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When less is more: #lazygirljobs and the interest in less  
meaningful, high-salary jobs

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**Abstract (English)**

The #lazygirljobs trend prioritizes financial stability, autonomy and work-life balance and thus actively opposes traditional concepts of meaningful work. Drawing on Self-Determination theory and Self-Discrepancy theory, my master's thesis examines the psychological mechanisms that may influence interest in jobs with high meaningfulness vs. high salary. Based on a sample of 184 Austrian participants, the results show a higher interest in jobs with higher meaningfulness and lower salaries, which contradicts the original hypothesis. Expected meaningfulness outside of work is related to job interest, especially for jobs with low meaningfulness and high salaries. This suggests that individuals may compensate for lower intrinsic job satisfaction with a higher salary and thus more opportunities for meaningful leisure activities. These findings offer theoretical and practical insights into today's work values and motivations.

**Keywords:** #lazygirljobs, meaningful work, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, work-life balance, Self-Determination Theory, Self-Discrepancy Theory, performance pressure at work, work values

**Abstract (German)**

Der *#lazygirljobs*-Trend stellt finanzielle Stabilität, Autonomie und Work-Life-Balance Vorrang in Vordergrund und stellt sich so aktiv gegen traditionelle Konzepte von sinnvoller Arbeit. Auf der Grundlage der Self-Determination Theorie und der Self-Discrepancy Theorie untersucht meine Masterarbeit die psychologischen Mechanismen, die das Interesse an Jobs mit hoher Sinnhaftigkeit vs. hohem Gehalt beeinflussen können. Die Ergebnisse zeigen anhand einer Stichprobe mit 184 österreichischen Teilnehmer:innen ein höheres Interesse an Jobs mit höherer Sinnhaftigkeit und einem niedrigeren Gehalt, was der Ursprungshypothese widerspricht. Die erwartete Sinnhaftigkeit außerhalb der Arbeit steht in Zusammenhang mit Jobinteresse, insbesondere bei Jobs mit geringer Sinnhaftigkeit und hohem Gehalt. Das deutet darauf hin, dass Personen eine geringere intrinsische Arbeitszufriedenheit durch ein höheres Gehalt und dadurch mehr Möglichkeiten zur sinnhaften Freizeitgestaltung kompensieren könnten. Diese Ergebnisse bieten theoretische und praktische Einblicke in die heutigen Arbeitswerte und -motivationen.

**Schlüsselwörter:** *#lazygirljobs*, sinnvolle Arbeit, intrinsische Motivation, extrinsische Motivation, Work-Life-Balance, Self-Determination Theorie, Self-Discrepancy Theorie, Leistungsdruck am Arbeitsplatz, Arbeitswerte, Arbeitsmotivation

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**When less is more: #lazygirljobs and the interest in less meaningful, high-salary jobs**

The pursuit and maintenance of meaningfulness in life are fundamental aspects of human existence (Baumeister, 1991; Weinstein et al., 2012). People who lead meaningful lives typically experience a greater sense of understanding, purpose and significance (Steger, 2009, 2012; Weinstein et al., 2012) as well as greater well-being, life satisfaction and resilience (Allan et al., 2016; Ryff & Singer, 1998; Steger et al., 2008).

Because adults spend nearly half of their waking hours at work (Carlson, 1981), the workplace can be a significant source of meaningfulness for many (Allan et al., 2015; Steger et al., 2012). Meaningful work can offer intrinsic value to individuals (Martela & Pessi, 2018; Renard & Snelgar, 2016) since it presents employees with opportunities to contribute to the greater good and supports prosocial goals (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997) or fosters self-realization and self-expression (Martela & Pessi, 2018). Consequently, meaningful work is broadly acknowledged as a vital element in enhancing overall well-being and life satisfaction (Allan et al., 2015; Steger et al., 2012; Van Wingerden & Van der Stoep, 2017).

The rise of #lazygirljobs, a viral trend on social media, may signal a cultural shift in work values and motivations. The term “*lazy girl job*” was first used in a TikTok video by Gabrielle Judge in 2023 and quickly gained popularity, with over 3.8 million views since it was posted (Judge, 2023). The #lazygirljobs trend emerged as a response to hustle culture and worker exploitation (Ogunde, 2023), emphasizing jobs that offer remote flexibility, low stress levels, and little effort while allowing individuals to maintain personal freedom and financial stability (McDermott, 2023).

Despite their appeal, jobs typically linked to #lazygirljobs seem to provide employees with limited intrinsic value. Jobs that are predominantly driven by extrinsic motivators, such as minimal work and great rewards, which are the primary motivators driving #lazygirljobs, may have a negative impact on intrinsic motivation. When individuals focus on external

rewards, their engagement and satisfaction may decline because their intrinsic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are not met (Deci, 1972; Deci et al., 2001). So why would individuals prefer these jobs that have little intrinsic value?

For my thesis, the *#lazygirljobs* trend serves as a starting point to explore broader shifts in attitudes toward meaningful work and job interest. In particular, my thesis tests the hypothesis that either a preference for financial rewards over meaningful work or the response to increasing levels of work-related performance pressure may explain the *#lazygirljobs* trend.

My thesis expands on Ward's (2024) findings, who investigated the interest in meaningful work versus salary in job evaluations across eight studies. Ward (2024) observed that participants consistently indicated a higher interest when they were presented with a description of a low meaningfulness, high-salary job than when they were presented with a description of a high meaningfulness, low-salary job. When participants expected that the financial stability that comes with a high-paying job would result in higher levels of satisfaction and quality of life outside of work, this preference was particularly strong. These findings suggest that financial stability may compensate for the lack of meaningfulness at work by enabling fulfillment in other non-work aspects of life (Ward, 2024). In contrast, prior studies have shown that individuals are willing to accept lower salaries in exchange for meaningful work (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Hu & Hirsh, 2017; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). This discrepancy highlights the need to replicate and expand on Ward's (2024) findings.

By examining these processes, my thesis contributes to both theoretical and applied understandings of current work values and motivations while investigating the *#lazygirljobs* trend. Theoretically, my thesis aims to explain how individuals' job interests may be shaped by their changing work attitudes. In addition, the thesis contributes to the field of work

psychology and job preferences regarding the potential trade-off between high salaries and meaningful work. The findings may have real-world implications for workplace policies. By framing the #lazygirljobs trend as a response to real workplace challenges and as a reimagining of ideal work, my thesis provides insights into the changing nature of work and the implications for the future of employment.

## **Theoretical Background & Literature Review**

### **Meaningful Work**

With the growing interest in employee engagement and well-being, organizational psychology has started to focus on the concept of meaningful work (Iždonaitė-Medžiūnienė & Batuchina, 2023). In general, meaningful work can be described as work that supports individuals in experiencing meaningfulness in their lives, giving them a sense of significance and purpose, and aligning with their personal beliefs (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003; Rosso et al., 2010). More specifically, meaningful work can be conceptualized using the *Multidimensional Model of Meaningful Work* proposed by Steger et al. (2012), which encompasses three complementary dimensions. The first dimension is the perception that one's work is meaningful and contributes to the goals and purpose of the organization. The second dimension is the feeling that one's work holds personal significance and aligns with one's broader life values and purpose. The third dimension is the conviction that one's efforts have a bigger influence outside of the immediate context, improving the lives of others and advancing the common good (Steger, 2016). This conceptualization is similar to Martela and Pessi's (2018) framework of meaningful work, where *significance* (the perception that one's job contributes to something impactful), *broader purpose* (the alignment with a meaningful goal or societal benefit), and *self-realization* (the job's ability to foster personal growth and fulfilment) are seen as the key dimensions of meaningful work.

Research indicates that when employees perceive their work as meaningful, this perception is associated with greater general well-being and reduced risk of burnout (Van Wingerden & Van der Stoep, 2017). Furthermore, feeling that one's work is meaningful can enhance overall job satisfaction (Allan, Dexter, et al., 2018). Empirical research has demonstrated that meaningful work is not only a vital resource for workers but may also be advantageous for organizations. For instance, meaningful work can improve task performance (Allan, Duffy, et al., 2018; Kahn, 1990; Van Wingerden & Van Der Stoep, 2018) and other favorable organizational outcomes, including increased work engagement (Albrecht et al., 2021), increased work commitment (Fairlie, 2011; Geldenhuys et al., 2014), and decreased intention to resign (Arnoux-Nicolas et al., 2016).

Research by Hu and Hirsh (2017) showing that people are willing to accept lower salaries to pursue jobs they perceive as meaningful further demonstrates the importance of meaningfulness in the workplace. This tendency seems to be especially evident when individuals view their work as a *calling*, which is a deeply personal and meaningful pursuit that aligns with their sense of purpose and fundamental beliefs (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Pratt & Ashforth, 2003).

### **Self-Determination Theory (SDT)**

From the perspective of *Self-Determination Theory (SDT)*, meaningful work supports personal well-being by fulfilling fundamental psychological needs essential for psychological flourishing (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Martela & Riekkari, 2018).

The foundation of SDT is the assumption that humans are inherently active and social, interested in their environment, seeking challenges, striving for thriving and finding a unique identity (Ryan & Deci, 2017). According to SDT, individuals have three basic psychological needs that must be met to experience well-being: *autonomy*, *competence*, and *relatedness*. *Autonomy* is defined as the need to feel in control of one's actions and to self-regulate

experiences. *Competence* is defined as the need to feel effective in one's actions and activities, meaning that people strive to master their lives in various contexts. *Relatedness* is defined as the need to feel connected to others, with a feeling of belonging and importance in the social context (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017). According to SDT, intrinsic motivation thrives when these three psychological needs are met (Deci, 2017). The concept of *intrinsic motivation* refers to pursuits arising solely from a sense of fulfillment or interest. If tasks have a high intrinsic value, individuals are motivated by curiosity, passion or the enjoyment derived from the task itself (Deci et al., 1991, 2001). A high level of intrinsic motivation increases a person's chances of experiencing increased motivation, performance, and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Vansteenkiste et al., 2006).

Conversely, extrinsic motivation results from external incentives like money or penalties (Deci et al., 1991, 2001). This kind of motivation can also drive behavior, but frequently falls short in meeting the fundamental psychological needs described by SDT, which eventually results in decreased engagement and well-being (Kasser & Ryan, 1996; Vansteenkiste et al., 2006).

