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The Mediating Role of Family and Job Satisfaction in the Relationships between Work-Family Conflict and Enrichment and Life Satisfaction of Women with Paid Work

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Abstract

For women, working outside the home can both consume and generate personal resources, which in turn can have an impact in their work and family domains. In this study, direct and indirect relationships were explored between work-to-family conflict and work-to-family enrichment, job satisfaction, satisfaction with family life and satisfaction with life, in a sample of 473 women with paid work and adolescent children in Temuco, Chile. Using structural equation modelling, results showed that participants' satisfaction with life was associated with their satisfaction in both work and family domains. Evidence was also found for underlying mechanisms explaining the relationship between work-to-family conflict and life satisfaction, and between work-to-family enrichment and life satisfaction. These findings contribute to organizational-level knowledge for designing practices and strategies to promote favourable conditions to increase women's work-to-family enrichment.

Keywords: resources; job satisfaction; family satisfaction; life; women.

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Introduction

For women mothers, increasing participation in the labour force over the last decades has brought on a ‘double shift’, which comprises their workload and their traditional care roles in the home (Gómez-Urrutia & Jiménez-Figueroa, 2015). The life stage of their children may pose additional family demands for mothers, given that they are considered the main responsible for child rearing and care, particularly in Latin American countries where the traditional gendered division of domestic labour still prevails (Schnettler *et al.*, 2021).

Most research in this line has been conducted in North American, European, and Asian contexts (Viñas-Bardolet, Guillen-Royo & Torrent-Sellens, 2020; Yucel & Fan, 2019; Zhang, Xu, Jin & Ford, 2018), focusing on female workers in specific fields related to care, such as nursery (Ghislieri *et al.*, 2017; Mousavinia, Naami, Arshadi & Beshlideh, 2020). This study explores work-family dynamics and well-being in a South American context, with women with diverse paid jobs and adolescent children. Expanding on these characteristics allows to better understand protective factors and conditions for mothers with a paid job in diverse industries and cultural contexts.

For workers in general, the conflict that comes from combining work and family demands has become a relevant psychosocial risk (Recuero & Segovia, 2021). Work-family conflict is conceptualized as an incompatibility between roles and demands from the work and family domains (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). However, work does not only produce inter-role conflict, but it can also provide workers with resources that can be transferred to the family domain and vice versa (Ghislieri, Gatti, Molino & Cortese, 2017). Work-family enrichment is defined as the ways in which work experiences improve family quality of life, considering that work resources could improve family performance and vice-versa (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). The dynamics encapsulated by the conflict and enrichment constructs can be better understood through the Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which states that people try to obtain, retain, and protect resources. The COR implies two major processes: a loss spiral, through conflict and a gain spiral, via enrichment (Hobfoll, 1989).

Work-family conflict and enrichment may have a substantial impact on women’s quality of life and subjective well-being. The cognitive component of subjective well-being is life satisfaction, or the person’s overall evaluation of their life in general (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999) or domains within it (Pavot & Diener, 2008). The bottom-up theoretical perspective of life satisfaction states that overall life satisfaction could be influenced by satisfaction in different life domains, such as work and family. The domains considered in this study as contributors of life satisfaction are job satisfaction, the extent to which an individual likes their job (Agho, Price & Mueller, 1992); and family satisfaction, which is the conscious

cognitive judgment of family life within the household (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003).

Traditionally studies carried out around the relation between work and family have been primarily dominated by a conflict-related perspective. In this study, we therefore focus on the conflict generated in work affecting the family as well as on positive experiences in the work affecting the family domain (Ghislieri *et al.*, 2017). Understanding the simultaneous influence of work-to-family conflict and enrichment on family, job and life satisfaction can help detect domains that can be improved to contribute to the well-being of women who do paid work and have adolescent children. The objectives proposed for this study are a) To explore direct and indirect associations between work-to-family conflict and job, family and life satisfaction, and b) To explore direct and indirect associations between work-to-family enrichment and job, family and life satisfaction, in women who do paid work and have at least one adolescent child.

Literature review

The work-to-family conflict is associated with negative outcomes for workers and their families (Frone, 2003), with low job, family, and life satisfaction levels (Orellana *et al.*, 2021). Work-to-family conflict has been negatively related to job satisfaction (Rhee, Park & Lee, 2020) and life satisfaction (Jia, Cheung & Fu, 2020). Additionally, work-to-family conflict transfers work-related interpersonal tensions to the family domain, negatively affecting workers' family satisfaction (Morr Loftus & Droser, 2020). Considering this background, we present the following hypotheses:

- H1: Work-to-family conflict is negatively associated with job satisfaction.
- H2: Work-to-family conflict is negatively associated with life satisfaction.
- H3: Work-to-family conflict is negatively associated with family satisfaction.

