

This is a pre-print of an article published in the Journal of Managerial Psychology. The final authenticated version is available online at:

Mas-Machuca, M.; Berbegal-Mirabent, J.; Alegre, I. (2016). Work-life balance and its relationship with organizational pride and job satisfaction. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 31(2): 586-602. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMP-09-2014-0272>

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## **WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ITS IMPACT ON ORGANIZATIONAL PRIDE AND JOB SATISFACTION**

### **Abstract**

**Purpose** – The purpose of this article is to explore the relationship between job autonomy, work-life balance, organizational pride and job satisfaction. When evaluating employee work-life balance the present paper takes into consideration both employer and employee support.

**Design/methodology/approach** – To verify the hypothesis proposed a questionnaire survey in a Spanish pharmaceutical organisation was used to collect data. 374 responses were obtained. The STATA and EQS statistical programs were used for the data analysis.

**Findings** – Regarding the causal model proposed, the data confirm the relationship between the constructs analysed. Results support the hypothesized influences of employer work-life balance support and autonomy on employee work-life balance support to other employees. As well, employee work-life balance is positively related with organizational pride, and finally, related to job satisfaction.

**Practical implications** – This study provides a useful measurement model that employers and employees can use to evaluate and improve work-life balance. Companies should pay attention to job autonomy and work-life balance in order to enhance organizational pride and job satisfaction. Our research tries to help companies more effectively use their human capital resources.

**Originality/value** – The article addresses gaps in the current literature in work-life, organizational pride, and job satisfaction. Results may serve as the criteria for managers to better enhance employee work-life balance in organizations.

**Keywords** – Work-life balance, organizational pride, job satisfaction, autonomy.

**Paper type** – Research paper

## **Introduction**

The daily schedule of millions of people in the world is divided between the time they spent at work and the time outside work. Academicians have studied the interaction between those two domains for the last decades, what has been called work-life or work-family literature. The seminal paper of Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined work-family conflict as “a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect”. Although the field initially focused on the conflict that heavy work demands could generate on the family sphere, it rapidly evolved into the study of the bidirectional relationship, with studies taking into consideration both, work to family conflict and family to work conflict (Frone et al., 1992b). More recently, literature has spanned its scope to consider not only the conflict that may arise between the demands of work and family, but also the enrichment that these two domains might generate on each other (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006) and the advantages of achieving a certain equilibrium between the two (Jain and Nair, 2013).

The terms work-life balance and work-family balance have been used interchangeably in the literature. In this article, we will use both of them, however it is important to underline that as our study is concerned about the equilibrium between work and any type of activities external to work, whether they are leisure activities, family time or others.

The antecedents and consequences of work-life conflict and work-life balance have been widely studied. The lack of company policies that enable work-life balance or the particular employees' family and work demands have been identified as antecedents of work-life conflict (Saltzstein et al., 2001). And, at the same time, consequences of work-family conflict have multiple impacts in both life and work. Some of the consequences most widely studied are the impact of work-family conflict on job satisfaction and turnover intentions (Kossek and Ozeki, 1998) as well as the impact of work-family conflict on employee health (Frone et al., 1992a).

Although the company-wide organization policies and other factors at the organizational level like organizational climate or culture do have an impact on employee work-life balance, the factors that have stronger influence are those related to the closer environment of the employee in the organization. Studies at the employee-level analysis show that colleagues and the employee's direct supervisor have a crucial role in the employee experience of work-life conflict (Wu et al., 2012). Baral and Bhargava (2010) confirm the importance of supervisor support for work-life balance, and Beham and Drobic (2010) that of colleagues. Autonomy is also one of the strongest antecedents (Morganson et al., 2010, Annink and den Dulk, 2012); if

the employee has autonomy in terms of schedule and in organizing his/her work, the conflict is mitigated.