SDT's psychological needs are particularly relevant in the workplace. For instance, work environments encouraging employees to act autonomously and make their decisions independently and feel in control of their work tend to facilitate intrinsic motivation and work engagement (Deci et al., 2017). Correspondingly, employees who believe they are capable of achieving their work goals and have opportunities to enhance their capabilities also tend to exhibit a higher degree of intrinsic motivation (Van Den Broeck et al., 2016). Positive relationships with colleagues and supervisors can satisfy the need for relatedness and contribute to a supportive work environment (Baard et al., 2004).

In contrast, it appears that occupations associated with *#lazygirljobs* have little capacity to meet the psychological needs proposed by SDT. Typical *#lazygirl jobs* are

characterized as jobs involving repetitive tasks with little or no responsibility and, as such, may not provide employees with a lot of opportunities to act autonomously (Graves & Luciano, 2013). Moreover, such roles seem to be unlikely to challenge employees or foster personal development, which can lead to decreased motivation and dissatisfaction (Van Den Broeck et al., 2016). Furthermore, jobs that are isolating or limit social interactions, such as remote jobs, may decrease relatedness to others, therefore further reducing intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Even though *#lazygirljobs* provide little intrinsic value, individuals may still choose to pursue these types of jobs due to their extrinsic rewards. The *#lazygirljobs* trend suggests that individuals may now place a higher value on financial gain and work-life balance than on demanding but meaningful jobs (MacArov, 1987). Individuals may choose higher salary jobs if financial success aligns with their extrinsic goals. In this case, *#lazygirljobs* may enable them to obtain external rewards such as money or social status (McHoskey, 1999). High salaries can satisfy tangible needs such as housing, food, or comfort and, therefore, act as a powerful external incentive, especially when financial security is a significant personal or societal concern (Ward & King, 2016). If individuals perceive that achieving financial stability can satisfy their fundamental psychological needs proposed by SDT, they may prioritize monetary benefits over pursuing meaningful jobs. Financial stability supports relatedness, competence, and autonomy by giving people the means and flexibility to engage in fulfilling personal pursuits outside of work (Cohen et al., 2018; Ward & Kim, 2023; Ward & King, 2016, 2019). Therefore, financial success can also contribute to enhancing meaningfulness and overall life satisfaction (Johnson & Krueger, 2006; Ward & King, 2016).

When individuals do not strongly internalize intrinsic values such as personal fulfillment or social contribution in the work context, they may also prioritize extrinsic motivators. Individuals who do not value meaningful work as critical to their identity or life

satisfaction could show a preference for financial rewards (Deci, 2017). Ward (2024) provides evidence for the prioritization of extrinsic rewards over intrinsic values in the workplace. Across eight studies, Ward (2024) examined the prioritization of meaningful work versus salary. In study one, a between-subjects-design was used where participants were randomly assigned to evaluate one of two job descriptions: a high-meaningfulness, low-salary job or a low-meaningfulness, high-salary job. The high-meaningfulness job was described as *'feeling meaningful and enabling one to make contributions that make a positive difference in the world'* (Ward, 2024, p. 1133). The low-meaningfulness job lacked these attributes but offered a higher salary than the high-meaningfulness job. Participants expressed higher interest in the low-meaningfulness, high-salary job compared to the high-meaningfulness, low-salary job. Study four indicated that the higher interest in low-meaningfulness, high-salary jobs may be based on the belief that a high-paying job would improve one's happiness and sense of fulfillment in life outside of work. For this study, a between-subjects-design was used where participants were also assigned to evaluate one of the two job descriptions. Participants rated how interested they were in their assigned job and the *'expected happiness and meaning outside of work'* (Ward, 2024, p. 1140), they expected from the job. A mediation analysis showed that participants in the low-meaningfulness, high-salary job condition expressed higher job interest compared to those in the high-meaningfulness, low-salary job condition. The low-meaningfulness, high-salary job was rated as providing greater happiness and meaningfulness outside of work, mediating the effect of job type on job interest (Ward, 2024). In light of these findings, I expect that there should be greater interest in low-meaningfulness, high-salary jobs in the Austrian population, and therefore hypothesize the following:

*H<sub>1</sub>: Individuals will indicate a higher interest in less meaningfulness, high-salary jobs compared to high-meaningfulness, low-salary jobs.*

In addition, extending Ward's (2024) results, I also hypothesize that the expected meaningfulness outside of work will mediate the effect of job type on job interest. For individuals who expect more meaningfulness outside of work, high-salary jobs may be of greater interest because these jobs may present new avenues for engaging in meaningful leisure activities.

*H<sub>2a</sub>: Individuals will expect greater meaningfulness outside of work in a low-meaningfulness, high-salary job compared to a high-meaningfulness, low-salary job.*

*H<sub>2b</sub>: The expected meaningfulness of life outside work will mediate the effect of job type on interest.*

Furthermore, research has shown growing desire among employees to balance work and personal goals. Particularly younger workers seem to focus on lifestyle and wish to integrate work with their personal goals (Ng et al., 2018; Smola & Sutton, 2002).

Additionally, younger individuals value leisure time more than older generations and appear to have a weaker work ethic, with work being less central to their lives (Twenge, 2010).

Younger people prioritize status and personal freedom (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008) and intentionally design their work environments to better balance their work and personal lives (Son, 2024). These findings indicate that young workers may seek meaningful experiences and personal development more in their private lives than through work while prioritizing extrinsic work values such as higher salaries (Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Twenge, 2010; Twenge et al., 2010). Assuming that the preference for meaningfulness outside of work and higher salaries is particularly pronounced among younger individuals, I propose the following hypothesis:

*H<sub>3</sub>: The relationship between job type and job interest is moderated by age. With an increase in age, the interest in low-meaningfulness, high salary jobs decreases.*



In contexts in which social or cultural norms strongly emphasize financial success as a signal of competence or autonomy, individuals may feel a strong need to conform to those norms. Under such circumstances, these powerful external pressures can override motivations and steer individuals toward extrinsic goals (Ryan & Deci, 2020). The current shift toward competitive individualism and materialism (Greenfield, 2009; Twenge & Kasser, 2013) in the West has generated a high-performance culture intensely driven by competitiveness and success (Curran & Hill, 2019). In this culture, individuals are encouraged to enhance their status and identity by signaling positive traits such as status and success (Butler, 2019, 2021).

Social media platforms further reinforce status-seeking behavior through positive peer feedback, pushing individuals toward idealized or extreme displays of culturally valued metrics (Butler, 2024). This culture encourages individuals to set high standards for themselves, pressuring them to excel out of the fear of being judged or criticized by others (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). The constant pressure to meet such expectations can lead to negative mental health outcomes such as feelings of failure and inadequacy (Donachie et al., 2018). For instance, performance pressure at work has been linked to negative health outcomes such as stress, anxiety, depression and fatigue (Thorsteinsson et al., 2014). Burnout is another emerging issue (Carod-Artal & Vázquez-Cabrera, 2013; Maslach et al., 2001), with many individuals struggling with excessive workloads, demanding jobs, and a lack of fulfilling experiences in their careers (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). How might these pressures and high expectations lead to a preference for *#lazygirljobs*?

### **Self-Discrepancy Theory**

According to *Self-Discrepancy Theory* (Higgins, 1987, 1989), the appeal of less meaningful but high-paying jobs may reflect a reaction to the negative consequences of performance pressure at work. The popularity of *#lazygirljobs* roles may originate in the attempt to feel successful without having a demanding career (Curran & Hill, 2019). *Self-*

*Discrepancy Theory* asserts that incongruities between an individual's actual, ideal and ought selves can be a source of emotional distress. The theory proposes that the ideal self represents personal desires and intrinsic values, such as pursuing meaningful work, while the ought self reflects external expectations or obligations, such as the societal pressure to attain financial security. Discrepancies between the actual and ideal self often result in negative emotions, such as dissatisfaction and sadness. In contrast, discrepancies between the actual and ought self can lead to agitation-related emotions, including anxiety and fear (Higgins, 1987, 1989). When external pressures, such as societal norms or economic constraints become dominant, individuals may focus more on aligning with their ought self, therefore prioritizing external rewards like high salaries over intrinsic goals such as meaningful jobs (Chandler, 1976). This behavior could be further reinforced when societal or organizational systems emphasize external metrics of success, such as income or status over personal fulfillment (Dahm et al., 2015).

The *#lazygirljobs* trend may serve as a coping mechanism for individuals who no longer value the meaningfulness of conventional, high-stress jobs. This could suggest that jobs offering a better work-life balance, more opportunities for personal pursuits, and lower emotional investments may be considered more interesting by individuals who consider personal well-being more important than stressful careers. Assuming that individuals experiencing greater performance pressure at work are also likely to favor less-meaningfulness, high-salary jobs, I hypothesize:

*H<sub>4</sub>: The relationship between job type and job interest is moderated by performance pressure at work. With an increase in performance pressure at work, the interest in the high-meaningfulness, low salary job decreases.*

## Present study

Extending the findings of Ward (2024), the aim of my thesis is to investigate job interest in two different types of jobs: high-meaningfulness, low-salary jobs and low-meaningfulness, high-salary jobs. Drawing on SDT and *Self-Discrepancy Theory*, my master's thesis examines how intrinsic and extrinsic motivators are related to job interest. My thesis uses a between-subjects design, where participants were randomly assigned to evaluate one of two hypothetical job postings, which were designed to emphasize either high meaningfulness with a lower salary or low meaningfulness with a higher salary.

Therefore, I conducted an online survey where I randomly assigned participants to one of the two experimental conditions containing a description of either a high-meaningfulness, low-salary job or a low-meaningfulness, high-salary job. Participants were instructed to imagine that they were actively looking for a job and to evaluate the provided job posting accordingly.

I measured job interest using 7-point scales adapted from Ward (2024), where participants rated their interest in and the likelihood of applying for the job. To assess the mediator 'expected meaningfulness outside of work', I adapted six items from Ward (2024), focusing on satisfaction, purpose, and work-life balance. A manipulation check was conducted to test whether the manipulation of the job postings had worked. The moderator 'performance pressure at work' was evaluated using the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (Hewitt & Flett, 2011), which I tailored to the workplace context to measure self-oriented and socially prescribed performance pressure at work. Additional variables were collected afterward for potential further analyses.

