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# TEACHERS' WELL-BEING: THE ROLE OF CALLING AND ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

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UDK:  
Original scientific paper

Received: January 31, 2025

The study focuses on understanding teachers' life satisfaction within the framework of Work as a Calling Theory. It investigated: a) the mediating role of living a calling and job satisfaction in the relationship between perceiving a calling and life satisfaction; b) the moderating role of organisational support in the relationship between perceiving and living a calling. Three hundred eighty classroom teachers (96% female, with an average of 20 years of work experience) participated in the study. A moderated serial mediation model was tested. The results showed that both living a calling and job satisfaction mediate between perceiving a calling and life satisfaction. Perceiving a calling is positively related to living a calling, which in turn leads to higher job satisfaction and consequently higher life satisfaction. Also, perceiving a calling is positively related to living a calling to a greater extent when organisational support is provided. The results support the proposed model and have implications for both theory and practice in the field of school management and teachers' well-being.

Keywords: calling, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, organisational support, teachers

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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Teaching is a demanding and challenging profession, which has led much research to focus on negative indicators of teacher functioning, such as stress and burnout (Agyapong et al., 2022). However, over the last decade, the rise of positive psycholo-

gy has shifted attention towards teachers' well-being. A growing body of evidence shows that teachers' well-being has significant benefits: it is associated with greater job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018), higher student well-being (Bilz et al., 2022), and better academic performance (Duckworth et al., 2009). Given the importance of these positive outcomes, it is essential to improve our understanding of the factors that support teachers' well-being. This study addresses this need by examining teachers' life satisfaction from the perspective of Work as a Calling Theory (WCT; Duffy et al., 2018).

Calling is conceptualised as an approach to work that reflects seeking a sense of overall purpose and meaning and contributing to the common good. Perceiving work as a calling (PC) has been linked to greater meaning in both work and life (Duffy et al., 2011a, 2013), with these variables being strongly related to well-being in various professions (Hagmaier & Abele, 2015), including teaching (Gradišek et al., 2020; Jurčec, 2019; Jurčec & Rijavec, 2015). However, to date, mechanisms connecting PC to well-being remain insufficiently explored, partly because theoretical foundations have only recently been developed (Duffy et al., 2018). WCT proposes that living a calling (LC) is the central pathway through which PC leads to positive work outcomes, and that employee-environment fit moderates the PC-LC relationship. However, empirical research within this approach is lacking.

To address this gap, the present study examines the relationship between PC, LC, organisational support and teachers' well-being. Specifically, it investigates: a) the mediating role of LC and job satisfaction in the relationship between PC and life satisfaction, and b) the moderating role of perceived organisational support in the PC-LC relationship. Thus, this study contributes to the literature in two ways. First, the study extends WCT by incorporating life satisfaction as a distal outcome within a serial mediation model in which job satisfaction precedes life satisfaction, thus highlighting the broader implications of calling beyond work-specific outcomes. Second, it empirically tests organisational support as a key element of employee-environment fit (Duffy et al., 2018) by examining its moderating role in the PC-LC relationship.

## **Work as a calling and well-being**

The idea that work can be a calling has gained considerable attention from both professionals and the general public over the past two decades, as individuals nowadays increasingly seek work that provides meaning and purpose beyond financial rewards. One large study, including employees from more than 70 countries, found that about 37% of employees per-

ceive their work as a calling (Peterson et al., 2009). Among teachers, this percentage seems to be even higher, consistent with the widespread belief that teachers tend to experience their work as a calling more often than employees in other professions (e.g., Hagmaier & Abele, 2012), with estimates ranging from 45% in the United Kingdom (Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2012), to 68% in Slovenia and as high as 83% in Croatia (Rijavec et al., 2016).

