Journal of Vocational Behavior 106 (2018) 153–164

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Vocational Behavior

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jvb

The roles of work and family in men's lives: Testing the social cognitive model of career self-management☆

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Social cognitive career theory
Career self-management model
Conformity to masculine norms
Work-family positive spillover
Multiple role self-efficacy

ABSTRACT

We tested a social-cognitive model of career self-management (CSM; Lent & Brown, 2013) in the context of the multiple role management among a sample of 693 working men. The findings of the current study indicated that (a) conformity to masculine norms is linked to work-family positive spillover both directly and indirectly through multiple role self-efficacy; (b) the hypothesized relations were all significant for the full sample; (c) CSM predictors accounted for a significant amount of variance in working men's work-family positive spillover and job, family, and life satisfaction; and (d) the direct and indirect effects among the variables did not vary across participants' relationship status and ethnic minority status. Taken together, these findings provide strong support for the validity of CSM in explaining the multiple role management and well-being of working men. Implications for research and practice are discussed in relation to working men's work-family enrichment and masculine norms.

1. Introduction

Dirty Harry, played by Clint Eastwood and Phil Dunphy, of the television show *Modern Family*, are two fictional characters who embody very different definitions of what it means to be male in the United States. The first embodies US hyper-masculinity and the second violates our expectations of traditional men as Phil expresses emotional vulnerabilities and invests significant time in raising his children. We would be tempted to think that Phil might feel more confident in managing work and family as well as experiencing more positive work-family spillover. This study was designed to examine our assumptions about men's confidence in work-family management and the relationship between that confidence and job, family and life satisfaction.

In spite of the growing body of research in work-family studies and gendered perspective in career development research in general, research that focuses on men as their own cultural group is only two decades old (e.g., Fitzgerald & Cherpas, 1985; Jome & Tokar, 1998; Mahalik, Perry, Coonerty-Femiano, Catraio, & Land, 2006; Snipes et al., 2015; Tokar & Jome, 1998). Traditionally, men have been studied as representatives of all human beings, while studies of women only, which followed, focused on femininity-specific factors (e.g., Byars & Hackett, 1998; Flores & O'Brien, 2002; Lee, Flores, Navarro, & Kanagui-Muñoz, 2015; Scheuermann, Tokar, & Hall, 2014). This made for very few studies that examined men and masculine norms as contextual factors (Tokar, Thompson, Plaufcan, & Williams, 2007).

While researchers have begun to examine the effect of gender role on men's careers, three major limitations exist. First, men's

☆ Note: This research was supported by American Psychological Association Dissertation Award (Recipient: Shin Ye Kim).
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https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.01.008
Received 11 September 2017; Received in revised form 26 January 2018; Accepted 29 January 2018
Available online 31 January 2018
0001-8791/ Published by Elsevier Inc.

career and gender role studies often focus on the extreme levels of traditionality of career choice such as nursing, elementary education and homemaking (which are > 90% female), or engineering (which is 88% male) (Dodson & Borders, 2006; Jome & Tokar, 1998; Lease, 2003; Rochlen, McKelley, & Whittaker, 2010; Tokar & Jome, 1998). Examination of a more comprehensive range of traditionality of career of working men is lacking in studies. Second, masculine norm measures that were frequently used in vocational and work-family research, such as O'Neil's Gender Role Conflict Scale or Eisler's Gender Role Stress Scale, assume a certain level of conflictual and pathological aspect of masculinity. As a result, we do not have a complete understanding of the broader and normative aspects of masculinity and its impact on work-family management. Third and finally, studies have largely focused on male students' major or career choice, but rarely examined male workers' role within a vocational framework. To address these limitations, the current study examined a range of different levels of traditionality of career in working men within the framework of the Career Self-Management Model (Lent & Brown, 2013). However, rather than using instruments that assume negative consequences of masculine norms on work-family management, we used the conformity to masculine norms (CMNI) scale to assess reported levels of personal conformity to masculine norms, which examines “great variability in how men enact masculinity” (Mahalik et al., 2003).