Scales and questionnaires used for measuring work-family balance and work-family conflict usually include questions about supervisor support and colleague support. However, a global measure of work-family balance is then calculated without differentiating those two levels: support from the employer and support from the other employees. In the present research we do differentiate between employer and employee work-life balance support. Results show that employer work-life balance support is an antecedent of colleagues' work-life balance support. Autonomy has been also included in the analysis as previous research has shown its importance in employees' ability to achieve work-life balance.

Some of the studies on work-life conflict have focused on women (Hoobler et al., 2009) or employees' with family responsibilities assuming that only those with a certain level of conflict between the two domains work and family, would really value family friendly policies, have a decrease in job satisfaction or change in turnover intentions. In this research, we would like to broaden the scope and we consider that an organization which enables employees balance their work and personal life, will be considered a better organization not only by the employees that need this balance but also by those that do not need it. The organization that facilitates work-life balance will increase job satisfaction via the creation of a positive climate and an increase in organizational pride in all employees. Research on the consequences of attitudinal organizational pride suggested a significant and positive relationship between pride and job satisfaction (Gunter and Furnham, 1996).

The objective of this study therefore is to explore the relationship between autonomy, employer work-life balance support and employee work-life balance support, and its relation with organizational pride and job satisfaction. We explore if better work-life balance perception increases organizational pride and job satisfaction.

The paper is organized as follows. The next section presents the background and the hypothesis. Then, the methodology is described and results from the analysis are presented. Finally the discussion and contributions of the paper are explained.

## **Background and hypothesis**

Currently, managing conflict between work and life is a big challenge for organizations and individuals (Kossek and Ozeki, 1998; Zhang et al., 2012). Previous research shows that abusive supervision is related to higher levels of work-family conflict (Tepper, 2000, 2007, 2011; Wu et al., 2012) in US and Western cultures. As opposite to this concept, individual or group autonomy have long been considered critical dimensions of a good organizational climate.

According to Hong and Kaur (2008) organizational climate is defined as a global impression of one's organization and personal impact of the work environment, and also, it describes the perception of employees towards their organizations. Autonomy is one of the most used variables in the organizational climate construct (e.g. James et al., 1974, Koys and DeCotiis, 1991; Patterson et al., 2005). Patterson et al., (2005) define autonomy as "designing jobs in ways which give employees wide scope to enact work". Autonomy reproduces the extent to which job permit self-determination, freedom to organize their own work or make decisions (Hackman and Oldham, 1975). Increased autonomy will allow employees more flexibility in how, where or when they define their daily work (Morgeson et al., 2005). Many companies have a culture that employees are participative decision-making (for example, set their own schedules, choose how to do their work or even elect to work from home). The perception of autonomy has positive effects on employees and enhances their motivation and productivity. Autonomy seems to be a relevant characteristic, enabling employees to balance their work more easily with others social and personal activities (Annink and den Dulk, 2012). In this sense, autonomy in decision-making process implies low levels of work-life conflict because employees have the possibility to choose the best way to work. As a result, we suggest that employees who have autonomy are likely to experience high levels of work-life balance. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis (see Figure 1):

*H1. Autonomy will be positively related to employee work-life balance.*

As we say before, in our research we have differentiated between employer support and employee work-life balance support. According to Saltztein et al., (2001) work-family policies have different impact in different groups of employees. So, it is relevant study in a different way employer and employee support. Supervisor support assessed positive affect of each subordinate (Baral and Bhargava, 2010).

Bosses' perception on employee work-family conflict plays an important role in employee career's progress (Hoobler et al., 2009). They found that manager's perception of employees' work-life conflict influenced the bosses' perception of fit and performance. These results suggested that supervisor perception of family-work conflict mediate the relation between employees and its satisfaction. We can hope that employer support is actually an antecedent of colleagues' support. Based on previous research and experience, the following hypothesis can be made (see Figure 1):

*H2. Employer work-life balance will be positively related to employee work-life balance.*

One of manager's challenges is to motivate employees to take pride of their work. CHA report (2004) states that it is possible to develop a stable inner pride attitude towards the organization for they work. Pride can be considered an emotion (Elfenbein, 2007) but previous research consider pride as a construct grounded in employee group membership (Arnett et al., 2002). Although this construct has not yet achieved large scientific attention, organizational pride is an important factor for business success (Gouthier and Rhein, 2011). Organizational pride positively influences the decision to stay in a particular company and stimulates the employee commitment (Appleberg, 2005).

