

Family Friendly Work Practice and Job Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of Work-Family Facilitation

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Abstract—Family friendly work practice (FFWP) has received considerable attention and research support over the past decade. Now the time has come to refine and better understand how it impacts job satisfaction. This study investigates the moderating effect of work-family facilitation. To be specific, we tested this mediated model with matched data among a sample of 261 employees in China. We found that family friendly work practice (FFWP) is positively related to work-family facilitation and consequently job satisfaction. Our discussion highlights the benefits of understanding the roles of work-family facilitation involved in the effectiveness of family friendly work practice and how they can be practically implemented. We discuss the theoretical and practical implications of the findings and provide suggestions for future research.

Keywords—Family Friendly Work Practice (FFWP); Work-Family Facilitation; Job Satisfaction; Mediated Model; Conservation of Resource Theory (COR)

I. INTRODUCTION

With the development of information technology, and global competition intensifies, 'Work from 9 am to 5 pm' or 'working for eight hours' work schedule has been broken, overtime working has become a norm for many employees. However, with the rapid development of Internet, the working time and space are becoming freer and employees will not be limited by time and space. Work and family began to permeate each other and it was difficult for employees to draw clear boundaries between work and family domain. In another hand, under the situation of China, the status of women is increasing, more and more women employees choose to enter the workplace. The old opinion 'Men work outside and women should stay home' has been gradually dissipated. Double-worker family is also more common. Based on mentioned before, changing foresees regarding work-life facilitation and more dual-career couples encouraged employers to use FFWP programs to satisfy the needs of the changing environment (Straub, 2011). FFWP refers to organizations should react to their employees need in family domain. It includes flexible work schedules, telework, job sharing, dependent care services, and special maternity leave arrangements, which are all intended to facilitate positive behaviors and attitudes toward work by improving work-life balance and employee well-being (Wang &

Walumbwa, 2007). In this study, we divided FFWP into two categories: flexible work scheduling and dependent care programs.

Many researchers have examined the impacts of FFWP on work-related attitudes, turnover intention, and performance. For instance, FFWP promotes organizational attachment by increasing organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and job satisfaction. In addition, some research has found that FFWP relate to a reduction in turnover intention (Kim & Wiggins, 2011) and improve organizational performance.

Though previous research had explored the connection between FFWP and job satisfaction, they didn't examined the mediating role of work-family facilitation between FFWP and job satisfaction. Based on that, we conducted this study.

II. THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

We draw upon social conservation of resources theory (COR) to examine relationships between FFWPs and outcomes. The theory proposes that individuals are motivated to gain or maintain resources, including "objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual or that serve as a means for attainment of these objects, personal characteristics, conditions or energies" (Hobfoll, 1989, p. 516). The theory further proposes that individuals who acquire resources are able to better obtain other resources in the future; that is, resources generate additional resources, thereby creating a resource "gain spiral" (Direnzo, 2015). As mentioned, we divided FFWP into two categories: flexible work scheduling and dependent care programs.

First, Laurel (2010) found flexible work scheduling can positively affect employees job satisfaction and negatively affect their turnover. We believe that the implementation of flexible work arrangements (Allen, 2013) for employees on the basis of the completion of the work, the time of their own have a certain autonomy. According to the (COR) theory, we can use the available resources to acquire other resources, and thus obtain a gain spiral, where we can take the time as a valuable resource, and use the time to relax, or do some other things. For example: female workers can use the extra to take care of family and children, male workers use the time to meet

with their friends. This will make them more satisfied with the current work arrangements

Secondly, dependent care programs include care for children, care for the elderly, and so on. According to the role theory, a person can play multiple roles at the same time and can maintain the harmony between the roles, but sometimes it can also be a role conflict. For example, a professional woman's professional role and her mother's role sometimes conflict; a student who has just entered the University, when his parents came to visit, he as an independent college students role and as a parent's role will also conflict. Suitable dependent care programs can be a good policy to reduce the conflict between people's roles. It can provide help for the employees in the play of other roles besides work domain, so that employees can feel the benefits from the company's policies, the current job ill more satisfied for them. Drawing from this theoretical, empirical statement, we derive the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: FFWP is positively related to employees' job satisfaction.

Work family facilitation, including work to promote family and family to promote work. Previous studies on the family field are mainly focused on the work family conflict. Recently a meta-analysis (Michelle, 2011) shows that, work role stress, job role into (job involvement and interest in work / Center), social support (organizational support, supervisor support, coworker support), work characteristics (task diversity, work autonomy, family friendly organization), and personality (control, the negative effects of internal control / neuroticism) is the antecedents of work family conflict.

First, Laurel. (2010) found that flexible work arrangements can positively affect work-family enrichment. Arguments that support this view have been based on Meijman and Mulder's effort-recovery (E-R) model. According to the E-R model, exerting effort at work can result in negative load reactions, such as sleep problems and fatigue. The model further proposes that these negative load reactions are reversible through the process of recovery that occurs when the functional systems challenged during work go untaxed. Flexible work scheduling increases opportunities for recovery in the family domain. Hence, flexible work scheduling is positively related to work-facilitate-family.

