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Benefits of Psychological Detachment from Work in a Digital Era: How do Job Stressors and Personal Strategies Interplay with Individual Vulnerabilities?

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Abstract

This study examined how individual strategies (boundary creation around information and communication technology; ICT) and job stressors (work-related extended availability) relate to psychological detachment, and how the latter associates with employees' behaviors (presenteeism) and attitudes (family life satisfaction). This research also explored the moderating role of performance-based self-esteem in these relationships. Questionnaire surveys were collected among 321 teachers in Sample 1 and 283 workers in Sample 2. Results from Sample 1 revealed that boundary creation surrounding ICT was positively linked to psychological detachment but only among employees with low performance-based self-esteem. Results from Sample 2 indicated that work-related extended availability negatively related to psychological detachment but only among employees with high performance-based self-esteem. In addition, psychological detachment was associated with lower levels of presenteeism (Samples 1 and 2) and higher levels of family-life satisfaction (Sample 2). More generally, these results confirm performance-based self-esteem to be a maladaptive individual characteristic, adding up to a negative cycle of stressors to decrease psychological detachment, in turn leading to maladaptive functioning.

Keywords: Information and communication technology; boundary creation; psychological detachment; performance-based self-esteem; presenteeism; family-life satisfaction

Introduction

Information and communication technology (ICT) has overspread most occupational areas: Paperwork has been digitalized, emails and texts are the go-to media to communicate formal information, and the cloud is the new archive room. Along with this evolution, most workers now possess those devices that allow them to be always connected, which some researchers refer to as an electronic leash tying individuals to their professional activity and blurring work-life boundaries (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2007). As a consequence, psychological detachment has become a major issue for most workers, for this ability to psychologically disconnect from work during off-job hours is a precious way to protect oneself from the detrimental effects of a society where constant connectivity is the new norm (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015).

Psychological detachment from work during non-work hours is possible upon behavioral and cognitive conditions: Not only does it imply “not to be occupied by work-related duties such as receiving job-related phone calls at home or actively engaging in job-related activities [but] psychological detachment also means to disengage oneself mentally from work. It implies to stop thinking about one’s work and job-related problems or opportunities” (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007, p. 205). Being psychologically detached from work once the work day is over is essential, for it is a necessary condition for recovery from work-induced efforts to occur. Indeed, recovery processes require that no further demands are made on the psycho-physiological systems that are called upon during work (Meijman & Mulder, 1998), which is impossible if one keeps working or thinking about their professional activity after work hours.

Because they can recover, workers who are able to psychologically detach from work once the workday is over experience more positive consequences such as higher levels of life satisfaction (Fritz et al., 2010) and daily performance (Binnewies et al., 2009). Conversely, poor psychological detachment leads to deleterious health effects such as burnout (Allen et al., 2015) or depressive symptoms (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Efforts have therefore been devoted to study the antecedents of psychological detachment, in order to identify levers to promote this desired state. In doing so, research has identified both personal and job-related antecedents of psychological detachment (see Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015), but prior studies have failed to document how such personal and job-related characteristics could interact in the prediction of psychological detachment. Yet, workers' psychological experiences are the result of intricate combinations between individual and contextual factors (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Examining personal and work-related antecedents of psychological detachment as independent from one another thus appears to provide a rather poor and unrealistic reflection of the reality underpinning this recovery experience. As such, the present research offers to shed light, not only on the direct effects of personal (i.e., boundary creation around ICT and performance-based self-esteem) and work-related (i.e., work-related extended availability) factors, but also on how they interplay to predict psychological detachment. Moreover, this research will contribute to extend the nomological network associated with psychological detachment by examining important, yet never explored, organizational (i.e., presenteeism) and family (i.e., family life satisfaction) consequences of psychological detachment. This is an important endeavor as criterion-related validity is critical to our ability to ascribe any specific meaning to constructs and constitutes critical information for practitioners (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). The present research will attempt to extend knowledge on these issues through a cross-sectional design examined in two distinct samples of employees.

Personal and Job-Related Antecedents of Psychological Detachment

Although the stressor-detachment model (Sonnentag, 2010; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015) proposes that job characteristics -particularly job demands- are the core antecedents of psychological detachment, researchers have also demonstrated that individual characteristics were linked to psychological detachment (Gluschkoff et al., 2017). Moreover, authors have shown that individual factors were able to explain additional variance in psychological detachment, over and above job characteristics (Shimazu et al., 2014), and suggested that researchers focus on individual orientations when exploring the causes of psychological detachment. Therefore, in the present research’s first sample, we looked into how individual characteristics would relate to psychological detachment. More precisely, we explored two distinct individual characteristics that differ in terms of their (mal)adaptive nature, their degree of stability, and their scope. On one hand, boundary creation around ICT constitutes an adaptive individual strategy, that can be developed or changed, and is specific to the

work-home interface (Barber & Jenkins, 2014). On the other hand, performance-based self-esteem is a maladaptive and rather stable dispositional characteristic, which thus spreads to individuals' experiences in various life situations (van Wijhe et al., 2014). By examining these distinct personal orientations, we aimed to better understand the personal determinants of psychological detachment.

First, research has suggested that individuals' ability to manage the boundaries between their work and other life areas is relevant to psychological detachment (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). Indeed, boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000) proposes that workers resort to personal strategies to create a balance between their work and personal roles, ranging from integration strategies (i.e., no physical, temporal, and behavioral distinction between work and personal matters) to segmentation strategies (i.e., clearly separating work and other domains through the creation of impermeable physical, temporal, and behavioral boundaries). Studies have demonstrated that leaning towards segmentation strategies through boundary creation increased psychological detachment from work during non-work hours (Park et al., 2011). Indeed, such strategies, by preventing work demands to intrude in their personal life, help employees to protect and restore their resources (Hobfoll, 2001; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Specifically, studies have shown that the creation of boundaries pointedly surrounding ICT use (e.g., not checking one's emails after a certain hour) helped to promote recovery processes, including psychological detachment (Barber & Jenkins, 2014).

Hypothesis 1 (Sample 1). Boundary creation around ICT levels will be associated with higher levels of psychological detachment.

