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THE EFFECT OF WORK-FAMILY CONFLICTS ON WITHDRAWAL BEHAVIOURS IN THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR

EL EFECTO DE LOS CONFLICTOS FAMILIA-TRABAJO SOBRE LOS COMPORTAMIENTOS DE RETIRO DEL TRABAJO EN EL SECTOR DE LA SALUD

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RESUMEN

Basados en dos marcos teóricos (el Modelo de Manejo del Estrés y el Modelo de Predictores Específicos) hemos desarrollado un modelo para evaluar la incidencia de seis formas de conflictos familia-trabajo (interferencias de la familia en el trabajo y del trabajo en la vida familiar, en las dimensions de tiempo, esfuerzo y comportamiento) sobre cuatro comportamientos de retiro parcial del trabajo (absentismo, llegar tarde, irse temprano, e interrumpir el trabajo) usando datos de una muestra de enfermeras de un hospital-escuela de Canada.

Los datos de 402 enfermeras fueron recabados usando un cuestionario en papel, y posteriormente analizados usando métodos de regresión múltiple. Los resultados sugieren que el modelo de Predictores Específicos explica mejor las variables dependientes. En efecto, solo las interferencias de la vida familiar sobre el trabajo ligadas a la dimensión esfuerzo explican el absentismo y las interrupciones de trabajo de los participantes. Las hipótesis ligadas a las otras dimensiones de este cuadro teórico (tiempo y comportamiento) no fueron corroboradas, de la misma manera que aquellas hipótesis derivadas del modelo de manejo del estrés.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Conflictos familia-trabajo; interferencia de la vida familiar sobre el trabajo; Modelo de Manejo del Estrés; Modelo de Predictores Específicos; comportamientos de retiro del trabajo; enfermeras.

ABSTRACT

Building on two competing theoretical frameworks (the Stress Management Model and the Domain-Specific Predictor-to-Outcomes Model) we developed a model to test the incidence of six forms of work-family interferences (time-, strain- and behavioral-based family interferences with work – FIW – and work interferences with family – WIF) on four withdrawal behaviours (absenteeism, late arrival, early departure, and work interruptions) using cross-sectional data from a sample of nurses working for a regional hospital in Canada.

Data was collected through a paper-and-pen questionnaire and 402 complete questionnaires were analyzed using multivariate regression. Results suggest that the domain-specific predictor-to-outcomes model produces a better explanation of the dependent variables, as the strain-based FIW explain respondents' absenteism and work interruptions. We didn't find support for the other hypotheses deduced from this model (influence of time- and behavior-based FIW on withdrawal behaviors) as well as those steming from the stress management model (time-, strain- and behavior-based WIF influence on withdrawal behaviors).

KEYWORDS

Work-family conflicts; family interferences with work; work interferences with family; stress management model; domain-specific predictor-to-outcomes model; withdrawal behaviours; nurses.

1. INTRODUCTION

Changes that have occurred in both the labour market and the family testify the inadequacy of the policies, programmes and practices of Human Resources Management with the socio-demographic challenges confronting health care management today. This observation unveils the fact that one of the more challenging issues in health care management is the design of effective strategies to attract and retain nursing staff. Over the past ten years many countries have invested in researching this issue with evidence-based management – investigating the cause and effect relationships that relate staff turnover to, for example, job satisfaction or the quality and appropriateness of the care provided (Melnyk, Fineout-Overholt, Stillwell & Williamson, 2010).

In our study we focus on an aspect that is related to voluntary turnover of nursing staff: withdrawal behaviours. We study these phenomena from the perspective of occupational stress analysis – a transactional approach in which individuals who experience stress factors from different sources, develop a feeling of distress with detrimental effects on the individual and the organization. This feeling of distress is identified as a psychological, physical, and behavioural reaction to stress of an individual (Beehr & Adams, 1998) arising from the realization that the requirements placed on him by the environment exceed his abilities and resources, wich may, among other things, lead him to adopt withdrawal behaviours from either the organization or the profession. Several models have been developed in the literature to characterize the sources of this stress and work-family conflicts rank among the top ten sources of stress that undermine the health of individuals and the performance of organizations (Kelloway, Gottlieb & Barham, 1999). Work-family conflicts are of particular relevance to the nursing profession (Burke & Greenglass, 2001) particularly because they are excellent predictors of nursing staff turnover, which is yet not fully understood (Hayes, O'Brien-Pallas, Duffield, Shamian & Buchan, 2006).

1.1. Withdrawal behaviours

Researchers in the area of health care management have long been interested in withdrawal behaviours. These include a set of behaviours of employees who, even though they remain on the job, choose to be less involved for a variety of reasons. In our study we will focus on the four indicators that are among the most popular in the literature: late arrival, early departure, absenteeism, and work interruptions.