Gunter and Furnham (1996) has divided organizational pride into emotional versus attitudinal organizational pride. Emotional organizational pride is defined as the affective emotions based on the perception of a successful event related to the organization. Attitudinal pride is defined as a cognitive and durable attitude of pride resulting from general perception of the organization (Gouthier and Rhein 2011). We argue here that an organization that both, supervisors and colleagues provide support to employees' work-life balance will enhance organizational pride among employees' that will result on higher job satisfaction. Specifically, work-family balance initiatives can cause strong pride emotions to employees. Hence, we propose that (see Figure 1):

*H3. Employee work-life balance will be positively related to organizational pride*

Research on organizational pride has shown the impact of pride on job satisfaction (Arnett et al., 2002). Research on the consequences of attitudinal organizational pride suggested a significant and positive relationship between pride and employee behavior (Gouthier and Rhein, 2011). Organizational pride enhances commitment to customer service, enthusiasm or creativity. In addition, employees who are identified and proud to work in a company are also satisfied of their job (Porter et al., 1974, Hom and Kinicki, 2001, Van Dick et al., 2004). Motivation and job satisfaction are frequent concepts used to present a framework through which companies can affect to their employees' drive to work and increase their interesting and passion towards their work (Furnham et al., 2008). According to Crossman and Abou-Zaki (2003) job satisfaction is one criterion for assessing the health of an organization. Based on the foregoing, we suggest that (see Figure 1):

*H4. Organizational pride will be positively related to job satisfaction.*

--- Insert Figure 1 about here ---

## **Methodology**

### *Sample and procedure*

Study participants were employees of a company working in the pharmaceutical industry in Spain. In order to ensure that respondents would be able to understand all the questions included in the survey, a pilot test was conducted. To this end, five employees from different hierarchical levels in the organization were randomly chosen. They were asked to complete the survey individually and to provide feedback in regard to the meaningfulness of the language used as the questionnaire was designed for all levels of the workforce. The emphasis at this early stage was to enhance readability and clarity of the questions. Based on their comments, changes were made to strengthen the accuracy of the survey by deleting troublesome items and rewording items that were confusing to the respondents.

For the final test, all respondents were informed that their participation was totally voluntary, and that no names or identifying information was required. The first page contained an explanation of the purpose of the study (stressing the importance of answering all questions honestly), the estimated time for completing it (about 10-15 minutes), as well as a promise that any information provided would remain confidential. In addition, respondents provided information about their department, job position, seniority within the company and work shift.

The field work was completed in March 2013. To maximize responses rates, both an online and a paper-and-pencil format questionnaire were made available to employees. The questionnaire was sent out to employees at their place of work in personally addresses and with a link to an on-line questionnaire. Altogether, 463 surveys were administered. Returned questionnaires were manually checked against protest responses or those with more than 2 unanswered items. Missing data points were imputed with the mean of nearby points in each case. After discarding some incomplete questionnaires, 374 valid surveys remained for analysis (response rate of 80.78%).

### *Measures*

All items in the survey were presented as statements to which respondents indicated their level of agreement/disagreement on a four-point Likert scale of (1) definitely false; (2) mostly false; (3) mostly true, an (4) definitely true. This rating scale has been recommended to minimize ambivalent neutral ratings (Lynn, 1986, cited in Thrush et al., 2007).

The questionnaire was based on an extensive review of the relevant literature. Items in the scales were originally in English. A back translation process was used to ensure the quality of the measurements (Brislin et al., 1973).

