Role of daily recovery experiences and articulation between life domains on health. Comparative study between farm owners and farm workers

Mathieu Le Moal, Olivier Torrès

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Mathieu Le Moal, PhD Student, Université de Montpellier – MOMA, Université Paul Valery Montpellier – EPSYLON.

Site Richter, Avenue Raymond Dugrand, +3378801719, mathieu.lemoal.pro@gmail.com, https://sites.google.com/view/mathieu-le-moal.

Olivier Torrès, University Professor, Université de Montpellier – MOMA.

Keywords: work-life interface, recovery experiences, health, agricultural worker, quantitative research, entrepreneurs

Abstract:

This study investigates the role of daily recovery experiences and the articulation between life domains on health among farm owners and farm workers. It aims to explore how work-home boundaries and recovery mechanisms, such as psychological detachment, relaxation, and mastery, impact well-being and satisfaction with work-life balance in these distinct populations. Existing literature highlights that farmers, particularly farm owners, face heightened mental health challenges due to blurred boundaries between work and personal life, financial stress, and social isolation. Previous research has extensively examined recovery experiences in other sectors but lacks focus on the agricultural sector, especially among entrepreneurs like farm owners. The study involved a survey of 916 farm owners and 757 farm workers, analyzing key recovery dimensions (psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery, and control) and their correlation with work-home segmentation preferences and well-being. Multiple linear regressions and independent sample tests were conducted to explore these relationships. Farm owners report significantly lower levels of work-home segmentation, psychological detachment, and relaxation compared to farm workers. They also experience lower satisfaction with work-life balance and higher burnout. Recovery experiences positively correlate with higher work-life balance satisfaction, with psychological detachment and relaxation being key predictors. Work-life balance satisfaction also significantly improves well-being and reduces burnout in both groups. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions promoting recovery experiences, particularly for farm owners who struggle with blurred work-life boundaries. Programs focusing on enhancing psychological detachment and relaxation could improve work-life balance and reduce mental health risks in agricultural workers. This study contributes to the understanding of how recovery experiences and work-home boundaries affect health in the agricultural sector. It also provides evidence for the development of tailored mental health interventions for farm owners, addressing their unique recovery challenges.

Introduction

Farm workers and farm owners face significant challenges that affect their mental and physical health. Farm workers, in particular, are exposed to greater physical constraints than those in other professions, and they often face heightened levels of stress due to external factors like weather conditions and regulatory pressures (Célérier, 2014; Truchot & Andela, 2018). This chronic exposure to stress is reflected in alarming suicide rates among farmers, which far exceed the national average (Deffontaines, 2014; Bossard et al., 2013; Sénat, 2022). Research suggests that long-term exposure to toxic substances, such as pesticides, may also play a significant role in the mental health challenges faced by this population (London et al., 2012)

Farm owners, on the other hand, experience intense pressures related to the blurred boundaries between their professional and personal lives, compounded by economic challenges, feelings of isolation, and a lack of mental health resources. Similar to entrepreneurs, farm owners must constantly juggle the demands of their business with their personal well-being (Lenoir & Ramboarison-Lalao, 2014; Torrès, 2017). These issues have been exacerbated by rapid global changes in agricultural practices and market pressures, leaving many farmers struggling to adapt to new realities (Campéon & Batt-Moilot, 2008). Moreover, criticism of farming practices, such as the use of pesticides, has led to increased psychological pressure on farmers (Bouvier et al., 2022).

Given the mental health crisis among agricultural workers, it is essential to explore recovery experiences that can improve well-being and mitigate the impact of these stressors (De Bloom et al., 2009; Sonnentag et al., 2022). A recent systematic review by Younker and Radunovich (2022) highlights the scarcity of well-evaluated mental health interventions targeting farmers, especially in terms of mental health literacy and peer support programs. Their work emphasizes the need for more comprehensive interventions that address the specific psychosocial challenges faced by farmers. As such, this study aims to investigate the role of daily recovery experiences, such as psychological detachment and relaxation, in enhancing the well-being of both farm owners and farm workers, as well as their satisfaction with the balance between work and personal life.

