contain the pandemic can still be felt today, especially with regard to human resource management in the *post-pandemic period*. Several

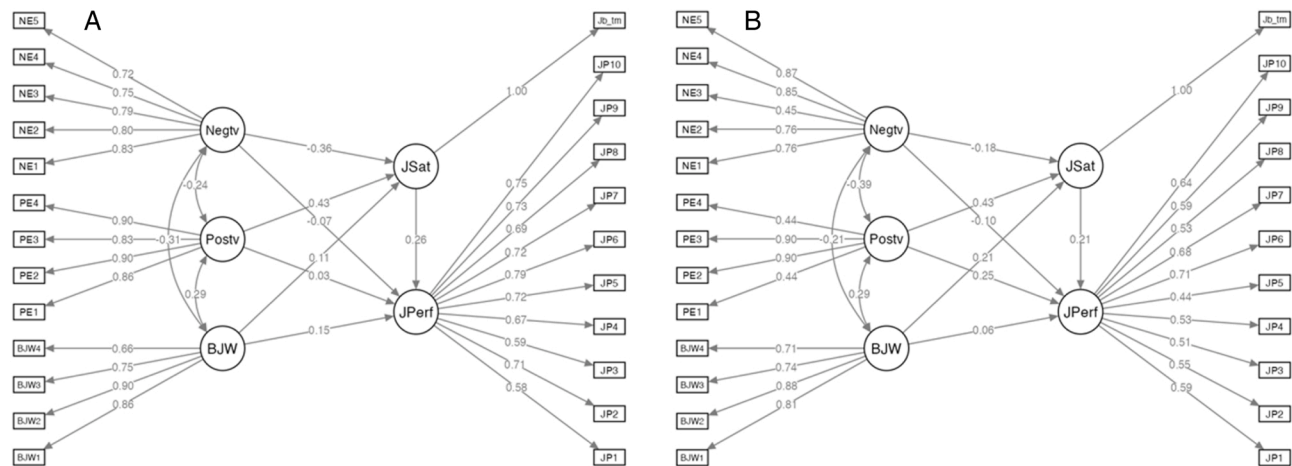


Fig. 4. A: Overview of the SEM model with Beta coefficients – Brazil. B: Overview of the SEM model with Beta coefficients – France.