Five dimensions were considered: *autonomy*, *organizational pride*, *satisfaction*, *employer work-life family balance* and *employee work-life family balance*. For the first three dimensions adaptation of validated scales were used. This method is shorter and less-time consuming and the utilizations of existing measures often lead to increased refinement and improvement (Fields, 2002). Only for those dimensions related to work-life family balance, new scales were generated. A further explanation of each construct follows below.

#### Autonomy

Autonomy was operationalized by using the construct with the same name from the scale on organizational climate (the Organizational Climate Measure, OCM) of Patterson et al. (2005), which in turn is based on Quinn and Rohrbaugh's (1981) Competing Values Model (CVM). We only included the first two items from the original scale, excluding reverse items.

#### Organizational pride

Organizational pride was measured by using the "attitudinal organizational pride" scale developed by Gouthier and Rhein (2011). One item was eliminated from the original scale ("*I feel proud to contribute to my company's success*") because we assumed that the underlying aspect of this question goes beyond our interpretation of organizational pride, as it entails a more comprehensive definition, including here economic challenges. Contrary, our interest is more focused on individuals and their internal emotions and feelings that may contribute to explain job satisfaction.

#### Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction was assessed using a single-item overall measure. According the Dolbier et al. (2005), Nagy (2002) and Wanous et al. (1997), from a psychometric perspective, single-item measures to operationalize this construct compare favorably with multiple-item measures. First, their reliability and validity have been proved, being demonstrated that they provide an effective measure to represent job satisfaction. Second, they are easier to understand, are completed more quickly, and change scores are more interpretable.

#### Employer work-life family balance support

Literature provides very little evidence on how to measure work-life balance from the viewpoint of the firm (Carlson et al., 2013). For the purpose of this study, focused on the central figure of the employee, we included one factor able to reflect this aspect, which is expected to impact on employees' perceptions about their job, and thus, in job satisfaction. The approach used considers two items where employees were asked to evaluate the position of the company and their managers with respect to work-life balance.

### Employee work-life family balance support

The scale used to evaluate work-life balance was built upon the work-life family scales of Hayman (2005) and Gröpel and Kuhl (2009). Three items were included: the first one considers work interference with personal life, that is, the feasibility (whether it is very difficult or not) of maintaining relationships and social contacts (with family and friends). Second item takes into account the perceived sufficiency of time, asking respondents about their routines and the need to work extra hours to complete the assigned tasks. Lastly, a third item was included in order to account for time spent in recreation activities.

Table 1 shows how items were arranged in the 5 aforementioned constructs and their loadings.

--- Insert Table 1 about here ---

### **Results**

The analysis consisted of a two-step process. First, we assessed the validity and reliability of the measurement scale using confirmatory factor analysis. Second, causal relationships (hypotheses) were tested using structural equation modeling. The data were analyzed using EQS, a software package.

#### *Assessment of fit*

The dimensional scales for each of the multi-item constructs were first evaluated. According to Bagozzi and Yi (1988), factor loadings should be 0.60 or higher. Since the lowest factor loading in our model is 0.671, there is support for convergent validity (Table 1).

Reliability of the constructs was then evaluated. Table 2 reports that both the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) exceeding the threshold value of 0.6 (Malhotra, 2004), indicating good internal consistency among the items within each dimension. The variance-extracted measures (AVE) for each construct were also estimated, surpassed or being very close to the recommended cut-off value of 0.5.

--- Insert Table 2 about here ---

The correlation results presented in Table 3 further corroborates that the square root of the AVE (shown in italic in the diagonal) of each of the scales was greater than the correlations between each construct and all other latent variables (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2006).



--- Insert Table 3 about here ---

### *Causal model*

The overall validity of the model was evaluated with respect to best-fit indices:  $\chi^2$  Satorra-Bentler was 80.2009 with 29 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.0000, being  $\chi^2/df$  2.76, which is clearly below the limit of 5. Both CFI (0.948) surpassing 0.9 and RMSEA (0.069) below 0.08 indicate good fit (Hu and Bentler, 1998). Taking the significance of the robust  $\chi^2$  statistic with caution, and considering the above fit indices the model fit was suggested to be acceptable (Bollen and Long, 1993).