Perceiving work as a calling has been associated with numerous positive professional and personal outcomes, including higher levels of well-being and life satisfaction (Peterson et al., 2009), better coping with stress, lower depression (e.g., Treadgold, 1999), and greater congruence between the actual self and ideal self (Hagmaier & Abele, 2015). Calling has also been linked to higher levels of job performance (Lee et al., 2016), work engagement (Hagmaier & Abele, 2015), job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and fewer intentions to withdraw (Duffy et al., 2011b). Similar findings have been reported among teachers. Teachers who perceived their work as a calling reported higher levels of life and job satisfaction (Jurčec, 2019; Jurčec & Rijavec, 2015; Miljković et al., 2016; Song et al., 2016), and more positive work attitudes (Willemse & Deacon, 2015). Teachers' calling orientation has also been associated with greater flourishing through several mechanisms, such as flow, job crafting (increased structural job resources), and work meaningfulness (Jurčec, 2019; Rijavec et al., 2021).

### **Living a calling and job satisfaction as mediators**

Perceiving a calling does not necessarily mean that a person is living it. Some individuals feel they have fulfilled their calling, while others feel that their calling remains unrealised (Berg et al., 2010) due to various contextual factors such as limited education and occupational opportunities (Duffy et al., 2018). Research has shown that the correlation between perceiving and living a calling is around 0.50 (Duffy & Autin, 2013; Duffy et al., 2012, 2019). Consistent with these findings and WCT, we hypothesised that perceiving a calling would be positively related to living a calling (Hypothesis 1).

Although both PC and LC have positive work and life outcomes, LC shows stronger links to these outcomes. According to the model proposed by Duffy et al. (2013), PC is linked to higher life satisfaction primarily through the ability to live out one's calling, which leads to greater life meaning and job satisfaction. Thus, it is proposed that PC is an important antecedent to LC, but living a calling is a key variable for well-being.

Job satisfaction is one of the most frequently examined outcomes of LC. It refers to the subjective evaluation that workers make of their jobs, and it is one of the most used indica-

tors of job well-being (Zhang et al., 2014). Across diverse samples of working adults, LC has been strongly positively linked to job satisfaction (e.g., Duffy et al., 2012, 2014). Based on these findings and WCT, we hypothesised that living a calling would positively predict job satisfaction (Hypothesis 2).

In education, job satisfaction has a central role because it promotes teacher engagement and protects against burnout (Madigan & Kim, 2021). According to the spillover hypothesis (Bowling et al., 2010), positive or negative experiences at work can extend into other areas of life, and vice versa. Thus, job satisfaction resulting from living one's work as a calling can influence an individual's life satisfaction. Among teachers, both general (Lee & Shin, 2017) and intrinsic job satisfaction (Olčar et al., 2019; Luque-Reca et al., 2022) predict their life satisfaction. Two studies have also found that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between LC and life satisfaction (Duffy et al., 2012, 2013). As one meta-analysis confirmed, job satisfaction predicts life satisfaction even after controlling for personality traits (Heller et al., 2004). Based on WCT and in line with these empirical findings (i.e., Lee & Shin, 2017; Olčar et al., 2019; Luque-Reca et al., 2022), we hypothesised that job satisfaction would positively predict life satisfaction (Hypothesis 3).

Overall, research on mediators linking PC and life satisfaction remains limited. Previous findings showing that LC mediates the relationship between PC and job satisfaction (Maser, 2021), and that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between LC and life satisfaction (Douglass et al., 2016; Duffy et al., 2012, 2013) suggest that both LC and job satisfaction may act as sequential mediators in the link between PC and life satisfaction. Yet, no research has examined this. Therefore, in this study, we hypothesised that both LC and job satisfaction would mediate the relationship between PC and life satisfaction. Specifically, we hypothesised that LC would lead to higher job satisfaction, which, in turn, would lead to higher life satisfaction (Hypothesis 4).

Previous research has shown that work meaning and career commitment help explain the relationship between perceiving a calling and job satisfaction (with living a calling acting as an important moderator of those effects), and that job satisfaction helps explain the relationship between living a calling and life satisfaction. However, no research has tested whether living a calling and job satisfaction act as sequential mediators linking perceiving a calling to life satisfaction. Therefore, we hypothesised that both living a calling and job satisfaction would mediate the relationship between perceiving a calling and life satisfaction.

