Job and Family Satisfaction and Work-Family Enhancement. Mediating Processes

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Abstract

The relationship between work-family positive interactions and different forms of satisfaction has recently begun to be addressed in work-family interface research. The purpose of this study is to provide a greater understanding of the relationship between job and family satisfaction and positive work-family interactions, examining self-efficacy and coping strategies as mediating variables. Participants completed self-report measures of family and job satisfaction, coping strategies, self-efficacy for work-family conflict management and work-family enhancement. On a sample of 192 participants, structural equation modelling was performed in order to test the hypotheses about the direct and indirect relations between the independent and the dependent variables. The mediation model fit the data well. Theoretical and practical implications of the results are discussed.

Keywords: Work-family/family-work enhancement; job satisfaction; family satisfaction; coping strategies; self-efficacy;

1. Introduction

The relationship between job/family satisfaction and work-family conflict was at the center of several studies which aimed at establishing if certain characteristics of one domain, like family stressors, influence the satisfaction in the other domain, for example the professional life. Few studies analyzed the relationship between satisfaction and the positive work-family interactions (Carlson, Grzywacz & Kacmar, 2010; Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne & Grzywacz, 2006; Wiese, Seiger, Schmid & Freund, 2010) and even fewer included mediating variables in this relationship (Carlson et al., 2010). Different concepts are used to describe the positive work-family/family-work relationships: positive spillover, enhancement, enrichment and facilitation. Within existing research, work-family/family-work
positive interactions were conceptualized as independent variable, while satisfaction was considered a dependent variable. Taking into account the correlational nature of the research, conclusions about the direction of the relationship could not be drawn. As Wiese et al. (2010) suggest, job and family satisfaction can predict the positive relationships between the two roles. Data from existent research show that work-family positive interactions are associated with increased levels of satisfaction (Carlson et al., 2010; Carlson et al., 2006; McNall, Kicklin & Masuda, 2010). In a study designed to develop and validate a work-family enrichment scale, Carlson et al. (2006) found that work-family enrichment correlated to a higher extent with job satisfaction, while family-work enrichment correlated with family satisfaction.

2. Objective

The purpose of this study was to test the mediating role of self-efficacy and coping strategies in the relationship between job/family satisfaction and work-family/family-work enhancement.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

192 subjects participated in this study, aged between 24 and 60 years old (m = 36.5, s = 7.90) and working in different domains, like justice (46.9%), economics (11.5%), IT, technical jobs, engineering (12.5%), health, medicine (9.4%), HR (3.6%).

3.2. Variables and measures

Job and family satisfaction were the independent variables, while work-family/family-work enhancement represented the dependent variable. The mediating variables were self-efficacy for managing work-family conflict and coping strategies. The following measures were used:

- **Family satisfaction.** Olson’s ten-item Family Satisfaction Scale (1995) was used. The author reported an alpha Cronbach coefficient of 0.92. Within our study, the internal consistency of the scale is also 0.92.
- **Job satisfaction.** We measured job satisfaction with the Brief Job Satisfaction Measure II (Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998). The reported alpha Cronbach coefficient is 0.88. In this study, the internal consistency of the scale was 0.83.
- **Coping strategies.** We used items from the following scales: Dual Employment Coping Scales (Skinner & McCubbin, 1982), COPE (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989), Ways of Coping Questionnaire (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988), Coping Skills Inventory (Jerabek, 1996), in order to measure the following coping strategies: active role management, partner support, social support and tension reduction. The alpha Cronbach coefficients of the scales ranged from 0.70 to 0.89.
- **Self-efficacy.** The Self-Efficacy for Work-Family Conflict Management Scale (Cinamon, 2003), validated by Hennessy and Lent (2008), with ten items assessing perceptions about one’s own abilities in managing the work-family conflict, was used. The alpha Cronbach coefficients reported by the authors are 0.83 and 0.84 for the two scales of the questionnaire. Within our study, the coefficients are 0.87 and 0.53.
- **Work-family enhancement.** We assessed work-family enhancement with Wiese et al.’s (2010) measure, including 44 items and six dimensions: work-family/family-work compensation, transfer of competencies and transfer of emotions. Within our study, the internal consistency for the six scales ranged from 0.92 and 0.96.