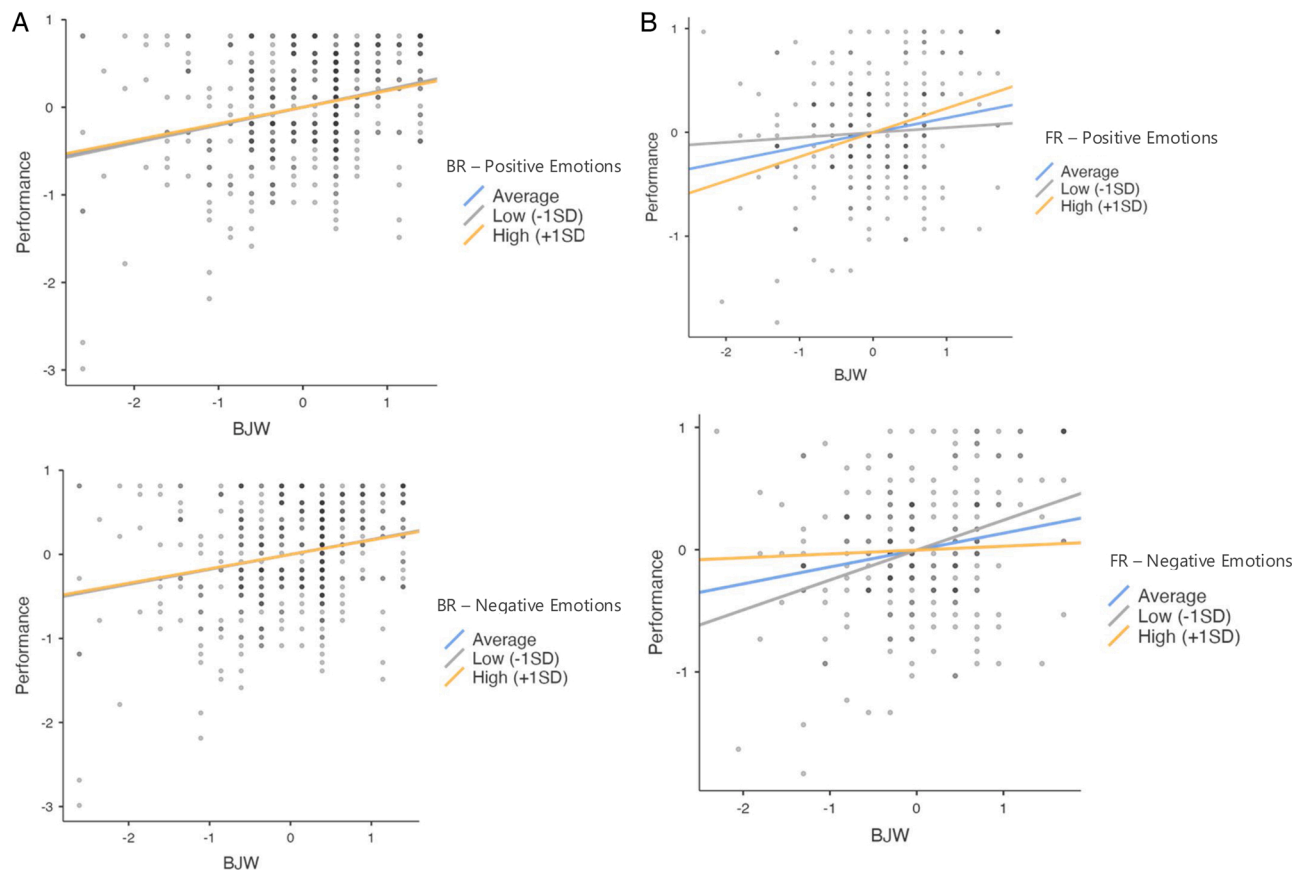


Fig. 5. A: Plots for moderation of Emotions on the relationship between BJW and Job Performance – Brazil. B: Plots for moderation of Emotions on the relationship between BJW and Job Performance – France.

practices introduced during the lockdown, have become well established, so have some of the characteristics of the work environment at that time. Our results are useful for understanding and showing how emotions and beliefs are important in times of crisis.

The Affective Events Theory (AET-Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) model was tested in this study by analyzing to what extent work environments have an indirect influence on affective experience and job outcomes. We applied the AET (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) to investigate whether BJW may have affected people's emotions at work in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how emotions impacted job performance and satisfaction in countries that adopted different

measures to contain the health crisis. Our model was useful to understand the relationship between the variables. In general, participants reported a moderate to high level of perceived job performance in both countries, while their job satisfaction averages remained stable during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. These scores are similar to those observed in research about fatigue in teleworking during the first wave of COVID-19 in Canada (Nwachukwu et al., 2020), Romanian (Nemteanu & Dabija, 2021), Spain (Pulido-Martos et al., 2021), and Brazil (Barbosa et al., 2022; Mishima-Santos et al., 2021). Leaving aside the commonalities between the two countries investigated (Brazil and France), our study revealed strong differences between them. The