In contrast with work-to-family conflict, work-to-family enrichment has been found to positively correlate with job, family, and life satisfaction (Deng & Gao, 2017). According to Choi, Jung, Cho and Sohn (2018), positive experiences between work and family could be linked to greater life satisfaction. Studies in Asian, European and North American countries indicate that enrichment generated at work could positively impact both the work and family domains (Zhang *et al.*, 2018). This evidence guides the following hypotheses:

- H4: Work-to-family enrichment is positively associated with job satisfaction.
- H5: Work-to-family enrichment is positively associated with life satisfaction.
- H6: Work-to-family enrichment is positively associated with family satisfaction.

Work-to-family conflict has been negatively related with work-to-family enrichment. Studies in Italy and China have shown this link, explaining that fewer tensions or negative work experiences allow the creation of favourable conditions for work-to-family enrichment (Ghislieri *et al.*, 2017). Following the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), we propose associations between work and family that are related to either conflict or enrichment. In this line, according to Frone (2003), a broad conceptualization of work-family balance would involve a reduction in work-family conflict and an increase in work-family enrichment. We therefore propose the following hypothesis:

- H7: Work-to-family conflict is negatively associated with work-to-family enrichment.

Researchers have found that job satisfaction could be one of the main determining factors for life satisfaction, in keeping with the bottom-up theoretical perspective (Edralin, 2013). Findings from various studies in Chile and in other regions support this positive relation between job satisfaction and life satisfaction (Bernarto *et al.*, 2020; Schnettler *et al.*, 2020). National and international studies have also reported positive relations between life satisfaction and family satisfaction (Schnettler, Grunert *et al.*, 2021; Viñas-Bardolet *et al.*, 2020).

The above relationships can be explained by the spillover model, which refers to the transmission of experiences across different domains of life in the same individual (Lee, Zvonkovic & Crawford, 2014) and establishes that satisfaction in different domains is positively correlated (Wu, 2009). Based on this spillover model, we could also expect that job satisfaction and family satisfaction are positively associated in Chilean female workers, as it has been reported in the literature in other samples (Al Musadieq, 2019; Viñas-Bardolet *et al.*, 2020). Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

- H8: Job satisfaction is positively associated with life satisfaction.
- H9: Family satisfaction is positively associated with life satisfaction.
- H10: Job satisfaction is positively associated with family satisfaction.

Various studies have shown the importance of job and family satisfaction as life satisfaction predictors (Viñas-Bardolet *et al.*, 2020; Busseri & Mise, 2020). Despite these findings, there is little research that has evaluated the mediating role of job and family satisfaction in workers' work-family interface and life satisfaction. Nevertheless, there is evidence showing that job satisfaction plays a mediating role in the relationship between work-life balance and work motivation towards intention to work from home in the future (Pranata, Hendrawan, Putra Riyanto, Gunadi, 2022). There is also evidence that family satisfaction mediates between family support and life satisfaction (Schnettler, Miranda-Zapata *et al.*, 2018).

However, no published studies have been found that evaluate the mediating role of job and family life satisfaction between work-to-family conflict and enrichment and life satisfaction among mothers with paid work.

On this basis, we posit that evaluating the mediating role of both job and family satisfaction can help identify these domains as potential underlying mechanisms that contribute to life satisfaction, via the following hypotheses:

- H11: Work-to-family conflict is indirectly associated with life satisfaction via job satisfaction.
- H12: Work-to-family conflict is indirectly associated with life satisfaction via family satisfaction.
- H13: Work-to-family enrichment is indirectly associated with life satisfaction via job satisfaction.
- H14: Work-to-family enrichment is indirectly associated with life satisfaction via family satisfaction.

Methodology

Sample

A non-probabilistic sample of 473 women in Temuco, Chile was recruited. Inclusion criteria was that participants had paid work, and had at least one adolescent child between 12 and 16 years old.