## The moderating role of perceived organisational support

Not all employees are able to live their calling at work, but the question is rarely posed about the conditions that enable individuals to do so. In this regard, the workplace characteristics may have a crucial role. One such characteristic that might be important in the relationship between PC and LC is perceived organisational support, defined as employees' perception of their organisation's care and commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Based on the WCT (Duffy et al., 2018), organisational support is a key contextual factor that enhances employee-environment fit, which in turn facilitates the translation of PC into LC. Higher fit increases the likelihood that PC leads to LC, highlighting the important role of organisational support in this process (Duffy et al., 2019). Organisational support has been found to increase teachers' commitment and performance (Yolanda & Said, 2022) and to moderate the relationship between job satisfaction and teaching effectiveness (Kanta & Sri-valli, 2018). Although organisational support might play an important role in living a calling, studies on this topic are scarce. Some studies have found a positive relationship between LC and perceived organisational support (Duffy & Autin, 2013) and a supportive workplace climate (Allan et al., 2015). Lee et al. (2016) demonstrated that organisationally supported knowledge-sharing mediates the relationship between PC and job satisfaction among hotel employees. One study on a sample of teachers showed that the PC-LC relationship is stronger for those with a mentor (Ehrhardt & Ensher, 2021), thus suggesting a moderating role of organisational support in the PC-LC relationship.

Beyond WCT, the Conservation of Resources Theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989) offers a useful framework for understanding how organisational support may facilitate LC. According to COR, while PC serves as an internal resource, living a calling often can drain one's reserves, since it requires sustained effort, emotional and personal investment. Organisational support provides external resources, both instrumental (e.g., flexible work hours, meaningful tasks) and emotional (e.g., encouragement, appreciation). This support reduces strain and helps employees to translate calling into lived experience. Thus, based on both WCT (Duffy et al., 2018) and COR (Hobfoll, 1989), the organisational support is likely to moderate the relationship between PC and LC. However, no empirical study has been found in the literature examining this possibility. Therefore, based on the WCT (Duffy et al., 2018) and COR (Hobfoll, 1989), we hypothesised that organisational support would strengthen the PC-LC relationship, producing a conditional serial mediation effect on life satisfaction (Hypothesis 5).

## METHOD

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### Participants and procedure

Primary education in Croatia lasts eight years for children aged 6 to 14. Grades 1–4 are taught by a single classroom teacher, while subject teachers take over in grades 5–8. Our sample included 380 class teachers (96% female) from various regions across Croatia. Their teaching experience ranged from 0 to 43 years, with an average of 20.07 years ( $SD = 11.07$ ). Approval for the research was granted by the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia and the school principals. The questionnaires were administered via Google Forms and distributed through the official email addresses of class teachers as part of a broader online study addressing the teaching profession. This section of the survey took approximately ten minutes to complete. At the outset, participants were informed about the study's purpose and their rights as participants. By proceeding with the survey, they provided informed consent. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and participants had the option to withdraw at any time.

### Instruments

*The Presence of a Calling* is a 2-item subscale of the Brief Calling Scale (BCS; Dik et al., 2012) used to assess the extent to which individuals perceive their career as a calling, referring to the fact that they are called upon to do a particular kind of work (e.g., *I have a calling to a particular kind of work*). Items were rated on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (*not at all true of me*) to 5 (*totally true of me*). The overall score is computed by averaging the items on the scale. Higher scores indicate a stronger perception of calling. In the current study, the two items were highly correlated ( $r = 0.82$ ).

*The Living a Calling Scale* (LCS; Duffy et al., 2012) consists of 6 items measuring to what extent participants perceive that they presently live their calling (e.g., *I am working in the job to which I feel called.*). Items are rated on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The overall score is computed by averaging the items on the scale. Higher scores indicate a stronger living of one's true calling. The principal component analysis of the items resulted in a one-factor solution (factor loadings ranged from 0.80 to 0.92), which explained 73.6% of the variance.