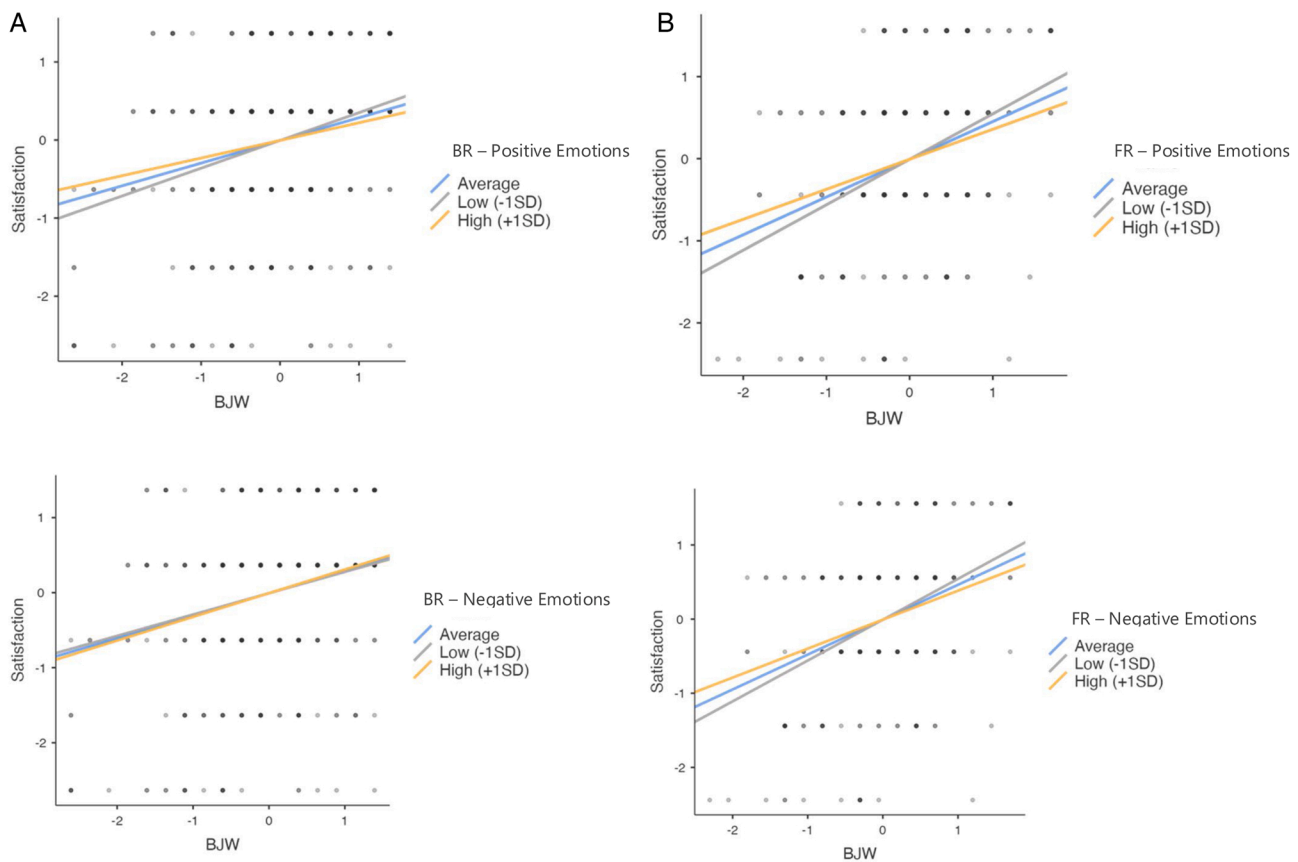


Fig. 6. A: Plots for moderation of Emotions on the relationship between BJB and Job Satisfaction – Brazil. B: Plots for moderation of Emotions on the relationship between BJB and Job Satisfaction – France.

marked differences in the governmental measures implemented in the two countries to mitigate the pandemic, associated with the important role of these measures in explaining people's behavior (Belkin & Kong, 2022), led us to expect different perceptions of the repercussions of telework in the two countries.