Second, dependent care programs can help the workers to complete their duties in the home field. For example: taking the children off to school and picking up the children back, taking charge of the elderly hospital cost. Employees in the role of the family can do their best as much as possible, so that they can spend more time on their work, so as to promote the success of work. Hence, dependent care programs are positively related to family-facilitate-work.

Drawing from this theoretical, empirical statement, we derive the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: FFWP is positively related to employees' work-family facilitation

Following Greenhaus and Powell (2006), the resources (e.g., flexibility) that have been obtained in the work may lead to better job performance, with a more positive impact on the job creation, and ultimately to a more positive impact on the home field (i.e., work for family promotion). In turn, individuals experience more positive emotions,

their work should have higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intention. The social exchange theory can better understand the relationship beyond the definition of facilitation. According to the social exchange theory, when the favorable treatment is made by one, the other one has the obligation to repay. Applied to the work family interface, when employees feel that their organizations are helping them to manage work and family roles, reciprocal norms are often in favorable attitude, such as the positive feelings and organizational forms of the organization in return. Therefore, we predict the following:

Hypothesis 3: Work-family facilitation mediates the relationship between FFWP and job satisfaction.

Comprehensive above, the theoretical model of this paper is:

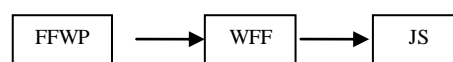


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the Study

III. METHOD

A. Sample and Procedure

We carried out a questionnaire survey in MBA student" companies from Wuhan University of Technology. We had set questionnaires to 320 employees and received 282, the questionnaire response rate was 88.1percent. After getting rid of the invalid questionnaires, we have 261 valid questionnaires, and the effective rate was 92.6 percent. The final sample was 54.0 percent male and 46.0 percent female. The average age of respondents was 31.85 years with 8.15 years of full-time work experience. 66.5 percent of the respondents were not single and or 58.6 percent had at least one children. Respondents represented a wide range of industries including manufacturing (25.6 percent), education (2.6 percent), financial services (9.5 percent), health care and pharmaceuticals (7.4 percent), law (4.1 percent), accounting (3.8 percent), government agencies (3.5 percent), real estate (2.2 percent), and other industries (30 percent).

B. Measures

1) Family Friendly Work Practice

First, FFWPs were divided into two categories: flexible work scheduling and dependent care programs. Six survey items were used to measure flexible work scheduling whereas four survey items were used to dependent care programs: A sample flexible work scheduling item is "How satisfied are you with the following Work/Life programs in your agency... Telework?" and a sample dependent care programs item is "How satisfied are you with the following Work/Life programs in your agency... Child Care Programs?" Respondents were asked to indicate how true the seven statements were for them, on a seven-point Likert scale (from 1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree). Cronbach's α coefficient for the ten items in for job satisfaction in the present study was 0.82.

2) Work-Family Facilitation

Work-to-family and family-to-work facilitation were measured with eight items from Van Steenbergen, Ellemers, and Mooijart's (2007) Work-Family Facilitation scale assessing psychological facilitation.

Psychological facilitation was chosen because it extends beyond energy, time and behavior-based forms and should better capture the cognitive and affective components, which are often the focus of personality research, of work-family facilitation. A sample work-to-family facilitation item is 'Because of my work, I am more able to put home-related matters into perspective' and a sample family-to-work facilitation item is 'Because of my home life, I am more able to put work-related problems aside.' Respondents were asked to indicate how true the seven statements were for them, on a seven-point Likert scale (from 1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree). Cronbach's α coefficient for the eight items in for job satisfaction in the present study was 0.84.

3) Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to the extent to which people are satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs in general and with the different aspects of their jobs. Job satisfaction was assessed with a composite measure of seven items adapted from the Job Diagnostic Survey (Hackman and Oldham, 1980). A sample job satisfaction item is "In general, my job measures up to the sort of job I wanted when I took it". Respondents were asked to indicate how true the seven statements were for them, on a seven-point Likert scale (from 1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree). Cronbach's α coefficient for the seven items in for job satisfaction in the present study was 0.91.

4) Control Variables

In our analyses, we controlled for several variables that may affect work-life facilitation and job satisfaction. We controlled gender age education material status work tenure and whether responsible for children.

IV. RESULT

TABLE I. MODELS

Model	X ²	NNFI	CFI	RMSEA	AIC
	/df				
Three-factor model	2.203	0.855	0.914	0.068	697.23
Two factor model: FFWP and WFF on same factor	3.449	0.760	0.814	0.097	6
Single-factor model: FFWP, WFF and job satisfaction on one factor	5.085	0.630	0.675	0.125	1005.0
					80
					1439.8
					34

Notes: n=261 dyads. FFWP=family friendly work practice WFF=work-family facilitate

Table I presents the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results of the proposed model. As shown in Table 1, the results of the proposed three-factor structure (FFWP work-family facilitation and job satisfaction) demonstrated good fit with the data (X^2 /df=2.203, CFI=.914, RMSEA=.068). Against this baseline three-factor model, we tested two alternative models: Model 2 was a two-factor model with work-family facilitation merged with FFWP to form a single factor; Model 3 was a single-factor model that all variables merged to form a single factor. As shown in Table 1, the fit indices support the proposed three-factor model, providing evidence for the construct distinctiveness between FFWP, work-family facilitation and job satisfaction.

