



Work–family conflict, social support, and turnover intentions: A longitudinal study



Christoph Nohe*, Karlheinz Sonntag

University of Heidelberg, Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Hauptstraße 47-51, D-69117 Heidelberg, Germany

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 30 January 2014

Available online 1 April 2014

Keywords:

Work–family conflict

Turnover intentions

Social support

Longitudinal study

ABSTRACT

This longitudinal study examined the relative merits of two alternative perspectives on the interplay between work–family conflict, social support, and turnover intentions. According to the cross-domain perspective, family-to-work conflict (FWC) should be more important in predicting increases in turnover intentions than work-to-family conflict (WFC). According to the matching-perspective, however, WFC should be more important in predicting increases in turnover intentions than FWC. We expanded the debate about matching- versus cross-domain relationships by testing whether resources (i.e., social support) should stem from the same domain (i.e., work or family) as the conflict (i.e., matching-principle) or from the other domain (i.e., cross-domain perspective). Additionally, authors hypothesized that changes in WFC and FWC predicted changes in turnover intentions and tested reciprocal relationships between WFC/FWC and turnover intentions. This longitudinal study (5-month time lag) with 665 employees revealed that (increases in) WFC predicted increases in turnover intentions, whereas (increases in) FWC did not. The relationship between WFC and increases in turnover intentions was buffered by work–family specific leader support but not by work–family specific support from family and friends. Further, results revealed reverse relationships such that turnover intentions predicted increases in WFC and FWC. Taken together, the results of this study supported the matching-principle rather than the cross-domain perspective. The reverse relationships found between work–family conflict and turnover intentions challenge the common view that work–family conflict antecedes turnover intentions in a unidirectional way.

© 2014 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

The many incompatibilities experienced by employees between their work and family roles are typically referred to as work–family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Work–family conflict can occur in two directions: work can interfere with family (work-to-family conflict; WFC) and family can interfere with work (family-to-work conflict; FWC; Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997). A considerable body of research has examined the potential consequences of high WFC and FWC, such as lower job satisfaction and lower organizational commitment. From a managerial perspective, one of the most important findings in this regard is the positive association of WFC and FWC with turnover intentions (Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elfering, & Semmer, 2011). Turnover intentions are one of the most powerful predictors of actual turnover (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000), which incurs financial costs (Allen, Bryant, & Vardaman, 2010), increases accident rates (Shaw, Gupta, & Delery, 2005), and decreases customer service and quality (Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel, & Pierce, 2011).

* Corresponding author at: University of Muenster, Organisational and Business Psychology, Fliehdnerstr. 21, D-48149 Muenster, Germany. Fax: +49 251 83 34190.

E-mail addresses: christoph.nohe@wwu.de (C. Nohe), karlheinz.sonntag@psychologie.uni-heidelberg.de (K. Sonntag).

Among work–family researchers, there is an ongoing debate about the pattern of relationships of work–family conflict with domain-specific consequences (Amstad et al., 2011; Nohe, Meier, Sonntag, & Michel, under review). The matching-hypothesis assumes that the primary effect of WFC and FWC on domain-specific consequences lies within the sending domain (e.g., WFC primarily affects job satisfaction and FWC primarily affects marital satisfaction). According to the cross-domain perspective, however, the primary effect of WFC and FWC lies within the receiving domain (e.g., WFC primarily affects marital satisfaction and FWC primarily affects job satisfaction). Most studies on work–family conflict and turnover intentions (e.g., Carr, Boyar, & Gregory, 2008; Hom & Kinicki, 2001) are mute on the relative merits of each perspective because they do not simultaneously consider WFC and FWC.

The aim of the present study is to contribute toward resolving this debate by testing a model of work–family conflict and turnover intentions. To compare the parts of the matching and cross-domain perspectives that focus on work-related outcomes, we simultaneously regress turnover intentions on WFC and FWC. In doing this, we account for the shared variance between WFC and FWC and provide a more rigorous comparison of the matching- versus cross-domain perspective than prior research (e.g., Amstad et al., 2011). We test our model with two waves of data. Compared with previous cross-sectional studies (e.g., Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Collins, 2001; Kirchmeyer & Cohen, 1999), our longitudinal design provides more opportunities to test alternative interpretations such as reverse relationships. Additionally, we expand the debate on matching versus cross-domain relationships by testing whether social support that stems from the domain in which the conflict originates (i.e., matching-principle) is more important in alleviating the negative effects of WFC and FWC on turnover intentions than social support that stems from the other domain (i.e., cross-domain principle). Gaining differentiated insights into moderators of the relationship between work–family conflict and turnover intentions is particularly important because work–family conflict is very common in contemporary jobs and may reflect a phenomenon that cannot be completely avoided.

