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The Effect of Remote-work Attitude on Life Satisfaction: Investigating the Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

Oğuz BAŞOL¹, Mehmet Fatih ÇÖMLEKÇİ²

Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic emerged amid the transformations created by technological advances in working life and has led to the peak of remote and hybrid working settings worldwide. The present study aims to focus on the mediating role of job satisfaction regarding the relation between remote working and life satisfaction. The sample of the study consists of 415 white-collar workers living in different regions of Turkey, with at least an undergraduate degree, and has remote-working experience during the Covid-19 pandemic. SmartPLS 3 package program was used in the analysis of the data. As a result, we found that only skill development and organizational support dimensions of the remote working attitude affect job and life satisfaction. Also, we found that job satisfaction has a partial mediating role between skill development and life satisfaction. However, in the case of the relationship between organizational support and life satisfaction, job satisfaction emerged as a full mediator.

Keywords: remote work, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, Covid-19, mediating effect.

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic emerged amid the transformations created by technological advances in working life and has led remote and hybrid working practices to bolster worldwide. According to research by World Economic Forum and IPSOS, 39% of the employees work remotely always, mostly, or sometimes; which is 15 points higher than the measurement before the pandemic. Moreover, two-thirds of the respondents claim that they are more productive with flexible

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working arrangements and organizations should consider remote-working as an option even after Covid-19 restrictions come to an end (Boyon, 2021). This data points out that remote working settings will have an increasing influence on the job and daily lives of both employers and employees.

The present study aims to focus on the mediating role of job satisfaction regarding the relation between remote working and life satisfaction. In the literature, life satisfaction is generally linked to job satisfaction, stressing the reciprocal relationship between the two (Unanue *et al.*, 2017; Hunter *et al.*, 2019). Especially after Covid-19, remote working became widespread around the world. We believe that it is important to understand if employees' attitude toward remote working applications affects their life satisfaction and if job satisfaction has a mediating role between the two constructs. Also, we intend to propose some recommendations based on our research to improve the remote work attitude of the employees for the higher job and life satisfaction. In this context, we aim to test the following hypotheses:

H₁: Remote work positively affects the job satisfaction

H_{1a}: Positive attitude towards remote work positively affects job satisfaction.

H_{1b}: Avoiding negative attitudes towards remote work positively affects job satisfaction.

H_{1c}: Skill development for remote work positively affects job satisfaction.

H_{1d}: Organizational support for remote work positively affects job satisfaction.

H₂: Remote work positively affects life satisfaction

H_{2a}: Positive attitude towards remote work positively affects life satisfaction.

H_{2b}: Avoiding negative attitudes towards remote work positively affects life satisfaction.

H_{2c}: Skill development for remote work positively affects life satisfaction.

H_{2d}: Organizational support for remote work positively affects life satisfaction.

H₃: Job satisfaction positively affects life satisfaction.

H₄: Job satisfaction has a mediating role in the relationship between remote work and life satisfaction.

H_{4a}: Job satisfaction has a mediating role in the relationship between positive attitude towards remote work and life satisfaction.

H_{4b}: Job satisfaction has a mediating role in the relationship between avoiding negative attitudes towards remote work and life satisfaction.

H_{4c}: Job satisfaction has a mediating role in the relationship between skill development for remote work and life satisfaction.

H_{4d}: Job satisfaction has a mediating role in the relationship between organizational support for remote work and life satisfaction.

Literature Review

Remote work can be defined as working at home or in another place outside of the employer's premises through new information and communication technologies (ILO, 2021). In the literature, both positive and negative sides of remote working for employees have been underlined. Spatiotemporal flexibility (Hardill & Green, 2003; Nickson & Siddons, 2012: 2), better/improved work-life balance (Nickson & Siddons, 2012: 2; Flores, 2019: 44), saved time in the absence of commuting (Klopotek, 2017) and higher productivity (Bloom *et al.*, 2015; Choudhury *et al.*, 2019) are widely stated as positive outcomes of switching to remote working. Employees can achieve considerable satisfaction thanks to the greater control they have over their daily life and working hours (ILO, 2021). According to Baker *et al.* (2007), improving work-life balance for employees and increasing productivity for employers are the main positives of remote working applications. Moreover, named as "digital nomads", some individuals prefer to work remotely while traveling the world and obtain location-independent lifestyles (Reichenberger, 2018). The spatial and temporal flexibility of remote working practices paves the way for innovative, digital, and progressive job designs.