However, research suggests that employees who highly identify to their work role may experience impeded psychological detachment because individuals tend to integrate the roles they strongly identify to in other life domains (Ashforth et al., 2000). This would make employees who have a high performance-based self-esteem particularly prone to low psychological detachment as they are likely to see work as an opportunity to gain or maintain their self-worth, and to achieve recognition, which may translate into strong role identification and involvement (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2007; van Wijhe et al., 2014). In other words, because their self-worth depends on their good role performance, they tend to overinvest their work role for instance by working overtime (Hallsten et al., 2005), which is in essence incompatible with psychological detachment. Indeed, research has demonstrated that psychological detachment was associated with perfectionism, which is closely related to performance-based self-esteem (Hallsten et al., 2005). For instance, Gluschkoff and colleagues (2017) showed a facet of perfectionism (i.e., negative reactions to imperfection) to negatively relate to psychological detachment from work. Additionally, research has demonstrated performance-based self-esteem to positively relate to burnout (Hallsten et al., 2011), which is known to be a long-term consequence of lack of psychological detachment (Sonnentag et al., 2010).

Hypothesis 2 (Sample 1). Performance-based self-esteem levels will be associated with lower levels of psychological detachment.

Performance-based self-esteem could also counteract the beneficial effects of healthy individual strategies (i.e., boundary creation around ICT). Indeed, personal characteristics are intricately tangled, so that adaptive (e.g., boundary creation around ICT) and maladaptive (e.g., performance-based self-esteem) personal characteristics could interact to predict more or less adaptive functioning (Merz & Roesch, 2011). However, prior research on employees' boundary creation around ICT has failed to explore how the beneficial effects (e.g., higher psychological detachment) of such individual strategies could be neutralized or attenuated by other individual characteristics. Yet, because they are more inclined to strongly identify to their work role, employees with high performance-based self-esteem could have a harder time reaping the benefits from their boundary creation strategies. Indeed, employees high in performance-based self-esteem are more prone to let work meddle in non-work areas, because their self-worth depends on it (van Wijhe et al., 2014). It does not mean, however, that these employees do not create boundaries around work-related ICT, because they have, like all individuals, a natural tendency to preserve and protect their resources (Hobfoll, 2001). Rather, it means that their tendency to consider their work role as an important component of themselves (e.g., performance-based self-esteem) and to engage in this work role even when they are in a different role area (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2007) could offset the beneficial effects of their boundary creation around ICT. Interestingly, employees' ambition -which appears closely related to performance-based self-esteem as they both relate to Type-A behavior pattern (Hallsten et al., 2005; Kivimäki & Kalimo, 1996)- was demonstrated to impede employees' boundary creation, which led to detrimental consequences at the work-family interface. Therefore, it appears that boundary creation around

ICT may have less beneficial effects in terms of psychological detachment for those individuals who have high performance-based self-esteem.

Hypothesis 3 (Sample 1). Boundary creation around ICT and performance-based self-esteem will interact so that performance-based self-esteem levels will buffer the positive effects of boundary creation around ICT on psychological detachment.

Because of the importance of such individual characteristics (e.g., boundary creation around ICT, performance-based self-esteem), a recent review of empirical evidence on psychological detachment has argued that individual differences should be integrated into the stressor-detachment model (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). Precisely, researchers have suggested that workers may differ in the degree to which they experience stressors and consequent psychological detachment. Yet, research on the interaction effects between individual characteristics and stressors in the prediction of psychological detachment remains scarce. We offered to explore this issue in our study's second sample to provide a more differentiated perspective on psychological detachment.

The stressor-detachment model originally proposes that job characteristics -particularly stressors- are the core antecedents of psychological detachment (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). Indeed, the stressors that employees have to face at work may lead to high levels of negative psycho-biological activation (Ilies et al., 2010; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2006) and negative affect (Rodell & Judge, 2009; Volmer et al., 2012), which linger after work. Such high levels of negative activation make it harder for employees to detach from work during non-work hours as they may remain preoccupied with the stressors that caused this negative activation, worry or vent about those demands, try to find solutions to deal with them, in sum, ruminate (Cropley & Purvis, 2003; Frone, 2015). This negative reflection is, in essence, incompatible with psychological detachment (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). Moreover, employees might keep working in the evening to try to come to grips with their job demands, especially in a context where ICT allows them to keep working even when they are not at work (Porter & Kakabadse, 2006), thus making them more accessible.

This "always-on work environment" (Middleton, 2007, p. 165) comes with expectations that employees should be constantly available, beyond the physical and temporal boundaries of their work (Porter & Kakanadse, 2006). Indeed, in a context where ICT allows employees to be reached for work anywhere and anytime, work-related extended availability (i.e., being informally available for work-related matters while physically being in a different life domain) has become a major stressor (Thörel et al., 2021). We will therefore focus on this specific job demand. Importantly, this constant availability allowed by ICT makes it difficult for employees to detach from work. For instance, studies (Barber & Jenkins, 2014; Park et al., 2011) demonstrated that ICT use at home could lead to lower psychological detachment from work. More specifically, Santuzzi and Barber (2018) showed that employees' urge to respond quickly to work-related solicitations through ICT led to lower psychological detachment from work. Similarly, scholars recently showed a longitudinal negative association between work-related extended availability and psychological detachment (Dettmers, 2017; Thörel et al., 2021), arguing that such ongoing availability triggers unwanted psychological transitions from one role (i.e., personal) to another (i.e., work) and that such transitions are associated with the emergence of domain-related thoughts that are incompatible with psychological detachment.

Hypothesis 4 (Sample 2). Work-related extended availability levels will be associated with lower levels of psychological detachment.

Importantly, these detrimental effects of job demands (i.e., work-related extended availability) could be bolstered for employees characterized by maladaptive personal characteristics such as performance-based self-esteem. Indeed, personal characteristics are known to interplay with job demands, so that maladaptive characteristics (e.g., performance-based self-esteem) have the potential to fuel a loss cycle of job demands and health impairment (Huyghebaert et al., 2018). Yet, prior research on the causes of psychological detachment has failed to explore how such maladaptive individual characteristics could strengthen the detrimental effects of job demands. Yet, these effects of job demands (e.g., work-related extended availability) may be amplified when such stressors are of particular relevance and constitute a serious threat to individuals (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Indeed, transactional stress theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) proposes that, during primary appraisal, one appraises whether a situation (e.g., work-related extended availability) may threaten their well-being, which can only happen if individuals pay attention to this event or its context of occurrence. For instance, recent research showed that, workers' positive or negative appraisal of their ICT use after work hours was associated with their

psychological detachment, beyond the extent of ICT use itself (Reinke & Ohly, 2021). Relatedly, Sonnentag and Fritz (2015) suggest that when workers pay attention to work in a way that it constitutes a core life area, it then reinforces the deleterious effects of stressors on psychological detachment. Specifically, authors advocate that the adverse effect of stressors on psychological detachment will be amplified for those individuals who have a strong work-role salience.