Our second aim is to shed light on work–family conflict and turnover intentions as dynamic constructs that change over time. Although work and family interactions reflect some of the most dynamic processes experienced by employees (Odele-Dusseau et al., 2013), most previous studies used a static approach that fails to capture the dynamic nature of work–family interactions and the turnover process (Casper, Eby, Bordeaux, Lockwood, & Lambert, 2007). To illustrate the distinction between a static and a dynamic approach, we adapt an example from Chen, Ployhart, Thomas, Anderson, and Bliese (2011). Consider two employees with an identical level of WFC (e.g., a rating of 3 on a 5-point scale). According to a static approach, the two employees are equally likely to leave or stay in the organization. However, what if one employee's WFC level has decreased from 4 to 3 and the other employee's WFC level has increased from 2 to 3? Would change in WFC exert unique influences on turnover intentions that go above and beyond the influence of static levels of WFC? Examining the dynamics of WFC change and FWC change can provide better tests of theory and offer stronger theoretical and practical implications (Mitchell & James, 2001).

1.1. Work–family conflict and turnover intentions

Employees experiencing extensive work–family conflict may try to reduce the conflict by quitting their job. Thus, withdrawal from the job may be seen as a coping reaction in response to incompatible work and family demands. Specifically, when an employee experiences WFC, he/she may be inclined to quit and search for a more family friendly new job to eliminate the occurrence of WFC. Similarly, when an employee's family responsibilities interfere with work duties (FWC), he/she may see quitting as a means to reduce FWC and to better meet family obligations (Boyar, Maertz, Pearson, & Keough, 2003). Meta-analyses on cross-sectional studies have generally supported positive associations of WFC and FWC with turnover intentions (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Amstad et al., 2011).

We shed new light on the relationships of WFC and FWC to turnover intentions by comparing the parts of the cross-domain and matching perspectives that focus on work-related outcomes. The cross-domain perspective assumes that WFC, although originating in the work domain, primarily impairs family-related variables such as marital satisfaction, and FWC, although originating in the family domain, primarily impairs work-related variables such as job satisfaction. The rationale behind this idea is that when one role (e.g., family) interferes with another role (e.g., work), individuals will have problems fulfilling demands in the receiving role (e.g., work). As a consequence of struggle in meeting receiving role demands, satisfaction related to the life domain of the receiving role suffers (Amstad et al., 2011). Accordingly, FWC is assumed to be more important in predicting job satisfaction than WFC (Frone et al., 1997). In turn, low levels of job satisfaction are one of the key antecedents of turnover intentions in theories of voluntary turnover (Holtom, Mitchell, Lee, & Eberly, 2008; Hom & Kinicki, 2001). Thus, according to the cross-domain perspective, FWC (vs. WFC) should be mainly related to turnover intentions because FWC more strongly reduces job satisfaction.

However, more recently, researchers have argued that a matching-hypothesis seems at least as plausible (Amstad et al., 2011; Peeters, ten Brummelhuis, & van Steenbergen, 2013; Shockley & Singla, 2011). According to this perspective, WFC predominantly affects work-related outcomes, while FWC predominantly affects family-related outcomes. The notion behind this assumption is grounded in appraisal theories. Appraisal theories assume that when self-relevant roles are threatened, people are likely to appraise the cause of the threat negatively (Lazarus, 1991; Shockley & Singla, 2011). For example, when one role (e.g., work) interferes with another role (e.g., family), individuals will appraise the role (e.g., work) which the conflict stems from negatively. Negative appraisals are likely to go along with a negative affective tone, which, when experienced frequently, can result in dissatisfaction in the domain where the conflict originates (Amstad et al., 2011). Thus, according to the matching-hypothesis, WFC (vs. FWC) should be mainly related to turnover intentions because WFC more strongly reduces job satisfaction which, in turn, should lead to higher levels of turnover intentions.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/886859>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/886859>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)