*The Perceived Organisational Support* (SPOS; Eisenberger et al., 1986) is an 8-item measure used to assess employees' perceptions of organisational support. Participants rated the degree of perceived care, the evaluation of their contributions, and the encouragement that they have experienced within their work environment (e.g., *The school values my contribution*

to its well-being) by using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The overall score is calculated by averaging the items on the scale. Higher scores indicate stronger organisational support. In this study, a one-factor solution explained 60.87% of the variance (factor loadings ranged from 0.72 to 0.84).

*The Job Diagnostic Survey* (JDS, Hackman & Oldman, 1975) consists of 14 items assessing overall job satisfaction. This scale includes assessments of satisfaction with specific job domains such as pay, security, colleagues, supervision, and growth/development (e.g., *How satisfied are you with the amount of personal growth and development you get in doing your job*). Combining facets to form a composite measure was used in a previous study (Duffy et al., 1998). The items are rated on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The overall score is calculated by averaging the items on the scale. A higher score points to higher job satisfaction. In this study, a one-factor solution of facet-specific measurements explained 58.11% of the variance (factor loadings ranged from 0.64 to 0.88).

*The Satisfaction with Life Scale* (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985) assesses the degree of participants' satisfaction with their life (e.g., *In most ways my life is close to my ideal*). It has 5 items which are rated on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The overall score is calculated by averaging the items on the scale. A higher score points to higher life satisfaction. The principal component analysis of the items resulted in a one-factor solution (factor loadings ranged from 0.71 to 0.89), which explained 66.29% of the variance.

*Work experience*, measured in years of teaching, was used as a control variable due to its significant correlations with perceiving ( $r = 0.15, p < 0.01$ ) and living a calling ( $r = 0.13, p < 0.05$ ). This aligns with meta-analytic findings showing that older individuals tend to report a stronger presence of calling, though correlations are small (Dobrow et al., 2023).

All scales used in the study demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficients exceeding 0.80 (Table 1).

## Overview of data analyses

Data were initially screened for missing values, outliers, and violations of assumptions underlying the planned analyses. No outliers were detected, and skewness and kurtosis values fell within acceptable ranges, indicating no substantial deviation from normality. Correlational analyses were conducted to examine the bivariate relations among the five examined constructs. Hypotheses were tested using regression analyses implemented with the PROCESS macro (version 4.1) for SPSS 26 (Hayes,

2022). Bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 resamples and 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were employed (Models 4, 6, 7, and 83). All variables were standardised prior to inclusion in the regression models.

## RESULTS

**TABLE 1**  
Descriptive statistics and correlations of perceiving a calling, organisational support, living a calling, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction

	$\alpha$	Range	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1 Perceiving a calling	0.90	2.50 – 5.00	4.61	0.58	-				
2 Organisational support	0.91	1.38 – 7.00	5.14	1.23	0.18**	-			
3 Living a calling	0.93	2.17 – 5.00	4.38	0.66	0.70**	0.29**	-		
4 Job satisfaction	0.87	2.14 – 5.00	3.80	0.56	0.33**	0.58**	0.51**	-	
5 Life satisfaction	0.86	1.80 – 7.00	5.38	1.00	0.31**	0.28**	0.39**	0.44**	-

Note. Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ); \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

	Outcome	Predictor	$\beta$	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Mediation	Model 1:	Perceiving a calling	0.70	0.04	18.87	0.000
		Living a calling	0.03	0.04	0.72	0.473
	Model 2:	Perceiving a calling	-0.05	0.06	-0.74	0.458
		Living a calling	0.55	0.06	8.81	0.000
		Work experience	-0.05	0.05	-1.07	0.288
Moderated mediation	Model 1:	Perceiving a calling	0.69	0.04	18.50	0.000
		Living a calling	0.16	0.04	4.45	0.000
		Interaction term	0.11	0.04	2.89	0.004
		Work experience	0.05	0.04	1.34	0.183
	Model 2:	Perceiving a calling	-0.05	0.06	-0.74	0.458
		Living a calling	0.55	0.06	8.81	0.000
	Work experience	-0.05	0.05	-1.07	0.288	
Moderated serial mediation	Full model:	Perceiving a calling	0.09	0.06	1.44	0.151
		Living a calling	0.18	0.07	2.60	0.010
		Job satisfaction	0.34	0.05	6.11	0.000
		Work experience	-0.11	0.05	-2.35	0.019