On the other hand, diminishing opportunities for face-to-face communication/interaction (Ferreria *et al.*, 2021; Guinaliu & Jordan, 2016), loneliness and isolation (Stone, Horan & Flaxman, 2018), adopting necessary digital skills (Vartiainen & Andriessen, 2006) and difficulties of separating work and home life (Richter *et al.*, 2006; Raghuram *et al.*, 2001) can be stated as the prominent downsides of remote working for the employees. Changing daily routines, adapting to the use of new communication technologies, and taking care of children when working at home emerged as other challenges (Allen *et al.*, 2021). A study in Germany showed that lockdown conditions and mandatory remote working experience had a negative effect on work satisfaction and family life, especially for mothers (Möhring *et al.*, 2021). Also, the frequent use of digital technologies and the feeling of being constantly reachable online can trigger stress and psychological problems. The spillover of remote-working technologies to the family domain may exacerbate the conflict between daily life and working life (Gaudioso, 2017). Usually named as "work to family spillover", work-related and never-ending tasks which is a consequence of constant connectivity may have a negative effect on the behaviors and emotions of the employees (Yang and Yin, 2020; McDaniel *et al.*, 2021).

Considering the expanse of remote working practices after national pandemic lockdowns, it became plausible to link remote working experience to job and life satisfaction. Locke (1976) identified job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (p. 1304). Then Hulin and Judge (2003) focused on the psychological aspects of job satisfaction and stressed the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses of employees towards their jobs. According to Kapteyn *et al.* (2010), job or daily activities, social contacts and family, health, and income have a direct influence on

life satisfaction. Given that all these components are directly or indirectly related to the working conditions, it is plausible to focus on job satisfaction as one of the determinants of life satisfaction.

A study by McNall *et al.* (2009) showed that flexible remote work arrangements can be associated with higher job satisfaction and lower turnover percentages. According to a study by Kondratowicz *et al.* (2021) during the Covid-19 pandemic, remote work is associated with job and life satisfaction, and levels of stress, self-efficacy and self-esteem have a mediating role. There are numerous studies in the literature linking remote work with higher levels of job satisfaction (Schall, 2019; Zakaria *et al.*, 2021). In this scenario, the absence of commuting, control over the working schedule, and benefits of being present in the home (spending time with family, sparing time for hobbies, etc.) are the main motivators. Perceived autonomy can be regarded as another positive mediator between remote work and job satisfaction (Schall, 2019). Regarding life satisfaction, Bellmann and Hübler (2021) found that employees working from home are happier than those who work at the office. On the other hand, loneliness, emotional exhaustion, and stress are emerging as the main obstacles to positive well-being when working remotely (Iqbal *et al.*, 2020).

Methodology

The methodology section consists of the introduction of the research sample and data collection tools.

Research Sample

The sample of the present study is consisting of white-collar workers living in different regions of Turkey, with at least an undergraduate degree, and having remote-working experience during the Covid-19 pandemic. We reached our sample via LinkedIn, a social media platform mostly used by professionals. We used the snowball sampling method and gathered an ethical committee permit prior to the data collection process. Moreover, we informed every participant with a detailed explanation about the scientific purposes of the survey and asked for their consent before the implementation of the survey. Our survey was open for participation for a month, and after that period, we collected 415 surveys.

58.3% of the participants are private-sector employees. 56.4% of the participants are women and 51.3% are married. It is seen that the participants mostly do not have children (66.3%). 51.6% of the participants have received undergraduate education and 73.7% of them have employee status. When the ages of the participants were examined, it was seen that they ranged from 22 to 65, and the mean age was 34 ± 6.2 . When the period of participants' work experience was examined, it was determined that it ranged from 1 to 40 years and the average period of experience

was 10 ± 6.4 years. When the participants were examined in terms of income, it was determined that the income ranged between 2200 TL (\$270) and 35000 TL (\$4310) and the average income was 7140 ± 4078 TL (\$880). The weekly working hours varied between 10 and 80 and the average weekly working hours was 41 ± 10.8 ; weekly remote working time varied between 2 hours and 70 hours, and the average weekly remote working time was 26 ± 16.1 hours.