Arriving late and leaving early amount to working a shortened work day. Koslowsky (2000) proposed that a pattern of late arrival and early departure might be understood as a negative reaction of the employee to deteriorating working conditions, indicating a decline in his/her commitment and job satisfaction. Occasional but inevitable late arrivals and early departures occur when employees are overwhelmed by other roles and responsi-

bilities in their daily lives and choose to prioritize them over respecting their work schedule. Work-family interferences are the quintessential example of this type of situation.

Another withdrawal behaviour is represented by random interruptions of work due to family responsibilities (i.e., having to take phone calls from the children or their caregivers) (Hammer, Bauer, & Grandey, 2003).

Finally, absenteeism represents «the lack of physical presence at a behavior setting when and where one is expected to be» (Harrison & Price, 2003, p. 204) and can be subdivided as follows: voluntary absences that are deliberate and under the control of the employee (i.e. searching for better employment opportunities while at work) and involuntary absences, which are not under the control of the employee.

1.2. Work-family conflicts

Work-family conflicts reflect an incompatibility in the roles imposed upon individuals. All social structures (e.g. firm, family) are associated with duties that dictate each person's obligations and are designed to ensure the functioning of such structure. Thus, a role is considered to be a normative behavioural model that any individual who participates in given social arrangement is expected to adopt.

However, different roles may conflict with each other due to the incompatibility of the associated expectations. Using Role Theory, Greenhaus and Beutell (1985, p. 77) define the notion of work-family conflicts as representing a situation in which, for example, successful fulfilment of the roles that make a professional life enriching impairs the ability to attain the same level of success in family life.

From a multidimensional perspective, we can make a distinction based on the direction of conflict (work interferences with family – WIF and family interferences with work – FIW) and on the dimension of those interferences: time-based interferences occurs when individuals have to split their time between a multiplicity of roles (e.g. responsibilities to the family vs. the demands of coworkers or bosses); strain-based interferences occurs when effort provided in fulfilling a certain role (e.g. a particularly demanding job situation) undermines the energy required in other roles (e.g. helping the children do their homework after a day of work) (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985); behaviour-based interferences occurs when a certain type of behaviour that is specifically required in one role becomes incompatible with expectations expressed in another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

1.3. WIF and FIW impact on withdrawal behaviours

Although various consequences of work-family interferences have been examined (Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997), there have been few studies of the impact of WIF and FIW from the perspective of withdrawal behaviours (i.e. absenteeism, late arrival, early departure, work interruption) applied to the nursing profession (Blomme, Rheed, & Tromp, 2010). Nonetheless, this is an important area of enquiry because these phenomena may give us early clues about staff turnover. In this regard, the literature in work-family conflicts suggests two main, and conflicting, theoretical frameworks that can explain the effects of these conflicts on organisational outcomes: the domain-specific predictors-to-outcomes model and the stress management model (Post, DiTomaso, Farris, & Cordero, 2009).

The domain-specific predictors-to-outcomes model suggests that WIF (but not FIW) affects work outcomes through spillover mechanisms, while the stress management model postulates that FIW (but not WIF) are the ones that affect work outcomes through the individual's willingness to reduce or eliminate the stress (Frone et al., 1997; Greenhaus et al., 2001; Post et al., 2009).

Research results are controversial and they reflect the assumptions underlying our two aforementioned theoretical frameworks. According to some studies, the interactions between these conflicts and behaviours may occasion some dysfunction in the organization of work, thus undermining workforce attraction and retention strategies and consequently increasing the costs for the organization (Boyar, Maertz & Pearson, 2005; Hepburn & Barling, 1996). Other researchers have found positive links between FIW and withdrawal behaviours (i.e., Anderson, Coffey & Byerly, 2002). Conversely, Hammer et al. (2003) found no link between these two phenomena for either men or women, with the sole exception that FIW experienced by women explained the absenteeism of their husbands. In short, the relationship between FIW, WIF and withdrawal behaviours remains poorly understood (Liberman, 2012).

2. OBJECTIVES

In light of the conflicting results found in the literature (Liberman, 2012) the purpose of this study is to reexamine the validity of the two aforementioned theoretical frameworks to explain withdrawal behaviors, particularly in the case of health care workers (i.e. nurses). Furthermore, the multidimensionsal modeling of work-family conflicts is very recent and little research to date has examined the effects of the FIW and WIF using a multidimensional model. Thus, our goal is to clearly identify the impact of the time (time-based interferences), effort (strain-based interferences), and behaviour (behaviour-based interferences) dimensions of FIW and WIF on four withdrawal behaviours.