Instrument

Participants reported age, number of children, number of household members, weekly work hours, type of work, and socioeconomic stratum based on total household income and size (Asociación de Investigadores de Mercado, 2016). In addition, included the following measures:

Work-Family Interface Scale (Kinnunen, Feldt, Geurts & Pulkkinen, 2006). Includes four sub-scales: Work-to-family conflict (WFC), family-to-work conflict (FWC), work-to-family enrichment (WFE) and family-to-work enrichment (FWE). The present study used the WFC and WFE subscales. In both subscales, participants indicated their agreement with each statement using a Likert-type 5-point scale. The WFC subscale has four items grouped in one dimension. The average extracted variance obtained was over .50 (AVE = .68) and reached a good reliability level (Omega = .89). The WFE subscale has three items grouped into one dimension. The average extracted variance obtained was around .50 (AVE = .48) and reached an acceptable reliability level (Omega = .74).

Overall Job Satisfaction Scale (OJSS) (Agho, Price & Mueller, 1992). Consists of six items with one dimension. Participants were asked to indicate their

level of agreement with each statement on a 5-point Likert scale. The average extracted variance obtained was over .50 ($AVE = .65$) and reached a good reliability level ($\Omega = .91$).

Satisfaction with Family Life Scale (SWFaL) (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). Adaptation of the satisfaction with life scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985). This scale includes five items with one dimension. Participants indicated their agreement level for each statement on a 6-point Likert scale. The average extracted variance obtained was over .50 ($AVE = .68$) and reached a good reliability level ($\Omega = .91$).

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985). Consists of five items with one dimension. Participants indicated their agreement with each statement on a 6-point Likert scale. The average extracted variance obtained was over .50 ($AVE = .78$), reaching a good reliability level ($\Omega = .94$).

Procedure

Trained interviewers contacted the mothers to explain the objectives of the study, the questionnaire structure, and the anonymity and strict confidentiality of their responses. Those mothers who chose to participate were visited in their homes by the interviewers between August and December 2019. All participants signed informed consent forms and the interviewers personally applied the questionnaire to the participants and recorded their responses in an online platform (QuestionPro). The study design was approved by the Ethics Committee at Universidad de La Frontera.

Plan of analysis

Descriptive data analysis was conducted with SPSS (v. 23). Reliability was analysed as internal consistency of the instruments by calculating the Omega coefficient (McDonald, 1999). Hypothesis testing was conducted via structural equation models (SEM) using Mplus 7.11. We opted for the estimator with greatest verisimilitude with robust standard errors and mean- and variance-adjusted test statistics (MLMV), which presented effectiveness on scales with over five possible answers. Model fitness was evaluated using the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). CFI and TLI indicate a good fit with values over .95, where .90 is considered the cutoff for establishing an acceptable fit level. A RMSEA value under .05 indicates a good model fit, while a RMSEA value under .08 indicates an acceptable fit (Marsh, Hau & Grayson, 2005). Age and weekly work hours were used as control variables.

The mediating roles tested in this study were established when confidence intervals above and below 2.5% did not contain zero (MacKinnon, Fairchild & Fritz, 2007).

Results

The sample comprised 473 women, whose average age was 39.1 years. On average, they had 2.2 children and their family group was composed of 4.4 members. Most participants belonged to the middle socioeconomic stratum. In terms of employment, 72.7% had a dependent job, 59.2% worked full time and 33.6% worked in commerce in the service industry.

Table 1 displays the average scores obtained. Work-to-family conflict among women was negatively correlated with their job satisfaction ($p<.001$), family satisfaction and life satisfaction ($p<.001$). Work-to-family enrichment was positively correlated with job satisfaction ($p<.001$), as well as with their family and life satisfaction ($p<.001$). Work-to-family conflict among women was negatively correlated with their work-to-family enrichment ($p<.001$). Job satisfaction was positively correlated with life satisfaction ($p<.001$) and family satisfaction ($p<.001$), while family satisfaction was positively related with life satisfaction ($p<.001$).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations

Scale	Median (Standard Deviation)	Correlations				
		1	2	3	4	5
1. WFC	10.6 (4.4)	1	-.130**	-.246**	-.237**	-.189**
2. WFE	10.2 (2.7)		1	.299**	.144**	.165**
3. OJSS	22.3 (4.8)			1	.224**	.292**
4. SWFaL	23.6 (4.8)				1	.703**
5. SWLS	23.1 (4.8)					1

The structural model presented an acceptable fit with the data (CFI=.913; TLI=.902; RMSEA=.052). As shown in Figure 1, results for the structural model standardized path coefficient estimate showed that the work-to-family conflict was negatively and significantly associated with job satisfaction ($\gamma=-.196$, $p<.001$), thus supporting H1. On the other hand, the association between work-to-family conflict and life satisfaction was not significant ($\gamma=.014$, $p=.586$), and thus H2 was not supported. The association between work-to-family conflict and family satisfaction was negative and significant ($\gamma=-.238$, $p<.001$), which supports H3.

