

Job Satisfaction and the positive side of Work-Family Interface

An empirical study among University teachers

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explore the relationship between work-family enrichment and job satisfaction, as well as the moderator effects and influence of organizational flexibility (schedule and human resources) and work-family conflict on this relationship. Data to test the paper's research hypotheses were collected through surveys among university teachers in Bolivia.

This study is based on the human resource organizational behavior approach, with emphasis on job satisfaction and work-family enrichment. There is an extensive literature on work-family conflict, but little research on the enrichment interface; this is one of the main contributions of the paper because focusing on the positive side of the interface and its relationship to job satisfaction has been largely ignored in the literature.

Work-family enrichment is a construct that represents how work and family benefit each other, but has been largely ignored in the literature. [Greenhaus and Powell \(2006\)](#) defined work-family enrichment as "the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in other role". They proposed that enrichment occurs when resources (skills and perspectives, flexibility, psychological and physical, social-capital and material resources) gained from one role, improve performance in other role. The fundamental thinking behind enrichment is that work and family each provide individuals with resources such as enhanced esteem, income, and other benefits that may help individuals better perform across other life domains. Initial evidence suggests that synergies between work and family exist, and these synergies are distinct from incompatibilities or work-family conflicts. Unfortunately compared to conflict, enrichment remains conceptually and empirically underdeveloped.

The results of our survey to a sample of university teachers indicate that work-family enrichment and human resource flexibility are both significantly related to job satisfaction, although their moderating effect is negative. This implies that there might be a threshold or critical point in human resource flexibility to optimize job satisfaction and work-family enrichment. These results may be important inputs in designing human resources policies on work-family balance and organizational flexibility, in order to improve the satisfaction of teachers and their contribution to the optimal organizational performance.

The practical utility of this study has organizational implications because of its connotations in educational management. Demanding expectations, limited resources of the

system and possible mismatch between demands and results that society places on education, justify the need for research on human resources within the education sector ([Maíllo et al, 2008](#)). Considering the leading role of teachers in achieving educational and social purposes of the university, [Simo et al \(2008\)](#) highlight the importance of influencing specific policies in universities, to ensure high levels of commitment and job satisfaction in order to improve teacher performance and reduce costs associated with labor turnover.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to propose an empirical model to estimate the level of faculty satisfaction with their teaching role, through its link with work-family enrichment, if any relationship exists between both variables. The study data was collected from Economics and Finance Faculty of Juan Misael Saracho University (Tarija, Bolivia). The research problem is to examine the satisfaction of university professors in their teaching role and its relationship with work-family enrichment, to establish the existence of relationships between these variables within a specific university context. We also analyzed factors of organizational flexibility (work schedule and human resource management) that can affect work-family balance and job satisfaction. We also introduced work-family conflict in the study, which along with certain demographic characteristics, they assumed the role of control variables.

There is extensive literature on work-family conflict, which refers to incompatibility between work and family, and its negative consequences on individual health and organizational performance ([Eby et al, 2005](#)). Recently, researchers have made efforts to examine the positive impact of work-family interface referred to as work-family enrichment ([Greenhaus and Powell, 2006](#), [Carlson et al, 2006](#)), positive spread ([Allis and O'Driscoll, 2008](#), [Hammer et al, 2005](#)), work-family facilitation ([Rotondo and Kincaid, 2008](#), [Wayne et al, 2006](#); [Balmforth and Gardner, 2006](#)) or work-family synergy ([Beutell and Witting-Berman, 2008](#)) on attitude and behavior of individuals. In general, there is little research on work-family enrichment; there it is the novelty of this work, focusing on the positive side of the interface and its relationship to job satisfaction.

Our results are inputs to design human resource policies on work-family balance and organizational flexibility, which improve teacher's satisfaction, facilitating the achievement of university social goals. Identifying the factors that determine faculty satisfaction, allows university directors/managers define strategies on human resources, in order to achieve optimal levels of satisfaction that facilitate teacher's contribution to service provision and improvement of institutional performance.

Theoretical background and research hypotheses

Job Satisfaction

[Velaz \(1996\)](#) defines job satisfaction as a state of mind which contains a set of feelings and positive emotions, resulting from the harmonious combination of personal factors, work environment and above all intrinsic factors. The feelings and positive emotions generate health, however the negative ones generate disease. Studies about them are relatively recent, yet fully convincing ([Cano-Vindel et al, 1999](#)). The feelings and positive emotions strengthen the immune system, and thus promote health.