3. HYPOTHESES AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Hypothesis 1: Time-based FIW/WIF and withdrawal behaviours

Today's economic imperatives, expressed as they are in terms of competitiveness and, especially, just-in-time delivery, provide employers with a strong incentive to require greater flexibility from their workers in order to facilitate time management. This, in turn, intensifies the conflict arising from splitting time between family and work rather than focusing exclusively on work. The consequence is a deterioration in both the quality of life and the work performance of individuals who assume family and personal responsibilities. They find it necessary to carefully plan out their work schedules as a function of daycare services, school, doctor's appointments, and various types of errands – as a consequence, they might become somewhat overwhelmed by it all.

The strategies individuals can resort to in order to handle this conflict might include arriving late, briefly interrupting work in order to address some pressing family matter on the phone, or leaving early (Boyar et al., 2005). Several of the researchers having studied how reciprocity in the interference of work with family and family with work relates to early departure or late arrival emphasize the importance of effective time management as key to this relationship (Boyar et al., 2005). Thus, employees who chronically arrive late, often interrupt their work, or leave early are problematic for a number of reasons, like for example increasing financial costs for their employers (Koslowsky, 2000). In a service-oriented organization, such as healthcare, employees who frequently engage in these types of withdrawal behaviours also have a negative impact on the quality and/or quantity of the services provided (Koslowsky, 2000). In fact, it has been found that when nurses arrive late for work in healthcare establishments, serious repercussions can result, such as the need to hastily improvise decisions regarding medical treatment to be given to patients.

Both theoretical frameworks (i.e. the Stress Management Model and the Domain-specific Predictors-to-Outcomes Model) suggest that work-family interferences might explain a number of withdrawal behaviors: employees might need to take their children to school at a specific time, or after having missed the school bus; they might interrupt their work to solve family problems or make arrangements by phone; or they might have to quit their job earlier due to unexpected family problems. Based on these theoretical frameworks, and using a multidimensional perspective of work-family interferences (Payne et al., 2011; Unruh, Rafenaud, Fottler & Fragoso, 2016) we propose that:

- H1a: Time-based FIW will increase withdrawal behaviors (late arrivals, early departures, work interrumptions and absenteeism).
- H1b: Time-based WIF will increase withdrawal behaviors (late arrivals, early departures, work interrumptions and absenteeism).

3.2. Hypothesis 2: Strain-based FIW/WIF and withdrawal behaviours

According to Hobfoll's (1989) conservation of resources model, adequately fulfilling professional or family responsibilities may require a considerable effort from the individual. This could impair individuals' ability to live up to their own standards in one or the other of their areas of responsibility and increase absenteeism, turnover, and job dissatisfaction (Chandola et al., 2004; Demerouti, Bouwman & Sanz-Vergel, 2011; Mohsin & Zahid, 2012; Ugoani, 2015).

This precariousness of resources and the concomitant drain on the emotional and physical energy of individuals has increased dramatically in the wake of the pressures brought on by globalization, which force employers to constantly introduce a variety of restructuring measures to meet the challenges of the changes within this context. For this reason, the job requirements are increasingly difficult to reconcile with family responsibilities.

Furthermore, in the particular case of nurses, females represent the vast majority of the workforce. In many cases, traditional family roles put extra pressure on them to fulfill typical family tasks (e.g. taking care of children or elders) leading to additional physical and emotional stress linked to family responsibilities.

From this perspective, the response of the individual under such an emotional and physical overload might be to increase his/hers withdrawals behaviors (e.g. take time off work, interrupt work during work hours, arrive late or leave early).

However, research on the impact this difficult balancing act has on withdrawal behaviours has yielded contradictory conclusions: Some analysts find a positive correlation between FIW and absenteeism (Anderson et al., 2002; Boyar, Wagner, Petzinger & McKinley, 2016). On the other hand, research by Boyar et al. (2005) indicates that these effects are differentiated by gender; in the case of women there is clearly a positive link between experiencing WIF and absenteeism. According to Bagger (2006), both FIW and WIF contribute to absenteeism. Finally, the conclusions of two meta-analyses corroborate that finding (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005; Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elfering, & Semmer, 2011). Considering this situation, we will test the following hypotheses:

- H2a: Strain-based FIW will increase withdrawal behaviors (late arrivals, early departures, work interruptions and absenteeism).
- H2b: Strain-based WIF will increase withdrawal behaviors (late arrivals, early departures, work interruptions and absenteeism).