## Method

### Participants and Design

The sample size was determined using G\*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2007). To detect the effects of the mediation (job type → expectations of meaningfulness outside of work → job interest), and to find a small effect with an effect size of 0.1 (Cohen, 1988) with a power of 0.95 and  $\alpha$ -err of 0.05 (Faul et al., 2007), a minimum sample size of 155 was calculated. To participate in the survey, individuals needed to meet the following criteria: they had to be between 18 and 65 years of age (the standard retirement age for men in Austria), currently employed (including internships and part-time jobs), and residing in Austria.

The link to the online survey was distributed via family, friends, acquaintances and social media, resulting in 224 individuals who took part in the study. Participants who did not complete the questionnaire correctly or did not pass the manipulation check were excluded. The final sample consisted of 184 participants, of which 146 were female, 37 male, and one diverse. The average age was 40.46 ( $SD = 12.83$ ) and the averaged socioeconomic status ranging from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest) was 6.24 ( $SD = 1.44$ ).

About 43.5% worked full-time, 37.5% part-time, 20% self-employed/freelance, 5.4% marginally employed, and 2.7% were interns. The participants worked in the healthcare sector (21.2%), education/research (14.7%), IT/technology (12.5%), public service/administration (8.2%), marketing/advertising/PR (7.6%), finance and insurance (6.0%), construction/architecture (4.3%), art/culture/creative industries (3.8%), consulting (3.3%), human resources/recruiting (3.3%), industry/production (2.7%), retail/wholesale (2.2%), social services (1.6%), logistics/transportation (1.1%), hospitality/tourism (1.1%), law/legal (1.1%), media/journalism (1.1%), energy/environment (0.5%) or other (3.8%).

Twenty-four participants knew the #lazygirljobs trend, 153 did not know of the trend, and 7 participants were not sure if they knew the trend. The average time spent using social media per day was 1 hour 54 minutes ( $SD = 1h15m$ ).

My thesis used a between-subjects design, where participants were randomly assigned to one of two experimental groups, serving as predictor ( $n_{\text{high-meaningfulness, low-salary}} = 89$ ;  $n_{\text{low-meaningfulness, high-salary}} = 95$ ). The mediating variable was the expected meaningfulness outside of work ( $H_{2a}$  and  $H_{2b}$ ), moderators were age ( $H_3$ ) and performance pressure at work ( $H_4$ ). The interest in the distinct job types served as outcome variable.

## Procedure

Before the start of the survey, the Department Review Board of the *Department of Occupational, Economic, and Social Psychology* of the University of Vienna approved of the study design (DRB number: 2024/S/024). The questionnaire was conducted online in German via the Unipark platform. Participants were given detailed information regarding the purpose of the thesis, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and withdrawal rights. Consent was obtained before proceeding. After the participants had agreed to the terms of the thesis (Department Review Board approved, Version 2023), they were asked demographic questions about their age, gender, socioeconomic status, country of residence, current employment, and the sector in which they worked. For further information, please refer to [Appendix B](#).

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions, each one including a job description – a high-meaningfulness, low-salary job or a low-meaningfulness, high-salary job. In both, they were asked to imagine that they were actively searching for a job. They received a hypothetical job posting and were instructed to evaluate it based on the details provided in the posting. In the high-meaningfulness, low-salary job condition, participants reviewed a job description emphasizing high meaningfulness and low salary.

Conversely, in the low-meaningfulness, high-salary job condition, participants reviewed a job where meaningfulness was minimized, and the high salary was emphasized.

Meaningfulness was operationalized as a construct incorporating the three dimensions of meaningful work: *significance*, *broader purpose*, and *self-realization* (Martela & Pessi, 2018; Steger et al., 2012). Salary was described in terms of industry standards and peer comparisons. In high-meaningfulness, low-salary job condition, the job was presented as underpaid (below industry standards and lower than colleagues' salaries); in the low-meaningfulness, high-salary job condition, the job was presented as overpaid (above industry standards and higher than colleagues' salaries). The exact manipulations of meaningfulness and salary for the high-meaningfulness, low-salary job and low-meaningfulness, high-salary job can be found in Table 1, for the German translation, please refer to [Appendix B](#).

**Table 1**

*Job descriptions with the manipulations of meaningfulness and salary*

|                       | <i>High-meaningfulness, low-salary job</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <i>Low-meaningfulness, high-salary job</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Meaningfulness</i> | Job position A is in a company that you have heard good things about. The position seems to match your interests. Your research has shown that you can make an <i>important contribution to society in this position</i> . Your work would help <i>improve the lives of others and have a positive impact on the world</i> . You would be working on projects that are <i>personally meaningful to you</i> and you would feel that your work has real added value for society. The work allows you to <i>identify with your values and fulfills you on a deep level</i> . | Job position B is in a company that you have already heard good things about. The position seems to match your interests. Your research has shown that you would <i>not be able to make a significant contribution to society in this position</i> . Your work would <i>not help to improve the lives of other people and have a positive impact on the world</i> . You would <i>not be working on projects that are personally meaningful to you</i> and you would not feel that your work has any real added value for society. The work does <i>not allow you to identify with your values and does not fulfill you on a deep level</i> . |
| <i>Salary</i>         | However, the starting salary for this position is <i>below the industry average</i> and is also <i>less than what your colleagues in similar positions earn</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | However, the starting salary for this position is <i>above the industry average</i> and is also <i>more than what your colleagues in similar positions earn</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

Participants were asked to rate their level of interest in the hypothetical job and to estimate how much meaningfulness they expected the job to bring to their personal lives outside of work. A manipulation check was conducted to ensure participants perceived the differences in meaningfulness and salary as intended.

Therefore, they were asked to rank the levels of meaningfulness and the salary of their hypothetical job description. To further explore contextual factors, the perceived performance pressure at work stemming from the participants themselves and from external sources, such as peer expectations, were measured utilizing two separate scales.

Furthermore, for exploratory purposes, participants were asked to evaluate the alternative job scenario they had not been initially assigned to. Additionally, participants' social media usage and familiarity with the *#lazygirljobs* trend were assessed. At the conclusion of the survey, participants were debriefed, and confidentiality and anonymity were reiterated.

## **Measures**

### ***Demographic measures***

Demographic measures included age, gender, socioeconomic status, country of residence, current employment, and the sector in which they worked. The question about the age of the participants was formulated as an open question and could be answered with whole numbers. This question also served as an exclusion question. People who did not meet the age criteria (age between 18 and 65) were excluded from the survey. The question about the participants' gender could be answered with 'female', 'male' or 'diverse'.

The MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status (Adler et al., 2000) was used to measure socioeconomic status. The scale is a self-report tool that assesses an individual's perception of their social standing within a given society or community. The scale uses a visual representation of a ladder with 10 rungs. Participants were asked to place themselves

on the ladder, where the top rung (10) represents individuals with the highest income, education and occupational prestige, and the bottom rung (1) represents those with the lowest income, education and occupational prestige.

To answer the question about their current place of residence, participants had the option of choosing between ‘Austria’, ‘Germany’ and ‘Switzerland’. They also had the option of specifying a different country using open-ended responses. Only people who stated ‘Austria’ as their place of residence were admitted to the survey.

The question about employment status could be answered with ‘full-time’, ‘part-time’, ‘self-employed/freelance’, ‘internship’, ‘part-time’ or ‘no employment’. Individuals who stated that they were not currently employed were excluded from the survey.

The sectors available for selection were based on the occupational dictionary of the Austrian Public Employment Service (n.d.) and expanded. In addition, the participants had the opportunity to provide their own information on the sector in which they worked using an open response format. For a detailed list of all items in German and the complete list of all branches, please refer to [Appendix B](#).

### ***Job interest***

Following Ward (2024), job interest was measured using a job posting task. Participants were asked to rate their interest in the job using a 7-point scale. On the basis of Ward’s (2024) study, the following two questions were translated into German and presented to participants to rate their job interest with ‘*How interested would you be in working in this position if you were currently looking for a job?*’, with options ranging from 1 = not at all interested to 7 = extremely interested; and ‘*How likely would you be to apply for this position if you were currently looking for a job?*’, with options ranging from 1 = not at all likely to 7 = extremely likely. Please refer to [Appendix B](#) for the translations to German. For the analysis, the responses to these two questions were combined into a single variable



representing overall job interest. The internal consistency was  $\alpha = .88$ , indicating that the items consistently captured participants' levels of interest in the two job postings (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

### ***Manipulation check***

To ensure that the manipulation of meaningfulness and salary in the two job descriptions worked and that the differences were perceived as desired, a manipulation check was carried out. Two items were created to measure whether the meaningfulness and the salary were perceived as high/low depending on the job description. The question about meaningfulness (*'To what extent do you believe that the position is meaningful and makes a positive contribution to society?'*) could be answered on a 5-point Likert scale from *1 = not at all* to *5 = very strongly*. The question about salary (*'How do you rate the salary in the position compared to salaries customary in the industry?'*) could be answered with 'below average', 'average' and 'above average'.

### ***Expected meaningfulness outside of work***

Items from Ward (2024) were adapted to German to measure expected meaningfulness outside of work. Six items were used to capture the expected meaningfulness outside of work, including satisfaction (e.g., *'I would be satisfied with my life outside of work if I had this job.'*), purpose (e.g., *'This job would allow me to find meaning in my life outside of work.'*), and work-life balance (e.g., *'This job offers me the opportunity to realize myself in my free time.'*). For the whole questionnaire in German, please refer to [Appendix B](#).

Each item was rated on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from *1 = strongly disagree* to *7 = strongly agree*. For the analyses, the responses to these items were aggregated into a single variable for each job type. The internal consistency was ranging from  $\alpha = .87$  to  $.92$  across the two conditions, indicating that the items consistently measured the expected meaningfulness of life outside of work (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

### ***Performance pressure at work***

To measure work-related performance pressure, the *Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale* (Hewitt & Flett, 1991) was adapted to the workplace context. Specifically, the two subscales *self-oriented perfectionism* and *socially prescribed perfectionism* were used. *Self-oriented perfectionism* reflects the internal drive to meet self-imposed standards. This subscale measures the internal pressure of individuals to perform well and achieve perfection in their performance. *Socially prescribed perfectionism* measures the perception that others (e.g., family, friends, colleagues) expect perfection, thereby pressuring individuals to meet these expectations to avoid criticism or disapproval.