**TABLE 2**  
Summary of standardised regression coefficients estimating living a calling, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction

Note. Standardised coefficients are reported. Work experience was included in the analysis as a covariate. Interaction term = perceiving a calling x perceived organisational support.

Before testing the full model, a mediation analysis was conducted to examine whether living a calling served as a significant mediator between perceiving a calling and job satisfaction. Additionally, a moderation analysis was performed to assess whether organisational support moderated the relationship between perceiving a calling and living a calling. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 2.

## Mediation model

The path coefficients (a, b, c, c') estimating the strength of the hypothesised causal associations are presented in Table 2. Results indicated that perceiving a calling positively predicted living a calling (95% CI [0.626, 0.771];  $R^2 = 0.50$ ,  $F_{(2,377)} = 184.26$ ), supporting Hypothesis 1. Perceiving a calling also positively predicted job satisfaction (95% CI [0.240, 0.430];  $R^2 = 0.11$ ,  $F_{(2,377)} = 23.60$ ). In line with Hypothesis 2, living a calling was a significant predictor of job satisfaction (95% CI [0.426, 0.671]). Furthermore, job satisfaction was positively related to life satisfaction (95% CI [0.234, 0.448]), supporting Hypothesis 3. The indirect effect of perceiving a calling on life satisfaction, via living a calling and job satisfaction, was significant ( $\beta = 0.12$ ,  $SE = 0.03$ , 95% CI [0.078, 0.177],  $R^2 = 0.25$ ,  $F_{(4,375)} = 30.61$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), supporting Hypothesis 4. The mediation was complete, as the direct effect became nonsignificant (95% CI [-0.033, 0.216]).

## Moderated mediation model

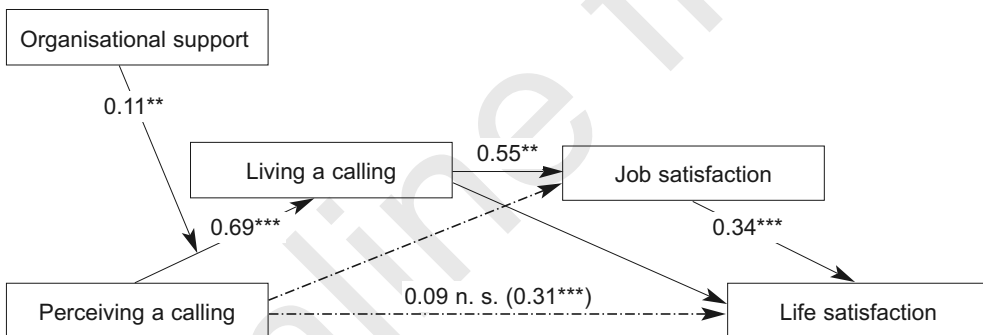
The moderation analyses (Table 2) revealed that organisational support (95% CI [0.090, 0.231]) significantly moderates the relationship between perceiving a calling and living a calling ( $R^2 = 0.53$ ,  $F_{(4,375)} = 107.07$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The interaction index for living a calling was significant (95% CI [0.034, 0.181];  $R^2_{ch} = 0.01$ ,  $F_{(1,375)} = 8.33$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The moderated mediation model was supported, as the confidence interval did not include zero ( $\beta = 0.06$ ,  $SE = 0.02$ , 95% CI [0.019, 0.103]).