3.3. Hypothesis 3: Behaviour-based FIW/WIF and withdrawal behaviours

Several theoretical and practical arguments exist for distinguishing behaviour-based WIF and FIW from time-based and strain-based conflicts (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). First, at a theoretical level, behaviour-based WIF does not reflect a depletion of the resources required for accomplishing the roles inherent in the other spheres of life, it rather reflects an incompatibility in the nature of the behaviours expected in each role of daily life (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). While individuals may hold their jobs accountable for their lack of time and energy, and thus for their withdrawal behaviours, they will be less prone to pin dysfunction in their family life on behaviour-based interference from their work. From a practical perspective, given the broad similarity of the behaviour that nursing staff are expected to show toward both their patients and their own families (care, affection, compassion, and empathy) we would not anticipate that behavioural expectations would be a major source of incompatibility and lead to withdrawal behaviours. Furthermore, it is worth noting the scarcity of empirical studies having examined this issue or, a fortiori, its effects on withdrawal behaviours (Amstad et al., 2011). Even though we don't expect to find any effect of behavior-based WIF and FIW on withdrawal behaviors, it is our intention to test the following hypotheses:

- H3a: Behaviour-based FIW will increase withdrawal behaviors (late arrivals, early departures, work interruptions and absenteeism).
- H3b: Behaviour-based WIF will increase withdrawal behaviors (late arrivals, early departures, work interruptions and absenteeism).

3.4. Research design

We used a non-experimental research design. Even though the nature of this study is explanatory, the assumptions underlying our research are static and deal with the state (i.e. withdrawal behaviours) rather than changes in the state (caused by controlled or observed variables). Accordingly, from the available non-experimental options we chose a cross-sectional design.

In order to minimize the risk of misspecification error related to the impact of our six dimensions of the work and family interferences on withdrawal behaviours, the following control variables were examined: gender, age, seniority, number of hours of work per week, the regular or irregular nature of the schedule of work and, finally, the number of dependants living at home.

3.5. Sampling and data collection procedure

The data was collected using a questionnaire distributed to all the nurses working at the Centre Hospitalier de l'Université de Sherbrooke (CHUS). Out of the 1606 questionnaires distributed, 402 were returned completed and within the specified time, representing a response rate of 25%. The descriptive statistics are as follows: 89.4% of our respondents were women; the average age was 39.71 years; 67.5% were married or living common law, 18.5% were single, and 12.1% were divorced or separated; 36.5% indicated that they had no dependants, 19.7% one dependant, 26.6% two, 12.9% three, 3.5% four, and 0.5% five. A majority (98%) were employed as nurses and the average seniority was 13.05 years.

3.6. Measures

The concept of work and family interferences was measured on a scale developed by Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams (2000) that accounts not only for the bidirectional measurement of conflict (FIW and WIF) but also differentiates between the three forms of conflictual interference that characterize each of these two directions. In other words, this scale measures six forms of work and family interferences (see Table 1) using three items for each one. In total, there were 18 items on the questionnaire, and responses were collected using a Likert six-point scale – from (1) «Strongly disagree» to (6) «Strongly agree».

Information on withdrawal behaviours was collected with one item for each behavior: absenteeism – «I am absent for personal or family reasons»; late arrival – «I arrive at work late»; interruption of work – «In the past four weeks, how often have you been interrupted at work?»; and early departure – «I leave work earlier than I should». A Likert six-point frequency scale, from (1) «Strongly disagree» to (6) «Strongly agree», was used to collect the responses.

3.7. Type of analysis

We began by performing a confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS 20 in order to examine the psychometric characteristics of the measurement scales. Once the psychometric characteristics of the instruments were assessed, we used multiple regression (SPSS, version 21) to examine the impact of the six dimensions of conflict on the four withdrawal behaviours. For each of the latter we first performed a multiple regression on the control variables in order to identify the effects of these variables on the expressed variance in the withdrawal behaviour. Subsequently we added time-based conflict, then strain-based conflict and, finally, behaviour-based conflict into the regression. At each stage we measured the significan-

ce of the regression coefficients as well as the variation in the variance explained by each introduced variable.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Reliability and validity of the measuring instruments

First, we assessed the reliability of the WIF and FIW measurement scales using three indicators: Cronbach's alpha, corrected item-total correlation, and composite reliability (Table 1). The smallest Cronbach's alpha is for time-based FIW (α = .732), and the largest is for behaviour-based FIW (α = .931). In other words, the six scales all have values greater than the threshold of 0.7 that suggests acceptable reliability (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2008).