Interestingly, employees who are high in performance-based self-esteem are characterized by a strong work-role salience as their very self-worth is contingent upon their work-role performance (Hallsten et al., 2005). They are thus more likely to see job stressors as a threat to their performance and therefore to their self-esteem, which could amplify the adverse effects of job stressors (e.g., work-related extended availability) on their psychological detachment. Indeed, employees high in performance-based self-esteem may feel even more impacted by work-related extended availability, because they see work as a way to prove themselves and preserve their self-esteem (Hallsten et al., 2005). Yet, hindering job demands such as work-related extended availability are, by nature, unconquerable and obstruct goal attainment. As such, employees high in performance-based self-esteem may be even more vulnerable to the detrimental effects of work-related extended availability because they experience these insurmountable job demands as a reflection of their poor self-worth. This negative experience may come with ruminative thoughts (e.g., self-denigration) and hamper their opportunities to psychologically detach from work. Therefore, we suggest that performance-based self-esteem may amplify the negative effects of job stressors on psychological detachment.

Hypothesis 5 (Sample 2). Work-related extended availability and performance-based self-esteem will interact so that performance-based self-esteem levels will amplify the negative effects of work-related extended availability on psychological detachment.

Effects of Psychological Detachment

As previously mentioned, it is critical to explore individual and organizational factors that may hamper or promote psychological detachment because it constitutes a crucial issue for both organizational (Binnewies et al., 2009) and individual functioning (Pereira & Elfering, 2014).

On one hand, existing research has failed to document the relations between psychological detachment and presenteeism. Yet, presenteeism is an under-researched costly global issue, given its prevalence worldwide and its negative consequences for employees, teams, and organizations (e.g., poor physical and mental health, decreased productivity; see Karanika-Murray & Biron, 2020). Identifying ways to alleviate this phenomenon would thus be particularly fruitful. Interestingly, when employees cannot psychologically detach from work during off-job time, they return to work in a physical and affective state that does not allow them to perform well (Sonnentag, 2012), which could lead to higher levels of presenteeism (i.e., situations where employees are physically present at work but experience reduced productivity and decreased work quality because of their health problems; Koopman et al., 2002). Promoting psychological detachment from work could thus constitute an interesting lever of intervention to reduce presenteeism. Interestingly, past studies found poor recovery experiences akin to low psychological detachment to relate to presenteeism. For instance, van Scheppingen et al. (2014) showed that relaxation negatively related to presenteeism, while sleeping problems were found to positively relate to presenteeism (also see Guertler et al., 2015; Huyghebaert et al., 2018). These results suggest that employees who cannot detach from work during non-work hours are more likely to attend work even though they do not have recuperated enough energy to perform their tasks efficiently (i.e., presenteeism; Fritz et al., 2010; Miraglia & Johns, 2016).

Hypothesis 6 (Samples 1 and 2). Psychological detachment levels will be associated with lower levels of presenteeism.

On the other hand, when failing to detach, employees cannot recover, which translates into less energy (Demerouti et al., 2012) and less positive affect (Feuerhahn et al., 2014). This lack of physical, psychological and emotional availability may lower the quality of their interactions with their family members (Danner-Vlaardingerbroek et al., 2013) and lead to impaired family life satisfaction. Yet, although the effects of psychological detachment on employee health have been widely demonstrated (Wendsche & Lohmann-Haislah, 2017), research on the effect of psychological detachment on workers' attitudes toward their relations at home remains scarce (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015) and rather inconsistent. For instance, Germeys and DeGieter (2017) found psychological detachment to positively relate to marital satisfaction, while in Cheng & McCarthy's (2013) study, psychological detachment did not predict family life satisfaction. It therefore appears that there is a need to expend

upon prior research to unveil whether psychological detachment relates to family life satisfaction. Based on a recent meta-analysis indicating positive correlations between detachment and life satisfaction (Wendsche & Lohmann-Haislah, 2017), we expect that such results may apply to more specific measures of family life satisfaction. Indeed, when employees cannot detach from work during off-job time, they lack the necessary resources to invest in their relationships at home (Neff & Karney, 2009), which may jeopardize the quality of these relationships and translate into lower family life satisfaction. Moreover, the Work-Home Resources (W-HR) model (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) suggests that resource accumulation at the work-home interface contributes to improve personal outcomes. Interestingly, psychological detachment is defined as a recovery experience allowing employees to replenish their resources after a work day (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007). As such, based on the W-HR model, when employees benefit from a resource-accumulation process (i.e., psychological detachment), they create a gain spiral of resources, which should result in better functioning and thus more satisfying experiences in their family life (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

Hypothesis 7 (Sample 2). Psychological detachment levels will be associated with higher levels of family life satisfaction.

Material and Methods

Procedure and Participants

Participants were recruited by research assistants. More precisely, two samples were recruited in order to pursue our two distinct goals in each sample (see Figure 1). Indeed, we aimed to cover how performance-based self-esteem could interact with personal orientations (Sample 1) and with job demands (Sample 2). For each sample, eligible participants received an email clarifying the general goal of the research and offering them to take part in a one-time ten-minute online survey. They were also guaranteed that participation was voluntary and that their responses would remain anonymous, and were invited to sign a consent form.

Sample 1 included a total of 321 teachers (83% women) working in various high schools located in France. Respondents were between 22 and 64 years old ($M = 36.50$, $SD = 9.18$) and had an average organizational tenure of 6.00 years ($SD = 6.00$). A total of 293 participants were full-time workers (91.3%).