When faced with the inconsistent measures adopted in their country, the Brazilians seemed to perceive mandatory telework as an opportunity to protect themselves and remain productive. Studies have revealed that when individuals face psychological stress, BJB works as an emotional regulator (Jiang et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2021) powerful enough to diminish the effect of negative emotions and enhance the effect of positive emotions. In France, where BJB was less prevalent than in Brazil, the relationship with emotions showed this effect on job outcomes. Moderation analyses showed that BJB diminished the effect of negative emotions and enhanced the effect of positive emotions, especially with respect to job satisfaction. However, the effects of BJB on Brazilian teleworkers was relatively weak. This shows that beliefs play different roles in different countries. Although some studies suggest similarities between samples in industrialized countries (the present case) (Henrich et al., 2010), others show that trait beliefs are stronger in an individualistic culture (i.e., France) when compared to contextual beliefs (i.e., Brazil) (Church et al., 2006). The present results support this conclusion.

In addition to providing a cultural explanation for the relationship between variables, the results of this study contribute to research and practice. The difference in support perceived by French and Brazilian teleworkers confirms emerging research in work and organizational psychology which focuses on workers' "idiosyncratic deals" (Latorre et al., 2021) and contextual conditions (Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés, 2020; Tavares et al., 2021; Tokarchuk et al., 2021) as central resources to maintain emotional health and job performance. We

extend this line of research by clarifying why some individuals manage their emotions better than others, using a blended approach that involves people's beliefs about how fair the world is and how both emotions and beliefs can impact their perception of job performance.

Also, by adding a dispositional construct (BJB) to the literature on organizational outcomes, we highlight that workers' perception of the world plays a role in activating the relationship between emotions and job performance and job satisfaction. Managers should take this into account because recent meta-analyses (Salgado & Moscoso, 2022) and COVID-19 studies (Nemteanu et al., 2021; Nemteanu & Dabija, 2021) have shown that macro variables (such as the cultural dimension or country economy) provide a better understanding of individual job outcomes.

In practical terms, our research informs managers and workers about factors that may increase job success and the need to consider them in light of the broad environmental and organizational context. Now that vaccination is widely available, the pandemic triggered by COVID-19 has disappeared in most countries, but many practices adopted in the work world have remained. Telework, which had recently become controversial as a way of working, has become well established in the post-crisis context (Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés, 2020; Contreras et al., 2020). It is also important to note that this study considers difficulties in the management context that are generally present in a work environment, whether due to internal tensions or external variables, as was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Limitations of this study should be pointed out. Analyzing the perception of work during the pandemic from the perspective of teleworkers offers a narrow perspective insofar as these workers represent a minority of the active population that was able to follow the recommendation to stay at home. In Brazil, for example, they account for 22.7% of jobs (National Confederation of Industry, 2020). The lockdown

was a source of stress for a number of teleworkers (Barbosa et al., 2022; Tokarchuk et al., 2021), but caution is needed when considering the fair world perception of such a specific portion of workers when others may have been in an even more stressful situation (Helioterio et al., 2020). The lack of cultural measure and the failure of the self-construal structure to replicate well in both cultures are also important limitations as well the data collection period, which was a stressful time for people experiencing a second lockdown. However, it was also a time when people learned to deal with the difficulties of teleworking. Because of this, a longitudinal approach would be more appropriate for understanding possible differences between the first and second lockdown.

But, a first suggestion for further research is to operationalize the variables of the model differently to test the model further. Self-reported scores could be cross-checked against peer/supervisor-rated scores. Cognitive distortion of job performance should also be examined particularly in the case of long tenure (Tommasi et al., 2024). Finally, when comparing countries, an emotional climate measure could be added, and the reference group that identifies with this telework could be tested (Páez et al., 2007). Although an attempt had been made to test the model in different contexts and to form a heterogeneous sample in each country, the study had similar samples regarding age, sex, and hours of work.

Teleworking is still a novelty for most workers, and many issues involved have not yet been completely solved, such as the emotions, the outcomes expected and achieved, the kind of support people need and want, and finally, how managers deal with the situation because it requires a different type of leadership that considers workers' emotions. There are at least three important practical implications of a deeper understanding of the influence of emotions on workers' outcomes. First, emotions depend on the work environment and this knowledge can help to foster the emotions associated with high quality work. Second, it can help scholars and practitioners understand the effects of emotions on workers' outcomes. Third, it can reinforce successful human resource practices to improve positive emotions.