3.3. Hypotheses

The general hypothesis of this research is: **Self-efficacy and coping strategies mediate the relationship between job/family satisfaction and work-family/family-work enhancement.** In accordance with our objective, six specific hypotheses were formulated about the relationships between the variables.
3.4. Procedure

Participants completed the presented measures. We used a correlational approach in order to test the direct relationships between variables. For the mediating effects of self-efficacy and coping strategies, we used structural equation modelling, performing a bootstrapping in Amos 21.

4. Results

4.1. The relationship between job/family satisfaction and work-family enhancement

Statistical analyses point out an insignificant relationship between job satisfaction and work-family/family-work enhancement ($\beta = 0.06$, $p = 0.38$) and a significant relationship between family satisfaction and work-family/family-work enhancement ($\beta = 0.15$, $p = 0.03$). The first hypothesis (There is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and work-family/family-work enhancement, job satisfaction positively predicts the enhancement) was not supported, while the second hypothesis (There is a significant relationship between family satisfaction and work-family/family-work enhancement, family satisfaction positively predicts the enhancement) was supported by the results: an increase in the family satisfaction level tends to be associated with a higher level of positive interactions between the two roles. The types of positive interactions that significantly correlated with family satisfaction are family-work compensation ($\beta = 0.43$, $p = 0.000$) and family-work transfer of competencies ($\beta = 0.27$, $p = 0.000$). Family satisfaction has a negative relationship with work-family compensation ($\beta = -0.17$, $p = 0.01$). As Wiese et al. (2010) [3] suggest, this finding can be explained by the fact that lower levels of family satisfaction can be related to the need to compensate negative experiences within the family domain through the positive experiences associated with the professional role. The positive relationship between family satisfaction and family-work compensation may be due to the fact that a high level of family satisfaction, associated with a positive perception of the family role, represents a resource which helps individuals manage problems at work.

4.2. The relationship between job/family satisfaction and self-efficacy and coping strategies

The relationship between job satisfaction and self-efficacy, as well as the relationship between job satisfaction and coping strategies are not significant. The third hypothesis (There is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and self-efficacy and coping strategies, job satisfaction positively predicts self-efficacy and coping) was not supported by the data. As for family satisfaction, it has significant relationships with self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.35$, $p = 0.000$), as well as with three coping strategies: cognitive restructuring ($\beta = 0.37$, $p = 0.000$), partner support ($\beta = 0.27$, $p = 0.000$) and tension reduction ($\beta = 0.21$, $p = 0.002$). The relationship with active role management and social support was not significant. Therefore, our fourth hypothesis (There is a significant relationship between family satisfaction and self-efficacy and coping strategies, family satisfaction positively predicts self-efficacy and coping) is partially supported, since two of the active coping strategies do not significantly correlate with family satisfaction. The positive perception of the family life can positively influence the perception of the personal ability to manage work-family interference situations and efficiently accomplish both professional and family demands. Also, family satisfaction is associated with three coping strategies: cognitive restructuring, partner support and tension reduction. Well-being in the family role predicts the focus on the positive aspects of one’s lifestyle, the positive reinterpretation or the interpretation of work-family conflicting demands in terms of personal development. It also predicts seeking emotional and instrumental partner support and the involvement in relaxation and recreation activities. Active role management (planning, time management, prioritizing) did not have a significant relationship with family satisfaction, suggesting that when family satisfaction is high, people use cognitive coping strategies that involve tolerating the conflict between job and family demands rather than behavioural strategies oriented toward planning and implementing solutions. Also, family satisfaction does not have a significant relationship with social support, suggesting that when people experience high levels of family well-being, they prefer seeking partner support as a coping strategy.
4.3. The relationship between self-efficacy, coping strategies and work-family enhancement

Work-family/family-work enhancement is positively predicted by self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.16$, $p = 0.01$) and three coping strategies: cognitive restructuring ($\beta = 0.31$, $p = 0.000$), partner support ($\beta = 0.18$, $p = 0.007$) and social support ($\beta = 0.18$, $p = 0.003$) and negatively predicted by active role management ($\beta = -0.12$, $p = 0.03$) and tension reduction ($\beta = -0.15$, $p = 0.01$). These findings partially support the fifth hypothesis (There is a significant relationship between self-efficacy, coping strategies and work-family/family-work enhancement, self-efficacy and coping strategies positively predict the enhancement).