In Sample 2, a convenience sample of 283 workers (59% women) from various organizations (e.g., hospitals, industries, sales, and services) located in France completed our questionnaire. This sample included 34 participants employed in the public sector (12.0%) and 249 employed in the private sector (88.0%). Respondents were between 22 and 61 years old ($M = 34.13$, $SD = 9.28$) and had an average organizational tenure of 6.93 years ($SD = 8.23$). A total of 244 participants were permanent workers (86.2%) and 39 were temporary workers (13.8%).

Measures

Boundary Creation around ICT (Sample 1). Boundary creation around ICT was measured with five items ($\alpha = .86$) used by Barber and Jenkins (2014): (1) “limiting amount of time or when information and communication technologies are used (i.e., only until seven p.m.)”, (2) “not using information and communication technologies during vacation”, (3) “not using information and communication technologies during weekends”, (4) “responding via information and communication technologies only for emergencies”, and (5) “using information and communication technologies for outgoing purposes (not incoming)”. Items were rated on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Work-Related Extended Availability (Sample 2). Work-related extended availability was measured using a four-item measure (e.g., “Technology enables people I work with to contact me at any time”; $\alpha = .79$) developed by Day et al. (2012). Response options ranged from 1 (never) to 5 (always).

Performance-Based Self-Esteem (Samples 1 and 2). Performance-based self-esteem was measured by four items ($\alpha = .82$ in Sample 1 and $\alpha = .77$ in Sample 2) used by van Wijhe et al. (2014): (1) “I think that I sometimes try to prove my worth through my work”, (2) “My self-esteem is far too dependent on my work achievements”, (3) “At times, I have to be better than others to be good enough myself”, and (4) “Occasionally I feel obsessed to accomplish something of value through my work”. Each item was rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree).

Psychological Detachment (Samples 1 and 2). Psychological detachment was assessed with a scale developed by Sonnentag and Fritz (2007). Following a common stem (i.e., “In the evening, after work, and when I am on a weekend/vacation...”), four items ($\alpha = .89$ in Sample 1 and $\alpha = .90$ in Sample 2; e.g., “I forget about work”) were rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree).

Presenteeism (Samples 1 and 2). The six-item Stanford Presenteeism Scale (Koopman et al., 2002) was employed to measure presenteeism during the past month (e.g., “Because of my health problems, the stresses of my job were much harder to handle”; $\alpha = .96$ in Samples 1 and 2). Participants answered on a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Family Life Satisfaction (Sample 2). Family life satisfaction was assessed with one item (Shimazu et al., 2015) (i.e., “Are you satisfied with your family life?”). Responses were given on a scale ranging from 1 (dissatisfied) to 4 (satisfied). Prior research has demonstrated single item measures of family life satisfaction to be inclusive and valid, and to have the advantage of being easier and take less time to complete, while retaining face validity (Fisher et al., 2016). Moreover, prior studies have provided evidence for the validity of a single-item measure of family life satisfaction in relation to various measures of job characteristics and of employees' functioning (e.g., Beutell, 2010; Gillet et al., 2021).

Analyses

All models were estimated using Mplus 8.1 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017) robust maximum likelihood estimator (MLR). In Sample 1, we first specified a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) predictive model in which boundary creation around ICT and performance-based self-esteem were allowed to predict a latent factor (estimated at the item level) representing psychological detachment. Participants' ratings of boundary creation around ICT (five items) and performance-based self-esteem (four items) were used as indicators of latent variables. Psychological detachment also predicted a latent factor representing presenteeism. We also tested an alternative model in which boundary creation around ICT and performance-based self-esteem had direct effects on presenteeism. In Sample 2, a SEM predictive model in which work-related extended availability and performance-based self-esteem were allowed to predict psychological detachment. Psychological detachment also predicted presenteeism and family life satisfaction. As in Sample 1, we also tested an alternative model in which work-related extended availability and performance-based self-esteem had direct effects on presenteeism and family life satisfaction.

These initial predictive models were used to ascertain the ability of the underlying measurement and predictive models to provide an adequate representation of the data given that goodness-of-fit indices are not available for tests of latent interactions. Goodness-of-fit of these models was assessed using typical interpretation guidelines where values greater than .90 and .95 on the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) and the comparative fit index (CFI), and values lower than .08 and .06 on the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) are respectively taken to reflect acceptable and excellent levels of fit to the data (Marsh et al., 2005). Tests of latent interactions were then performed using the latent moderated SEM (LMS) approach. Properly standardized effects for the LMS approach are directly provided by Mplus (Marsh et al., 2013). Simple slope analyses for significant interactions were conducted using the approach described by Hayes and Preacher (2013), allowing us to assess the effects of boundary creation (Sample 1) and availability (Sample 2) around ICT at distinct levels of performance-based self-esteem.

Results

The goodness-of-fit of the initial model supported its adequacy in Sample 1 ($\chi^2 = 406.327$, $df = 148$; CFI = .92; TLI = .91; and RMSEA = .07) and Sample 2 ($\chi^2 = 350.826$, $df = 147$; CFI = .92; TLI = .91; and RMSEA = .07). The goodness-of-fit of the alternative models was similar in Sample 1 ($\chi^2 = 388.646$, $df = 146$; CFI = .92; TLI = .91; and RMSEA = .07) and lower in Sample 2 ($\chi^2 = 346.796$, $df = 143$; CFI = .92; TLI = .90; and RMSEA = .07). Although work-related extended availability and performance-based self-esteem had no significant effects on presenteeism and family life satisfaction in Sample 2, boundary creation around ICT and performance-based self-esteem had significant effect on presenteeism in Sample 1. We thus chose to retain these alternative models in the following analyses. The parameter estimates from the measurement part of these models were satisfactory and the latent correlations are reported in Table 1 for both samples. They revealed well-defined, inter-related yet differentiated, and reliable constructs (i.e., standardized factor loadings between .623 and .932 in Sample 1 and between .585 and .919 in Sample 2).

The results supported Hypotheses 1 and 2, showing that boundary creation and performance-based self-esteem, had positive and negative main effects in the prediction of psychological detachment, respectively (see Figure 2). Moreover, boundary creation around ICT and performance-based self-esteem interacted in the prediction of psychological detachment. Simple slope analyses are graphically represented in Figure 3. The results showed that performance-based self-esteem tended to buffer the positive effects of

boundary creation around ICT so that the combination of high levels of boundary creation around ICT and low levels of performance-based self-esteem was associated with the highest levels of psychological detachment. These results support Hypothesis 3.