Work-Home Boundaries

The concept of work-home boundaries is crucial in understanding how individuals manage the separation between their professional and personal lives. Allen et al. (2014) defines boundaries as "the socially constructed lines that individuals negotiate and manage to maintain distinct roles in work and family domains." These boundaries are dynamic and vary based on the individual's management strategies, often involving role transitions (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000). When individuals move between work and home roles, they must cross these boundaries, which can either be more segmented or integrated depending on their preferences. Ashforth et al. (2000) and Clark (2000) both explored the idea of role transitions—the process of moving between professional and personal roles—using the terms "boundary" and "border," respectively. Role transitions occur when an individual shifts from one role (e.g., employee) to another (e.g., parent). These transitions can be either micro transitions, which are frequent and recurring (e.g., commuting between home and work), or macro transitions, which are less frequent and often permanent (e.g., retirement). Micro transitions often involve rites of passage, helping the individual mentally and physically switch between roles (Ashforth et al., 2000). The management of these boundaries can be understood as existing on a continuum between segmentation and integration. Segmentation refers to the desire to keep work and personal life separate, both physically and mentally, and involves maintaining rigid, impermeable boundaries. According to Kreiner (2006), segmentation helps reduce role conflict and prevents the spillover of stress from one domain to the other. Conversely, integration involves more permeable and flexible boundaries, where work and personal life blend, making role transitions smoother but potentially leading to role confusion and greater difficulty in maintaining a clear distinction between domains (Ashforth et al., 2000). In the context of farmers, managing work-home boundaries can be particularly challenging due to the nature of agricultural work, where professional and personal spaces often overlap. As Lenoir and Ramboarison-Lalao (2014) point out, farmers frequently face blurred boundaries between work and home, making it harder to maintain a clear division between these two domains. This complexity makes farmers an interesting population for studying work-home segmentation preferences and boundary management strategies, given the unique pressures they face.

Daily Recovery Experiences

The concept of recovery was initially studied in the context of physical illness, disability, and addiction, later extending to mental health (Ralph, 2000). The primary aim of recovery in these fields was to alleviate physical and mental symptoms to a point where they no longer interfere with daily functioning (Davidson et al., 2005; Moos & Schaefer, 1984). In organizational literature, particularly within employee research, evening recovery activities have been explored as a way to reduce stress and increase well-being (Sonnentag, 2001). Recovery in this context is defined as the process of “unwinding and restoration during which a person’s strain level, increased as a reaction to a stressor or demand, returns to its pre-stressor level” (Sonnentag et al., 2017,

p. 366). Daily recovery experiences refer to psychological processes that occur during off-work activities or breaks (Sonnentag et al., 2022). Sonnentag and Fritz (2007) identify four key psychological experiences that are essential for effective recovery: psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery, and control. Psychological detachment refers to mentally and physically distancing oneself from work tasks, essentially disconnecting from work-related worries. This detachment helps reduce the functional demands placed on individuals during work, which allows affective and self-regulatory resources to be replenished. Research highlights the significant benefits of this type of detachment (Bennett et al., 2018; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007, 2015). Relaxation is characterized by a reduction in physiological arousal and a cognitive reset, often achieved through activities like meditation or nature walks. Mastery involves engaging in activities that develop new skills or resources outside of work, such as learning a new hobby or improving athletic abilities. Control refers to the freedom to choose leisure activities and the conditions under which they take place (e.g., deciding who to be with, when, and where). This sense of control enhances self-efficacy and contributes to the regulation of behavior. Notably, it is how these activities are experienced, rather than the specific activities themselves, that supports recovery (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007; Sonnentag et al., 2022). These recovery experiences play a crucial role in promoting well-being and mitigating the impact of work-related stress (de Bloom et al., 2009; Sonnentag et al., 2017; Sonnentag et al., 2022). Although there is a wealth of research on recovery experiences among employees in various sectors, specific studies focusing on recovery experiences in the agricultural sector, particularly among farmers, are notably lacking. Given the high stress levels and unique work-life challenges faced by farmers, it is essential to investigate how these recovery mechanisms apply to them. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the role of daily recovery experiences in enhancing farmers' health. Given the differences in work responsibilities and lifestyle between employees (farm workers) and entrepreneurs (farm owners) (Stephan & Roesler, 2010), it is reasonable to expect variations in their recovery experiences. Employees, who typically have more defined work hours, may find it easier to disengage from work during their personal time, while entrepreneurs, who often face ongoing responsibilities and blurred work-life boundaries, may struggle with psychological detachment and other recovery experiences.

Daily Recovery Experiences and Work-Home Boundaries

While work-home boundaries and daily recovery experiences are both well-studied concepts individually, there has been little research linking the two, particularly in the agricultural sector. Hahn and Dormann (2013) suggest that the type of boundary individuals maintain between work and family—whether segmented or integrated—can influence psychological detachment of employees. More segmented boundaries, where work and personal life are kept separate, facilitate better detachment from work-related stress during off-work hours, which is a key component of effective recovery. In the case of farmers, where work-home boundaries are often blurred, the preference for segmentation could play a crucial role in how effectively they engage in daily recovery experiences. Although no studies have specifically examined the relationship between work-home boundaries and recovery experiences in farmers, it is reasonable to hypothesize that those with a preference for more segmented boundaries will experience more effective recovery, including not only psychological detachment, but also relaxation, mastery, and control.

