

# Social Psychological Bulletin

Psychologia Społeczna

## Strategies for Maintaining Work–Life Balance and Their Consequences for Quality of Life and Job Satisfaction

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**Handling editor:** Agata Błachnio (The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Lublin, Poland)

**Received:** 31 August 2017 • **Accepted:** 16 April 2018 • **Published:** 18 July 2018

**Citation:** Andersz, N., Czarnota-Bojarska, J., & Wojtkowska, K. (2018). Strategies for maintaining work–life balance and their consequences for quality of life and job satisfaction. *Social Psychological Bulletin*, 13(2), Article e27578. <https://doi.org/10.5964/spb.v13i2.27578>

### Abstract

Interest in issues surrounding work–life balance has increased in recent years. Some studies stress the consequences of work–life balance, while others put emphasis on the ways in which people manage to keep the balance. We decided to combine both points of view. The presented study focuses on personal strategies for combining family and work roles and their consequences for maintaining the work–family balance and satisfaction with work and quality of life. There were 289 participants in the study. The instruments used were Work–Family Linkage Questionnaire, Work–Family Fit Questionnaire, Satisfaction of Life Scale and Job Satisfaction Scale. The procedure of adapting the Work–Family Linkage Questionnaire (WFLQ) into Polish was conducted to enable the use of the tool in Poland for the first time. Good psychometric properties of WFLQ were confirmed. The results showed that the individual strategy for combining family and work roles determines the work–home balance, as well as satisfaction with life and career. For example, the amount of negative spillover from home and from work was correlated positively with role conflict and negatively with satisfaction with life, while the amount of positive spillover correlated positively with facilitation and experienced satisfaction with life.

### Keywords

work–family balance, work–family conflict, work–family facilitation, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, quality of life



Work and family life are important aspects of adult life, and these professional and family roles constitute significant components of identity and are key determinants of social roles. Nowadays, a successful career and family life are both considered valuable and worth pursuing (Allen, 2001). At the same time, expectations regarding performance in all areas of life are rising. Young adults, regardless of gender, often try to combine professional development with achieving financial stability, being involved in family life and developing their individual interests. Inevitably, this leads to compounding of emotional tension and places high demands on resources, since success in any one of these spheres is a challenge, while juggling multiple roles and maintaining high standards inevitably leads to conflicts (Braunstein-Bercovitz, Frish-Burstein, & Benjamin, 2012). For a long time, the assumption that work–family interference must, by definition, be negative dominated research on combining roles, meaning that the bulk of data reflected conflict rather than the positive aspects of balancing multiple obligations (Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz, 2006).

The conflict between family and work only occurs when the performance of tasks associated with one role makes it difficult or impossible to meet the demands of the other. A more comprehensive definition has also been proposed that includes the mutual interaction between the spheres of life and differentiates between work interfering with family life (work–(to)–family conflict) and family life interfering with work (family–(to)–work conflict) (Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997). Facilitation of family and work roles is a process of role spillover in such a way that performing one role enhances satisfaction or effectiveness in performing the other. The direction of interference can be defined by analogy with role conflict.

It should be noted that recently there has been a surge in research on both the internal factors affecting role interference and the phenomenon of positive interference (facilitation) (Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2007). The internal, individual-dependent factors have greater consequences for facilitation, which is mainly associated with the spillover of attitudes, emotions, values, and behaviors accrued in one sphere into the other. In the case of conflict, spillover is accompanied by drainage of resources (such as time, attention, energy), where reserves are limited and the consequences of limiting engagement are not wholly dependent on the individual (Lachowska, 2008, 2012a). Thus, an emphasis has been placed on identifying external factors. Presently, there seems to be every reason to investigate the role of facilitation at least as thoroughly as that of conflict, and knowledge of its causes (including the internal ones) can safely be expected to expand systematically.