Results also showed that work-related extended availability had negative main effects in the prediction of psychological detachment (see Figure 2), thus confirming Hypothesis 4. Additionally, work-related extended availability and performance-based self-esteem interacted in the prediction of psychological detachment. Simple slope analyses are graphically represented in Figure 4. Results showed that performance-based self-esteem amplified the negative effects of work-related extended availability so that the combination of high levels of work-related extended availability and performance-based self-esteem was associated with the lowest levels of psychological detachment. These results support Hypothesis 5.

Finally, psychological detachment significantly and negatively predicted presenteeism in both samples, thus providing support for Hypothesis 6. In Sample 2, psychological detachment significantly and positively predicted family life satisfaction, thus providing support for Hypothesis 7.

Discussion

This research aimed to look into how individual strategies (i.e., boundary creation around ICT) and job stressors (i.e., work-related extended availability) relate to psychological detachment, and how the latter associates with employees' behaviors (i.e., presenteeism) and attitudes (i.e., family life satisfaction). This research also aimed to explore the moderating role of performance-based self-esteem in the relationships between boundary creation around ICT and work-related extended availability on the one hand, and psychological detachment on the other hand.

Theoretical Implications

On one hand, in Sample 1, the present study confirmed that individual characteristics (i.e., boundary creation around ICT and performance-based self-esteem) directly relate to psychological detachment but also interact to predict psychological detachment. This is an important contribution in a context where prior research had under-documented the role played by individual characteristics in employees' ability to psychologically detach from work during off-job hours. Perhaps more importantly, prior research had failed to explore how (mal)adaptive individual characteristics could interplay to influence workers' well-being. Our work thus contributes to extend knowledge on this issue. More precisely, our results confirmed that the more employees use personal strategies to segmentate their work and private lives by setting clear physical, temporal, and behavioral boundaries around work-related ICT use (Ashforth et al., 2000), the more they are able to psychologically detach from work when at home. However, the beneficial effect of such personal strategies on psychological detachment is not as strong for those employees who are high in performance-based self-esteem for they tend to see work as an opportunity to prove their self-worth (van Wijhe et al., 2014). As such, they may perceive the setting of boundaries around ICT as a hamper to their accomplishment and a threat to their self-esteem, thus trying to overachieve through the use of work-related ICT at home, at the expense of their psychological detachment.

In turn, employees' psychological detachment negatively related to presenteeism. This is an important contribution, as our research is the first to show that psychological detachment relates to presenteeism. In other words, our results suggest that, because they can recuperate from work-related efforts (Geurts & Sonnentag, 2006), employees who psychologically detach from work during off-job hours are less likely to go to work in a state where they experience reduced productivity and decreased work quality because of health problems (i.e., presenteeism).

Interestingly, results from Sample 1 also showed that presenteeism also stemmed from employees' boundary creation around ICT and performance-based self-esteem. Indeed, we found a direct positive effect of both individual characteristics on presenteeism. The positive relation between performance-based self-esteem and presenteeism can be explained by the fact that employees high in performance-based self-esteem tend to overinvest their work role (even when sick), because they draw their self-worth from their work performance (van Wijhe et al., 2014). However, the positive relation between boundary creation and presenteeism is rather counterintuitive, given that boundary creation is conceived as an adaptive strategy (Barber & Jenkins, 2014). A possible explanation could be that, when employees create clear temporal and physical boundaries between their work and personal life, they are willing to do everything to keep work from intruding in their home. This could take the form of their staying at work longer hours and experiencing reduced work quality and quantity because they

are no longer in good enough shape to complete their work (i.e., presenteeism; Karanika-Murray & Biron, 2020).

On the other hand, in Sample 2, our results confirmed that job stressors (i.e., work-related extended availability) and individual characteristics (i.e., performance-based self-esteem) directly relate to psychological detachment but also interact to predict psychological detachment. More precisely, our results confirmed that the more employees face expectations of availability through the use of ICT, the less they are able to psychologically detach, for this job stressor interferes with their off-job time, leaving them with few opportunities to mentally and physically switch-off from work. Our results showed that this detrimental effect of expectations of availability through ICT on psychological detachment is even stronger for employees who are high in performance-based self-esteem. Indeed, it appears that because these employees' self-worth is contingent upon their work-role performance (Hallsten et al., 2005), they feel like they have to surmount their job stressors to preserve their self-esteem. Therefore, they spend more effort to face expectations of availability surrounding ICT, which taxes their psychophysiological system even more (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2006), while paradoxically leaving them with less time to psychologically detach. This is an important contribution in a context where prior research had failed to consider how individual characteristics could interplay with job demands to influence employees' psychological detachment. Our work thus contributes to extend knowledge on this issue and sheds light on the fact that psychological detachment is not only determined by the work environment, but is rather the product of a complex interaction between contextual and dispositional factors.

In turn, in Sample 2, employees' psychological detachment negatively related to presenteeism and positively related to family life satisfaction. Indeed, when employees are not able to psychologically detach from work during off-job hours, because of the expectations of availability through ICT that they have to face, they are more likely to go back to work while feeling unrecovered (Fritz et al., 2010). Because such expectations of availability tax their resources while offering few opportunities to replenish these resources, employees also tend to lack the physical, psychological, and emotional resources necessary to nurture their relationships at home (Danner-Vlaardingerbroeck et al., 2013), which translates into lower family-life satisfaction. Unlike in Sample 1, in Sample 2, no direct effects were found between the predictors (i.e., work-related extended availability and performance-based self-esteem) and presenteeism or family life satisfaction. This result suggests that the direct effects of personal characteristics on presenteeism might depend on the specificities of the population under study (i.e., teachers in Sample 1 and workers from diverse areas in Sample 2). More research is needed to shed light on this issue. Moreover, our results show that work-related characteristics do not directly relate to employees' presenteeism and family life satisfaction, but rather through their effects on employees' resource accumulation or depletion processes (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), as reflected by psychological detachment.