Both scales were adapted to assess performance pressure specifically in the workplace context by slightly modifying the original items to reflect work-related situations. The items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. Each scale consisted of 13 items tailored to the workplace context. For self-oriented performance pressure at work, the items were adjusted to capture individuals' internal drive to excel in their work (e.g., '*It is very important to me to perform well in all my work tasks.*'). For socially prescribed performance pressure at work, the items were modified to reflect the perception of external work expectations and pressures (e.g., '*Even if they don't show it, people are dissatisfied when I make a mistake at work.*'). For the translated items, please refer to [Appendix B](#). The items from each scale were combined into new variables. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess the internal consistency of the adapted scales. When combining the subscales into a single variable representing overall performance pressure at work, the internal consistency was low ( $\alpha = 0.49$ ; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). However, when the subscales were analyzed separately, self-oriented performance pressure at work demonstrated high internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.83$ ), and socially prescribed performance pressure at work also showed acceptable internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.78$ ; Nunnally &

Bernstein, 1994). For this reason, the analyses were also conducted using the subscales of the performance pressure at work scale.

### ***Explorative measures***

The time people spend on social media was also assessed for possible exploratory analyses. For this purpose, participants indicated in an open response format how many hours and minutes they spend on social media on average per day. Awareness of the *#lazygirljobs* trend was also assessed. Here, participants had to indicate whether they had ever heard of the *#lazygirljobs* trend. This question could be answered with 'yes', 'no' and 'don't know'. For the exact questions and the translated items in German, please see [Appendix B](#).

## **Results**

### **Preliminary Analysis**

To assess whether the manipulation of differences in job conditions was effective, a manipulation check was conducted. An independent samples t-test compared perceived job meaningfulness between the high meaningfulness, low salary job condition and the low meaningfulness, high salary job condition. Participants in the high-meaningfulness, low-salary job condition rated the meaningfulness significantly higher ( $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ,  $n = 89$ ) than those in the low-meaningfulness, high-salary job condition ( $M = 1.60$ ,  $SD = 0.72$ ,  $n = 95$ ),  $t(182) = 23.06$ ,  $p < .001$ . These results suggest that the perceived meaningfulness differed between the two job conditions as intended. Similarly, perceived salary ratings also differed significantly between the job conditions. Participants in the high-meaningfulness, low-salary job condition rated the salary as below industry standards ( $M = 1.02$ ,  $SD = 0.15$ ,  $n = 89$ ) in contrast to those in the high-meaningfulness, low-salary job condition, where the salary was rated as higher than industry standards ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 0.00$ ,  $n = 95$ ),  $t(88) = -125.16$ ,  $p < .001$ . This indicates that the manipulation of perceived salary differences was also successful.

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics and correlations for the variables. Age is positively correlated with socioeconomic status ( $r = .35, p < .01$ ). Job interest is positively correlated with expected meaningfulness outside of work ( $r = .44, p < .01$ ), while being negatively correlated with performance pressure at work ( $r = -.15, p < .05$ ) and socially prescribed performance pressure at work ( $r = -.19, p < .05$ ).

**Table 2**

*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of the measured variables*

| Variable                                   | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | 1     | 2    | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7 |
|--------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---|
| 1. Age                                     | 40.46    | 12.83     | —     |      |       |       |       |       |   |
| 2. Socioeconomic status                    | 6.24     | 1.44      | .35** | —    |       |       |       |       |   |
| 3. Expected meaningfulness outside of work | 3.98     | 1.43      | -.13  | -.11 | —     |       |       |       |   |
| 4. Job interest                            | 4.44     | 1.75      | -.11  | .06  | .44** | —     |       |       |   |
| 5. Performance pressure at work            | 3.09     | 0.51      | -.01  | -.02 | -.02  | -.15* | —     |       |   |
| 6. Self-oriented PPW <sup>a</sup>          | 2.42     | 0.66      | -.01  | -.04 | .06   | -.07  | .84** | —     |   |
| 7. Socially prescribed PPW <sup>b</sup>    | 3.75     | 0.59      | -.02  | .08  | -.11  | -.19* | .77** | .79** | — |

<sup>a</sup> Self-oriented performance pressure at work

<sup>b</sup> Socially prescribed performance pressure at work

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

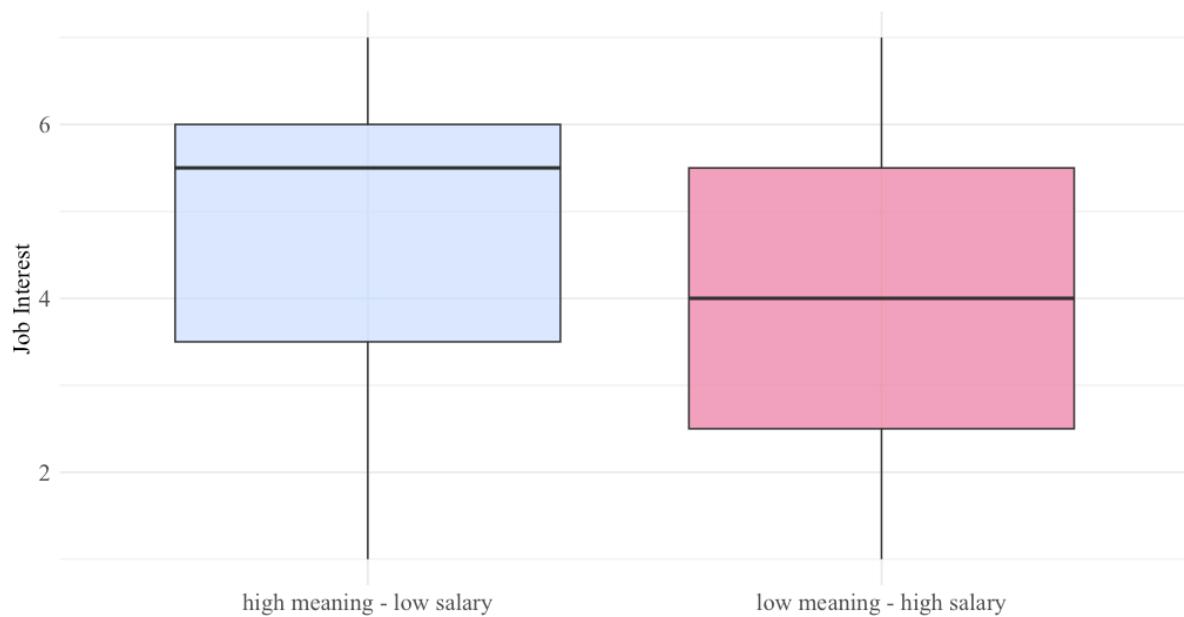
### Job Interest

Hypothesis 1 stated that individuals would indicate a higher interest in the low-meaningfulness, high-salary job compared to the high-meaningfulness, low-salary job. To test this hypothesis, I conducted an independent sample t-test to test whether job interest

differed between the two job types. Participants in the high-meaningfulness, low-salary job condition showed higher job interest ( $M = 4.81$ ,  $SD = 1.58$ ,  $n = 89$ ) than those in the low-meaningfulness, high salary job condition ( $M = 4.09$ ,  $SD = 1.83$ ,  $n = 95$ ),  $t(181) = 2.86$ ,  $p = .005$ ,  $d = .42$ , 95% CI [.13, .71], *standardized*  $r^2 = 1.72$ . The difference in job interest can be seen in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Independent Sample t-test: Differences in job interest*



### Mediation by expected meaningfulness outside of work

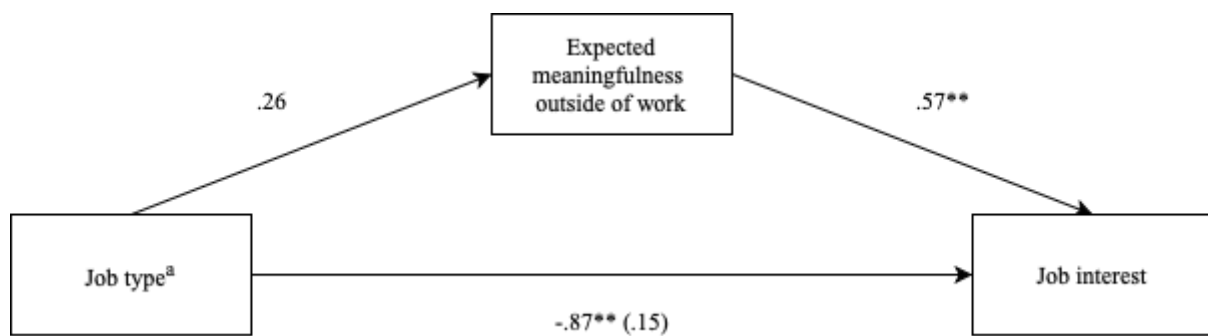
To test the difference in expected meaningfulness outside of work between the two job types, I used an independent sample t-test. There was no significant difference in the expected meaningfulness outside of work between the high-meaningfulness, low salary job condition ( $M = 3.84$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ,  $n = 89$ ) and the low-meaningfulness, high salary job condition ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = 1.55$ ,  $n = 95$ ),  $t(182) = -1.25$ ,  $p = .106$ ,  $d = -.19$ , 95% CI [-.48, .11], *standardized*  $r^2 = 1.43$ .

To test whether the link between job type (predictor) and job interest (outcome) was mediated by the expected meaningfulness outside of work (mediator), a mediation analysis was conducted in IBM SPSS Statistics 30.0.0.0 (172) using Hayes PROCESS 4.2 MODEL 4 (Hayes, 2022) with 5,000 bootstrapping samples. A heteroscedasticity consistent standard error and covariance matrix estimator were used. The predictor and mediator were mean centered.

As seen in Figure 2, the job type did not significantly predict the expected meaningfulness outside of work,  $b = 0.26$ , 95% CI [-0.15, 0.68],  $t(182) = 1.26$ ,  $p = .21$ , indicating no direct effect of the job type on the mediator. In contrast, job type negatively predicted job interest,  $b = -0.87$ , 95% CI [-1.32, -0.42],  $t(181) = -3.82$ ,  $p < .001$ . In turn, the expected meaningfulness outside of work positively predicted job interest,  $b = 0.57$ , 95% CI [0.41, 0.73],  $t(181) = 6.85$ ,  $p < .001$ .