Table II presents the means and standard deviations for all study variables, as well as the inter-correlations

between them. Most of the coefficients are moderate in magnitude and well below their reliabilities, providing supportive evidence for their discriminant validity. As shown in Table 2, FFWP is significantly and positively correlated with work-family facilitation (.462, $p < .001$) and job satisfaction (.325, $p < .01$), and work family facilitation is significantly correlated with job satisfaction (.502, $p < .001$).

TABLE II. MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND CORRELATIONS

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender	.540	.499	-							
2. Marial status	.660	.476	.026	-						
3. Age	31.850	6.846	.116	.553**	-					
4. Education	1.830	.660	.179**	.116	.166**	-				
5. Work tenure	8.150	3.192	.065	.545**	.753**	.109	-			
6. Responsibility for children	.590	.493	.083	.716**	.675**	.099	.682**	-		
7. FFWP	4.494	1.029	.06	.009	.049	.068	.023	.046	-	
8. WFF	4.968	1.059	-.008	.014	-.063	.104	-.015	-.057	.462**	-
9. Job satisfaction	5.243	1.085	-.105	-.059	-.091	.012	-.109	.144*	.325**	.502**

Notes: n=261 dyads. FFWP=family friendly work practice WFF=work-family

facilitate

*.p<.001

We tested Hypothesis 1, 2, and 3 using multiple regression. Table 3 summarizes the results of regression analysis for testing Hypothesis 1 (FFWP is positively related to job satisfaction), Hypothesis 2 (FFWP is positively related to employees' work-family facilitation). Model 3 in Table III indicates that the R² change associated with work-family facilitation was significant ($\Delta R^2=0.144$), lending support to Hypothesis 3. Work-family facilitation partly mediates the relationship between FFWP

Table III Multiple stepwise regression

Variable	WFF		Job satisfaction		
	Model1	Model2	Model3	Model4	Model5
Control variabls					
Intercept	5.017**	3.013**	5.338**	3.852**	2.505**
1. Gender	-.028	-.070	-.216	-.247	-.216
2. Marial status	.239	.296	.183	.225	.093
3. Age	-.020	-.024	.005	.002	.013
4. Education	.188	.146	.064	.032	-.033
5. Work tenure	.032	.038	-.016	-.011	-.028
6. Responsibility for children	-.263	-.336	-.408	-.462*	-.312
Independent variabls					
7. FFWP		.482**		.358**	.142*
8. WFF					.447**
R ²	.028	.245	.035	.149	.293
ΔR^2		.217**		.114**	.144**

Notes: n=261 dyads. FFWP=family friendly work practice WFF=work-family facilitate

**p<.001

*.P<.05

and job satisfaction.

V. DISCUSSION

This study examined the role that work-family facilitation mediates the relationship between FFWP and employees' job satisfaction. We found FFWP is positively

related to job satisfaction and the relationship is partly mediated by work-family facilitation. These findings have some implications.

1) Theoretical Implications

First, this article makes an organic integration and supplement to the definition of FFWP. On the basis of the previous article, we defined two dimensions of FFWP : flexible work scheduling and dependent care programs. Furthermore, this findings highlight the potential importance of adopting a complementarity perspective to work-family facilitation research in general.

Another contribution is the theoretical and Empirical Study of the development of work family facilitation as a mediating mechanism between FFWP and job satisfaction. This study adds to our knowledge of FFWP and the importance of supporting the utilization of working practice from a resource perspectives.

Finally, our results provide further support for the classical alternative to FFWP. This is well known, but according to the study, the notion of FFWP argues that some organizational characteristics and work procedures can be replaced, or suppressed FFWP, thereby denying positive influence on employees' job satisfaction

2) Practical Implications

First, companies should provide more family-friendly work practices to help employees achieving a balance in both work and family domains, so that employees will feel more satisfied with work and their companies.

In addition, employees should fully take advantage of their companies' family friendly work practice .They can arrange their work and family in a suitable way and feel more balance between family and work.

3) Limitations and future research

This study still has some limitations. First, all variables are used self-report measures at the same time, which might have increased common method bias and we cannot substantiate causal conclusions with this study's cross-sectional data. The common method bias may expand the relationship between variables, this study took an anonymous way to collect data and encourages participants to fill in the questionnaire, in order to reduce common method bias. Future research could benefit from a longitudinal design and collecting data from multiple sources.

Second, though the measure scale has provide good job satisfaction scale is the most widely used by the existing mature scale. The measure scales of the FFWP and work-family facilitation are not mature. Nevertheless, we encourage future research to collect second source data to assess variables such as FFWP and work-family facilitation when feasible.

A final potential limitation concerns the generalizability of the findings. Although our sample consisted of employees in a variety of industries and occupations,, and the samples are all from China. Hence, the result is not universal. The future research can be conducted in multicultural environment.

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