Standardized path coefficients indicate that work-to-family enrichment is positively and significantly associated with job satisfaction ($\gamma=.266$, $p<.001$), and therefore H4 was supported. However, the association between work-to-family enrichment and life satisfaction was not significant ($\gamma=.017$, $p=.518$), thus H5 was not supported. H6, on the other hand, was supported, as the association between work-to-family enrichment and family satisfaction was positive and significant ($\gamma=.127$, $p<.001$). Additionally, the work-family conflict was negatively

and significantly correlated (covariance) with work-family enrichment ($r=-.171$, $p<.001$), providing support to H7.

The job satisfaction was positively and significantly associated with life satisfaction ($\gamma=.144$, $p<.001$), thereby supporting H8. The family satisfaction was also positively and significantly associated with life satisfaction ($\gamma=.561$, $p<.001$), which supported H9. Lastly, path coefficients indicate a significant positive correlation (covariance) between job satisfaction and family satisfaction ($r=.237$, $p<.001$), a finding which supports H10.

When controlling for age and workday variables, a statistically significant positive association was established between age and job satisfaction ($\gamma=.104$, $p<.001$), suggesting that older women feel greater job satisfaction than younger women.

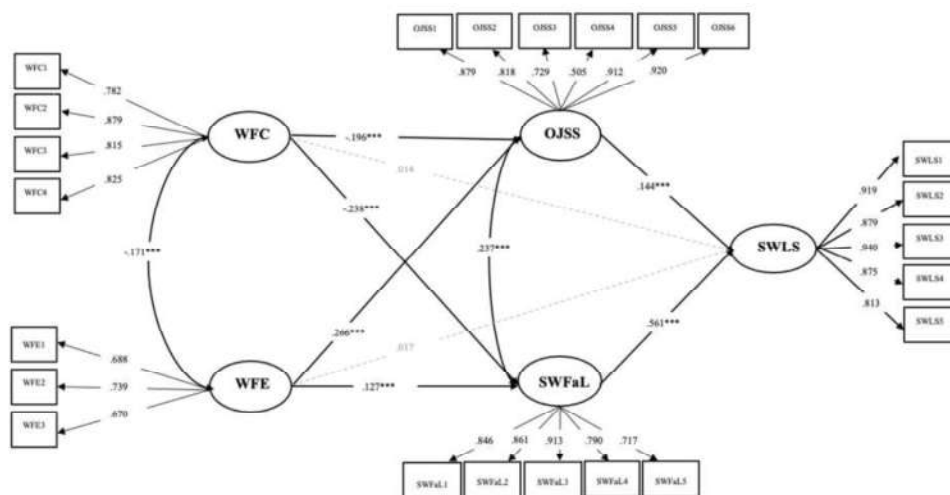


Figure 1. Model explaining direct and indirect associations. To simplify the model, the age and workday control variables are not reported.

Table 2 displays the role of job satisfaction as a mediator in the relation between WFC and life satisfaction was supported by a significant indirect effect obtained with the confidence interval procedure (indirect standardized effect = $-.028$, 95% CI = $-.044$, $-.013$), since the confidence interval did not include zero. Therefore, H11 was supported. Similarly, H12 regarding the role of family satisfaction as a mediator in the relation between WFC and life satisfaction was supported by a significant indirect effect (standardized indirect effect = $-.134$, 95% CI = $-.184$, $-.083$), since the confidence interval did not contain zero.

On the other hand, the role of job satisfaction as a mediator in the relation between WFE and life satisfaction was supported by a significant indirect effect (standardized indirect effect = $.038$, 95% CI = $.018$, $.058$), since the confidence interval did not include zero. Therefore, H13 was supported. Lastly, the role of

family satisfaction as a mediator in the relation between WFE and life satisfaction was also supported by a significant indirect effect (standardized indirect effect = .071, 95% IC = .029, .113), since the confidence interval did not contain zero, supporting H14 (*Table 2*).