**Figure 2**

*Job type and job interest mediated by expected meaningfulness outside of work*



*Note.* Unstandardized regression coefficients for the link between job type and job interest as mediated by expected meaningfulness outside of work. The unstandardized regression coefficient for the indirect path between job type → expected meaningfulness outside of work → job interest is in parentheses.

<sup>a</sup> 0 = high meaningfulness – low salary, 1 = low meaningfulness – high salary.

These results suggest a significant direct effect of job type on job interest and a significant positive association between the expected meaningfulness outside of work (mediator) and job interest (outcome), with the model explaining 26% of the variance in job interest,  $R^2 = .26$ ,  $F(2,181) = 27.39$ ,  $p < .001$ . However, the indirect effect of job type on job interest via expected meaningfulness outside of work was not significant,  $b = 0.15$ , 95% CI [-0.08, 0.40]. These findings suggest a direct negative effect of job type on job interest and a positive association between expected meaningfulness outside of work and job interest. There was no evidence that the mediator might explain the effect of job type on job interest. This finding supports the direct pathway hypothesis and highlights the independent role of expected meaningfulness outside of work.

For exploratory purposes, it was tested whether the link between job type and job interest was moderated by the expected meaningfulness outside of work. IBM SPSS Statistics Version 30.0.0.0 (172) PROCESS 4.2 Model 1 (Hayes, 2022) was used. A heteroscedasticity consistent standard error and covariance matrix estimator were used. The predictor and moderator were mean centered for the analysis.

**Table 3**

*Moderation Analysis: Job type and expected meaningfulness outside of work on job interest*

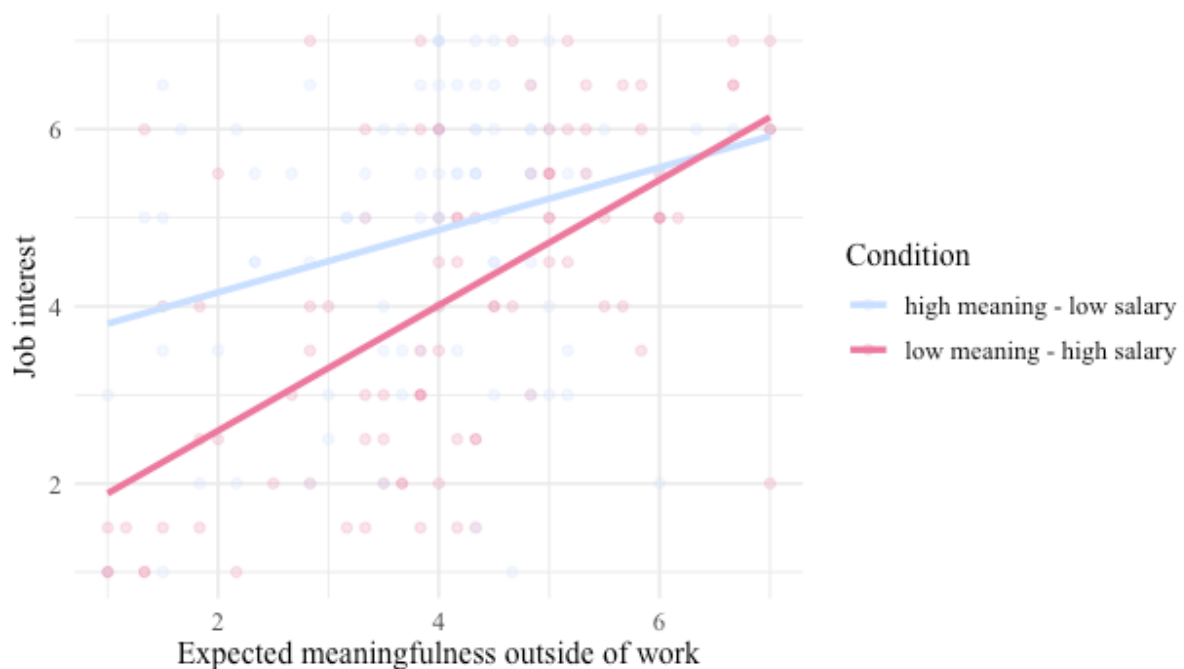
| Effect                                                          | Estimate | SE  | 95% CI |       | p     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----|--------|-------|-------|
|                                                                 |          |     | LL     | UL    |       |
| Intercept                                                       | 4.41     | .11 | 4.19   | 4.64  | <.001 |
| Job type                                                        | -0.86    | .22 | -1.3   | -0.41 | <.001 |
| Expected meaningfulness outside of work                         | 0.54     | .09 | 0.37   | 0.71  | <.001 |
| Interaction: Job type * Expected meaningfulness outside of work | 0.36     | .17 | 0.01   | 0.70  | .041  |

*Note.* CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

Table 3 shows that the interaction between job type (predictor) and expected meaningfulness outside of work (moderator) was significant,  $b = 0.36$ , 95% CI [0.01, 0.70],  $p = .041$ . This finding indicates that the effect of job type on job interest varied depending on the level of the expected meaningfulness outside of work. As shown in Figure 3, when the job was described as low in meaningfulness but high in salary, job interest was more strongly correlated with higher expected meaningfulness outside of work compared to when the job was described as high in meaningfulness but low in salary. The overall model explained 28% of variance in job interest,  $R^2 = .28$ ,  $F(3,180) = 20.46$ ,  $p < .001$ .

**Figure 3**

*Moderation of job type  $\times$  expected meaningfulness outside of work on job interest*



### Moderation by age

To examine whether age moderated the effect of job type on job interest, a moderation analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics Hayes' Process 30.0.0.0 (172) Model 1 (Hayes, 2022). For the analysis, a heteroscedasticity consistent standard error and



covariance matrix estimator were used. The predictor and moderator were mean centered. As Table 4 shows, job type had a significant main effect on job interest,  $b = -0.71$ , 95% CI [-1.21, -0.21],  $t(180) = -2.79$ ,  $p = .006$ .

**Table 4**

*Moderation Analysis: Job type and age on job interest*

| Effect                      | Estimate | SE  | 95% CI |       | p     |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----|--------|-------|-------|
|                             |          |     | LL     | UL    |       |
| Intercept                   | 4.81     | .17 | 4.47   | 5.14  | <.001 |
| Job type                    | -0.71    | .25 | -1.21  | -0.21 | .006  |
| Age                         | -0.01    | .01 | -0.04  | 0.01  | .173  |
| Interaction: Job type * Age | -0.01    | .02 | -0.05  | 0.03  | .684  |

*Note.* CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

Participants in the low-meaningfulness, high-salary job condition reported lower job interest than those in the high-meaningfulness, low-salary job condition. The main effect of age on job interest  $b = -0.01$ , 95% CI [-0.04, 0.01],  $t(180) = -1.37$ ,  $p = .173$  and the interaction between job type and age ( $b = -0.01$ ,  $p = .684$ ) were not significant, indicating that, contrary to the initial hypothesis, the link between job type and job interest did not vary by age.

### **Moderation by performance pressure at work**

A moderation analysis was conducted using Hayes' Process Model 1 (Hayes, 2022) in IBM SPSS Statistics 30.0.0.0 (172) to examine whether performance pressure at work moderated the effect of job type on job interest. A heteroscedasticity consistent standard error and covariance matrix estimator were used. The predictor and moderators were mean centered for the analyses. The overall model was significant,  $R^2 = .076$ ,  $F(3,180) = 5.58$ ,  $p = .001$ , explaining 7.6% of the variance in job interest. As seen in Table 5, the job type had a

significant main effect on job interest,  $b = -0.79$ , 95% CI  $[-1.29, -0.30]$ ,  $t(180) = -3.17$ ,  $p = .002$ . Performance pressure at work also had a significant main effect on job interest,  $b = -0.61$ , 95% CI  $[-1.10, -0.11]$ ,  $t(180) = -2.42$ ,  $p = .017$ . Higher performance pressure at work was associated with lower job interest overall. However, the interaction term (job type x performance pressure at work) was not significant,  $b = 0.34$ , 95% CI  $[-0.64, 1.33]$ ,  $t(180) = 0.69$ ,  $p = .49$ , indicating that performance pressure at work did not significantly moderate the link between job type and job interest.

**Table 5**

*Moderation Analysis: Job type and performance pressure at work on job interest*

| Effect                                               | Estimate | SE  | 95% CI    |           | <i>p</i> |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----|-----------|-----------|----------|
|                                                      |          |     | <i>LL</i> | <i>UL</i> |          |
| Intercept                                            | 4.45     | .13 | 4.2       | 4.7       | < .001   |
| Job type                                             | -0.79    | .25 | -1.29     | -0.30     | .002     |
| Performance pressure at work                         | -0.61    | .25 | -1.1      | -0.11     | .017     |
| Interaction: Job type * Performance pressure at work | 0.34     | .50 | -0.64     | 1.33      | .493     |

*Note.* CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

The results suggest that job type and performance pressure at work could independently predict job interest, as their interaction was not significant. Participants in the low-meaningfulness, high-salary job condition reported significantly lower job interest than those in the high-meaningfulness, low-salary job condition. Participants with higher performance pressure at work reported lower job interest overall, regardless of job type.

Since the internal consistency of the subscales of the performance pressure at work scale was relatively low, I also conducted the moderation analysis exploratively with the two subscales analyzed separately. The first moderation analysis was conducted to examine

whether self-oriented performance pressure at work moderated the link between job type and job interest. Similarly, the overall model was significant,  $R^2 = .058$ ,  $F(3,180) = 4.33$ ,  $p = .006$ , explaining 5.8% of the variance in job interest. Job type had a significant main effect on job interest,  $b = -0.76$ , 95% CI  $[-1.26, -0.27]$ ,  $t(180) = -3.03$ ,  $p = .003$ . The main effect of self-oriented performance pressure at work was not significant,  $b = -0.24$ , 95% CI  $[-0.62, 0.05]$ ,  $t(180) = -1.19$ ,  $p = .24$ . The interaction of job type and self-oriented performance pressure at work was not significant ( $b = 0.44$ ,  $p = .255$ ), indicating that the effect of job type on job interest does not vary across the levels of self-oriented performance pressure at work.