Results from Samples 1 and 2 are, to the best of our knowledge, the first to show the relevance of performance-based self-esteem for psychological detachment, and to show the latter's negative effect on presenteeism. This is particularly interesting as prior research has emphasized the necessity to explore how to decrease presenteeism, which is associated with negative job attitudes, health decline, and productivity loss (Miraglia & Johns, 2016). Psychological detachment therefore appears as an effective lever to prevent such undesirable behaviors in employees. Results from Sample 2 also add up to the literature by offering a test of and support for the proposed extended stressor-detachment model (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015), which suggests that the effects of job stressors may be moderated by individual differences. We hereby confirm that when employees pay attention to work in a way that they consider it as a core life area (e.g., performance-based self-esteem; Hallsten et al., 2005), it increases the deleterious effects of stressors (e.g., expectations of availability surrounding ICT) on psychological detachment. Results from Sample 2 are also, to the best of our knowledge, the first to demonstrate the effect of psychological detachment on family-life satisfaction. These results prove psychological detachment to be beneficial beyond employee health, as it seems to radiate on the quality of workers' relationships at home and to be profitable for their family life.

Limitations and Research Perspectives

First, this study was based on self-reported data, which is known to be sensitive to social desirability and may imply self-report biases (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). Future studies would gain into using more objective measures (e.g., biological measures of psychophysiological activation,

company data on presenteeism), as well as peer-reports (e.g., supervisors, colleagues, partner) of workers' functioning. Relatedly, we used single-item measures to assess family satisfaction. Yet, such measures can be less reliable than multi-item measures, and not as good at providing a complete content coverage of the construct under study (Fisher et al., 2016). The replicability of our findings could thus be tested through the use of a more solid measure of family satisfaction (e.g., Bandura et al., 2010). Second, we treated covariables as either predictors (e.g., boundary creation around ICT, expectations of availability surrounding ICT) or outcomes (e.g., presenteeism, family-life satisfaction) of psychological detachment based on theoretical considerations (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). Yet, our design and the limitations of our analytical possibilities made it impossible to rigorously assess the directionality (e.g., reverse causality, reciprocity) of the associations between assumed antecedents, psychological detachment, and individual consequences. It would therefore be fruitful for future studies to explore the issue of directionality through longitudinal research. This would also allow to test indirect effects. Indeed, results from our research suggest that psychological detachment could mediate the effects exerted on presenteeism by both boundary creation around ICT and work-related extended availability. Showing such indirect effects would concur with the stressor-detachment model (Sonntag & Fritz, 2015) which emphasizes the mediating role of psychological detachment in the positive relationship between work stressors and strain.

Third, the present study relied on two samples of French employees, and future research could examine the extent to which these results could be replicated in different countries and cultures. Fourth, expectations of availability surrounding ICT was the only job stressor of interest in our research. Yet, it would be interesting to examine how other ICT-related (e.g., ICT hassles, lack of control in ICT use; Day et al., 2012) or personal (e.g., living with children; Walter & Haun, 2020) demands interplay with individual characteristics to predict employees' psychological detachment. It would also be fruitful to document the role of job resources in buffering the detrimental effects of such demands on employees' psychological detachment. For instance, recent findings indicated that a positive collegial climate can buffer the negative impact of job stressors on workers' ability to mentally unwind from work once the workday is over (Pauli & Lang, 2021). Importantly, in this research we considered how performance-based self-esteem could interact with two distinct predictors (boundary creation around ICT and work-related extended availability) of psychological detachment through two distinct samples. Future studies could explore three-way interaction models to further document how these distinct personal and job characteristics interact to predict psychological detachment.

Practical Implications

Our research emphasizes that psychological detachment not only depends on ICT demands but also on how employees interact with technology, therefore the strategies that could be deployed to promote psychological detachment and its beneficial consequences are twofold.

The first strategy consists in implementing practices at the organizational level (Sonntag & Frese, 2012). Indeed, even though organizations usually implement ICT in an effort to make work easier, this often comes with unexpected counterproductive effects. As such, in order to minimize expectations of availability surrounding ICT, organizations should promote boundary management through clear segmentation norms (Kreiner, 2006). This could take the form of clear policies regarding organizational expectations in terms of availability during off-job hours (e.g., employees are not expected to -or even, expected not to- reply to their work-related emails during the weekend or vacations, and after a certain hour on weekdays).

Such formal policies also need to be backed up by informal embodiment of these expectations, through managers' exemplarity. Indeed, based on social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), managers should model the expected behaviors by not sending emails beyond the temporal and physical boundaries set by organizational norms, so that employees would be more inclined to reproduce such behaviors. Managers could also help prioritize employees' tasks and goals in a way that leaves them room for psychological detachment from work during off-job hours. In sum, it is fundamental that organizations and managers create a climate where employees feel like they can develop personal strategies for boundary creation around ICT and psychological detachment.

The second strategy consists in identifying solutions at the individual level (Sonntag & Frese, 2012), even though managers and organizations may still play a role in promoting some of these practices. For instance, organizations could promote employees' boundary creation around ICT use by offering them

training programs to facilitate psychological detachment through the development of clear physical, psychological, and behavioral boundaries between the work and home settings (Ashforth et al., 2000). Employees can also create opportunities for themselves to psychologically detach from work during off-job hours, by engaging in social activities for instance (Mojza et al., 2011). It is also possible that employees underestimate the deleterious effects that their lack of boundary creation around ICT or their conforming to expectations of availability through ICT can have. Awareness could thus be raised among employees on the risks associated with the integration of work into one's private life.

Specifically, our study gives organizations and managers a better understanding of which employees are likely to experience the most detrimental effects of expectations of availability surrounding ICT and are the least likely to create boundaries around work-related ICT. Therefore, human resources practitioners, health and safety specialists, and managers could try to identify those employees who are high in performance-based self-esteem and raise awareness among them that their use of ICT during non-work hours comes at a price for their psychological health (i.e., psychological detachment), for their productivity (i.e., presenteeism), and for their personal life (i.e., work-family satisfaction). Finally, those employees who are high in performance-based self-esteem could also be helped by practitioners to replace their maladaptive beliefs that their self-worth depends on their work-role performance by more rational thinking (Chen, 2006). Indeed, even though performance-based self-esteem is detrimental, it is worth working on this maladaptive individual characteristic, for ego-involvement is not a fatality (Deci & Flaste, 1995).