Data Collection

The data collection tool used in the research consists of four parts. In the first part, there are 10 questions regarding the demographic characteristics of the participants (sector, gender, marital status, having a child, education level, job position, age, job experience, weekly working time, weekly remote working time).

In the second part, we utilized the “Remote-Work Attitude Scale” (Başol & Çömlekçi, 2022), which is valid and reliable and consists of 16 items (sample item: Remote work has positively affected my work performance). We used 5-point Likert-type evaluation for the implementation of the survey (1: I strongly disagree, 5: I strongly agree). The remote work attitude scale used in the research consists of 4 sub-factors. The first factor of the scale is the “Positive Attitude” variable. There are 4 items in this factor, and an increase in the score on the relevant factor means that the participant’s attitude towards remote work improves. The second factor of the scale is the “Avoiding Negative Attitudes” variable. There are 4 items in this factor that expresses the negative attitudes of the participants towards remote work, and the increase in the score obtained from this factor indicates that the negative attitudes of the participants such as stress and conflict towards remote work decrease. The third factor of the scale is the “Skill Development” variable. There are 4 items in this factor focusing on the digital skills of the participants that developed after remote work, and an increase in the score obtained from this factor indicates that the participants’ skills such as communication, technology, and time management have improved with remote work. The fourth factor of the scale is the “Organizational Support” variable. There are also 4 items in this factor showing the support of the organizations for remote working applications, and an increase in the score obtained from this factor indicates that the organization of the remote worker gives higher support to the employee to improve their digital and offline working environment. The scale is evaluated as “Remote Working Attitude” by taking the average of all items. An increase in the score obtained from the scale indicates that the participants’ positive attitudes towards remote work, skill development of the employees, and organizational support improves, while negative attitudes towards remote work decrease.

In the third part, we used the “5 item-satisfaction with life scale”, which was developed by Diener *et al.* (1985) and adapted to Turkish society by Dağlı and Baysal (2016). Finally, we used the “5 item-job satisfaction scale” which was

developed by Brayfield and Rothe (1951) and adapted to Turkish society by Başol and Çömlekçi (2021).

Results and Discussion

There are two types of structural equation modeling (SEM) methods in the relevant literature (Zhen *et al.*, 2022). The first one is the Covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) which estimates a set of model parameters by developing a theoretical covariance matrix and must satisfy a set of assumptions (e.g., normality of data and minimum sample size) (Hair *et al.*, 2013). And the second is partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) which concentrates on maximizing the explained variance of dependent latent constructs and can overcome the assumption that must be fulfilled in CB-SEM, such as high model complexity, small sample size, and nonnormal data (Hair *et al.*, 2011). As our model includes mediation, SmartPLS 3.0 software was used to examine the hypotheses described in our theoretical model. The proposed model of the research can be seen in *Figure 1*.