Table 2. Mediating role of job and family satisfaction

Specific indirect effects	Lower 2.5%	Estimate	Upper 2.5%
From WFC to SWLS			
SWLS			
OJSS			
WFC	-.044	-.028	-.013
SWLS			
SWFaL			
WFC	-.184	-.134	-.083
From WFE to SWLS			
SWLS			
OJSS			
WFE	.018	.038	.058
SWLS			
SWFaL			
WFE	.029	.071	.113

Discussion

We posited that the increased tension that women experience due to their ‘double shift’ at work and at home (Gómez-Urrutia & Jiménez-Figueroa, 2015) could be linked to a major loss of resources in these domains, which in turn is detrimental to subjective well-being. This study is, to the best of our knowledge, the first one to perform parallel evaluations of these relations, thus establishing key domains that can benefit from interventions to promote women’s well-being.

Our findings show that when interpersonal tensions increase at work, these are transferred to the family, which negatively affects family satisfaction (Morr Loftus & Droser, 2020; Orellana *et al.*, 2021). Negative experiences at work diminish women’s family satisfaction, as these demands interfere with the time, they may want to dedicate to family life (work-to-family conflict, Choi *et al.*, 2018). However, work-to-family conflict was also observed to diminish women’s job satisfaction (Rhee *et al.*, 2020), along with having less work-to-family enrichment (Ghislieri

et al., 2017). These findings suggest that when work responsibilities interfere with family care for women with adolescent children, their job satisfaction decreases, which in turn could lead to negative perceptions towards work (Morr Loftus & Droser, 2020).

Incorporating the negative and positive directions of work-family influence into the study allowed to expand on the more commonly used conflict-related approach to work-family relations (Yucel & Latshaw, 2020). Moreover, this study provides a more purposeful look at this relation by supporting a significant positive relation between work-to-family enrichment and job or family satisfaction. According to COR theory, obtaining resources at work, such as learning things that help to better fulfil home obligations, improves job satisfaction among women and allows them to generate resources such as skills and abilities to efficiently perform tasks or better organize their time, both at work and at home (Hobfoll, 1989).

The model developed in this study, in keeping with the bottom-up theoretical approach to life satisfaction (Pavot & Diener, 2008), showed that greater job satisfaction was associated with increased life satisfaction among these women. This model also showed that greater family satisfaction among women was associated with higher levels of life satisfaction. However, based on the effect size in each domain, our results indicate that, compared to job satisfaction, family satisfaction made a greater contribution to life satisfaction among women. Other findings in our study supported that greater job satisfaction among women was related with increased family satisfaction, in keeping with the spillover model.

Our work also provides evidence about underlying mechanisms supporting the relation between work-to-family conflict and life satisfaction, and between work-to-family enrichment and life satisfaction. While prior studies have noted a direct relationship between work-to-family conflict and life satisfaction (Jia *et al.*, 2020) and between work-to-family enrichment and life satisfaction (De Simone *et al.*, 2014), the results in our study indicate that both work-to-family conflict and work-to-family enrichment are associated to the work and family domains first, and subsequently on overall life satisfaction. This relationship implies that work-to-family conflict can indirectly decrease life satisfaction among women by reducing their job and family satisfaction, while the opposite occurs in the case of work-to-family enrichment.

Conclusion

This study contributes to existing literature by establishing the mediating role of job and family satisfaction. Namely, satisfaction in these two domains can function as mechanisms that allow or hinder the transfer of resources from work-to-family conflict and work-to-family enrichment. This resource gain or loss has an influence (negative in work-to-family conflict, positive in work-to-family enrichment) in working mothers' general life satisfaction.

Hence, state and organizational policies and practices are needed for the promotion of work-to-family enrichment and the reduction of work-to-family conflict. These practices include increasing time flexibility, implementing a culture promoting support for the families of working women, and stimulating a work culture of training and permanent flexible support practices to improve the skills of working women and thereby reconciling work and family. These and similar strategies may allow women to satisfactorily gain personal resources that can be invested their family life, particularly as they raise their adolescent children, who are at a stage of identity construction and growth (Alonso-Stuyck & Aliaga, 2017).

The main limitation of this study is that causal relations cannot be established among the variables tested, as this study had a cross-sectional design. Similarly, study data were obtained via self-reports, meaning that answers given by participants in the questionnaire could have been influenced by social desirability. These limitations should be accounted for in further research.

Moreover, we suggest that future studies evaluate the possible mediating role of work-to-family enrichment between job support and job, life and family satisfaction among women with paid work, because job support conditions at work could contribute to greater satisfaction.

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