Teleworking, which was slowly becoming controversial, began to establish itself in the post-pandemic period (Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garcés, 2020; Contreras et al., 2020). We successfully tested the AET, which suggests that judgments and work attitudes vary partly due to individual variables and partly to the situation. We confirmed a model

that to the authors' best knowledge had not been tested in collective countries (Latin-American), using the Belief in a Just World variable, another innovation in the social sciences and not commonly used in organizational studies. The suggestions put forward in the paper aim to facilitate the successful management of performance, satisfaction, and emotions in a context that regularly includes adversities, and maybe in the future, we will not need to stop the Earth every time a crisis occurs.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Fabiana Queiroga: Conception and design; Statistical expertise; Drafting of the article; Interpretation of the results; Critical revision of the article for important intellectual content; Final approval of the article.

Amalia R. Pérez-Nebra: Conception and design; Statistical expertise; Interpretation of the results; Critical revision of the article for important intellectual content; Final approval of the article.

Eva M. Lira: Provision of study materials; Critical revision of the article for important intellectual content; Final approval of the article.

Vincent Angel: Analysis and interpretation of the data; Critical revision of the article for important intellectual content; Final approval of the article.

Marilena Bertolino: Provision of study materials and revision of the French language instruments; Critical revision of the article for important intellectual content; Final approval of the article.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare there are no conflicts of interest.

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Appendix

Instruments in Brazilian-Portuguese language

- General Job Performance Self-Assessment Scale – EGDT (Andrade et al., 2020)/Autopercepção de desempenho no trabalho – versão reduzida (Andrade et al., 2020) ($\alpha = .90$; $\omega = 0.90$)

Totalmente falso = 1 2 3 4 5 = Totalmente Verdadeiro	
1. Executo adequadamente tarefas difíceis.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Procuro atualizar meus conhecimentos técnicos para realizar meu trabalho.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Executo meu trabalho de acordo com o que é esperado pela organização.	1 2 3 4 5
4. Planejo a execução do meu trabalho definindo ações, prazos e prioridades.	1 2 3 4 5
5. Planejo ações de acordo com minhas tarefas e rotinas organizacionais.	1 2 3 4 5
6. Tomo iniciativas para melhorar meus resultados no trabalho.	1 2 3 4 5
7. Busco novas soluções para problemas que possam surgir em meu trabalho.	1 2 3 4 5
8. Esforço-me para realizar as tarefas que me são destinadas.	1 2 3 4 5
9. Executo minhas atribuições prevendo os seus resultados.	1 2 3 4 5
10. Aproveito oportunidades que possam melhorar meus resultados no trabalho.	1 2 3 4 5

- Job satisfaction was measured according to one single item “How do you feel about the job you have now?” inspired by [Quinn et al. \(1974\)](#)/Satisfação no trabalho foi medido com item único inspirado em [Quinn et al. \(1974\)](#) “Como você se sente com o trabalho que você tem agora? Totalmente insatisfeito = 1 2 3 4 5 = Totalmente satisfeito”.
- Belief in a Just World - personal beliefs ([Modesto et al., 2017](#))/Crença no Mundo Justo – crenças pessoais ([Modesto et al., 2017](#)) ($\alpha = .87$; $\omega = 0.88$)

Totalmente falso = 1 2 3 4 5 = Totalmente Verdadeiro	
1. De modo geral, os acontecimentos da minha vida são justos.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Eu acredito que a maioria das coisas que acontecem comigo são justas.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Eu acredito que geralmente tenho o que mereço.	1 2 3 4 5
4. Eu geralmente sou tratado de forma justa.	1 2 3 4 5
5. Eu acredito que, geralmente, eu mereço o que acontece comigo.	1 2 3 4 5

- Positive and Negative Affect Schedule – PANAS ([Demo & Paschoal, 2016](#))/Painel de Emoções Positivas ($\alpha = .93$; $\omega = 0.93$)e Negativas ($\alpha = .88$; $\omega = 0.87$) – PANAS ([Demo & Paschoal, 2016](#)).