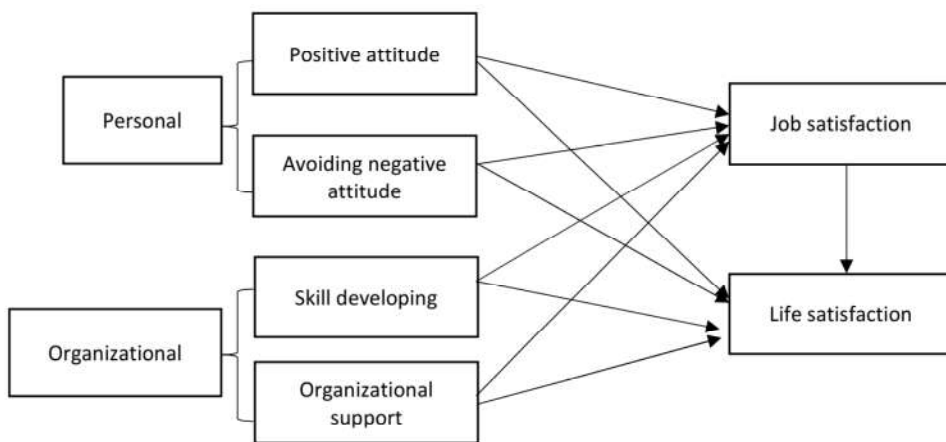


Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

Reliability and Validity Results of the Model

In order to test the proposed research model in the SmartPLS program, the measurement model must be valid and reliable. For a research model to be deemed valid, outer loadings of indicators should be above 0.60, Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability values should be above 0.70 and the average variance extracted (AVE) values should be above 0.50.

Table 1. Construct validity and reliability results of the research model

Latent Variable	Indicators	Outer Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Job satisfaction	i1	1.108	0.932	0.962	0.929	0.733
	i2	0.612				
	i3	0.932				
	i4	0.835				
	i5	0.706				
Organizational support	u13	0.923	0.938	0.939	0.937	0.789
	u14	0.878				
	u15	0.820				
	u16	0.927				
Skill development	u5	0.886	0.892	0.894	0.890	0.670
	u6	0.802				
	u7	0.727				
	u8	0.849				
Life satisfaction	y1	0.805	0.903	0.918	0.903	0.703
	y2	0.712				
	y3	0.999				
	y4	0.813				

After the analysis of the proposed model, we observed that the latent variables of “positive attitude” and “avoiding negative attitude”, which are personal section of the scale two factors in the remote working scale, are not statistically significant (Lower CR, CA, AVE). Therefore, we excluded those variables from our research model, and in Figure 2, the new proposed research model can be seen. The results show that “skill development”, “organizational support”, “life satisfaction”, and “job satisfaction” variables were reliable. The outer loadings of the indicators are above the expected value of 0.60. Moreover, Cronbach’s alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability values are above the expected value of 0.70 and average variance extracted (AVE) values are above the expected value of 0.50. The above results provided evidence of good construct reliability. On the other hand, to ensure the discriminant validity of the model, the square root of the AVE value should be higher than the correlations in the relevant column (& Fornell-Larcker criterion), and the HTMT values should be below 0.90.

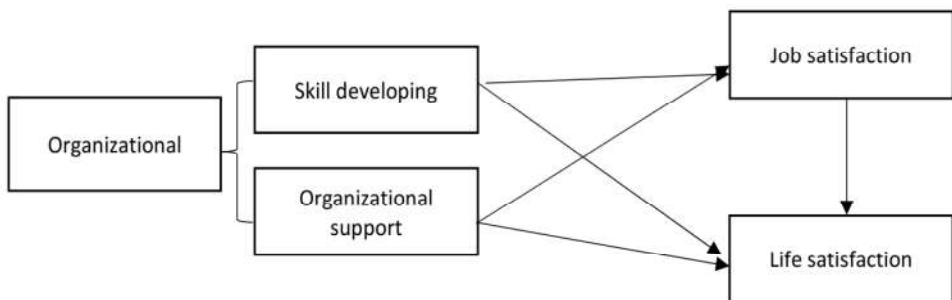


Figure 2. New proposed research model

Table 2. Discriminant validity - AVE & Fornell-Larcker values

	AVE	Job satisfaction	Life satisfaction	Organizational support	Skill development
Job satisfaction	0.733	0.856			
Life satisfaction	0.703	0.737	0.839		
Organizational support	0.789	0.463	0.439	0.888	
Skill development	0.670	0.334	0.434	0.505	0.818

Diagonal elements in bold font show the square root of AVE for the corresponding construct.

Table 3. Discriminant validity - HTMT values

	Job satisfaction	Life satisfaction	Organizational support
Life satisfaction	0.752		
Organizational support	0.454	0.436	
Skill development	0.321	0.430	0.502

According to the findings in Tables 2 and 3, the above results provided evidence of good construct validity. After reliability and validity analysis, it is possible to claim that the model is reliable and valid. In addition, we examined the collinearity between construct and we saw that VIF values are below 5 which is the critical level (Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2011).