The moderated serial mediation model (Figure 1) was also supported. Specifically, the relationship between perceiving a calling and life satisfaction was mediated by living a calling and job satisfaction, and organisational support significantly moderated the association between perceiving a calling and living a calling. The total effect of perceiving a calling on life satisfaction was positive (95% CI [0.212, 0.405],  $R^2 = 0.10$ ,  $F_{(1,378)} = 39.59$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). After accounting for the mediators, the direct effect became nonsignificant (95% CI [-0.033, 0.215]), indicating full mediation. The indirect effect of perceiving a calling on life satisfaction through job satisfaction alone was nonsignificant ( $\beta = -0.02$ ,  $SE = 0.02$ , 95% CI [-0.055, 0.029]), highlighting the central role of living a calling in the proposed causal sequence ( $\beta = 0.04$ ,  $SE = 0.02$ , 95% CI [0.013, 0.072]). Among

the control variables, work experience had a significant negative effect on life satisfaction (95% CI [-0.196, -0.017]).

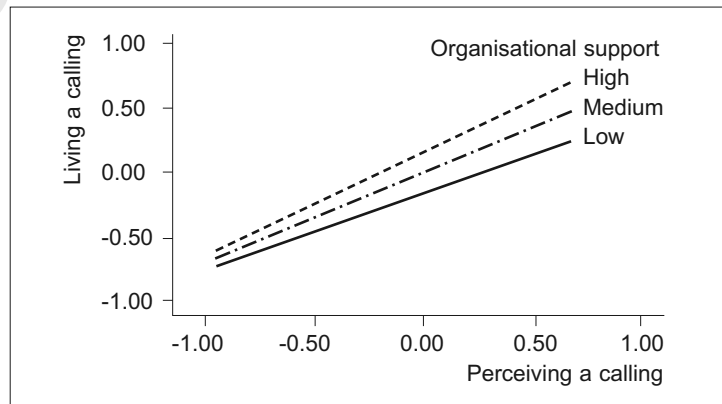
The index of moderated mediation was significant ( $\beta = 0.02$ ,  $SE = 0.01$ , 95% CI [0.006, 0.035]). Conditional indirect effects were significant at  $-1 SD$  ( $\beta = 0.10$ ,  $SE = 0.02$ , 95% CI [0.063, 0.147]), the mean ( $\beta = 0.12$ ,  $SE = 0.02$ , 95% CI [0.077, 0.172]), and  $+1 SD$  ( $\beta = 0.14$ ,  $SE = 0.03$ , 95% CI [0.088, 0.201]) of perceived organisational support. Inspection of the interaction slopes indicated that the indirect effect strengthened as perceived organisational support increased (Figure 2). These findings support Hypothesis 5, demonstrating that the indirect effect of perceiving a calling on life satisfaction, through living a calling and job satisfaction, is contingent upon the level of perceived organisational support. Specifically, when organisational support is high, teachers are more likely to feel enabled to act on their calling, thereby increasing the likelihood of living a calling and experiencing higher job satisfaction and consequently greater life satisfaction. Overall, the proposed model accounted for 25% of the variance in life satisfaction ( $R^2 = 0.25$ ,  $F_{(4,375)} = 30.61$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

FIGURE 1  
Moderated serial mediation of perceiving a calling on life satisfaction



Note. Numbers in parentheses reflect the original paths before controlling for mediators. The interaction term = perceiving a calling x perceived organisational support. Work experience is used as a covariate. \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

FIGURE 2  
Interaction effect of organisational support and perceiving a calling on living a calling



## DISCUSSION

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The present study aimed to deepen the understanding of the mechanisms through which perceiving a calling relates to life satisfaction. Drawing on Work as Calling Theory (Duffy et al., 2018), we tested a well-being model in which perceiving a calling predicts living a calling among individuals who experience organisational (i.e., school) support. Living a calling then leads to higher job satisfaction and, consequently, greater life satisfaction. Overall, the results support the proposed model.