One of the external factors, the effects of which on conflict or facilitation of family and work roles merits closer research, is the model of work–family linkage (Sumer & Knight, 2001). Three candidate models were first identified by Wilensky (1960) and include: spillover, compensation, and segmentation. The particular model an individual uses depends on both their professional and family situation and their choice of resource management strategy leading to the development of the dominant model of combining work and family life (Sumer & Knight, 2001).

The hypothesis behind spillover is that work and private life satisfaction levels are interrelated. Spillover can either be positive or negative. Successful family life can facilitate professional achievement and drawing satisfaction from work (positive spillover), or it can inhibit being fully satisfied with a career (negative spillover). The same relationship occurs with respect to spillover from work. According to Hobfoll's (2006) conservation of resources theory, gaining resources (as happens in the case of positive spillover) has positive effects for an individual, e.g., through lower exposure to distress and improved coping with the demands of their role. Negative spillover is closely associated with losing resources in one sphere of life due to having to allocate them to meet the demands of another role. This can result in poorer functioning and distress while performing both roles (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999), as, again according to Hobfoll (2006), any resource depletion poses the risk of dissatisfaction, emotional stress, and low mood.

The definition of compensation presupposes a contradiction between the levels of satisfaction with work and family life. The choice of the compensation model is made in response to unsatisfactory conditions of one sphere, which are then compensated by increased commitment to the other. If little satisfaction is derived from performing the family role, and the resources at one's disposal cannot be used to amend that situation or their use fails to increase satisfaction significantly, compensation enables the individual to transfer unused resources to the sphere of work, where they can be put to better use. The reverse may also occur: shortcomings in one's career may be compensated by increased commitment to family life (Sumer & Knight, 2001).

The third possible model for juggling roles is segmentation, which consists of separating the two spheres to the extent that the level of satisfaction in one has no effect on the other. The absence of spillover and compensation may be the result of deliberate efforts or specific professional and family circumstances. Segmentation may be associated with the incompatibility of the resources required in the two spheres, having sufficient resources to satisfy the requirements of both roles, or, on the contrary, having too few resources to manage them flexibly (Sumer & Knight, 2001).

The Work-Family Linkage Questionnaire – WFLQ (Sumer & Knight, 2001) – is an instrument that helps uncover the model of combining work with family life. Multiple models can be employed concurrently, each to a different degree. Empirical findings have demonstrated that the actual model used depends on individual characteristics, and that the way in which roles are balanced has consequences for the assessment of self-efficacy and satisfaction with one's functioning in the family and work spheres (Sumer & Knight, 2001).

It was decided to test the relationship between the model of combining roles and the magnitude of work-family conflict and facilitation, based on the interference model taking into account the process of spillover and resource management (Grzywacz & Butler, 2005). The model of interference between family and work roles proposed by Sumer and Knight (2001) has failed to attract the attention of researchers in Poland so far, even though the phenomenon of role interference (both conflict and facilitation) and its multiple corollaries

for the well-being and optimal functioning of organisations have been analysed (Lachowska, 2008, 2012a). Thus the decision was made to adapt the WFLQ in order to broaden the spectrum of available instruments useful for the study of the causes and effects of positive and negative role interference.

Additionally, satisfaction with private life and work was measured to elucidate the correlations between these variables and the chosen model of combining roles in the conditions prevalent in Poland.

Correlations were expected between the amount of negative spillover from work and from home and the severity of work–family and family–work conflict, respectively. The same relationship was hypothesised between the magnitude of positive spillover from work and work–family facilitation and positive spillover from home and family–work facilitation. Both the definition of spillover and the description of the causes of role conflict and facilitation accentuate the sharing and exchange of resources between spheres and the effects of emotional states kindled in one sphere for performance in the other.

No relationships were predicted between the degree of segmentation and the severity of conflict and facilitation, due to the popular view that segmentation of the spheres of life is the optimal model of functioning.