As a component of quality working life, job satisfaction has also been defined in many ways, but most definitions are subscribed to Herzberg's theory. It derives from the extent to which intrinsic motivators (relationships, work-family enrichment, etc.) and extrinsic motivators (eg: wages) are meeting their objectives (Desselle and Conklin, 2010). These authors state that management strategies to create an academic department or an institutional environment conducive to teacher satisfaction, organizational commitment and retention of employees, require evidence-based approaches, so the study of teacher's satisfaction and the factors that compose it, is a pre-requisite for a positive change in a university department or institution. Desselle and Conklin (2010) indicate that the evidence suggests job satisfaction of faculty members is an important mediator of organizational commitment, staff turnover and productivity. Therefore, a detailed understanding of job satisfaction is the key to improving the welfare of a large number of workers. Then, a deep and detailed understanding of teacher's job satisfaction can help university administrators and academic managers to identify and improve factors that lead to higher levels of satisfaction (Xu, 2008).

Job satisfaction is thus a critical labor issue, which has proven to be highly predictive of productivity or efficiency (Rosser, 2004). Lane et al (2010) suggest that research on teacher satisfaction, allows to get data which could help colleges to manage the real reasons that motivate teachers to develop their full potential. Based on empirical evidence, García Del Junco and Brás Dos Santos (2008) have concluded that organizational commitment and job satisfaction are positively related, they found higher influence of job satisfaction on organizational commitment, than in the opposite way.

Sabharwal and Corley (2009) mention that in next decade, universities and schools for professional will demand more workers, then, issues related to teacher satisfaction and retention will be increasingly important for university administrators and those responsible university policy. Callister (2006) referred that previous research has not considered the business faculty, most satisfaction studies have focused only on natural sciences and engineering fields. Regarding this point, our study is aimed specifically at the area of economics and business.

Dalmau (2004) suggests addressing the faculty satisfaction from the context of teaching and mentions that if the professor is not satisfied with their teaching role, it is impossible to actively participate in a process of quality education. This approach envisions, consciously, a university that educates students on knowledge, skills and values; therefore, is based on a teacher profile who can make this possible. This model of teacher matches with the Humanistic Psychology Approach of the teacher-student relationship.

Work-Family Enrichment

Work-family enrichment is considered one of the most significant dimensions of work-family balance (Aryee et al, 2005). It focuses on the positive effects from work to family life (enrichment from work to family) and from family to working life (enrichment from family to work). Both the enrichment from work to family and from family to work, have proved to be positively related to individual's mental health (Allis and O'Driscoll, 2008), family functioning (Wayne et al, 2006,) and work outcomes such as job satisfaction (Beutell and Witting-Berman, 2008) and organizational commitment (van Steenbergen et al, 2007). However, studies on work-family enrichment are still too few to confirm the results (Baral and Bhargava, 2010). In this sense, this research aims to provide inputs to the study of this variable.

The work-family enrichment is defined as the extent to which experiences in one role or function improves the quality of life, performance or affection, in other role or function (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006). Greenhaus and Powell suggested that the enrichment occurs when benefits of obtained resources in role A, promote an improvement in individual performance in role B. More specifically, the enrichment occurs when resources (skills and perspectives, flexibility, physical and psychological, social-capital and material resources) obtained in one role improve the performance in another role either directly (known as the instrumental route) or indirectly through its influence on the positive affect (the affective route).

According Grzywacz (2000), job satisfaction is an affective response from people that is essential, since it is considered an indicator of specific welfare issues and may well reflect the global welfare. The greater conflict between work and family, the greater feelings of distress, leading to lower satisfaction (Michel et al, 2009; Grandey et al, 2005; Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran, 2005).

Grzywacz (2000) also indicates that positive emotional experiences that accompany work-family enrichment can improve job satisfaction and general welfare (Allis and O'Driscoll, 2008). While there has been much less empirical work on the positive side of work-family interface, there is some evidence supporting the relationship between enrichment and satisfaction. Two recent studies have examined the relationship between work-family enrichment and job satisfaction (Hill, 2005; Wayne et al, 2006). With regard to job satisfaction, both studies found a significant and positive relationship, so greater work-family enrichment was associated with increased job satisfaction. Workers who have experienced work-family enrichment tend to demonstrate better physical health, lower absenteeism and higher job performance (Van Steenbergen et al, 2007). According to Aryee et al (2005), Carlson et al (2010) and Hill (2005), work-family enrichment is positively related to job and family satisfaction, also to life satisfaction itself, and to lower resigning intentions.

Considering the objectives, the research problem and the reviewed relevant literature, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1: Work-Family Enrichment perceived by teachers of the Faculty, has a significant and positive effect to their job satisfaction.

H2: Family-Work Enrichment perceived by teachers of the Faculty, has a significant and positive effect to their job satisfaction.