### **Living a calling and job satisfaction as mediators between perceiving a calling and life satisfaction**

Regarding the first aim of the study, the findings confirmed that living a calling and job satisfaction sequentially mediate the relationship between perceiving a calling and life satisfaction. This supports the view that for individuals with a sense of calling, work represents a central and meaningful life domain, with satisfaction at work contributing substantially to overall well-being (Wright et al., 1999). These results align with Duffy et al.'s (2018) model and prior research showing that perceiving a calling fosters living a calling, which enhances job satisfaction and, in turn, life satisfaction (Duffy et al., 2013). Similarly, Dobrow et al. (2023) emphasise that callings serve as an important pathway to a fulfilling life.

The study also showed that perceiving a calling had no direct relationship with life satisfaction, indicating total mediation. This suggests that although perceiving a calling is a prerequisite for living a calling, it is the living of that calling that plays a central role in job satisfaction and, consequently, life satisfaction. This finding is consistent with earlier studies. For example, Duffy et al. (2013) found that living a calling fully mediated the link between perceiving a calling and life satisfaction, while Duffy et al. (2016) reported that perceiving a calling may even relate to lower life satisfaction when both living a calling and life meaning are included as mediators. In other words, individuals who perceive a calling but do not enact it or experience meaning tend to report lower life satisfaction. Conversely, as shown in this and other studies (Duffy et al., 2016), those who live their calling experience higher job satisfaction. Moreover, the relationship between living a calling and job satisfaction was stronger among employees experiencing higher burnout or exploitation, suggesting that living a calling may serve as a protective factor for maintaining job satisfaction even in demanding work environments.

Our model accounted for a substantial proportion of the variance in life satisfaction (25%). However, several predictors identified as relevant in previous studies, such as life mean-

ing (Duffy et al., 2013), were not included. Earlier studies have shown that living a calling is positively associated with both job satisfaction and a sense of life meaning, which in turn may promote life satisfaction (Duffy et al., 2013). Future research could therefore test the model that includes life meaning as a mediator, but also other potential mediators in the link between living a calling and life satisfaction, such as work engagement and self-efficacy. Variables such as work-life and work-family balance represent promising moderators that warrant further investigation.

It should be noted that the model proposed by Duffy et al. (2018) includes two mediators between perceiving a calling and living a calling: the person-environment fit and work meaning. Perceiving a calling is thought to enhance person-environment fit, since individuals with a calling are more likely to choose work environments that fit their calling. This fit, in turn, is expected to foster work meaning and career commitment, ultimately leading to living a calling. Future studies should address these two hypothesised mediators in the link between perceiving and living a calling.

The model tested in the presented study assumes that perceiving a calling is a predictor variable and life satisfaction is the outcome. However, reverse causality is also possible. The theoretical framework proposed by Duffy et al. (2018) suggests that personal factors, including overall life satisfaction, may create conditions that enable individuals to recognise and live out their calling at work. Studies using cross-lagged panel designs indicate that calling and life satisfaction may influence each other bidirectionally. Individuals with a more positive personal outlook (including higher life satisfaction) tend to overcome work-related challenges more effectively and are therefore more likely to experience their work as a calling (Unanue et al., 2017). Research models usually conceptualise life satisfaction as an outcome of having and living a calling; however, more longitudinal and experimental studies are needed to substantiate this assumption.

### **Organisational support as a moderator between perceiving a calling and living a calling**

The second aim of the study was to examine the moderating role of organisational support. In line with Work as a Calling Theory (WCT; Duffy et al., 2018), the results confirmed that organisational support moderates the relationship between perceiving and living a calling in the predicted direction. Specifically, the relationship between perceiving a calling (PC) and living a calling (LC) was stronger among teachers who reported higher levels of support from their school, suggesting that strong organisational support fosters positive work outcomes that

enable individuals to more fully live out their calling. Although schools usually provide the organisational structure and support that is needed for teachers to feel that their work fits their calling, our findings showed that those who perceive greater organisational support are better at translating their calling into action. High organisational support reinforces teachers' beliefs that their contribution to the school's well-being is valued, that their extra efforts are recognised, and that the organisation cares about their job satisfaction and well-being.