Another prediction was that there would be a relationship between the magnitude of compensation in family life and work–family facilitation and family–work conflict. Similar correlations were expected between the amount of compensation in work life and family–life facilitation and work–family conflict. The assumptions were based on the definition of compensation as transferring resources between spheres in order to obtain desired outcomes that enhance the individual's overall satisfaction with their functioning. Furthermore, there may be positive correlations with other types of interference because resources transferred between spheres may be perceived as a factor contributing to facilitation. The basis for the role conflict in the compensation model may, in turn, be the exacerbation of difficulties in the sphere in which problems are compensated by increasing involvement in another, more satisfying activity.

## Aims and Hypotheses

The purpose of the study was to measure the strength of the relationship between the strategies of combining the two spheres of life and other work–family matching indicators. Relationships with measures of satisfaction and conflict and facilitation of family and professional roles were expected. The following hypotheses are thus proposed:

1. Positive spillover from work (PSW) will be positively correlated with the magnitude of work–family facilitation.
2. Negative spillover from work (NSW) will be positively correlated with the severity of work–family conflict.
3. Positive spillover from home (PSH) will be positively correlated with the magnitude of family–work facilitation.

4. Negative spillover from home (NSH) will be positively correlated with the severity of family–work conflict.

5. Compensation of what is missing at home (COMPH) will be positively correlated with the magnitude of work–family facilitation and severity of family–work conflict, as well as with job satisfaction.

6. Compensation of what is missing at work (COMPW) will be positively correlated with the magnitude of family–work facilitation and severity of work–family conflict.

7. Positive spillover from home (PSH) and positive spillover from work (PSW) will be positively correlated with perceived life satisfaction and, in the case of PSW, satisfaction with work.

8. Negative spillover from home (NSH) and negative spillover from work (NSW) will be negatively correlated with perceived satisfaction with life and, in the case of NSW, job satisfaction.

As a consequence of the hypotheses set, it became necessary to prepare the Polish version of WFLQ. The growth of literature on models for engaging in multiple roles and work–life interference in Poland has created a demand for an instrument that would measure this phenomenon with precision.

## Method

### Participants and Procedure

There were 289 participants in the study. 300 sets of questionnaires were handed to the participants and 11 were not returned. The study group included office workers aged 17 to 68 ( $M = 39$  years, standard deviation  $SD = 10.89$ ), who worked an average of 16 years and 9 months ( $SD = 11.22$ ), and in their current companies for 9 years and 1 month ( $SD = 8.16$ ). The subjects were recruited from 6 companies. The places where employees were recruited included state offices and administrative staff of private companies in Warsaw. The instructions for the research clarified the purpose of the study, the use of its results, and information on the possibility of obtaining them through e-mail contact with the researcher. All participants filled a set of measures in isolation. In order to maintain anonymity, subjects would place filled measures in envelopes and return them to co-workers affiliated with the researcher.

### Measures

1. **Work–family linkages** were measured using the Work–Family Linkage Questionnaire (Sumer & Knight, 2001). Work–family linkages are patterns of mutual interaction between work and private life. The description of mutual influences between the spheres of life primarily involves resource management, the strategy of which is to a certain extent determined by external factors: the family and work situation. Depending on the direction of changes in the amount of resources (accrual or depletion) and the way in which they are

allocated (to the family sphere, to the work sphere, or both simultaneously), different types of linkages emerge. The seven subscales used in the inventory are:

1. The Negative Spillover Scales, which refer to the necessity of borrowing resources from another sphere, namely: (a) Negative Spillover From Work (NSW) 6 items, e.g., *My job tires me out so I feel drained for home responsibilities*; (b) Negative Spillover From Home (NSH) 5 items, e.g., *I sometimes let my personal problems affect my work performance*.
2. The Positive Spillover Scales, which refer to the possibility of using resources from one sphere to enrich the other, namely: (a) Positive Spillover From Home (PSH) 5 items, e.g., *My home life develops skills in me that are useful at work*; (b) Positive Spillover From Work (PSW) 4 items, e.g., *Quality of my home life improves if I am satisfied with my job*.
3. The Segmentation Scale (SEG) 2 items, which refer to the separation of the family and work spheres, e.g., *When I come home, I leave all the problems at work behind*.
4. The Compensation Scales, which mean striving for achievements in the chosen sphere at the expense of the other, namely: (a) Compensation of What Is Missing at Work (COMPW) 2 items, e.g., *If things are not going well with my job, I turn to my family*; (b) Compensation of What Is Missing at Home (COMPH) 3 items, e.g., *My job gives me a chance to do things that are lacking in my home life*.

The first step was translation of questionnaire items followed by back translation and comparison of the two versions in terms of consistency. The translation was done by two independent psychologists fluent in English. Back translation was done by an M.A. in English Studies not familiar with the original version of the questionnaire. The next step was to conduct research and compare the psychometric properties of the two language versions of the instrument.

2. **Job satisfaction** was measured using the scale of six items that refer to the six components of satisfaction (Czarnota-Bojarska, 2010). These components are: amount of earnings, possibility of advancement, self-reliance at work, learning opportunities, relations with superiors and sense of employment stability (Locke, 1976; Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969).

3. **Life satisfaction** was measured using the Satisfaction of Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) in the Polish adaptation by Jankowski (2012). Rather than measuring specific satisfaction domains, the instrument assesses life satisfaction as a cognitive-judgmental process.

4. **Work–family fit** was measured using the Work–Family Fit Questionnaire (Grzywacz & Bass, 2003) in the Polish adaptation by Lachowska (2012b). Work–family fit is defined as the subjectively perceived ability to combine the demands of work and family roles (Grzywacz & Bass, 2003; Grzywacz & Butler, 2005). This yields the four scales of the question-

naire: (a) Work–Family Conflict; (b) Work–Family Facilitation; (c) Family–Work Conflict; (d) Family–Work Facilitation.

## Results

### The Adaptation of the Work–Family Linkage Questionnaire (WFLQ)

To compare the Polish scale with the original version, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted, which includes five of the seven subscales, according to analysis presented by Sumer and Knight (2001).

A confirmatory factor analysis was performed using statistical software R version 3.4.1 (R Core Team, 2017), and lavaan package version 0.5-23.1097 (Rosseel, 2012) with the use of maximum likelihood estimator. Analysis ( $n = 281$ ) was conducted on the relevant items of the WFLQ to seek evidence for construct validity. The goodness of fit of the five-factor model, as evidenced by a variety of indices, was  $\chi^2(199) = 683.772$ ,  $p < .001$ ; root mean square error of approximation RMSEA = .093, with 90% CI [.086, .101]; goodness-of-fit index GFI = .814; adjusted goodness-of-fit index AGFI = .764; nonnormed fit index NNFI = .687; comparative fit index CFI = .731. Although most of the measures do not show a very accurate fit, the model was significantly better than a single-factor solution ( $\chi^2(10) = 620.05$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The results of the CFA are almost identical as shown by Sumer and Knight (2001).

The internal consistency of individual scales of the questionnaire was also checked. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values for individual scales in the original instrument were between 0.68 and 0.80, while in the Polish adaptation between 0.62 and 0.77. Reliability values for individual scales of the Polish adaptation are as follows: (a) NSW: 0.76; (b) NSH: 0.70; (c) PSH: 0.69; (d) PSW: 0.66; (e) SEG: 0.77; (f) COMPW: 0.62; (g) COMPH: 0.69.

The analysis shows that the Polish version of the Work–Family Linkage Questionnaire (WFLQ) has very similar psychometric properties to the original version. Therefore, the indicators of subsequent subscales were used for testing the hypotheses.

### The Tests of the Hypotheses

The majority of hypotheses regarding the relationships of specific work–family linkages with interference between work and family were confirmed. Analyses also revealed correlations that were not originally intended. The use of segmentation strategy is negatively correlated with the family–work conflict and work–family conflict. Correlation coefficient values are shown in Table 1.