Hypothesis Testing

According to R² values, the variance in job satisfaction can be explained with “skill development” and “organizational support” by %22.8. For life satisfaction, this rate is evaluated as %25.3. f² refers effect size of variables. According to analysis, the effect size of organizational support upon job satisfaction seems medium and skill development is low (f²: 0.02 is low; medium up to 0.15; up to 0.35 is high). Accordingly, the effect size of organizational support and skill development is medium upon life satisfaction. Lastly, Q² shows the estimation accuracy, and this value should be positive and above 0. According to results estimations are significant.

Table 4. Path coefficient and t values of the model

	Path coefficient	t
Skill developing -> Job satisfaction	0.134**	2.346
Skill developing -> Life satisfaction	0.285**	4.607
Organizational support -> Job satisfaction	0.396**	7.703
Organizational support -> Life satisfaction	0.295**	5.379

** : p < 0,01

According to the findings, the positive attitude towards remote work is not significantly associated with the job (H_{1a}) and life satisfaction (H_{2a}), and avoiding negative attitude towards remote work is not significantly associated with the job (H_{1b}) and life satisfaction (H_{2b}) too. After these results, we concluded that personal perception of remote work is not significantly associated with job and life satisfaction. Skill development is positively associated with the job (H_{1c}) and life satisfaction (H_{2c}); on the other hand, organizational support is positively associated with job (H_{1d}) and life satisfaction (H_{2d}). After these results, we concluded that organizational perception towards remote work is significantly increased job and life satisfaction. As striking results, we saw that improving the workers' perception towards remote work is not related to job and life satisfaction, but improving the organizational perception towards remote work on the contrary positively increases job and life satisfaction (Table 5).

Testing Mediating Effect

According to R^2 values, the variance in job satisfaction can be explained with "skill development" and "organizational support" by %22.3. For life satisfaction, this rate is evaluated as %60.9. f^2 refers effect size of variables. According to analysis the effect size of organizational support upon job satisfaction seems medium and skill development is low (f^2 : 0.02 is low; medium up to 0.15; up to 0.35 is high). Accordingly, the effect size of job satisfaction upon life satisfaction seems high, skill development is low and organizational support has no effect upon life satisfaction. Lastly, Q^2 shows the estimation accuracy, and this value should be positive and above 0. According to the results, estimations are significant. In addition, we examined the collinearity between construct, and we saw that VIF values are below 5 which is a critical level (Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2011).

Table 5. Coefficient and t values of the mediating model

	Path coefficient	t
Skill development -> Job satisfaction	0.130**	2.154
Skill development -> Life satisfaction	0.197**	3.758
Organizational support -> Job satisfaction	0.394**	7.253
Organizational support -> Life satisfaction	0.027	0.493
Job satisfaction -> Life satisfaction	0.678**	14.389

** : $p < 0,01$

According to the findings, job satisfaction is positively associated with life satisfaction (H_3). Since the positive attitude towards remote work and avoiding the negative attitude towards remote work is not significantly associated with job and life satisfaction, mediating effect cannot be calculated. Therefore, mediating effect of job satisfaction between positive attitude towards remote work and life

satisfaction (H_{4a}) and the mediating effect of job satisfaction between avoiding negative attitude towards remote work and life satisfaction (H_{4b}) is not supported. Results show that job satisfaction has a partial mediating role in the relationship between skill development for remote work and life satisfaction (0.285 t: 4.607 -> 0.197 t: 3.758) (H_{4c}). Specifically, this result shows that skill development for remote work increases life satisfaction partly via job satisfaction. And lastly, job satisfaction has a fully mediating role in the relationship between organizational support for remote work and life satisfaction (0.295 t: 5.379 -> 0.027 t: 0.493) (H_{4d}). This result shows that improving organizational support for remote work increases life satisfaction via job satisfaction (Table 5, 6, and 7).

Table 6. Specific indirect effect results

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Skill development -> Job satisfaction -> Life satisfaction	0.088	0.087	0.041	2.128	0.034
Organizational support -> Job satisfaction -> Life satisfaction	0.267	0.265	0.041	6.467	0.000

	Wo JS		W JS	
	coefficient	t	coefficient	t
Skill development -> life satisfaction	0.285	4.607	0.197	3.758
Organizational support -> life satisfaction	0.295	5.379	0.027	0.493

Accordingly, job satisfaction has a partial mediating role between skill development and life satisfaction. In the relationship between organizational support and life satisfaction, job satisfaction is the full mediator.