--- Insert Table 4 about here ---

Hypotheses 2 to 4 were confirmed at a confidence level of 99%, while hypothesis 1 was accepted at a confidence level of 95%. These results underline the appropriateness of the proposed model.

Particularly, our findings show that autonomy affects employee work-life balance ( $\beta=0.252$ ), supporting the first hypothesis. This last factor is also explained by employer work-life balance with a stronger effect than the previous one ( $\beta=0.648$ ), validating H2. Results also support hypothesis 3, stating that employee work-life balance is positively related to higher levels of organizational pride ( $\beta=0.581$ ). In turn, this factor positively influences job satisfaction ( $\beta=0.405$ ), thus confirming hypothesis 4.

### **Discussion and contributions**

The present study sought to expand our understanding of job autonomy, work-life balance, organizational pride and job satisfaction. First, autonomy in decision-making allows employees to have flexibility in managing their time and work. This freedom will help to balance in a good manner time spent in the job and in family or leisure activities. This balance has mutual profit and synergies to workers and to the organization. So, autonomy will allow employees more flexibility in their daily work, increasing the level of work-life balance.

Results also suggest the distinction between employer and employee work-life balance support. This perspective helps us to analyze if employer support affects employee work-life balance support. The perspective top-down it is important to be considered as an antecedent of a

real work-life balance. If managers believe and support all the work-life initiatives it is easier for workers to perceive a high level of work-life balance.

Our results extend previous work-family research focused on the employee work outcomes, that is, that employee work-life balance is related to organizational pride. Although pride sentiment has been linked to constructs such as organizational commitment or job involvement, very few studies in the field of work-life balance literature included it. Our results seem to indicate that employees that feel comfortable in their job and have effective work-life balance, are proud to work for their companies. This affect is a strong and perdurable feeling that enhances employee's satisfaction.

The originality of our research can be outlined in three main contributions. First, it offers a model which shows the relations between variables related to work-life balance and organizational pride. According to Carlson et al. (2013) the major gap in the work-family research is the absence of theoretical foundations that link work-life balance to organizational gaps. Research on these constructs is an original contribution because no literature has paid enough attention at these relations. We extend our understanding of the consequences of work-life balance by examining whether employee work-life balance fosters organizational pride.

Second, traditionally, work-life conflict was studied by considering the bidirectional relation between work and life conflict, that is, work can interfere with family, and family can interfere with work (Frone et al., 1992a). In our research we propose an original classification depending on the organizational perspective: top down (employer) and bottom up (employee). Although this paper provides an original contribution to the existing literature, further research efforts are needed in order to better understand how these two constructs interact, in order to improve how work-life balance can be correctly managed.

Finally, the theoretical model proposed has broadened the antecedents and consequences of work-life balance research. Specifically, we identify autonomy as an antecedent that exerts a significant influence on employee work-life balance. Also, employee work-life balance has been found to be an antecedent of organizational pride, and this last one, an antecedent of job satisfaction.

In conclusion, our study empirically supports the relationship between job autonomy, work-life balance, organizational pride and job satisfaction. We believe that this study provides a useful measurement model that employers and employees can use to evaluate and improve work-life balance. Companies should pay attention to job autonomy and work-life balance in order to enhance organizational pride and job satisfaction. Our research tries to help companies more effectively use their human capital resources.