Nada = 1 2 3 4 5 = Muito			
	1 2 3 4 5	6. Feliz	1 2 3 4 5
1 Irritado	1 2 3 4 5	7. Nervoso	1 2 3 4 5
2 Animado	1 2 3 4 5	8. Empolgado	1 2 3 4 5
3 Chateado	1 2 3 4 5	9. Tenso	1 2 3 4 5
4 Impaciente	1 2 3 4 5		
5 Entusiasmado	1 2 3 4 5		

Instruments in French language

- General Job Performance Self-Assessment Scale – EGDT ([Andrade et al., 2020](#))/Auto-évaluation des performances professionnelles – *version courte* ([Andrade et al., 2020](#)) ($\alpha = .84$; $\omega = 0.85$)

Absolument faux = 1 2 3 4 5 = Absolument vrai	
1. J'effectue correctement les tâches difficiles.	1 2 3 4 5
2. J'essaie de mettre à jour mes connaissances techniques pour faire mon travail.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Je fais mon travail en fonction de ce que l'organisation attend de moi.	1 2 3 4 5
4. Je planifie l'exécution de mon travail en définissant des actions, des délais et des priorités.	1 2 3 4 5
5. Je planifie les actions en fonction de mes tâches et des routines de l'entreprise.	1 2 3 4 5
6. Je prends des initiatives pour améliorer mes résultats au travail.	1 2 3 4 5
7. Je cherche de nouvelles solutions aux problèmes qui peuvent surgir dans mon travail.	1 2 3 4 5
8. Je travaille dur pour accomplir les tâches qui m'ont été confiées.	1 2 3 4 5
9. J'exécute mes tâches en prévoyant leurs résultats.	1 2 3 4 5
10. Je saisis les opportunités qui peuvent améliorer mes résultats au travail.	1 2 3 4 5

Job satisfaction was measured according to one single item “How do you feel about the job you have now?” inspired by [Quinn et al. \(1974\)](#)/La satisfaction au travail a été mesurée à l'aide d'une seule question : « Que pensez-vous du travail que vous avez maintenant? », inspirée de [Quinn et al. \(1974\)](#). Absolument pas satisfait = 1 2 3 4 5 = Absolument satisfait

- Belief in a Just World - personal beliefs ([Modesto et al., 2017](#))/Croyance en un monde juste – Croyances personnels ([Modesto et al., 2017](#)) ($\alpha = .86$; $\omega = 0.86$).

Absolument faux = 1 2 3 4 5 = Absolument vrai	
1. En général, les événements de ma vie sont justes.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Je crois que la plupart des choses qui m'arrivent sont justes.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Je crois que j'ai généralement ce que je mérite.	1 2 3 4 5
4. Je suis généralement traité de manière juste.	1 2 3 4 5
5. Je crois qu'en général, je mérite ce qui m'arrive.	1 2 3 4 5

- Positive and Negative Affect Schedule – PANAS (Demo & Paschoal, 2016)/Panneau des Émotions Positives ($\alpha = .87$; $\omega = 0.79$) et Négatives ($\alpha = .86$; $\omega = 0.86$) – PANAS (Demo & Paschoal, 2016).

Rien = 1 2 3 4 5 = Beaucoup	
1 Irrité	1 2 3 4 5
2 Animé	1 2 3 4 5
3 Triste	1 2 3 4 5
4 Impatient	1 2 3 4 5
5 Enthousiaste	1 2 3 4 5
6 Heureux	1 2 3 4 5
7 Nerveux	1 2 3 4 5
8 Excité	1 2 3 4 5
9 Tendü	1 2 3 4 5

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