Table 8. Hypothesis results

Hypothesis	Remarks
H_{1a} : Positive attitude towards remote working positively affects job satisfaction.	Not supported
H_{1b} : Avoiding negative attitude towards remote working positively affects job satisfaction.	Not supported
H_{1c} : Skill developing towards remote working positively affects job satisfaction.	Supported
H_{1d} : Organizational support towards remote working positively affects job satisfaction.	Supported
H_{2a} : Positive attitude towards remote working positively affects life satisfaction.	Not supported
H_{2b} : Avoiding negative attitude towards remote working positively affects life satisfaction.	Not supported

H _{2c} : Skill developing towards remote working positively affects life satisfaction.	Supported
H _{2d} : Organizational support towards remote working positively affects life satisfaction.	Supported
H ₃ : Job satisfaction positively affects life satisfaction	Supported
H _{4a} : Job satisfaction has a mediating role in the relationship between positive attitude towards remote work and life satisfaction.	Not supported
H _{4b} : Job satisfaction has a mediating role in the relationship between avoiding negative attitude towards remote work and life satisfaction.	Not supported
H _{4c} : Job satisfaction has a mediating role in the relationship between skill developing towards remote work and life satisfaction.	Partially Supported
H _{4d} : Job satisfaction has a mediating role in the relationship between organizational support towards remote work and life satisfaction.	Supported

Conclusion

The findings of our research show that the only skill development and organizational support dimensions of the remote work attitude affect job and life satisfaction. Also, we found that job satisfaction has a partial mediating role between skill development and life satisfaction. However, in the case of the relationship between organizational support and life satisfaction, job satisfaction emerged as a full mediator.

According to our model, developing positive attitudes and avoidance of negative attitudes, which are personal aspects of remote work, do not have either direct or indirect effects on job and life satisfaction. However, the other two dimensions of the remote-working attitude, “organizational support” and “skill development”, namely the organizational aspects of remote work, are associated with job and life satisfaction. These results point out that technical and social support towards remote working settings by organizations and skill development applications (training, increasing digital capabilities, etc.) positively affect the remote work attitude of the employee. Correlatively, this positive effect on remote work attitude stems from improvement in organizational support, and skill development improves life satisfaction via job satisfaction.

In line with the study of Bulinska-Stangrecka and Bagienska (2021) who worked with IT employees in Poland, it can be stated that organizational support and positive employee relations can improve the level of job satisfaction. Our research shows that a positive approach towards remote-working is mostly related to organizational support, overcoming the personal opinions of employees towards

remote-working. When organizations build a sustainable remote-working setting by providing adequate digital infrastructure, employee training, and balancing the workload, this approach leads to increased job and life satisfaction of the employees. This result corresponds to the research findings of Regueros (2021), which stresses the effect of individuals' appraisals of their remote working arrangements on job and life satisfaction levels.

According to research by Sull *et al.* (2020), employers should maintain frequent and consistent communication in addition to providing support for the physical and mental health of the employees. In sum, organizations seeking to boost productivity should not overlook the fact that the success of remote working mostly depends on focusing on the emergent needs of employers and strengthening the infrastructure of digital communication technologies. It is well known that lack of organizational support during the implementation of remote work can negatively affect work-life wellness combined with Covid-19 related stress (Como *et al.*, 2021). Furnishing the employees with necessary digital skills by in-service training and enabling the sharing of remote working experiences among employees can provide benefits for the organization while reducing stress and uncertainty perception.

The sample of the study (415 white-collar employees in Turkey) is the main limitation of the research. Performing the analysis via the PLS technique was another limitation. It should be taken into consideration that the results of studies conducted in different countries and with different techniques with wider participation may differ. In the future, researchers can question the relationship of remote work with variables such as work-life balance, work stress, and workload, as well as the mediation and moderation effects of these relationships. Finally, examining the longitudinal effect of remote work on these variables can also make a big difference in the literature.

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