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## Work-Family Conflict and Job and Family Satisfaction. The Mediating Role of Cognitions

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### Abstract

Although the relationship between work-family conflict and different forms of satisfaction was addressed by numerous studies, the correlational nature of this data does not allow for causal conclusions. Relying on the ABC model in the cognitive-behavioral paradigm and using an experimental design, the purpose of this study consists of analyzing the effects of work-family/family-work conflict on job and family satisfaction, as well as irrational/rational cognitions as mediators in the relationship between conflict and satisfaction. On a sample of 192 participants, ANOVA, MANOVA, regression analyses and structural equation modeling were performed in order to test the hypotheses about the direct and indirect relationships between the variables. The direction of the conflict significantly influenced job and family satisfaction and the mediation hypothesis is partially supported: cognitions mediate the relationship between the direction of the conflict and family satisfaction, but do not mediate the relationship between the direction of the conflict and job satisfaction. Theoretical and practical implications of the results are discussed.

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**Keywords:** Work-family conflict; job satisfaction; family satisfaction; cognitions

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### 1. Introduction

Studies that investigated the relationship between work-family conflict and satisfaction reported negative correlations (Bruck, Allen & Spector, 2002; Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001). However, data regarding the way in which conflict influences satisfaction is relatively limited and the correlational nature of this data does not allow for causal conclusions. As for the main theoretical perspectives that guided research in work-family interface, they are

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represented by the role theory and the ecological systems theory (Mullen, Kelley, & Kelloway, 2008). Recently, some authors underlined the importance of investigating the role of the cognitive variables in work-family interactions (Janasz & Behson, 2007; Van Steenbergen, Ellemers, Halsam, & Urlings, 2008; Poposki, 2011). Though negative effects associated with work-family conflict, like high levels of stress and low levels of satisfaction, have been pointed out, there are theoretical models which suggest that a situation or a stressor do not determine certain emotional and behavioral effects by themselves, but through the agency of beliefs, cognitions or personal perceptions (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Ellis, 1994; Beck, 1976). In work-family interface research, there are studies which analyzed the role of some cognitive characteristics (Janasz & Behson, 2007), the possibility of influencing the way of perceiving the relationships between the two life roles (Van Steenbergen et al., 2008) and the cognitive evaluations of fit between demands and resources (Moen, Kelley, & Huang, 2008). To our knowledge, studies haven't considered the role of different types of cognitions related to work-family conflict, from the rationality/irrationality perspective, as these are conceptualized within the cognitive-behavioral paradigm.

## 2. Objective

Relying on Voydanoff's (2008), general conceptual model and the ABC cognitive model (Ellis, 1994; Beck, 1976), the purpose of this research was to analyze the effect of work-family/family-work conflict on job and family satisfaction, as well as the cognitions as mediators between conflict and satisfaction.

## 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

The direction of the conflict (work-family and family-work) and the type of conflict (time-based, strain-based and behaviour-based) were the independent variables, while job and family satisfaction were the dependent variables. The mediating variable was represented by the cognitions. The following measures were used:

*Cognitions.* We developed and validated The Work-Family Conflict Cognitions Questionnaire (CMF, Buliga & Turliuc, 2014) for the purposes of this study. The internal consistency of the four scales (work-family conflict irrational cognitions, work-family conflict rational cognitions, family-work conflict irrational cognitions, family-work conflict rational cognitions) ranged from 0.57 to 0.74. Family satisfaction, Olson's ten-item *Family Satisfaction Scale* (Olson, 1995), assessing family satisfaction through three dimensions (cohesion, flexibility and communication) 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), assessing a person's general job satisfaction with 5 items. The authors reported an alpha Cronbach coefficient of 0.88. In this study, the internal consistency of the scale is 0.83.

### 3.3. Hypotheses

The general hypothesis of the study is: *The direction and the type of conflict influence job and family satisfaction, influence mediated by individual's cognitions.* In accordance with our objective, five specific hypotheses were formulated about the relationships between the variables.

### 3.4. Procedure

We used an experimental approach in order to test the effects of the independent variables on the dependent

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