Organizational Flexibility

Organizational flexibility of human resources is widely regarded in terms of formal and informal flexibility policies established on the management of human resources (Kossek et al, 2006). They suggest this flexibility must be considered from the perspective of availability of policy, its use and its differential effects of use. This stream of research has supported the idea that adoption and use of family-friendly policies (also called work-family benefits) help to manage work-family balance (Hornung et al, 2008; Kossek et al, 2006). In addition, research has shown that availability and use of human resource management flexibility is associated with greater organizational commitment and job satisfaction, improved group dynamics, better performance, more organizational citizenship behaviors, and lower turnover intention (Jones et al, 2008; Kossek et al, 2006; Van Dyne et al, 2007). So, we propose that:

H3: Flexibility in Human Resource Management perceived by teachers of the Faculty, has a significant and positive effect to their job satisfaction.

Schedule flexibility is among the most common flexible arrangements available to employees (Galinsky et al, 2008), and evidence suggests that flexibility of schedule, in particular, contributes to valuable organizational outcomes such as productivity, absenteeism and job satisfaction (Casey and Grzywacz, 2008; Grzywacz et al, 2008, Hill et al, 2008). Schedule flexibility may be the result of formal organizational policies or can be derived from informal procedures implemented by the heads of units or discrete teams. Schedule flexibility is a valuable organizational resource offered to workers and is also a resource that crosses the boundaries considered in the interrelated process of family and work domains (Kelly et al, 2008). Then we propose:

H4: Flexibility of Job Schedule perceived by teachers of the Faculty, has a significant and positive effect to their job satisfaction.

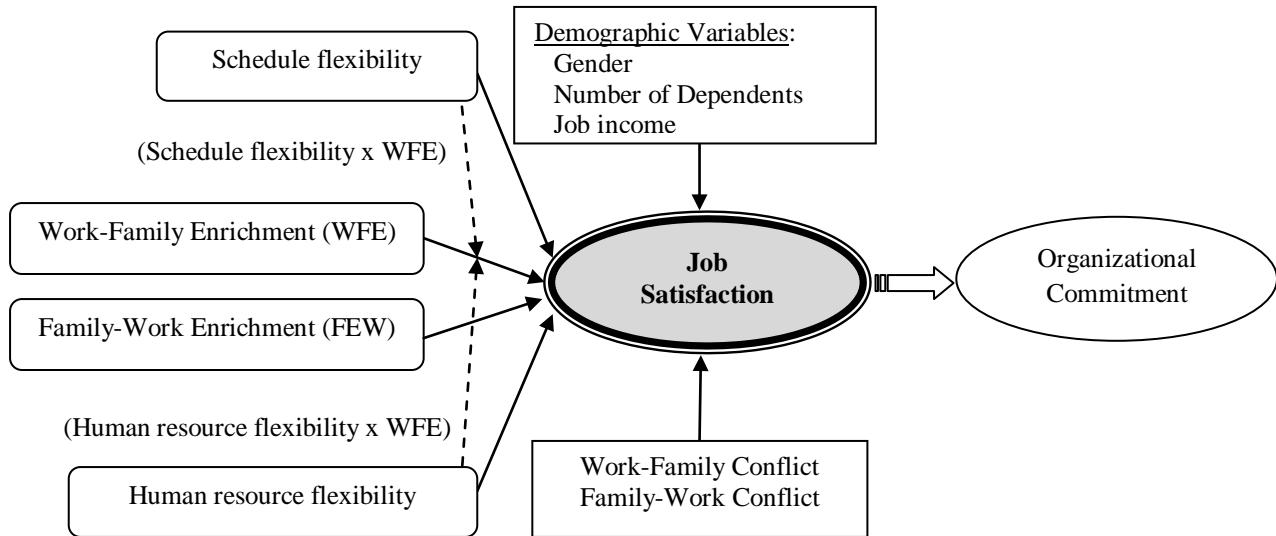
Recently, McNall et al. (2010) indicated that perceptions of work-family enrichment are mediators of the positive relationship between the availability of organizational flexibility (job schedule and human resource management) and job satisfaction. So, we propose that:

H5: The moderating effect of Flexibility in Human Resources Management on Work-Family Enrichment perceived by teachers of the Faculty, has a significant and positive effect to their job satisfaction.

H6: The moderating effect of Flexibility of Job Schedule on Work-Family Enrichment perceived by teachers of the Faculty, has a significant and positive effect to their job satisfaction.

The proposed model on the basis of the objective, problem and research hypotheses is depicted in figure 1.

Figure 1. Research Model: Work-Family Enrichment and Job Satisfaction



WFE: Work-Family Enrichment

FEW: Family-Work Enrichment

Methodology

Research will be conducted in public higher education area (characterized by its social and non-profit nature), specifically in Economics and Finance Faculty from Juan Misael Saracho Autonomous University of Tarija, Bolivia (UAJMS). Currently, this institution of higher education has 132 teachers from seven departments of the Faculty and four of another faculties serving in the main center. This faculty represents 18% of university teachers, the second largest faculty of seven study centers (the first is the Faculty of Science and Technology). On the other hand, consists of 3,250 students, representing 21% of community college student, the second largest faculty of seven centers (the first is the Faculty of Science and Technology) (UAJMS – University Statistics, 2010).