H1. The more farmers have a preference for segmented boundaries, the more they implement (a) psychological detachment, (b) relaxation, (c) mastery, and (d) control as daily recovery experiences.

Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance theory has been extensively analyzed, with Casper et al. (2018) providing a recent meta-analysis. In this framework, balance is defined as "employees' positive evaluation of the combination of their professional and non-professional roles, stemming from the degree to which their emotional experiences, and their perceived involvement and effectiveness in both professional and non-professional roles, are proportional to the value they attach to these roles" (Casper et al., 2018, p. 197). Unlike conflict theories (which focus on the negative impacts of work on family or vice versa) and enrichment theories (which emphasize positive interactions between work and family), the concept of balance offers a holistic view of an individual's multiple life domains (i.e., professional and non-professional roles). Importantly, this theory does not assume a unidirectional influence between roles (e.g., work affecting family or family affecting work) (Wayne et al., 2017).

Within this framework, two distinct dimensions of balance are highlighted: satisfaction with work-life balance, defined as "a global level of satisfaction resulting from an evaluation of how successfully an individual meets the demands of both professional and family roles" (Valcour, 2007, p. 1512), and work-life balance effectiveness, described as "the achievement of role expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and their role partners in both the professional and family domains" (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007, p. 458). This balance model provides a comprehensive perspective on how individuals navigate their different roles (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011), making it especially relevant for the population of entrepreneurs. For many,

achieving a better work-life balance is a key motivation for becoming entrepreneurs, as this status allows them more flexibility in managing their work hours and schedules (Stephan, 2018; Torrès, 2017). However, certain atypical professions, such as artisans and farmers, face greater challenges in balancing their life domains. In these occupations, work-life balance is often judged more difficult to achieve, especially when individuals consider work to be as important, or even more important, than family life (Garner et al., 2005). Moreover, the aspiration for a balanced life has become a significant concern for many individuals, and thus a **strategic** issue for organizations (Guilbert & Lancry, 2009). It is therefore important to explore how the permeability of work-home boundaries and the overall work-life balance impact the ability to engage in recovery experiences, and how these experiences may contribute to subjective well-being.

Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance and Daily Recovery Experiences

Effective recovery plays a crucial role in promoting a healthy work-life balance. Kottwitz et al. (2021) emphasize that sufficient recovery is essential for maintaining work-life balance, especially in reducing the impact of work-related stress. In a study conducted over five consecutive workdays, Calderwood et al. (2021) found that engaging in physical activity during the workday increased feelings of vigor by the end of the day, which in turn enhanced daily satisfaction with work-life balance. Additionally, Michel et al. (2014) demonstrated that mindfulness (a form of relaxation) significantly reduces work-family conflict, increases psychological detachment, and improves satisfaction with work-life balance. While these studies provide valuable insights into how recovery experiences influence work-life balance among salaried employees, there is a noticeable lack of research examining these relationships among entrepreneurs or farmers. Given the unique work conditions faced by these groups, particularly the blurred boundaries between work and personal life, further exploration is needed to understand how daily recovery experiences, such as psychological detachment and relaxation, impact their satisfaction with work-life balance.

H2. The more farmers implement (a) psychological detachment, (b) relaxation, and (c) control as daily recovery experiences, the higher the satisfaction with work-life balance.

Farmers' Mental Health

The physical and mental health of farmers, particularly farm owners, has become a significant societal and economic concern. Research on the health challenges of farmers began in the 1980s, with numerous studies highlighting both mental and physical issues in this population (Daghagh Yazd et al., 2019). Various work-related stressors affect farm owners (Booth & Lloyd, 2000; Firth et al., 2007), leading to emotional and physical exhaustion (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). These stressors are shaped by social, economic, and technological factors. For instance, the rapid introduction of technology, mechanization, and new farming methods has caused an identity crisis for many farm owners, who may struggle to adapt to the modern expectations of their profession (Campéon & Batt-Moilot, 2008). Additionally, the rise of "agribashing"—criticizing agricultural practices for their environmental impact (e.g., use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers)—contributes to increased psychological pressure (Bouvier et al., 2022). A meta-analysis by Daghagh Yazd et al. (2019) identified four primary factors impacting the mental health of farmers: (1) exposure to toxic substances, (2) financial difficulties, (3) climate-related challenges, and (4) poor physical health and work-related injuries. Moreover, stress is widespread among farm owners, with common sources including agricultural economics, regulatory pressures, weather conditions, and occupational hazards (Kallioniemi et al., 2011; Lunner Kolstrup et al., 2013). These stressors appear to affect farm owners similarly across various countries and cultures. Administrative burdens (Mesnel, 2017) and feelings of marginalization (Younker & Radunovich, 2021), combined with a perception of harassment by bureaucratic systems (Lenoir & Ramboarison-Lalao, 2014), further compound the mental health challenges faced by farm owners. Other stressors, such as job insecurity (De Witte, 2005; Sverke et al., 2002), workload, and the moral obligation to preserve family farms for future generations (Campéon & Batt-Moilot, 2008), also contribute to the poor mental health of farm owners. Farm owners often work longer hours than most employed individuals, and their continuous presence at the workplace—usually their home—makes it difficult to separate personal and professional life (Lenoir & Ramboarison-Lalao, 2014).