The moderating role of organisational support may be especially salient in the current Croatian educational context. Recent research indicates that Croatian teachers are widely dissatisfied with their salaries, social status, and their limited influence on educational reforms. While many report intrinsic satisfaction with teaching, a substantial proportion perceive their profession as socially undervalued and materially under-rewarded (Jokić et al., 2022). In such a context, organisational support may play a crucial role in enabling teachers to transform perceiving a calling into living a calling by buffering the effects of negative structural and societal conditions.

## Practical implications

The findings of this study have practical implications for both school management practice and national education policies. First, it is essential to recognise perceiving a calling as an important factor in selection procedures for the teaching profession. Second, it is important to acknowledge the central role of living a calling in promoting teachers' job satisfaction and overall well-being, as both are linked to higher teaching quality and greater student satisfaction.

At the level of the school management, principals should cultivate an environment that supports teachers' autonomy (e.g., in designing curriculum, teaching methods, and classroom management), introduce reflective sessions to help teachers explore what makes their role profoundly meaningful and provide opportunities for continuous professional development. Organisational support may include taking account of teachers' opinions and well-being, acknowledging and rewarding teachers' extra efforts, and offering additional training opportunities. Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is also essential, as living one's work as a calling may increase the risk of workaholism, burnout and organisational exploitation (Duffy et al., 2018).

At the level of school system, educational authorities should be aware that excessive administrative tasks, large class sizes and stress associated with low salaries often limit teachers' opportunity for creativity or meaningful engagement, thus hindering teachers' ability to *live* their calling at work.

## Limitations and future studies

The first limitation of this study is the use of a one-time self-report measure, which contributes to the strength of all the correlations, due to the inherent method effect. Second, the study is of a cross-sectional type; therefore, longitudinal research is needed to test the proposed model. The sample is comprised of primary school teachers, and it would be interesting to investigate whether the model is also valid in diverse samples, such as secondary school teachers or employees in other organisational settings, such as business environments. In addition, this study addresses only a subset of variables from the Duffy et al. (2018) model. Future research should explore other components of the model, including additional proposed moderators, and consider potential negative outcomes such as burnout.

## CONCLUSION

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Having a calling does not necessarily guarantee higher job or life satisfaction. What seems to be more important is the ability to live one's calling, which requires support from school principals and colleagues. Teachers who can live their calling tend to experience greater job satisfaction, which may, in turn, spill over into higher life satisfaction.

## Acknowledgment

This research was supported by a grant from the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Teacher Education, for presenting preliminary results at the 17th European Congress of Psychology (July 2022, Ljubljana, Slovenia).

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## Dobrobit učitelja: uloga poziva i organizacijske podrške

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Rad se bavi istraživanjem zadovoljstva životom učitelja iz perspektive Teorije posla kao poziva. U istraživanju se ispitala: a) medijacijska uloga življenja poziva i zadovoljstva poslom u odnosu između percipiranja poziva i životnoga zadovoljstva, b) moderirajuća uloga organizacijske podrške u odnosu između percipiranoga poziva i življenja poziva. Tri stotine osamdeset učitelja razredne nastave (96 % žene, 20 godina radnog staža u prosjeku) sudjelovalo je u istraživanju. Testiran je model moderirane serijalne medijacije. Rezultati su pokazali da su i življenje poziva i zadovoljstvo poslom medijatori između percipiranoga poziva i zadovoljstva životom. Percepcija poziva je pozitivno

DRUŠ. ISTRAŽ. ZAGREB  
GOD. 35 (2026), BR. 0,  
STR. 000-000

JURČEC, L. ET AL.:  
TEACHER'S WELL-BEING...

povezana sa življenjem poziva, što dovodi do većeg zadovoljstva poslom i, posljedično, do većega životnog zadovoljstva. Također, percipirani poziv u većoj je mjeri pozitivno povezan sa življenjem poziva onda kada postoji organizacijska podrška. Rezultati podržavaju predloženi model te imaju teorijske i praktične implikacije na području školskoga menadžmenta i dobrobiti učitelja.

Ključne riječi: poziv, zadovoljstvo poslom, zadovoljstvo životom, organizacijska podrška, učitelji



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