School departments are: Administration, Applied Administration, Economic Theory, Applied Economics, Accounting Systems, Auditing and Finance, and Statistics. The departments belonging to other faculties are: Mathematics, Languages, Civil Law and Computer Systems. The school offers three undergraduate courses: Business Administration, Economics and Accounting.

To test the research hypotheses, a questionnaire was developed based on scientifically proven and validated scales, to measure the variables of the model. Primary information was collected through direct application of the questionnaires to the total population of teachers in the Faculty. Factor and reliability data analysis was done to identify and validate the constructs that represent the study variables.

In addition, tests of correlation and linear regression between the identified variables were run, according the study model to determine the relationships and the significance of each construct with respect to the dependent variable (job satisfaction). Also mean differences were tested to determine the most relevant differences of variables, so as to complement both descriptive and explanatory studies.

Results and Conclusion

Table 1 shows the results of linear regression analysis, which empirically contrasts the research model. This information indicates the coefficients of each independent variable related to the dependent variable (job satisfaction). It also shows the specific significance of each element within the model (p value), the overall model fit and the adjusted R².

Table 1. Linear Regression Outcome. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction

Independent Variables	Coefficient	t	P value (Sig.)	F	Model Fit (Sig.)	Adjusted R ²
Constant	1,598	1,101	0,273			
Gender	-0,136	-0,869	0,387			
Number of Dependents	0,147	2,053	0,042 **			
Income	0,014	0,491	0,624			
Work-Family Conflict	-0,020	-0,325	0,746			
Family-Work Conflict	-0,065	-0,963	0,338			
Work-Family Enrichment (WFE)	0,617	2,316	0,022 **			
Family-Work Enrichment	0,085	1,042	0,300			
Schedule flexibility (SF)	-0,134	-0,392	0,696			
SF x WFE	0,025	0,409	0,683			
Human resource flexibility (HRF)	0,740	2,472	0,015 **			

HRF x WFE	-0,102	-1,865	0,065 *		
** Significant at 5%	* Significant at 10%				

The relationship between work-family enrichment and job satisfaction is positive and highly significant, which in turn, presents a positive and highly significant correlation with organizational commitment, as shown in [table 2](#). These results support hypotheses H1 & H3.

Table 2. Correlations between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment - Rho Spearman

Correlations	Job Satisfaction	Organizational Commitment
Job Satisfaction		
Correlation Coefficient	1,000	0,204 (**)
Sig. (bilateral)		0,023
N	125	125
Organizational Commitment		
Correlation Coefficient	0,204 (**)	1,000
Sig. (bilateral)	0,023	
N	125	125

** Correlation is significant at 0.05 (bilateral).

Given the neutrality of work-family conflict with respect to job satisfaction, work-family enrichment (the positive side of work-family interface), showed a strong significance in determining job satisfaction, being an important factor when influencing this variable. It's so useful and helpful to analyze work-family interface from its positive side, since in this specific case, higher work-family enrichment leads to greater job satisfaction. It should be noted that work-family enrichment is only statistically significant in the direction from work to family but not in the reverse case (family-work) which does not support hypothesis H2.

Flexibility in Human Resource Management perceived by the teachers of the Faculty is positively related to job satisfaction. However, the moderating effect of flexibility on work-family enrichment, although statistically significant, is not positive as initially expected, but negative in its influence on job satisfaction which does not support hypothesis H5. This implies that flexibility combined with work-family enrichment has not always a positive influence on Job Satisfaction, so there might be a threshold or critical point in terms of Human Resource Management Flexibility to optimize job satisfaction and to avoid diminishing returns in this process. The same as with work-family conflict, schedule flexibility is not significantly related to either job satisfaction or work-family enrichment which does not support hypotheses H4 & H6.

The results of the research presented here suggest that University Managers and Directors should be encouraged to adopt and manage work-family enrichment policies because of their positive contribution to teachers' job satisfaction. Our results also show that organizational commitment and job satisfaction are positively correlated which suggests that enhancing the job satisfaction of employees could contribute to improve teachers' organizational commitment and probably their job performance as well.

Limitations and future research

Our research uses cross-sectional data which cannot contrast causal relationships. The suggested relationships found in our empirical model should be tested with longitudinal data in order to test these causal relationships. Another limitation of the research is the use of managerial perceptions of a single organization. It could be interesting to analyze larger samples in diverse

organizations to analyze the different approaches to human resource flexibility as well as the influence of organizational culture and values in the perception of work-family enrichment. Future research could analyze a more comprehensive model of work-family enrichment, flexibility and job satisfaction that also includes job performance as a dependent variable in order to study the contribution of family-friendly policies on organizational performance.

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