Mental Health and Satisfaction with Work-Life Balance

According to role balance theory, individuals who engage equally across multiple roles—putting effort, attention, and care into each—experience less tension between these roles and perform them more effectively. This balanced engagement contributes to higher self-esteem, improved well-being, and greater creativity (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Wayne et al. (2017) found that satisfaction with work-life balance predicts better organizational commitment, lower turnover, and improved family performance, such as household task

management. Moreover, work-life balance has been linked to affective commitment, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and family satisfaction (Casper et al., 2018). While studies specifically exploring the link between work-life balance and subjective well-being in entrepreneurs are limited, evidence suggests that a healthy balance improves entrepreneurs' well-being by giving them more time to pursue new business opportunities and better manage family life (Leung et al., 2020). Work-life balance is positively associated with job and family satisfaction and negatively linked to burnout and work-related stress. Additionally, factors such as work hours, job intensity, control, and family-work balance are key stressors that affect mental and physical health (Ben Tahar & Rossi, 2017). Entrepreneurs often face more difficulties balancing work and family responsibilities compared to employees, largely due to heavier workloads (Torrès, 2017). However, it is important to note that there is a notable lack of research specifically examining the relationship between work-life balance and mental health among farmers. Given the unique challenges farm owners face, such as blurred boundaries between work and personal life, further exploration in this area is essential.

H3. Farmers satisfaction with work-life balance is positively associated with (a) well-being and negatively associated with (b) burnout.

H4. Farm owners are expected to report lower (a) segmented boundaries, (b) recovery experiences, (c) work-life balance satisfaction and higher (d) burnout compared to farm workers.

Methodology

In this section, we start with a presentation of the four surveys, followed by a description of the dependent variables, independent variables and control variables. Throughout the text of this section, we emphasize the differences between farm owners and farm workers. These differences may extend the scope of our findings.

Sample

This study was conducted with the support of the MSA (Mutualité Sociale Agricole) from the Midi-Pyrénées Sud, Ardèche Drôme Loire, and Provence Azur regions. Data was collected via an online questionnaire distributed in April 2024, with responses collected until June 2024. Only fully completed questionnaires were included in the analysis. Additionally, responses from individuals who consistently provided the same answer across a large number of questions were excluded to ensure data quality. In total, we retained responses from 916 farm owners and 757 farm workers.

Measure

Table 1 summarizes some descriptive statistics from farm owners and farm workers. Table 2 shows these correlations of the farmers for dependent and independent variables.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for farm owners and farm workers

	Farm owners (n=916)				Farm workers (n=757)			
Variables	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Segmentation	1	7	3.77	1.22	1	7	4.75	1.36
Detachment	1	5	1.95	0.79	1	5	2.68	1.00
Relaxation	1	5	2.80	1.01	1	5	3.47	0.93
Mastery	1	5	3.10	0.96	1	5	3.37	0.88
Control	1	5	3.25	1.02	1	5	3.79	0.92
Balance satisfaction	1	5	2.69	0.86	1	5	3.15	0.89
Well-being	0	100	46.2	21.8	4	100	52.7	22.00
Burnout	1.2	6.8	3.82	1.01	1.1	6	3.67	1.18
Age	21	76	49.10	10.1	6	70	43.9	12.10
Life partner	0	1	0.78	0.42	0	1	0.61	0.49
Gender	1	2	1.41	0.49	1	2	1.47	0.50
Number of children	1	5	2.04	1.08	1	5	1.73	1.02
Work with family	1	2	1.51	0.28	1	2	1.91	0.50
Education level	1	6	3.53	1.14	1	6	3.35	1.14
Weekly workload (Hours)	0	120	59.80	20.40	0	120	41.40	17.30

Note: Gender: male = 0, female = 1; Life partner: yes = 0, no = 1; Work with family: yes = 1, no = 2; Education level: none = 1 to PhD = 6.