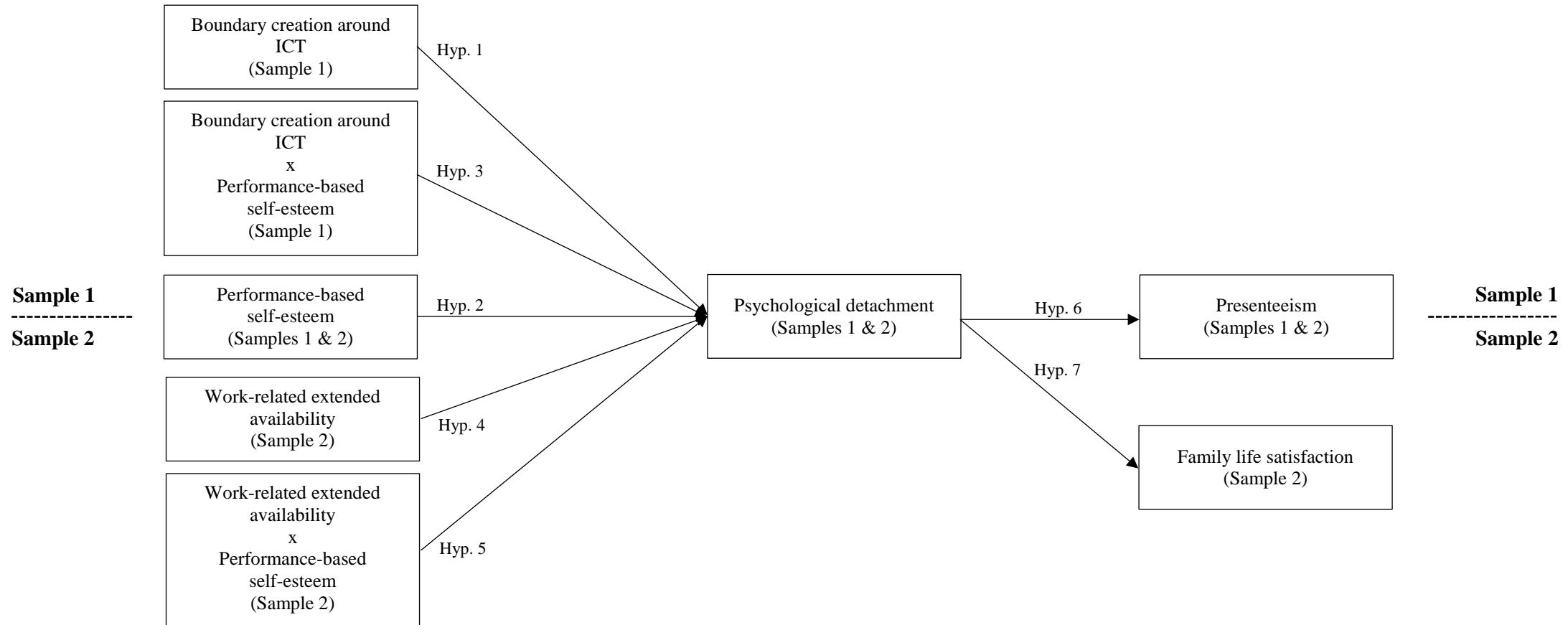
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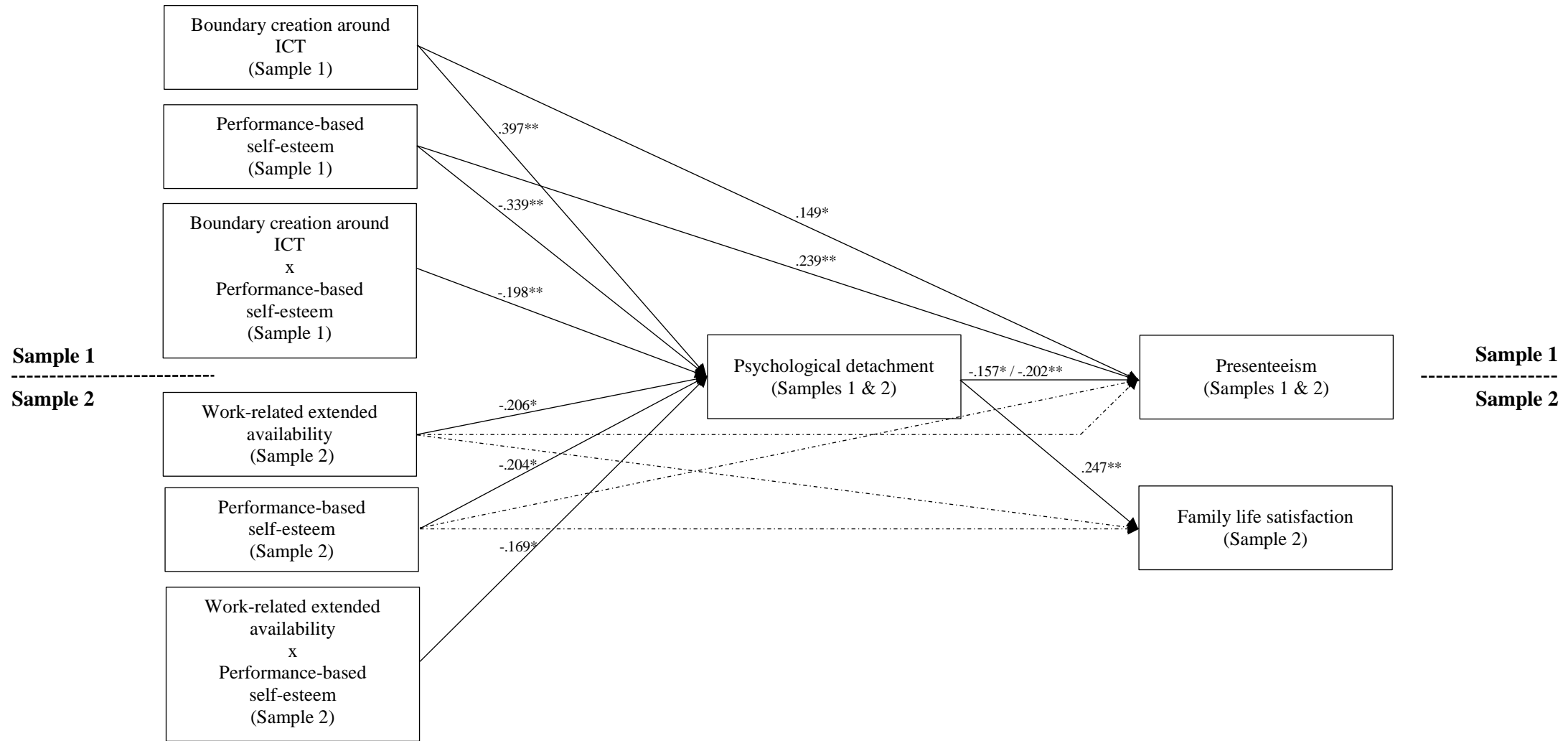
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Figure 1*Hypothesized Models for Samples 1 and 2*

Note. Hyp. = Hypothesis; the hypothesized model for Sample 1 is presented in the upper part of the Figure; and the hypothesized model for Sample 2 is presented in the lower part of the Figure.