Table 1: Factor loadings and reliability measures

	Correlations item-total corrected	Factor loadings					
Time-based WIF (WIF_t) (α=.871, CR=.862, AVE=.676)							
My work interferes with my ability to participate in family activities more than I would like.	.755	.811					
The investment of time required by my work keeps me from participating in family activities and responsibilities.	.762	.845					
Because of the amount of time I invest in my professional responsibilities I miss out on family activities.	.743	.811					
Strain-based WIF (WIF_s) (α=.841, CR=.849, AVE=.654)							
When I arrive at home after a day at work, I often feel too exhausted to participate in family activities.	.641		.712				
Often I am so drained emotionally after a day at work that I am unable to contribute to my family.	.788		.912				
Sometimes I am too stressed to do the things I enjoy because of work-related pressures.	.697		.789				
Behaviour-based WIF (WIF_b) (α=.824, CR=.792, AVE=.560)							
The problem-solving behaviour I adopt at work does not help me solve family problems.	.664			.669			
Behaviour that is effective and necessary for me on the job doesn't work at home.	.743			.759			
Behaviour that makes me effective at work doesn't help me be a better parent or spouse.	.627			.811			
Time-based FIW (FIW_t) (α=.732, CR=.772, AVE=.551)							
The time I devote to family responsibilities often interferes with my work-related responsibilities.	.366				.412		
The time I spend with my family keeps me from devoting enough time to activities that could advance my career.	.669				.855		
The amount of time I dedicate to family responsibilities keeps me from participating in work-related activities.	.679				.868		
Strain-based FIW (FIW_s) (α=.829, CR=.833, AVE=.626)							
I am often preoccupied by family issues when I'm at work.	.646					.739	
I have trouble concentrating at work because of stress caused by family responsibilities.	.747					.862	
Tensions and worries from my family life often impair my ability to do my job.	.662					.767	
Behaviour-based FIW (FIW_b) (α=.931, CR=.933, AVE=.822)							
Behaviour that works for me at home does not appear to be effective at work.	.860						.915
Behaviour that is effective and necessary for me at home doesn't work on the job.	.892						.940
The problem-solving behaviour I adopt at home does not appear effective at work.	.825						.864

The results of the corrected item-total correlations show that all items but one fall between 0.627 and 0.892. The exception is one item from the time-based FIW scale, at 0.366. An exploratory factor analysis with a varimax rotation reveals that this item presents high cross loadings between time-based WIF and FIW. While some authors maintain that it is preferable to remove items that have large cross-loading (Hair et al., 2008), we opted to retain this one for later analysis for the following reasons: first, this scale has been amply validated in the literature and second, retaining the item in question will allow us to make comparisons with other analyses. Similarly, retaining this item will provide a clearer definition of the factors in our procedure with three items per scale. Nevertheless, while the score of 0.366 is low relative to the others, it still exceeds the minimum threshold of .35 expected for good reliability (Hair et al., 2008).

Finally, the composite reliability indices range between 0.772 and 0.933, which exceeds the 0.60 threshold required for ensuring the reliability of a scale (Hair et al., 2008). All in all, our scales perform well in terms of reliability.

To ascertain the validity of our scales we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis of the measurement model, loading each item onto the factor it is intended to measure and allowing free correlation between the factors (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 2008). With a single exception, all the standardized factor loadings are greater than 0.67 and significant ($p<.01$), suggesting a good convergent validity (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 2008) (Table 1).

The only item that presented a low factor loading was time-based FIW. This item presented a standardized factorial load of 0.412, raising questions about the convergence of the scale to which it belongs. To address this issue we performed an average variance extracted (AVE) test, which stipulates that the convergent validity of the factor in question is adequate if its AVE exceeds 0.50. We found that the average variance extracted for the factor in question is 0.551, indicating that despite the presence of a standardized factor loading of less than 0.7 the set of items belonging to the sub-scale of time-based FIW explains 55.1% of the variance in this factor.

We also computed the AVE for the rest of the factors, and found that, with a minimum value of 0.551 for time-based FIW and a maximum of 0.822 for behaviour-based FIW, the scales present adequate convergent validity.

We evaluated the discriminant validity of the measurement scales in our study by comparing the square root of the average variance extracted for each factor ($AVE^{1/2}$) with the correlations between that factor and each of the others (Table 2). This reveals that every factor, except one, presents an $AVE^{1/2}$ greater than its correlation with any other factor. The exception is the behaviour-based WIF scale, which presents a correlation with behaviour-based FIW of 0.765 ($p\leq.01$) and an $AVE^{1/2}$ value of 0.749. This could indicate that, in

light of the high correlation between the factors, the discriminant validity of the behaviour-based WIF scale is sub-optimal. Finally, we find that the discriminant validity of the remaining scales is satisfactory (Hair et al., 2008).