The second moderation analysis was conducted to explore whether socially prescribed performance pressure at work moderated the effect of job type on job interest. The overall model accounted for 8.2% of the variance in job interest,  $R^2 = .082$ ,  $F(3,180) = 4.93$ ,  $p = .003$ . Job type was a significant predictor of job interest,  $b = -0.76$ , 95% CI  $[-1.26, -0.27]$ ,  $t(180) = -3.03$ ,  $p = .003$ , with participants in the low-meaningfulness, high-salary job condition reporting lower levels of job interest. Socially prescribed performance pressure at work also had a significant negative effect on job interest,  $b = -0.59$ , 95% CI  $[-1.03, -0.15]$ ,  $t(180) = -2.66$ ,  $p = .009$ , indicating that greater socially prescribed performance pressure at work was associated with lower job interest overall. The interaction term between job type and socially prescribed performance pressure at work was not significant,  $b = -0.02$ , 95% CI  $[-0.90, 0.86]$ ,  $t(180) = 0.04$ ,  $p = .967$ , suggesting that socially prescribed performance pressure at work does not moderate the relationship between job type and job interest. These findings indicate that while job type and socially prescribed performance pressure at work independently affect job interest, their effects do not interact.

### Discussion

The basic idea of my master's thesis was to investigate how extrinsic and intrinsic motivators are related to job interest, with a focus on the interplay between salary and job

meaningfulness. Specifically, my thesis sought to examine how individuals prioritize these factors in hypothetical job scenarios. My thesis draws on the results of Ward (2024), who was able to show across several studies that there may be a higher interest in jobs if they are considered well paid but meaningless in contrast to jobs considered meaningful but offering low salaries with expected meaningfulness outside of work increasing the interest in the less-meaningful, low-salary jobs. These findings contrast with other studies (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Hu & Hirsh, 2017) demonstrating that individuals are often willing to accept lower salaries in exchange for meaningful work. Due to these differing findings, my aim was to replicate the results of Ward (2024) and to extend them supported by SDT and Self-Discrepancy theory. Since research has shown an increasing importance of leisure time particularly for younger individuals (Ng et al., 2018; Smola & Sutton, 2002) and rising work-related performance pressure (Curran & Hill, 2019) that could lead individuals to prefer less meaningful but higher paid jobs, I added age and performance pressure at work as moderators to my design.

For my thesis, I employed a between-subjects design, randomly assigning participants to one of two experimental conditions: a high-meaningfulness, low-salary condition and a low-meaningfulness, high-salary condition. Contrary to my initial hypothesis, my findings did not reveal a higher interest in the low-meaningfulness, high-salary job condition. Participants in my sample showed greater interest in the high-meaningfulness, low-salary job. At the same time, expected meaningfulness outside of work emerged as a significant predictor of job interest, particularly in the low-meaningfulness, high-salary job condition. Contrary to my assumption, age did not influence the relationship between job type and job interest. Similarly, performance pressure at work did not moderate the relationship. Instead, high performance pressure was associated with a generally lower interest in both job types.

My findings challenge the perception that financial stability - one of the core attributes of *#lazygirljobs* - is prioritized over meaningfulness. Research by Hu and Hirsh (2017) demonstrates that individuals accept lower salaries if they find their work meaningful. Similarly, research shows that zookeepers who perceive their job as a *calling* are willing to sacrifice time and salary for the welfare of the zoo (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009). These findings are consistent with my thesis, showing that meaningfulness generates higher job interest compared to salary.

In contrast, Ward (2024) found across multiple studies that individuals tend to show greater interest in higher paying, but less meaningful jobs compared to meaningful but poorly paid ones. These discrepancies between my findings and Ward's (2024) could be attributed to several factors. First, Ward's (2024) study was conducted in the U.S. and involved participants primarily living in the U.S., while my thesis focused on Austria. Differences in the cultural context between the U.S. and Europe may have contributed to these contrasting results. For instance, people in the U.S. seem to value independence more compared to Western Europeans (Kitayama et al., 2009). This could lead to individuals in the U.S. being more motivated by personal achievements, recognition or rewards which highlight independence and individual contribution. In order to investigate possible differences between countries, future studies should try to conduct cross-country studies and include the countries contexts.

Additionally, there were differences in the sample composition, with Ward's (2024) study having a more balanced gender distribution. Furthermore, participants in Ward's (2024) study received monetary compensation for their participation, whereas participants in my thesis did not. Hence, it is possible that participants receiving monetary compensation were primarily or solely motivated by financial rewards. Consequently, they might also have preferred higher salaries over meaningfulness. The uncompensated volunteers in my thesis

may have been more intrinsically motivated and interested in the research topic or motivated by altruism, valuing meaningfulness more highly. Additionally, paid participants may have approached the task in a more transactional frame of mind, emphasizing efficiency and economic gain. When answering the employment scenarios, volunteers might be more thoughtful or involved, giving more detailed information about their interests.

Another potential explanation lies in the operationalization of meaningfulness. While Ward (2024) defined meaningfulness primarily as contributing positively to others, I expanded the definition in my thesis to include self-realization. This inclusion of self-realization might explain the increased interest in the high-meaningfulness, low-salary jobs. Research suggests that individuals sometimes prioritize self-benefit over altruistic actions, especially when these decisions involve high personal costs (Volz et al., 2017). In the context of choosing between contributing positively to others and earning more money, financial compensation might take precedence due to its immediate and tangible benefits. However, when self-realization is included in the concept, meaningfulness could be more strongly related to personal benefits (Pugno, 2008), and therefore outweighing financial compensation.

One question that ultimately lies behind my thesis is how shifts in preferences for low-meaningless, high-salary work can arise. My thesis does not allow any statements to be made on this, as the expected higher interest for low-meaningfulness, high-salary jobs was not found in my thesis. What is important, however, is that the observed correlation between job interest and meaningfulness outside the job is consistent with the assumption that people can also find less meaningful jobs interesting if they can experience meaningfulness outside work. Ward (2024) highlighted that individuals anticipate greater happiness and meaningfulness outside of work in high-salary roles, as financial rewards can create opportunities for meaningful activities. This is in line with research by Milyavskaya and

Koestner (2011), showing that satisfaction in one domain, such as work or family, can enhance overall well-being and positively influence other areas of life. This compensatory mechanism is consistent with SDT's suggestion that psychological needs may be satisfied across multiple life domains (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Similarly, the *Work-Family Enrichment Framework* proposed by Greenhaus and Powell (2006) posits that positive experiences in one domain of life can enhance quality of life in another. Financial resources from high-salary jobs might facilitate meaningful activities outside work, such as hobbies, relationships, or community involvement, compensating for a lack of job satisfaction. Participants in the low-meaningfulness, high-salary job condition may have anticipated using financial resources to engage in fulfilling activities outside the workplace, thereby compensating for the lack of intrinsic job satisfaction. Additionally, *Social Exchange Theory* (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) further supports this dynamic by proposing that individuals evaluate work rewards by balancing material and psychological benefits. If psychological benefits such as intrinsic rewards are not sufficient, material rewards such as money may compensate.

A question that remains open is whether a balance between less meaningful work and meaningful activities outside work is indeed possible, given that a job takes up a large part of an individual's life (Carlson, 1981). Research shows that negative job characteristics, such as work that is perceived as meaningless, can negatively affect individuals in their private lives (Schuller et al., 2014; Tummers & Den Dulk, 2013). This suggests that there also could be a negative spillover effect from meaningless work to an individuals' personal life, raising the question of whether a fulfilling personal life can indeed offset the negative effect of job meaninglessness. Future research is needed to clarify if a balance between less meaningful work and meaningful activities outside of work is indeed possible.

The finding that with increasing performance pressure at work, job interest in both job types was decreased, aligns with SDT, which posits that excessive external control

undermines autonomy and competence, diminishing intrinsic motivation and engagement (Deci et al., 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Especially performance pressure at work from external influences had a strong negative association with job interest, aligning with research suggesting that external stressors decrease job satisfaction and engagement by reducing perceptions of control and competence (Gillet et al., 2015; Inoue et al., 2014). Research suggests that intrinsic motivators, such as meaningful work, may buffer these negative effects of stress by enhancing resilience and engagement (Allan et al., 2016; Ferraro et al., 2020). The absence of intrinsic motivators in low-meaningful, high-salary jobs could drive individuals to seek roles that better balance meaningfulness and manageable demands.

My findings may suggest independent and additive effects of stress and job characteristics on job interest. Furthermore, they highlight the importance of designing roles that minimize not only performance pressure at work but also satisfy the intrinsic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness that foster both motivation and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

### **Limitations**

There are several limitations to be found in this thesis. First of all, the sample consisted primarily of Austrian workers, with an overrepresentation of women (79.3%) and participants in the healthcare and education/research sectors (21.2%). Prior research suggests men prioritize salary and career advancement (Konrad et al., 2000; Rowe & Snizek, 1995; Wiswall & Zafar, 2018), while women prioritize meaningful work and personal or societal benefits (Burbano et al., 2020, 2024). These characteristics may reduce the generalizability of the findings to other cultural, gender and occupational contexts.

The average socioeconomic status of participants was higher than the average ( $M = 6.24$  on a 10-point scale), which may have impacted the prioritization of meaningfulness over salary. Individuals with lower socioeconomic status seem to prioritize salary to meet basic



needs (Mullet et al., 1992), whereas higher socioeconomic status allows them to focus on non-monetary job characteristics (Kristensen et al., 2002). This limitation restricts the generalizability of the findings to populations with lower socioeconomic status. If the sample had been more balanced in terms of socioeconomic diversity, different results might have emerged.

A key methodological distinction from Ward (2024) lies in the recruitment procedure of the participants. Ward's participants received monetary compensation for participating in her studies, while the participants in my study received no compensation. This could have led to different results. It is necessary to take a closer look at the differences in the results in terms of compensation/no compensation in future studies.

My thesis used an online design that included hypothetical job scenarios. It is questionable whether the participants would choose similarly if they were to perform the tasks in real life. Speculative decisions might not accurately represent real-world behavior.

The fact that the job conditions were not directly compared within the same evaluation should also be noted. Instead of choosing between two options, the participants were asked to assess each employment scenario separately. Direct comparisons might produce different results or other nuances of job preferences.