Table 2: Correlations of dependent and independent variables

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
(1) Segmentation	(0.79)							
(2) Detachment	0.58***	(0.87)						
(3) Relaxation	0.30***	0.55***	(0.88)					
(4) Mastery	0.13***	0.27***	0.45***	(0.85)				
(5) Control	0.18***	0.39***	0.53***	0.34***	(0.88)			
(6) Balance satisfaction	0.13***	0.44***	0.52***	0.30***	0.52***	(0.91)		
(7) Well-being	0.05	0.32***	0.45***	0.32***	0.45***	0.57***	(0.87)	
(8) Burnout	0.01	–0.30***	–0.40***	–0.23***	–0.38***	–0.52***	–0.69***	(0.90)

*Note: n=1673, * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p <.001*

Segmentation preferences refer to an individual's desire to keep work and personal life separate, rather than allowing them to overlap. The preference for segmentation has been assessed using a measurement instrument (Segmentation Preferences Scale) developed by Kreiner (2006). This instrument, translated into French following the backtranslation method, includes items that assess the degree to which individuals prefer to maintain clear boundaries between their work and personal life. Respondents are asked to rate their agreement with statements such as "I prefer to keep my work life and personal life separate." The response options follow a 7-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 5 = Somewhat Agree, 6 = Agree, 7 = Strongly Agree. The overall score is calculated by averaging the responses across all items, with a higher score indicating a stronger preference for segmenting work and personal life.

Daily recovery experiences were assessed via an instrument developed by Sonnentag and Fritz (2007) and validated for the French language by Le Moal et al. (2024). This instrument distinguishes between four dimensions (detachment, relaxation, mastery and control), each of which is measured via four items (questions). The items follow a headline stating, "Please indicate your level of agreement with doing or not doing each of the following after your workday: ...." A sample item for Detachment is "I forget about work". A sample item for Relaxation is "I decompress and relax". A sample item for Mastery is "I learn new things". A sample item for Control is "I feel like I can decide what to do for myself". The response scores assigned are as follows: Strongly Disagree = 1; Somewhat Disagree = 2; Neither Agree nor Disagree = 3; Somewhat Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5. The scores per dimension are obtained by averaging the responses to the four questions, which range from 1 to 5.

Work-life balance satisfaction refers to an individual's perception of their ability to manage and harmonize both work and personal responsibilities in a satisfying manner. The level of satisfaction with work-life balance has been assessed using a measurement instrument (Work-Life Balance Satisfaction Scale) developed by Valcour (2007) and translated into French by Guilbert et al. (2019). This instrument consists of several items that measure perceived satisfaction with the balance between different life domains. Respondents are asked to rate their level of satisfaction with statements such as "I am satisfied with the way I divide my time between work and personal life." The response options and their corresponding values are based on a Likert scale: 1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = somewhat dissatisfied, 3 = neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4 = somewhat satisfied, 5 = very satisfied. The overall score is calculated by averaging the responses across all items, resulting in a value between 1 and 5. A higher score indicates greater satisfaction with one’s work-life balance.

Well-being is a subjective measure of some positive dimensions of mental health. It was assessed via a measurement instrument (the 5-item World Health Organization Index, WHO-5), which is derived from the WHO-28 developed for the WHO European Regional Office (Johansen, 1989). The WHO-5 was first presented at a WHO meeting in Stockholm (Johansen, 1998) and provides a score based on responses to five standardized questions. The items followed a headline stating "Over the past month...". A sample item is "I felt good and in a good mood". The response modalities and the values assigned to them are as follows: never = 0; from time to time = 1; less than half the time = 2; half the time = 3; most of the time = 4; all the time = 5. The well-being score is calculated by first summing the values obtained for the five questions (i.e., a number from 0 to 25) and then multiplying this sum by 4 to obtain a score of 0-100. A score below 50 is usually interpreted as a risk of depression.

Burnout is a state of fatigue or inability to function normally in the workplace when demands exceed an individual's ability to meet them. The risk of burnout has been assessed by a measurement instrument (Burn-out Measure Short version, BMS) developed by A. Pines (Malach-Pines, 2005). The 10-item version (BMS-10)

of the instrument translated into French by Lourel et al. (2007) was administered. This instrument produces a score based on the answers to ten standardized questions. The items followed a headline stating "When you think about your work, currently, how often...". A sample item is "Do you feel tired?". The response modalities and the values assigned to them are as follows: never = 1; almost never = 2; rarely = 3; sometimes = 4; often = 5; very often = 6; always = 7. The burnout score is obtained by averaging the answers to the 10 questions; it takes a value between 1 and 7. A higher score indicates a greater presence of symptoms associated with burnout.