Table 2: Correlation matrix

	Mean (Std.Dev.)	$AVE^{1/2}$	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. WIF_t	4.09 (1.24)	.822	.871									
2. WIF_s	3.84 (1.26)	.809	.464 **	.841								
3. WIF_b	2.77 (1.27)	.749	.275 **	.393 **	.824							
4. FIW_t	3.10 (1.22)	.743	.310 **	.318 **	.165 **	.732						
5. FIW_s	2.35 (1.01)	.791	.344 **	.417 **	.389 **	.368 **	.829					
6. FIW_b	2.57 (1.28)	.907	.259 **	.413 **	.765 **	.186 **	.337 **	.931				
7. Absence	2.10 (1.11)	N/A	.157 **	.170 **	.219 **	.184 **	.302 **	.191 **	-			
8. Late arrival	1.50 (.78)	N/A	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.098 *	n.s.	n.s.	.140 **	-		
9. Interruptions	1.23 (2.07)	N/A	.143 **	.170 **	n.s.	.183 **	.288 **	n.s.	.257 **	.218 **	-	
10. Early departure	1.31 (.58)	N/A	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.163 **	.451 **	.100 *	-

***AVE*$^{1/2}$ is the square root of average variance extracted.**
The values of Cronbach's alpha are in the main diagonal
**** Significant correlation at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**
*** Significant correlation at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)**
N/A: not applicable
n.s.: not significant

The fit indicators for the measurement model suggest a good fit between the model and the data, as they amply exceed the lower bounds recommended in the literature, (Byrne, 2010; Hair et al., 2008; Kline, 2011): χ^2 = 209.875; χ^2/df = 1.794; GFI = .946; PGFI = .647; RFI = .928; IFI = .972; CFI = .978; RMSEA = .044; HI 90 RMSEA = .054.

4.2. Main effects

Concerning absenteeism («I am absent for personal or family reasons») we observe that only one of the control variables, the age of the respondents, appears to have a significant, negative impact (Table 3). In other words, absenteeism because of the family seems to affect more the youngest respondents. In our regressions we observe an initial positive incidence of time-based WIF on absenteeism when this conflict is introduced on the regression (r^2_{adj} = .060 and Δr^2_{adj} = .031 p<.01). However, when strain-based interference is introduced into the regressions, it appears to cancel out the contribution of other forms of

conflict to absenteeism (r^2_{adj} = .122 and Δr^2_{adj} = .062 p<.01). As expected, the contribution of behavioral-based conflict is non-significant.

Table 3: Regression analysis

	Absence				Late arrival				Interruptions				Early departure			
Control variables																
Age	- .20*	-.18*	-.19*	-.22*	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
SR	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
HW	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.101+	.099+	.099+	.104+	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.124+	.123+	.123+	.120+
Irreg.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Dep..	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.157*	.149*	.147*	.147*	.10+	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
r^2_{adj}	**.029**				**.030**				**.007**				**.009**			
Δr^2_{adj}	**.029***				**.030***				**n.s.**				**n.s.**			
Time-based conflict																
WIF_t		.111+	n.s.	n.s.		n.s.	n.s.	n.s.		n.s.	n.s.	n.s.		n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
FIW_t		.127+	n.s.	n.s.		n.s.	n.s.	n.s.		.131+	n.s.	n.s.		n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
r^2_{adj}		**.060**				**.032**				**.036**				**.006**		
Δr^2_{adj}		**.031***				**n.s.**				**.029***				**n.s.**		
Strain-based conflict																
WIF_s			n.s.	n.s.			n.s.	n.s.			n.s.	n.s.			n.s.	n.s.
FIW_s			.267*	.230*			n.s.	n.s.			.236*	.255*			n.s.	n.s.
r^2_{adj}			**.122**				**.028**				**.082**				**.007**	
Δr^2_{adj}			**.062***				**n.s.**				**.046***				**n.s.**	
Behaviour-based conflict																
WIF_b				n.s.				n.s.				n.s.				n.s.
FIW_b				n.s.				n.s.				n.s.				n.s.
r^2_{adj}				**.135**				**.029**				**.081**				**.003**
Δr^2_{adj}				**n.s.**				**n.s.**				**n.s.**				**n.s.**

* p < 0.01
\+ p < 0.05
n.s. = not significant

Age: Age of the respondent
SR: Seniority
HW: Hours worked per week
Irreg.: Irregular schedule
Dep.: Dependants

In the case of late arrivals («I arrive at work late») we observe that the control variables number of hours worked during a week and number of dependants seem to be the primary explanatory factors for it, while none of the forms of work and family interferences appears to have any incidence.

With regard to work interruptions («In the past four weeks, how often have you been interrupted at work?») it is noteworthy that none of the control variables have any significant effect on them. On the other hand, work interruptions seem to be influenced by time-based FIW if no other interferences are considered. However, once strain-based FIW is incorporated into the regression, this type of interferences seem to capture all the variance of the

independent variable (r^2_{adj} = .082 and Δr^2_{adj} = .046 p<.01) and neither the respondents' sociodemographic characteristics nor time-based FIW remain significant.