### **Future Research**

By addressing these gaps, future studies can build on this thesis' findings. Future researchers should attempt to diversify their sample to include a wider range of cultural, socioeconomic, and occupational contexts. In particular, further research should determine whether the preference of meaningfulness over salary holds true across other samples, including low socioeconomic status or non-Western populations. Additionally, the overrepresentation of females and participants from healthcare and education/research sectors suggests the need to examine job interests in a diversified sample and in other industries in

order to control sector-specific influences on attitudes toward work meaningfulness and salary.

The literature also does not yet allow any conclusions to be drawn as to whether less meaning work can be compensated for in the long term by a higher salary and more meaningfulness in private life. Further studies should therefore investigate how well less meaningful work can indeed be compensated by meaningful activities outside of work and how this affects life satisfaction.

This study used hypothetical job scenarios to test job interest. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a replication of these findings in a more natural setting. Longitudinal research could follow individuals' real job choices over time to determine whether the hypothetical interests of individuals correspond to actual behavior in real-life decision-making. Experimental designs, such as field studies or job-selection experiments, could provide further insights into how individuals navigate trade-offs between meaningfulness and salary under real-world constraints. Further research into the extent to which compensating mechanisms of meaningfulness extend into actual work-life balance decisions would help to further our knowledge of these processes. Based on my findings, future research should focus on intervention designs that specifically look at meaningfulness and manageable performance pressure at works. Examining the effectiveness of job models that aim to balance intrinsic and extrinsic motivators could provide practical implications for organizations interested in attracting and retaining diversified talent.

### **Practical implications**

The results of my thesis suggest that individuals may prefer high meaningfulness over high salaries. For employers, my findings indicate that to be attractive for employees, they should emphasize the meaningfulness of jobs so that their employees can find intrinsic value in their work. Therefore, they should focus on providing autonomy, task variety and

significance, and thereby enhancing meaningfulness (Popaitoon, 2022). Autonomy can be increased by enabling employees to be active crafters of their work who can shape their roles according to their ideas and redefine tasks to their liking (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Furthermore, jobs can be designed in a way that employees perform a variety of tasks, seeing their work as a whole process (Whittington et al., 2017). This gives employees the opportunity to use and develop different skills, which also increases meaningfulness (Albrecht et al., 2021). Transformative leadership, positive relationships and interactions with leaders and colleagues can inspire and encourage employees to find meaningfulness in their work (Han et al., 2020; Lysova et al., 2019). For instance, in industries such as construction, employees value seeing the direct results of their work and engaging in meaningful social interactions (Welfare et al., 2021). High-salary jobs that lack intrinsic meaningfulness may benefit from being coupled with policies supporting work-life balance and opportunities for meaningful activities outside of work.

As high performance pressure at work has a negative effect on job interest, organizations should consider lowering performance pressures and establishing autonomy-supportive settings that encourage intrinsic motivation (Deci, 2017; Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2011; Nie et al., 2015). Enhancing job satisfaction and engagement may be possible by offering opportunities and resources to meet employees' psychological needs. Research suggests a meaningful work environment makes employees feel empowered and valued, enhancing their level of engagement and retention accordingly (Smither, 2003). Public awareness campaigns could encourage organizations to adopt work practices that employees value, thereby promoting broader well-being.

## **Conclusion**

My thesis explores the interplay between extrinsic and intrinsic motivations and work interest. It was found that, in contrast to low-meaningfulness, high-salary jobs, participants

were more interested in high-meaningfulness, low-salary jobs. These findings highlight the importance of intrinsic motivators and challenge the notion that job preferences are driven by financial incentives.

By combining ideas from Self-Discrepancy Theory and SDT, this thesis advances the theoretical understanding of modern work ideals. The results have implications for companies looking to attract employees. Employers should prioritize meaningful work that meets psychological demands for relatedness, competence, and autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Despite these contributions, my thesis has a few limitations. Caution is advised due to the sample's overrepresentation of specific demographic groups and the hypothetical nature of the job selection task. Future research should aim to expand the demographic diversity and explore real-world job selection processes through longitudinal studies.

My thesis emphasizes work values where meaningfulness may often outweigh monetary rewards. While *#lazygirljobs* emphasize extrinsic rewards, my thesis suggests that fostering intrinsic motivators remains crucial. By aligning job roles with employees' intrinsic needs, organizations can foster greater engagement, satisfaction, and retention, contributing to a more sustainable and fulfilling work environment.

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### **Appendix A: Use of AI**

For this master's thesis, I utilized various AI-powered tools to support research, translation, and my writing process. These tools were employed as supplementary aids to enhance the quality and efficiency of my work.

Research Rabbit (<https://www.researchrabbit.ai>) and Consensus (<https://consensus.app>) were used to find relevant scientific literature and to recommend additional literature based on previously identified sources. DeepL Translator (<https://www.deepl.com/en/translator>) was used to translate content from German to English and to ensure accuracy and clarity. DeepL Write (<https://www.deepl.com/en/write>) and ChatGPT 4o (<https://chatgpt.com/>) were employed for refining and improving the clarity and coherence of my writing, as well as for providing suggestions on phrasing and grammar. All results obtained with these tools were critically reviewed and further processed by me.

## Appendix B: Questionnaire

### Informed Consent (DRB approved)

Liebe Teilnehmerin, lieber Teilnehmer,

herzlichen Dank für Ihre Bereitschaft, an dieser Studie des Instituts für Arbeits-, Wirtschafts- und Sozialpsychologie der Universität Wien teilzunehmen.

Im Rahmen dieser Studie beschäftigen wir uns mit Ihren Einstellungen zum Thema **Arbeit**. Ihre Aufgabe wird es sein, eine Stellenausschreibung zu bewerten.

Die Umfrage dauert ca. 10 Minuten. Bitte nehmen Sie nur teil, wenn Sie sich derzeit in einem **aktiven Arbeitsverhältnis** befinden oder **selbstständig** sind und **über 18 und unter 65 Jahre alt** sind und in **Österreich** leben.

Die Studie dient ausschließlich wissenschaftlichen Zwecken. Die Befragung wird vom Institut für Arbeits-, Wirtschafts- und Sozialpsychologie der Universität Wien durchgeführt. Ihre Studienergebnisse werden streng vertraulich behandelt. Die Ergebnisse und Daten dieser Studie werden unter Umständen veröffentlicht. Dies geschieht in anonymisierter Form, d.h., ohne, dass die Daten einer spezifischen Person zugeordnet werden können. Anonyme und anonymisierte Daten unterliegen nicht dem Datenschutz.

Die Teilnahme an der Studie ist freiwillig und mit keinen bekannten Risiken verbunden. Sie können die Teilnahme an dieser Untersuchung zu jedem Zeitpunkt ohne Angaben von Gründen abbrechen. Eine Löschung Ihrer Antworten zu einem späteren Zeitpunkt ist nicht möglich.

Bei Fragen wenden Sie sich bitte an Katharina Schindler BSc BA unter [gal721701@unet.univie.ac.at](mailto:gal721701@unet.univie.ac.at)

Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!

Ich habe die oben genannten Informationen gelesen und verstanden und erkläre mich mit den Teilnahmebedingungen einverstanden.

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nein

### Demographic Data

Wie alt sind Sie?

Bitte geben Sie Ihr Alter in Zahlen an.

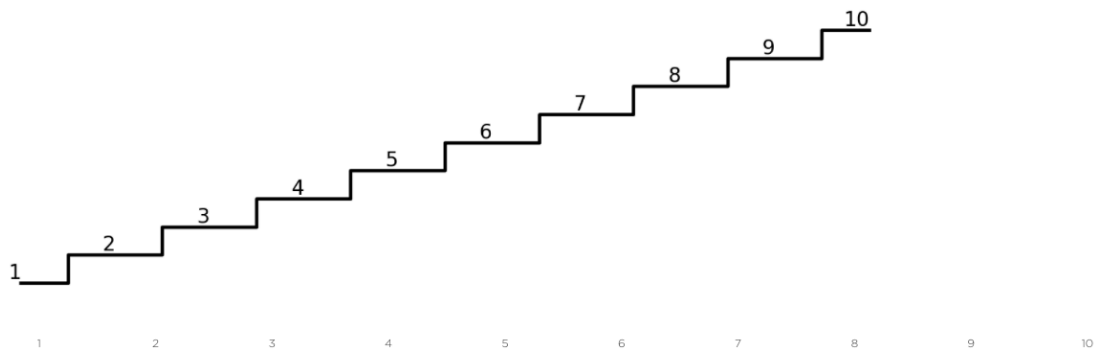
Welchem Geschlecht fühlen Sie sich zugehörig?

- ☐ männlich
- ☐ weiblich
- ☐ divers

Stellen Sie sich eine Stiege mit 10 Stufen vor.

Die oberste Stufe (10) repräsentiert Menschen mit dem höchsten Einkommen, dem höchsten Bildungsstand und Berufen mit hohem gesellschaftlichem Ansehen. Die unterste Stufe (1) repräsentiert Menschen mit einem niedrigeren Einkommen, einem geringeren Bildungsstand und Berufen, die weniger gesellschaftliche Anerkennung erfahren. Bitte ordnen Sie sich selbst auf einer Stufe ein, indem Sie alle genannten Aspekte als Ganzes berücksichtigen.

Bitte beantworten Sie die Frage mittels Schieberegler unter dieser Abbildung.



Was ist Ihr derzeitiges Beschäftigungsverhältnis?

- ☐ Vollzeit
- ☐ Teilzeit
- ☐ selbstständig / freiberuflich
- ☐ geringfügig angestellt
- ☐ Praktikum
- ☐ derzeit in keinem Beschäftigungsverhältnis

In welcher Branche sind Sie derzeit tätig?

In welchem Land verbringen Sie derzeit die meiste Zeit?

## Instructions Job Interest

Bitte lesen Sie die folgenden Anweisungen aufmerksam durch:

Für die nächste Aktivität möchten wir Sie bitten, sich vorzustellen, Sie seien auf der Suche nach einer Arbeitsstelle. Im nächsten Schritt werden Sie gebeten, Informationen über eine hypothetische Stelle zu lesen und dann Ihr Interesse an dieser Stelle zu bewerten und die Stelle anhand verschiedener Dimensionen zu beurteilen.