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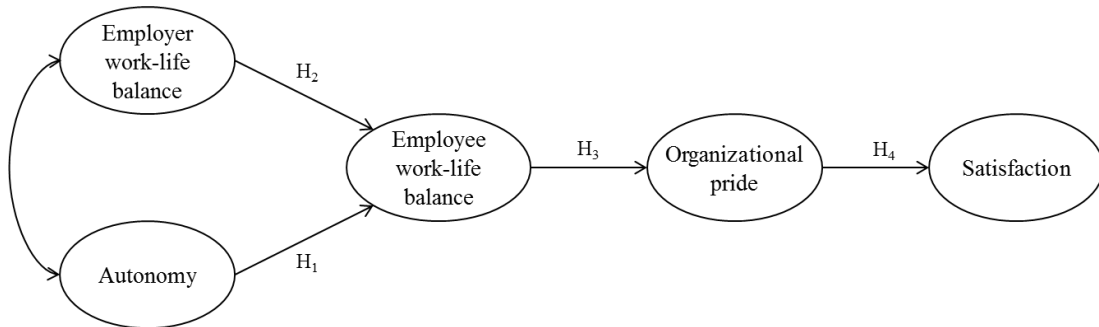
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## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Conceptual model and hypothesized relationships.



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Questionnaire items.

Construct measure	Mean	S.D.	Factor loading
<i>Autonomy (F1)</i>			
Management let people make their own decisions much of the time	2.580	0.872	0.873
Management trust people to take work-related decisions without getting permission first	2.866	0.837	0.873
<i>Employer work-life balance support (F2)</i>			
The company facilitates work-life balance	3.032	0.912	0.935
Managers emphasize work-life balance	3.051	0.894	0.935
<i>Employee work-life balance support (F3)</i>			
I have enough time for my family and friends	2.906	0.866	0.846
I do not need to work overtime as I use to finish work within working hours.	2.824	0.921	0.671
There is enough time for recreation activities	2.733	0.973	0.843
<i>Organizational pride (F4)</i>			
I feel proud to work for my company	3.460	0.689	0.881
I feel proud to tell others for which company I am working	3.564	0.663	0.881
<i>Satisfaction (F5)</i>			
People are enthusiastic about their work	3.586	0.623	-

Table 2. Properties of measurement scales.

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
1. Autonomy	0.687	0.690	0.526
2. Employer work-life balance support	0.855	0.843	0.729
3. Employee work-life balance support	0.691	0.693	0.442
4. Organizational pride	0.711	0.726	0.574

Table 3. Correlation matrix of latent factors.

Construct	1	2	3	4
1. Autonomy	0.829			
2. Employer work-life balance support	0.525	0.925		
3. Employee work-life balance support	0.449	0.639	0.831	
4. Organizational pride	0.516	0.433	0.380	0.843
5. Satisfaction	0.293	0.195	0.161	0.457

Table 4. Standardised solution of the causal model.

Path	Coefficient	t-Value <sup>a</sup>
H <sub>1</sub> : Autonomy → Employee work-life balance support	0.252*	2.453
H <sub>2</sub> : Employer work-life balance support → Employee work-life balance support	0.648**	6.391
H <sub>3</sub> : Employee work-life balance support → Organizational pride	0.581**	7.756
H <sub>4</sub> : Organizational pride → Job satisfaction	0.405**	6.313

\*\*\* Significant at p-value 5% and 1% respectively

<sup>a</sup> Robust statistic



Construct	Scale (Likert scale 1-4)	Authors
<i>Autonomy (F1)</i>	Management let people make their own decisions much of the time	<i>Patterson et al. 2005</i>
	Management trust people to take work-related decisions without getting permission first	
<i>Employer work-life balance support (F2)</i>	The company facilitates work-life balance	<i>Adapted from Carlson et al. (2003)</i>
	Managers emphasize work-life balance	
<i>Employee work-life balance support (F3)</i>	I have enough time for my family and friends	
	I do not need to work overtime as I use to finish work within working hours.	
<i>Organizational pride (F4)</i>	There is enough time for recreation activities	
	I feel proud to work for my company	<i>Gouthier and Rhein (2011)</i>
I feel proud to tell others for which company I am working		
<i>Satisfaction (F5)</i>	People are enthusiastic about their work	<i>Dolbier et al. (2005), Nagy (2002) and Wanous et al. (1997)</i>