Finally, with regard to early departure from work («I leave work earlier than I should»), we point out that aside from the significant positive impact of the number of hours worked per week, there are no other control variables and no dimension of interferences between work and family life that appears to contribute

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1. Scope of the research results

The objective of this study was to evaluate the incidence of six forms of work-family conflicts on four withdrawal behaviours (absenteeism, late arrival, early departure, and work interruptions) using two theoretical structures, the «stress management model» and the «domain specific predictor-to-outcomes model». We found partial support for the hypotheses drawn from the stress management model, in the sense that strain-based FIW positively affect absences and work interruptions (H2a partially supported), while time-based and behavioral-based FIW do not affect withdrawal behaviors (H1a and H3a not supported). On the other hand, all the hypotheses deduced from the domain-specific predictors-to-outcomes model (H1b, H2b and H3b) were rejected

With regard to how the conclusions reported in the literature relate to ours, we emphasize the difficulties in comparing our results with other studies for the simple reason that, as far as we know, our study is conceptually innovative in its approach to the links between work-family interferences and withdrawal behaviours. Our results shed new light on the dynamics of these relationships, revealing that the six dimensions of work-family interferences do not all appear to have the same incidence on absenteeism, tardiness, work interruptions, and early departures.

- **Absenteeism** is shown to be positively influenced by strain-based interference from family life, in particular in the case of younger respondents. However, our data do not support the conclusion that time- and behaviour-based interferences have an effect on withdrawal behaviours.
- Furthermore, the results in Table 3 indicate that the various dimensions of work-family conflict do not explain **late arrival** by the respondents. In fact, this particular issue only seems to be a function of the number of hours worked per week (β=.101 p<.05) and, especially, the number of dependants (β=.157 p<.01). Nevertheless, the model accounts for a smal percentage of explained variance (Δr^2_{adj}=.030 p<.01). Similarly, it is surprising that time-based WIF does not appear to have any incidence on late arrival by the respondents. However, it does seem to be correlated with

the number of dependants (r=.201 p<.01) – which appears to have very significant explanatory power for late arrival at work β=.157 p<.01, Δr^2_{adj}=.030 p<.01).

• In the matter of **work interruptions**, it is worth noting that only the number of dependants shows significant correlation, (β=.102 p<.05) even though the explained variance due to this variable remains non-significant (Δr^2_{ad}=.007, n.s.). However, when time-based conflict is introduced into the regression, the significance of this sociodemographic characteristic vanishes and the time-based FIW explains these interruptions (β=.131, p<.05; Δr^2_{ad}=.029, p<.01). Similarly, once the strain-based variant of this conflict is included in the equations it replaces the other explanations for work interruptions (β=.236, p<.01; Δr^2_{ad}=.046, p<.01). Finally, in keeping with our assumptions, inserting behaviour-based WIF and FIW does not seem to have any effect on the result. What are we to conclude from all of these results, except that the explanatory power of each variable introduced displaces that of its predecessor because of their high degree of correlation: First, the number of dependants is replaced by time-based FIW, with which it proves to be correlated (r=.201 p<.01), then this latter by strain-based FIW, with which it is also correlated (r=.368 p<.01). We find that only FIW contributes to explained variance in work interruptions. Time-based FIW is responsible for an additional 2.9% of explained variance significant at p<.01, but strain-based FIW adds another 4.6% which is significant at p<.01. Thus, the aspects of time and strain, and their intimate association with the size of the family, remain plausible candidates for explaining work interruptions.

• With regard to the connection between the various dimensions of work-family conflict and **early departure** from work, we emphasize that only the number of hours worked per week proves relevant (β=.124, p<.05). However, our model does not appear to have a significant explanatory power for this withdrawal behaviour. Adding time- and strain-based WIF does not affect this result. If we add behaviour-based forms of these conflicts into the regression our results do not show any association between this dimension of WIF and early departure from work.

5.2. Limitations of the study

First, since our study uses non-experimental proof based on a cross-sectional design, the reported results are unable, on their own, to explain why some assumptions are not corroborated or to provide the rationale for a causal structure linking work-family interferences to the four examined withdrawal behaviours. Nonetheless, in what follows we will note some of the limitations of our research in order to explore why time-based FIW did not explain our respondents' early departures from work.

Turning first to the fact that time-based FIW apparently fails to explain our respondents' **late arrival**, we find instead that this withdrawal behaviour is correlated with the number of dependants (r=.201, p<.01). Some of the limits that we can invoke in order to interprete this result are the following:

- It is quite likely that the way in which time-based FIW was measured did not make clear to the respondents that they were being asked how their family life was impinging on their work life by causing them to arrive late. This might be indicated by the wording of the only question in the questionnaire to measure this withdrawal behaviour: «I arrive at work late».
- Since most of our survey respondents were women, we must consider the possibility that they were simply unwilling, because of the social desirabilty effect, to attribute their tardiness to time-based FIW. In other words, having been socialized into domestic roles more intensely than men, women avoid blaming these roles for late arrival at work for fear of being stigmatized as lacking «self-leadership» in how they manage their family time. In fact, though, they seem more inclined to justify lateness with strain-based FIW. As we know, invoking a lack of energy, and by extension exhaustion, as an excuse may be less stigmatizing in our system of social values, if only because it could be evidence of great dedication to family tasks and responsibilities, even at the cost of arriving late at work (Pratt & Rosa, 2003).