Results

Linear regressions

The results presented in Table 3 display the regression coefficients for the four dimensions of daily recovery experiences: detachment, relaxation, mastery, and control. The primary objective is to examine Hypothesis H1, which posits that the more farmers prefer segmented boundaries between work and personal life, the more they engage in these four dimensions as recovery experiences. The coefficient for segmentation is positive and highly significant across all four recovery dimensions. Specifically, for detachment, the coefficient is 0.50 (standard error = 0.01, $p < 0.001$), indicating a strong positive relationship between preference for segmentation and psychological detachment from work during leisure time. For relaxation, the coefficient is 0.19 (standard error = 0.02, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that farmers who prefer segmented boundaries are more likely to relax effectively. In terms of mastery, the coefficient is 0.07 (standard error = 0.02, $p < 0.01$), showing a significant but more modest positive association. Lastly, for control, the coefficient is 0.08 (standard error = 0.02, $p < 0.01$), indicating that a preference for segmentation enhances the sense of control during free time. These findings collectively support Hypothesis H1. The positive and significant coefficients across all four dimensions imply that farmers with a stronger preference for segmented boundaries are more likely to engage in psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery activities, and experience a sense of control as part of their daily recovery experiences. Additional observations from the regression analysis reveal that variables such as weekly workload and owner/worker status are negatively and significantly associated with several recovery dimensions, suggesting that higher workloads and being an owner may impede recovery experiences. Variables like gender and education level also show significant associations with certain dimensions, indicating potential areas for further research to understand their impacts on recovery experiences.

Table 3: Regressions with recovery experiences dimensions as dependent variables (n=1663)

	Detachment		Relaxation		Mastery		Control	
Variable	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error
Age	0.08***	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.07**	0.00	0.06*	0.00
Life partner	–0.04*	0.04	–0.03	0.05	–0.08**	0.05	–0.01	0.06
Gender	–0.06**	0.04	–0.11***	0.05	–0.14***	0.05	–0.03	0.05
Number of children	–0.01	0.02	–0.11***	0.02	–0.01	0.02	–0.07**	0.02
Work with family	0.03	0.05	0.03	0.06	0.02	0.05	0.06*	0.06
Education level	–0.05*	0.02	0.03	0.02	0.14***	0.02	0.01	0.02
Weekly workload (Hours)	–0.10***	0.00	–0.16***	0.00	–0.09***	0.00	–0.12***	0.00
Owner/Worker	–0.30***	0.05	–0.34***	0.06	–0.19**	0.06	–0.33***	0.06
Segmentation	0.50***	0.01	0.19***	0.02	0.07**	0.02	0.08**	0.02
R^2/AjustedR^2/F	0.39/0.39/119.60***		0.20/0.19/44.67***		0.08/0.07/15.25***		0.10/0.10/21.40***	

*Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.*

The regression results presented in Table 4 examine the relationship between daily recovery experiences and satisfaction with work-life balance among farmers, aiming to test Hypothesis H2. This hypothesis states that the more farmers implement psychological detachment, relaxation, and control as daily recovery experiences, the higher their satisfaction with work-life balance. The coefficients for the key recovery experience

variables are positive and statistically significant, supporting the hypothesis. Psychological detachment has a coefficient of 0.15 (standard error = 0.02, $p < 0.001$), indicating that higher levels of detachment are associated with greater satisfaction with work-life balance. This suggests that farmers who can mentally disengage from work during non-working hours experience an improved balance between work and personal life. Relaxation shows a coefficient of 0.24 (standard error = 0.02, $p < 0.001$), demonstrating a strong positive relationship between engaging in relaxing activities and work-life balance satisfaction. Farmers who take time to relax are more likely to feel satisfied with the balance between their professional and personal lives. The sense of control has the highest coefficient among the recovery experiences, at 0.31 (standard error = 0.02, $p < 0.001$), indicating that a greater sense of control during free time significantly enhances satisfaction with work-life balance. This implies that when farmers feel they have autonomy over their leisure activities, their overall work-life balance improves. Additionally, mastery experiences show a positive coefficient of 0.05 (standard error = 0.02, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that engaging in activities that promote skill development or personal growth modestly contributes to work-life balance satisfaction, even though it was not explicitly included in Hypothesis H2. Other notable results include the negative coefficient for education level (–0.07, standard error = 0.02, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that higher education levels are associated with lower satisfaction with work-life balance. This may indicate that more educated farmers have higher expectations or face different stressors impacting their perceived balance. The weekly workload has a coefficient of –0.10 (standard error = 0.00, $p < 0.001$), highlighting that longer working hours are significantly associated with decreased satisfaction with work-life balance. Having a life partner shows a positive coefficient of 0.05 (standard error = 0.04, $p < 0.05$), indicating that being in a relationship slightly increases satisfaction with work-life balance, possibly due to shared responsibilities or emotional support. The model explains a substantial portion of the variance in work-life balance satisfaction, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.39. The overall model is statistically significant ($F = 90.06$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a good fit.