Uns interessiert, wie Menschen auf der Basis beschränkter Informationen ein Bild von einem Arbeitsplatz gewinnen. Sie erhalten nur wenige Details über die Stelle. Bitte versuchen Sie, die Stelle mit den Ihnen zur Verfügung stehenden Informationen so gut wie möglich zu beurteilen.

Stellen Sie sich aktiv vor, dass Sie auf der Suche nach einer neuen Stelle sind, und achten Sie auf alle beschriebenen Merkmale der Stelle.

**Job Interest A: High meaningfulness – low salary job**

Stellen Sie sich vor, dass Sie auf Jobsuche sind. Bitte lesen Sie die folgende Stellenbeschreibung sorgfältig durch:

Jobposition A befindet sich in einem Unternehmen, von dem Sie bereits Gutes gehört haben. Die Stelle scheint Ihren Interessen zu entsprechen. Ihre Recherchen haben ergeben, dass Sie in dieser Position einen wichtigen Beitrag für die Gesellschaft leisten können. Ihre Arbeit würde dazu beitragen, das Leben anderer Menschen zu verbessern und einen positiven Einfluss auf die Welt zu haben. Sie würden an Projekten arbeiten, die für Sie persönlich von Bedeutung sind, und Sie hätten das Gefühl, dass Ihre Arbeit für die Gesellschaft einen wirklichen Mehrwert hat. Die Arbeit ermöglicht es Ihnen, sich mit Ihren Werten zu identifizieren und erfüllt Sie auf einer tiefen Ebene. Das Einstiegsgehalt für diese Position liegt jedoch unter dem Branchendurchschnitt und ist auch weniger, als Ihre Kolleginnen und Kollegen in ähnlichen Positionen verdienen.

Bitte beziehen Sie sich bei der Bewertung der folgenden Fragen auf die obige Stellenbeschreibung.

Wie sehr würden Sie sich für diese Stelle interessieren, wenn Sie derzeit auf Stellensuche wären?

[illegible]

Jobposition B befindet sich in einem Unternehmen, von dem Sie bereits Gutes gehört haben. Die Stelle scheint Ihren Interessen zu entsprechen. Ihre Recherchen haben ergeben, dass Sie in dieser Position keinen wichtigen Beitrag für die Gesellschaft leisten können. Ihre Arbeit würde nicht dazu beitragen, das Leben anderer Menschen zu verbessern und einen positiven Einfluss auf die Welt zu haben. Sie würden nicht an Projekten arbeiten, die für Sie persönlich von Bedeutung sind, und Sie hätten nicht das Gefühl, dass Ihre Arbeit für die Gesellschaft einen wirklichen Mehrwert hat. Die Arbeit ermöglicht es Ihnen nicht, sich mit Ihren Werten zu identifizieren und erfüllt Sie nicht auf einer tiefen Ebene. Das Einstiegsgehalt für diese Position liegt jedoch über dem Branchendurchschnitt und ist auch mehr, als Ihre Kolleginnen und Kollegen in ähnlichen Positionen verdienen.

Bitten beantworten Sie die folgenden Statements in Hinblick auf die obige Stellenausschreibung.

|                                                                                                | stimme überhaupt nicht zu |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       |                       | stimme voll und ganz zu |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Dieser Job würde mir ein erfülltes Leben außerhalb der Arbeit ermöglichen.                     | <input type="radio"/>     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>   |
| Ich wäre mit meinem Leben außerhalb der Arbeit zufrieden, wenn ich diesen Job hätte.           | <input type="radio"/>     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>   |
| Diese Arbeit würde mir ermöglichen, einen Sinn in meinem Leben außerhalb der Arbeit zu finden. | <input type="radio"/>     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>   |
| Diese Tätigkeit würde es mir ermöglichen, ein sinnvolles Leben außerhalb der Arbeit zu führen. | <input type="radio"/>     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>   |
| Dieser Job würde mir ausreichend Freizeit bieten.                                              | <input type="radio"/>     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>   |
| Dieser Job bietet mir die Möglichkeit, mich in meiner Freizeit zu verwirklichen.               | <input type="radio"/>     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>   |

## Manipulation Check B: Low meaningfulness – high salary

Inwiefern glauben Sie, dass die Arbeit in Position B sinnvoll ist und einen positiven Beitrag zur Gesellschaft leistet?

☐ gar nicht

☐

☐

☐

☐ sehr stark

Wie schätzen Sie das Gehalt von Position B im Vergleich zu branchenüblichen Gehältern ein?

☐ unter dem Durchschnitt

☐ Durchschnitt

☐ über dem Durchschnitt

## Performance pressure at work (self)

Bitte denken Sie bei der Beantwortung der folgenden Statements an Ihre jetzige berufliche Tätigkeit.

Bitte bewerten Sie die folgenden Statements von 1 = stimme nicht zu bis 5 = stimme voll und ganz zu.

|                                                                                         | 1 - stimme nicht zu   | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5 - stimme voll und ganz zu |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Wenn ich an etwas arbeite, kann ich mich nicht entspannen, bis ich damit zufrieden bin. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Mir ist es nicht wichtig, meine Arbeit bestmöglich zu erledigen.                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Ich habe nur selten das Bedürfnis, meine Arbeit perfekt zu erledigen.                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Meine Leistungen in der Arbeit sollen so gut wie möglich sein.                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Es ist mir sehr wichtig, bei allen meinen Arbeitsaufgaben gute Leistungen zu erbringen. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Ich möchte Arbeitsaufgaben besser als meine Kolleg:innen erledigen.                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Ich möchte keine meiner Arbeitsaufgaben nur halbherzig erledigen.                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Ich fühle mich schlecht, wenn ich Fehler in meiner Arbeit entdecke.                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Ich möchte in der Arbeit mein volles Potenzial entfalten.                               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Ich muss in der Arbeit nicht immer die beste Leistung erbringen.                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Ich habe keine hohen Karriereziele.                                                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Ich setze mir hohe Ziele für meine Karriere.                                            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Ich muss immer Erfolg in der Arbeit haben.                                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |

## Performance pressure at work (others)

Bitte denken Sie bei der Beantwortung der folgenden Statements an Ihre jetzige berufliche Tätigkeit. Mit "anderen Personen in Ihrem Umfeld" sind alle Personen gemeint, mit denen Sie in Ihrem beruflichen und / oder privaten Umfeld zu tun haben.

Bitte bewerten Sie die folgenden Statements von 1 = stimme nicht zu bis 5 = stimme voll und ganz zu.

|                                                                                                                           | 1 - stimme nicht zu   | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5 - stimme voll und ganz zu |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ich finde es schwierig, die Erwartungen anderer Menschen an meine Arbeit zu erfüllen.                                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Die Personen in meinem Umfeld akzeptieren, wenn ich etwas weniger Motivation in meine Arbeitsaufgaben stecke.             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Umso erfolgreicher ich in meinem Job bin, desto mehr wird von mir erwartet.                                               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Wenn ich meine Aufgaben nicht perfekt erledige, wird meine Arbeit von anderen als schlecht angesehen.                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Die Personen in meinem Umfeld erwarten, dass ich immer perfekte Leistungen in meinem Job erbringe.                        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Die Menschen in meinem Umfeld mögen mich nicht mehr, wenn ich meinen Job manchmal nicht so wichtig nehme.                 | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Damit ich mich erfolgreich fühle, müssen immer alle mit meinen Leistungen in der Arbeit zufrieden sein.                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Andere Personen sind mit mir zufrieden, auch wenn ich nicht immer perfekt in meinem Job bin.                              | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Ich habe das Gefühl, andere Menschen erwarten mehr Leistungen in der Arbeit von mir, als ich erfüllen kann.               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Auch wenn sie es nicht zeigen, sind die Personen in meinem Umfeld unzufrieden, wenn ich einen Fehler in der Arbeit mache. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Die Personen in meinem Umfeld erwarten, dass ich immer gute Leistungen in meinem Job erbringe.                            | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Die Personen in meinem Umfeld erwarten mehr, als ich an Leistungen in der Arbeit erbringen kann.                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |
| Die Menschen in meinem Umfeld denken, dass ich kompetent bin, auch wenn ich Fehler in meinem Job mache.                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/>       |

## Social Media Usage & Familiarity with the #lazygirjobs trend

Bitte geben Sie an, wie viele Stunden und Minuten Sie schätzungsweise pro Tag in den sozialen Medien verbringen. Bitte geben Sie die Nutzungsdauer in folgendem Format an: XX:XX.

Wenn sie keine sozialen Medien nutzen, geben Sie bitte 00:00 an.

Haben Sie schon einmal vom #lazygirjobs-Trend gehört?

☐ ja

☒ nein

☐ weiß nicht

## Endpage & Debriefing

Sie haben das Ende der Studie erreicht. Vielen Dank für Ihre Teilnahme!

In dieser Studie möchten wir den **#lazygirjobs-Trend** genauer untersuchen und herausfinden, warum manche Menschen sinnvolle Jobs mit geringem Einkommen und andere Menschen weniger sinnvolle Jobs mit hohem Einkommen bevorzugen.

### Zum #lazygirjobs-Trend

Der **#lazygirjobs-Trend** wurde von der TikTokerin Gabriella Judge in den sozialen Medien bekannt gemacht. Der Trend kritisiert die sogenannte **Hustle-Culture**, die den Beruf in den Mittelpunkt des Lebens stellt. "Lazy girl jobs" hingegen sind gekennzeichnet durch ein starkes Augenmerk auf eine gesunde Balance zwischen Beruf und Freizeit, bieten oft flexible Arbeitszeiten, wenig Druck ohne übermäßigen Stress, um genügend Zeit für persönliche Interessen und Wohlbefinden zu haben.

Wir danken Ihnen für Ihre Teilnahme an dieser Studie. Mit Ihrer Teilnahme haben Sie einen wichtigen Beitrag zu unserer Forschung geleistet. Wenn Sie weitere Fragen oder Anmerkungen haben, können Sie uns unter [a11721701@unet.univie.ac.at](mailto:a11721701@unet.univie.ac.at) erreichen. Wir möchten Sie außerdem bitten, Stillschweigen über die Inhalte dieser Studie zu bewahren.

Sie können dieses Fenster nun schließen!