1.1. Theoretical framework: social cognitive model of career self-management

Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) has guided many research studies in career development to explain an individual's career-related decisions. Developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994, 2000), SCCT is an extension of Bandura's (1986, 1997) social cognitive theory and Hackett and Betz's (1981) career self-efficacy theory to help explain the development of career choices. More recently, Lent and Brown expanded the model to focus on career self-management (CSM; cf. Lent & Brown, 2013). While the earlier SCCT studies have focused on a number of *content* questions, such as predicting a certain major or career, the latter model emphasizes the *process* questions: Where and how people obtain certain career ideas and how they manage challenges once they start work. This includes how individuals manage work-family-life conflicts as well as the adaptive (coping) career behavior that people use to achieve their own career objectives (Lent & Brown, 2013).

In the current study, we tested aspects of the CSM by specifically investigating working men's self-efficacy in relation to multiple role management. Of interest in this study are the propositions of CSM that background contextual variables exert an influence on men's multiple role self-efficacy, which in turn directly may influence their goal, which is successful multiple role management, represented by work-family positive spillover. We also investigated how self-efficacy both directly and indirectly (through career goals) relates to the outcomes of job, family, and life satisfaction (see Fig. 1).

Recent studies provided partial support for the CSM model by examining how well it fit career exploration and decision-making (Lent, Ireland, Penn, Morris, & Sappington, 2017), job searching (Lim, Lent, & Penn, 2016), managing sexual identity (Tatum, Formica, & Brown, 2017), and multiple role planning (Roche, Daskalova, & Brown, 2017). CSM has yet to be used in the context of men's multiple role management. As such, the objective of this study was to apply the CSM model to men's multiple role management to demonstrate how conformity to masculine norms relate to multiple-role self-efficacy, positive work-family spillover, and the outcomes of job, family, and life satisfaction among employed men.

1.2. Men's conformity to masculine norms, work-family positive spillover and well-being

Work-family research has largely focused on work-family conflict and challenges associated with managing work and family (e.g.,

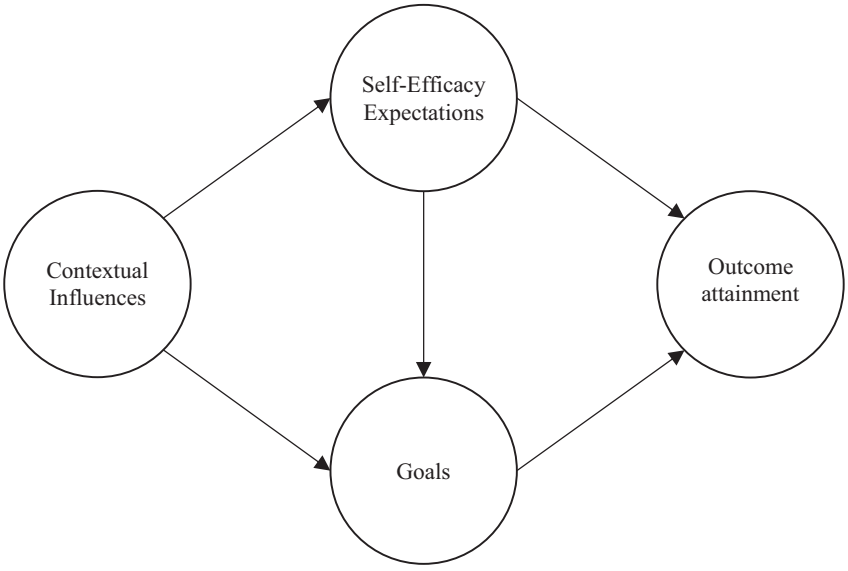

Fig. 1. Portions of Lent and Brown's (2013) model of career self-management tested in the present study.

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