Figure 2*Results from the Predictive Models (Samples 1 and 2)*

Note. * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; dotted arrows indicate non-significant associations; results from Sample 1 are presented in the upper part of the Figure; and results from Sample 2 are presented in the lower part of the Figure. For purposes of clarity, only the coefficients associated with significant associations are displayed.

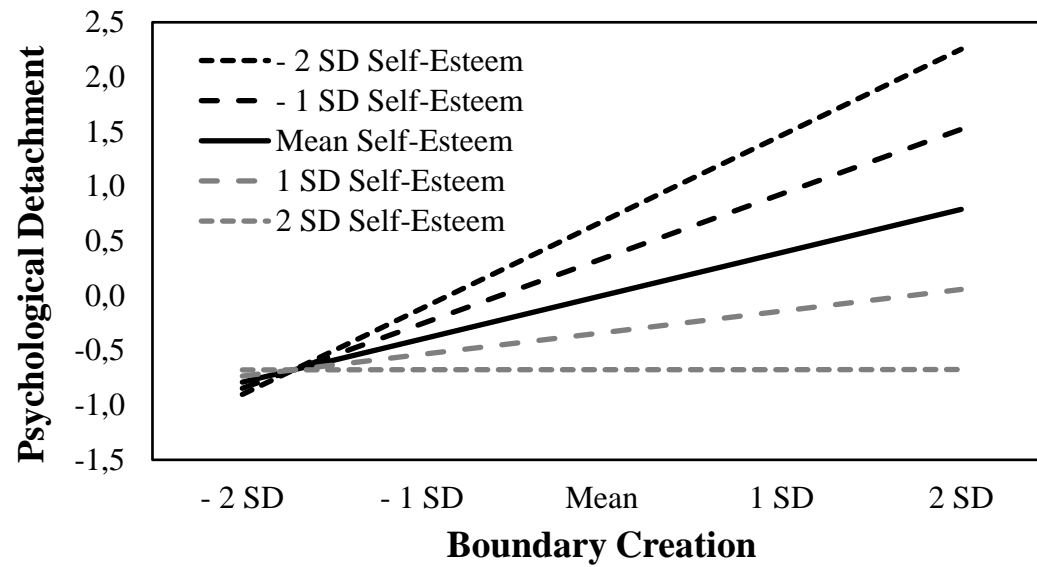


Figure 3.

Simple Slope Analysis of the Effects of Boundary Creation around ICT at Different Levels of Performance-Based Self-Esteem in the Prediction of Psychological Detachment.

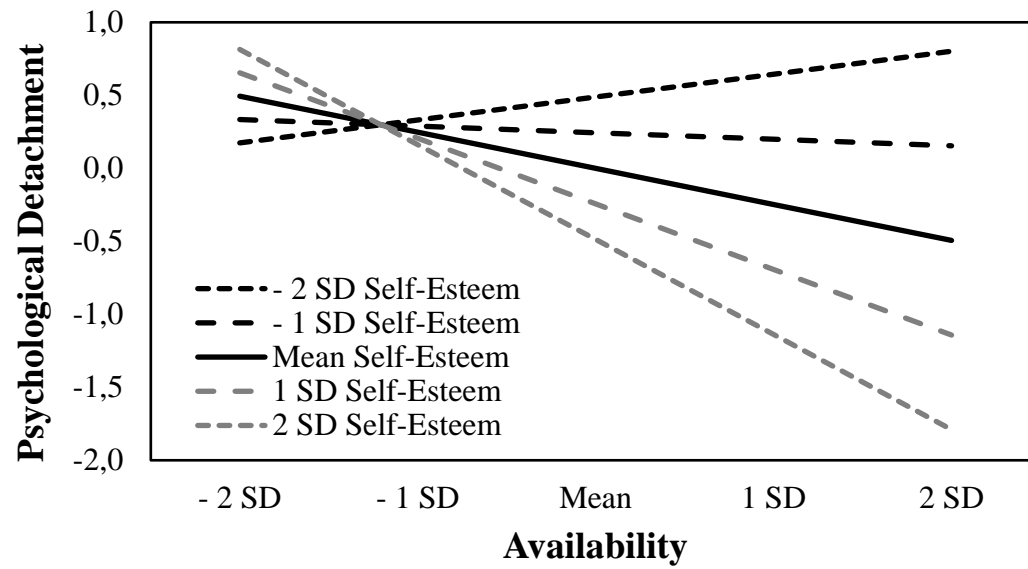


Figure 4.

Simple Slope Analysis of the Effects of Work-Related Extended Availability at Different Levels of Performance-Based Self-Esteem in the Prediction of Psychological Detachment.

Table 1*Latent Correlations between Variables (Sample 1)*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Boundary Creation† (Sample 1)	-								
2. Performance-Based Self-Esteem† (Sample 1)	-.117*	-							
3. Psychological Detachment† (Sample 1)	.478**	-.428**	-						
4. Presenteeism† (Sample 1)	.036	.264**	-.199**	-					
5. Availability † (Sample 2)	-	-	-	-	-				
6. Performance-Based Self-Esteem† (Sample 2)	-	-	-	-	.359**	-			
7. Psychological Detachment† (Sample 2)	-	-	-	-	-.324**	-.287**	-		
8. Presenteeism† (Sample 2)	-	-	-	-	.047	.119*	-.227**	-	
9. Family Life Satisfaction (Sample 2)	-	-	-	-	-.185*	-.074	.288**	-.113	-

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$; †: Factor scores from preliminary models with a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1.