



Work-family supportiveness organizational perceptions: Important for the well-being of male blue-collar hourly workers? ☆

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Abstract

The current study questions whether organizational perceptions of family supportiveness predict work-family conflict (WFC) and job satisfaction for an atypical sample of male hourly workers in a manufacturing organization, and whether those relationships depend on work (number of work hours) and family (number of family roles) demands. A unidimensional factor structure for the family supportiveness scale was not found; however a subscale for the extent that the organization supported work-family balance was strongly related to WFC and job satisfaction. An interaction was found such that those working long hours in the family-supportive work environment had lower WFC than those working long hours in an unsupportive environment, while the number of family roles (e.g., spouse, parent, eldercare) had no moderating effects. Supporting employees' non-work life is determined to be important for these employees.

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1. Introduction

Work-family conflict (WFC) is a form of interrole conflict in which time spent in the work role interferes with the family role (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), and is associated with lower job satisfaction and other signs of job strain (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Bruck, Allen, & Spector, 2002; Grandey, Cordeiro, & Crouter, 2005; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). Generally speaking, the work environment, rather than the family environment, predicts work-family conflict (Carlson, 1999; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). In particular, recent evidence has shown that when organizations are perceived as supportive of employees' family lives, employees report lower WFC and higher job satisfaction, and these relationships exist beyond demographics, work-family policies, and more general organizational climate variables (Allen, 2001; Behson, 2002; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999).

In the current study, we contribute to the knowledge on work-family supportiveness in two ways. First, we attempt to constructively replicate the finding that organizational perceptions of family supportiveness are related to WFC and job satisfaction in a sample of male, hourly, blue-collar workers. Most of the research on work-family support has been conducted with white-collar professional occupations or primarily female samples (e.g., Allen, 2001; Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005; Thompson et al., 1999). Family-supportive organizations may be more critical for such samples, resulting in overestimated relationships. Second, we examine two possible moderators of the effectiveness of family-supportive organizations for our male employees that represent the extent of quantitative demands in the work and family contexts. First, more hours at work reduce the time that one has for family roles (Major, Klein, & Ehrhart, 2002); but if that work environment is supportive of employees' personal lives the time spent at work may be less likely to result in negative spillover. Second, the number of family roles these male employees has (e.g., spouse, parent, eldercare) may impact the degree to which family-supportiveness matters to their reported WFC. Those who have more family roles may be more appreciative of a family-supportive organization, while those without family demands may be indifferent or even react negatively (i.e., backlash).

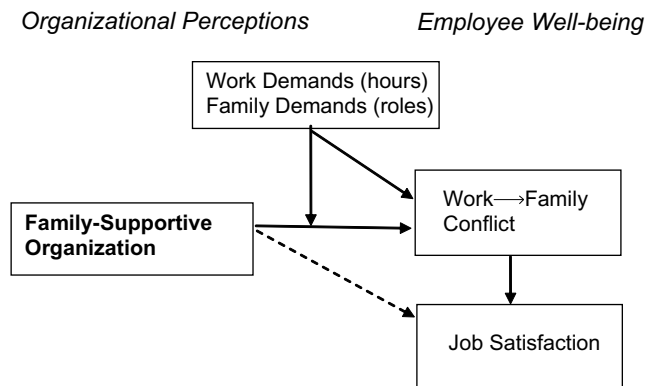


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework.

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