Table 4: Regression with work-life balance satisfaction as dependent variable (n=1663)

	Work-life balance satisfaction	
Variable	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error
Age	0.00	0.00
Life partner	0.05*	0.04
Gender	0.02	0.04
Number of children	0.02	0.02
Work with family	–0.01	0.04
Education level	–0.07***	0.02
Weekly workload (Hours)	–0.10***	0.00
Owner/Worker	0.00	0.05
Detachment	0.15***	0.02
Relaxation	0.24***	0.02
Mastery	0.05*	0.02
Control	0.31***	0.02
R^2/AjustedR^2/F	0.39/0.39/90.06***	

*Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.*

The regression results presented in Table 5 examine the relationship between farmers' satisfaction with work-life balance and two key outcomes: well-being and burnout. The primary objective is to test Hypothesis H3, which posits that farmers' satisfaction with work-life balance is positively associated with well-being (H3a) and negatively associated with burnout (H3b). In the regression with well-being as the dependent variable, the coefficient for balance satisfaction is 0.58 (standard error = 1.13, $p < 0.001$). This positive and highly significant coefficient indicates that higher satisfaction with work-life balance is associated with greater well-being among farmers. This finding supports Hypothesis H3a, suggesting that when farmers feel satisfied with the balance between their work and personal life, their overall well-being improves. In the regression with burnout as the dependent variable, the coefficient for balance satisfaction is –0.54 (standard error = 0.03, $p < 0.001$). This negative and highly significant coefficient indicates that higher satisfaction with work-life balance is associated with lower levels of burnout. This finding supports Hypothesis H3b, implying that farmers who are more satisfied with their work-life balance are less likely to experience burnout symptoms. These results collectively confirm Hypothesis H3. Satisfaction with work-life balance is a significant predictor of both increased well-being and

decreased burnout among farmers. Other notable findings from the regressions include the role of demographic and work-related variables. Age shows a negative coefficient in the well-being regression (–0.05, standard error = 0.04, $p < 0.05$) and a positive coefficient in the burnout regression (0.05, standard error = 0.00, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that older farmers may experience slightly lower well-being and higher burnout levels. Gender is negatively associated with well-being (–0.07, standard error = 0.92, $p < 0.001$) and positively associated with burnout (0.12, standard error = 0.05, $p < 0.001$), indicating that male farmers may report lower well-being and higher burnout compared to female farmers. Education level has a positive coefficient in the well-being regression (0.07, standard error = 0.42, $p < 0.001$) and a negative coefficient in the burnout regression (–0.06, standard error = 0.02, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that higher education levels are associated with increased well-being and reduced burnout, potentially due to better coping strategies or access to resources. Interestingly, weekly workload (hours) shows a positive association with well-being (0.05, standard error = 0.02, $p < 0.05$) and a negative association with burnout (–0.06, standard error = 0.00, $p < 0.05$), implying that farmers who work more hours may experience slightly higher well-being and lower burnout, which could reflect a sense of accomplishment or engagement in their work. The models explain a substantial portion of the variance in the dependent variables, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.33 for well-being and 0.29 for burnout. The overall models are statistically significant ($F = 93.00$, $p < 0.001$ for well-being; $F = 77.60$, $p < 0.001$ for burnout), indicating a good fit and that the included variables meaningfully contribute to explaining variations in well-being and burnout among farmers.

Table 5: Regressions with well-being and burnout as dependent variables (n=1663)

	Well-being		Burnout	
Variable	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error	Coefficient (B)	Std. Error
Age	–0.05*	0.04	0.05*	0.00
Life partner	0.01	1.04	-0.06**	0.05
Gender	–0.07***	0.92	0.12***	0.05
Number of children	0.00	0.44	0.00	0.02
Work with family	–0.01	1.09	0.00	0.06
Education level	0.07***	0.42	-0.06**	0.02
Weekly workload (Hours)	0.05*	0.02	-0.06*	0.00
Owner/Worker	–0.05	0.52	-0.07	0.06
Balance satisfaction	0.58***	1.13	-0.54***	0.03
R^2/AjustedR^2/F	0.34/0.33/93.00***		0.30/0.29/77.60***	

*Note: * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001.*

Independent samples test

The results from the Mann-Whitney U test clearly support the hypothesis (H4) (Table 6). Farm owners report significantly lower scores in segmentation ($U = 200406$, $p < .001$), indicating less distinct boundaries between work and non-work domains compared to farm workers. This aligns with hypothesis part (a). Farm owners also show significantly lower detachment ($U = 200873$, $p < .001$), relaxation ($U = 215657$, $p < .001$), mastery ($U = 296110$, $p < .001$), and control ($U = 240020$, $p < .001$), all of which support hypothesis part (b) about reduced recovery experiences among farm owners. Regarding work-life balance satisfaction ($U = 246094$, $p < .001$), farm owners indeed report lower satisfaction with work-life balance, which confirms hypothesis part (c). Additionally, farm owners exhibit higher burnout levels ($U = 317224$, $p < .001$), supporting hypothesis part (d). Although well-being was not explicitly mentioned in the hypothesis, the data shows that farm owners also report lower well-being ($U = 289347$, $p < .001$) compared to farm workers, which suggests an additional area of concern for farm owners' health.