Negative spillover from work positively correlated with the severity of role conflict, both in the expected direction (work–family conflict), and with family–work conflict, which is consistent with Hypothesis 2. Similar relationships were obtained with respect to the severity of negative spillover from home (Hypothesis 4). Additionally, there was a correlation between negative spillover from home and the magnitude of work–family facilitation.



**Table 1**  
*Correlation Between Work–Family Linkage and Work–Family Balance*

Interference direction	Work–family linkage	NSW	NSH	PSH	PSW	SEG	COMPW	COMPH
Work–family	Conflict	.73***	.33**	-.01	.04	-.44***	.26**	.07
	Facilitation	-.03	.12*	.32**	.64***	-.04	.35**	.44***
Family–work	Conflict	.23**	.59***	-.03	.10	-.29**	.34**	.12
	Facilitation	.10	.07	.54***	.27**	.00	.34**	.11

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

As predicted (Hypothesis 3), positive spillover from home was positively correlated with family–work facilitation. Elevated positive spillover from work was associated with greater work–family facilitation, which is consistent with Hypothesis 1. There were also positive correlations between positive spillover from home and from work and facilitation in the direction opposite to the one expected.

Hypothesis 5 regarding relationships between compensation for problems at home and interference was partly confirmed: there was a strong relationship between the level of compensation and facilitation in the work–family direction, but the expected relationship with the family–work conflict was not observed.

As hypothesised (Hypothesis 6), there were positive correlations between the level of compensation for problems at work and both the magnitude of family–work facilitation and work–family conflict. Some unexpected relationships were revealed between the severity of family–work conflict and work–family facilitation.

One of the purposes of the study was to investigate relationships between the presence of certain types of work–family linkages and the level of job satisfaction and general satisfaction with life. Correlation coefficient values are shown in Table 2.

The hypotheses regarding the relationships between job satisfaction and the type of work–family linkage were confirmed. Positive and negative spillover from work is significantly correlated with the job satisfaction scale scores. The correlation is positive for PSW and negative for NSW. The results are consistent with Hypothesis 7 and 8.

There was a positive association between the degree of compensating for household problems by increased commitment to work and perceived job satisfaction (Hypothesis 5).

The results also supported the hypothesised positive correlation between positive spillover from home and from work with general wellbeing and a reverse relationship between negative spillover from home and from work (Hypothesis 7 and 8). Furthermore, the analysis revealed a positive relationship between the level of segmentation and wellbeing.



**Table 2***Correlation between Work–Family Linkage and Life Satisfaction and Job Satisfaction*

Work–family linkage	Overall life satisfaction	Job satisfaction
NSW	-.16**	-.22**
NSH	-.20**	-.11
PSH	.36***	.10
PSW	.20**	.28**
SEG	.20**	.11
COMPW	.05	-.00
COMPW	-.02	.16**

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

## Discussion

Any transfer of resources to a given sphere due to spillover and accumulation may indirectly cause facilitation in the opposite direction to that spillover (Frone et al., 1997). Therefore, positive spillover is associated with facilitation proceeding in both directions: the expected work–family direction (for spillover from work) and family–work direction (for spillover from home), and the opposite direction.

Negative spillover is inextricably associated with perceived role conflict. The phenomenon of role interference in the form of conflict requires mobilization of resources at the cost of neglecting other spheres of life, which may indirectly cause conflict in the opposite direction and explain positive correlations between the extent of negative spillover on the one hand and work–family and family–work conflicts (for the spillover from work and from home, respectively) on the other, and with the conflict in the opposite direction (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000).

Once surplus resources in one sphere are exhausted, the level of functioning declines. If resources required for performing the family role need to be replenished, the possibility of sourcing them from the professional sphere (work–family facilitation) may be the factor that instigates the strategy of negative spillover from home. This strategy might exacerbate the role conflict, but this is not a given. The situation at work and resources at a given individual's disposal should be taken into account (Frone et al., 1997).