With regard to the lack of correlation between time-based FIW and **early departure** we might consider the following arguments:

- We begin by noting that the only sociodemographic attribute that appears to contribute to explaining early departure from work is the number of hours worked per week. This result seems less expected compared to the result related to the number of children, especially those between three and six year old – which appears to have no effect on the dependent variable. Is it possible that a correlation resulted in the firt variable subsuming the latter? Or is the number of hours worked per week correlated with time-based family→work conflict, resulting in a high degree of multicollinearity between them. It would seem reasonable to us that the variable for the number of dependants, a fortiori those aged three to six years (r=.338, p<.01) actually explains the time-based interference of family responsibility with the functioning of professional life and, by extension, the impact of these interferences on early departure from work. Children in this age group need to be delivered to and picked up from the institutions that provide preschool care, both before and after work. Under these

conditions, parents may feel trapped into leaving work early in order to pick up their children and then make their way home before the height of rush-hour traffic.

- As mentioned above in our discussion of measurement of time-based FIW in the case of late arrival, it is quite likely that our wording did not elicit an answer to the question we wanted to ask. A similar observation may come into play in this case. This might be indicated by the wording of the question used to measure this withdrawal behaviour: «I leave work earlier than I should».

One potential methodological limitation, the potential effect of common-method variance, can be invoked due to the the fact that the data collection was based on the same sources for all of our constructs. This might increase the level of conscious or subconscious adaptation of the responses given. It is known that this phenomenon could inflate or deflate the correlation between the independent and dependent variables in the model. We investigated this issue using Harman's Single Factor Test in order to determine whether the variance shared by the ten constructs we worked with (six forms of work-family conflict and four withdrawal behaviours) is big enough to have skewed our results. An exploratory factor analysis suggests that the first factor only captures only 30.7% of the total variance, thus suggesting that common method bias does not appear to seriously undermine the results and conclusions of our study.

5.3. Avenues for future research

First, a multidimensional model of work-family conflict for identifying the explained variance specific to each of the six forms of conflict may increase our understanding of the shape taken by the effects of this conflict on the different aspects of organizational performance.

Second, psycho-sociological control variables (i.e., social desirability, psychological investment) are needed to make it possible to better identify withdrawal behaviours of men and women under the various forms of work-family conflict (Carlson et al., 2000). The importance individuals attach to each of these roles can be determined by simultaneously accounting for the value they assign to them and the extent of their commitment to them, which reflects their intention to invest time and effort in each role (Carlson et al., 2000).

Third, an approach using longitudinal data would be invaluable in light of the repeating nature of work-family interferences (Ford, 1985). More precisely, in research models of the stress-strain type, this strategy would not only allow the direction of causality between the variables in the model to be determined at a given point in time, but also clearly identify the conditions for reverse causality and, consequently, yield an understanding of reciprocal impacts between the various components of a model with temporal dynamics.

Finally, it would be of some interest to obtain a random sample so that the reported results could be truly representative of the underlying population and consequently useful for designing programmes to minimize withdrawal behaviours attributable to conflict between the spheres of work and family which is experienced daily by a great majority of workers. In addition, it would be very informative to reexamine this model, especially along the lines of the aforementioned avenues for further research, with data representing various employment status and economic sectors in order to bring more refinement to the explained variance of withdrawal behaviours in a context of work-family conflict.

5.4. Managerial implications of the research findings

Strain- and time-based interference of family life with work life appears to represent a very important explanation for withdrawal behaviours in the case of young respondents who work long hours every week and have many dependants. In this respect, what managerial implications can we draw?

Policies benefiting work-family balance should be developed that make provision for strategies of attraction and retention. Work-life balance policies that have been frequently recommended include: floater services, parental leave, and job-site daycare services that could accommodate young workers who are at the beginning of both their professional and marital/parental lives. This is the backdrop against which organizations must base their approach to the challenges they will need to meet in order to improve their strategies for attracting and retaining talent and, consequently, bolstering the competitive edge that they provide. In other words, this is also the backdrop against which new ideas of organizational efficiency are articulated. These notions resonate more and more in the ears of managers and new generations of workers, and the answers that are found will reflect throughout the mosaic of issues of corporate social responsibility. This, ultimately, determines the legitimacy of an organizational environment in a modern society.

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