Table 6: Mann-Whitney tests for variables differences between owners and workers

Variables	Owners or Workers	Score	P-value
Segmentation	Farm owners < Farm workers	200406	< .001
Detachment	Farm owners < Farm workers	200873	< .001
Relaxation	Farm owners < Farm workers	215657	< .001
Mastery	Farm owners < Farm workers	296110	< .001
Control	Farm owners < Farm workers	240020	< .001
Balance satisfaction	Farm owners < Farm workers	246094	< .001
Well-being	Farm owners < Farm workers	289347	< .001

Burnout	Farm owners > Farm workers	317224	< .001

Discussion

The results of this study highlight significant differences between farm owners and farm workers regarding work-life segmentation, recovery experiences, and satisfaction with work-life balance. Specifically, farm owners report lower scores in work-life segmentation, psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery, and control, as well as lower satisfaction with work-life balance compared to farm workers. These findings suggest that farm owners, who often experience more blurred boundaries between work and personal life, may struggle more with recovery from work-related stress. This aligns with previous literature emphasizing the unique stressors that farm owners face, such as financial instability, social isolation, and the constant merging of personal and professional demands (Sonnentag et al., 2017; Truchot & Andela, 2018).

This study extends existing research on recovery experiences and work-life boundaries by focusing on a unique population—farm owners and workers in the agricultural sector. While much of the literature has examined recovery and boundary management among employees in more structured environments, our findings add to the growing recognition of the entrepreneurial nature of farming, where boundaries between work and personal life are often indistinct. These blurred boundaries hinder recovery processes, including psychological detachment and relaxation, which are crucial for mental well-being. Furthermore, this research reinforces the importance of work-life segmentation in facilitating effective recovery experiences, particularly for farm owners who face continuous and intense work demands without clear temporal or physical separations between their work and personal life.

The need for targeted interventions to support the health and well-being of farm owners is critical. Given the lower levels of recovery and work-life balance satisfaction observed in farm owners, there is a strong case for implementing programs aimed at promoting psychological detachment and relaxation outside of work. Interventions that help farm owners manage the overlap between work and personal life, such as mental health literacy programs and peer support networks, are essential. Younker and Radunovich (2022) emphasize that while various mental health interventions have been introduced for farmers, there remains a lack of rigorous evaluation, particularly in assessing their long-term effectiveness. This review highlights the need for holistic, multi-component interventions that address the specific challenges faced by agricultural workers. Tailored programs that promote relaxation, mastery, and control over non-work time could significantly enhance recovery experiences and improve overall well-being.

Several limitations should be noted. First, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce social desirability bias, as participants may have provided responses they perceived as favorable. Future studies should aim to incorporate more objective measures of work-life boundaries and recovery experiences to validate these findings. Additionally, this study focuses on the agricultural sector, which limits the generalizability of the results to other entrepreneurial or worker populations. Further research could explore how recovery processes vary across different agricultural settings and consider the influence of external factors such as environmental conditions and market pressures on recovery and well-being. Moreover, Younker and Radunovich (2022) argue for the need to better evaluate the effectiveness of mental health interventions in farming communities, pointing to the importance of multi-dimensional approaches that go beyond single-focus interventions. Future studies should explore the potential for combining mental health literacy with peer support and community-based initiatives to address the complex mental health challenges faced by farmers.

On a methodological level, establishing longitudinal databases would help better capture the causes and consequences of recovery experiences. For example, demonstrating the causal effect of segmentation on recovery experiences would provide a significant advantage in understanding the recovery mechanisms of salaried and non-salaried agricultural workers. Furthermore, longitudinal approaches could reveal to what extent recovery experiences influence the work-life balance. In addition, methods such as fuzzy set analysis could facilitate identifying optimal configurations between segmentation, recovery, and balance.

Finally, given the significant differences in health outcomes between farm owners and farm workers, it would be valuable for future studies to examine these two populations separately. This could allow for a more nuanced understanding of their distinct health profiles and challenges, helping to develop targeted interventions that address the specific needs of each group.

Conclusion

This study highlights the challenges farm owners face in managing work-life boundaries and recovering from work-related stress. The findings emphasize the importance of segmented boundaries between professional and personal life and recovery experiences in improving work-life balance satisfaction and reducing burnout or enhancing well-being. These insights provide a foundation for developing targeted interventions

aimed at improving the health and well-being of agricultural workers, particularly farm owners, by addressing their unique recovery needs.

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