Compensation of what is missing at home is positively correlated with work–family facilitation; however, the expected relationship with the severity of the family–work conflict was not observed. Potential benefits from career development may enhance work–family facilitation without provoking conflict. The role of other factors, such as workload and job satisfaction may be also significant in this context (Britt & Dawson, 2005).

The level of compensation for shortcomings in family life is positively correlated with job satisfaction. By adopting the compensation strategy, people can allocate spare resources for the sphere that offers the greatest probability of personal growth. The popular tendency

to encourage employees to become more involved in the life of the organization, even at the expense of family life, is met with less resistance among those employees that have fewer family obligations and experience greater job satisfaction (Lobel & Kossek, 1996).

The evolution of the work environment towards greater demands placed on employees along with increased expectations and ambitions regarding career development mean that there is more ambivalence with respect to the effects of a professional career on quality of life (Geurts, Kompier, Roxburgh, & Houtman, 2003). Long-term use of the compensation strategy, which involves investing more resources in family life at the expense of work, may aggravate the family–work conflict, while the potential benefits of continuing work may be conducive of work–family facilitation, which would explain the positive correlations between the degree of compensation of what is missing at work and the unexpected dimensions of interference between the work and family spheres.

With the strict separation of the family and professional spheres in the segmentation strategy, the risk of role conflict is diminished, but the probability of role facilitation remains unchanged. In addition, increased segmentation in the participants coincided with greater wellbeing, potentially suggesting a relationship between satisfaction with life and the possibility to optimally allocate resources across the spheres of functioning of a working parent.

Our findings indicate a correlation between the availability of resources that can be flexibly assigned to a given sphere of life and wellbeing. If resources are insufficient to meet the obligations of one role, the overall assessment of satisfaction with life declines as well. As expected, positive spillover from home and work is associated with higher satisfaction with life, and the opposite relationship is obtained for the negative spillover. For spillover from work, similar relationships were found for job satisfaction.

Analysis confirmed the hypothesised relationships between the employed model of combining family and work roles, (understood as the function of external factors and the strategy preferred by the person), and the direction and nature of role interference: conflict or facilitation between work and family. The manner of juggling professional and family life significantly affects wellbeing (Sonnentag, 2001) and performance of tasks associated with each role. The choice of strategy directly affects the level of satisfaction with life and work.

It can be concluded on the basis of the present findings that each form of combining family and professional roles may be beneficial, as long as it is appropriate for the specific job and family circumstances. With regard to strong relationships between the level of stress during role performance and the general wellbeing and satisfaction with work and family life (Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose, 1992), it seems valid to continue researching factors that determine the effectiveness of a given strategy for combining roles in employed individuals. A large portion of the working age population faces the challenge of combining the roles of parent and employee. Regular experience of the consequences of role conflict leads to accumulation of emotional burdens and may increase the risk of depression, burnout, anxiety attacks and marital conflict (Macewen & Barling, 1994; Major,

Klein, & Ehrhart, 2002). The search for factors that mitigate the risk of role conflict and facilitate positive interference is particularly important for our understanding of effective professional development of employees who are parents.

In order to perform the whole study, it was necessary to adapt the Work–Family Linkage Questionnaire for use in Poland. This goal has been met. The instrument has satisfactory psychometric properties and shows the expected relationships with other measures. The model fit indicators did not differ from the values obtained by the authors of the original version of the questionnaire. In conclusion, the tool can be used for research purposes in Poland.

The Work–Family Linkage Questionnaire is useful both for research on working parents and on childless individuals living in relationships or performing other family roles. It helps to measure employee behavior in terms of the mode of combining family and professional life that makes it possible to achieve balance between family and work.

## Funding

The authors have no funding to report.

## Competing Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

## Acknowledgments

The authors have no support to report.

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