4.4. The relationship between job/family satisfaction and work-family enhancement through the mediating role of self-efficacy and coping strategies

Taking into account the significant relationships between the variables, we elaborated a structural model that was tested using Amos 21 and which is represented in Figure 1, all paths being significant at $p < 0.05$. The tested model had very good fit indices, reproduced in Table 1. The mediating variables that we included were the ones that had statistically significant relationships with the independent, as well as with the dependent variables: self-efficacy, cognitive restructuring and partner support. Mediation analyses using the bootstrapping method in Amos 21 were performed to test self-efficacy, cognitive restructuring and partner support as mediating variables in the relationship between family satisfaction and family-work compensation and transfer of competencies.

![Fig. 1. The proposed model](image1)

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<th>CMIN/DF</th>
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Family satisfaction had a significant direct effect on family-work compensation ($p = 0.002$) and family-work transfer of competencies ($p = 0.003$). The indirect effect through self-efficacy is significant: self-efficacy mediates the relationship between family satisfaction and transfer of competencies ($p = 0.01$), as well the relationship between family satisfaction and family-work compensation ($p = 0.004$). Also, these relationships are mediated by cognitive restructuring and partner support. After introducing the mediating variables, the relationship between family satisfaction and transfer of competencies becomes insignificant ($p = 0.47$), suggesting that this relationship is totally mediated by the three variables. The relationship between family satisfaction and family-work compensation is partially mediated by self-efficacy, cognitive restructuring and partner support: the direct relationship is still significant after introducing the mediators. The sixth hypothesis predicted that the relationship between job/family satisfaction and work-family/family-work enhancement is mediated by self-efficacy and coping. Thus, results partially support this hypothesis.
5. Conclusions and discussion

Data on the mechanisms that explain the relationship between satisfaction and work-family positive interactions is limited. The present research tries to address this limitation by investigating individual mediating variables in the relationship between satisfaction and enhancement (Allen et al., 2012). Our findings suggest that family satisfaction is a significant predictor of family-work enhancement, which is consistent with McNall et al.’s (2010) meta-analysis. The results of our research support the existence of a positive relationship between family satisfaction and family-work compensation, as well as between family satisfaction and family-work transfer of competencies. This data is similar to that of Wiese et al. (2010) on the relationship between family-work enhancement forms and relationship satisfaction, which support the idea that individuals assign a higher value to a domain if it enhances the functioning within the other domain. Family satisfaction can influence family-work compensation by: finding support and retrieving self-confidence within the family when a person faces problems at work, relaxing in the family after a stressful day at work, forgetting about job worries when in the family. Family satisfaction can also influence family-work transfer of competencies: abilities acquired in family context can help a person plan his or her time better at work, better manage job stress, have more self-confidence on the job, optimize communication with co-workers and increase flexibility towards job demands. Based on the relationships between variables, a mediation model was tested and the fit indices were very good. In this model, self-efficacy for managing work-family conflict, cognitive restructuring and partner support are mechanisms through which family satisfaction influences family-work compensation and transfer of competencies. As for the practical implications of the study, taking into account that persons with high levels of self-efficacy for managing the work-family conflict tend to use specific positive interactions strategies, organisational development programs can also include interventions aiming at increasing employees’ self-efficacy in managing professional demands and multiple roles. Also, the development of certain coping abilities, such as cognitive restructuring, can positively impact work-family enhancement. Thus, organisational specialists can contribute to promoting positive relationships between work and family and role integration.

References