



Umbrella Summary

Work-Family Enrichment

A Summary of Workforce Research Evidence Relevant to the Child Welfare Field

What is work-family enrichment?

Work-family enrichment is used to describe the positive benefits derived from spillover between work and family. Specifically, work-family enrichment is formally defined as “the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other role” (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006, p. 73). This is often contrasted with the concept of [work-family conflict](#), which represents the negative spillover between the work and family domains. Work-family enrichment is often distinguished by the direction of its effect; benefits from work that are applied to the family domain are termed work-to-family enrichment (WFE), and benefits from family that are applied to the work domain are termed family-to-work enrichment (FWE; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). WFE and FWE are moderately and positively related to each other, but still retain enough unique variance to justify investigating them as separate constructs (Shockley & Singla, 2011). Throughout this summary, WFE and FWE will be used where applicable to indicate findings that are direction specific, whereas work-family enrichment will be used to refer to the enrichment between the work and family domains more generally.

There are five main types of resources that individuals may acquire in their roles that can then be applied to enrich the other domain. Specifically, individuals can gain flexibility, material resources, new skills/perspectives, social-capital resources (e.g., networking connections), and psychological or physical resources (e.g., self-efficacy; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). These resources can either impact outcomes directly when applied to the other domain or can impact outcomes indirectly through increased positive affect (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

Work-family enrichment is most often measured using the 18-item Work-Family Enrichment Scale, which measures both WFE and FWE (Carlson et al., 2006). This scale assesses four factors: (a) development (e.g., “My involvement in my work helps me acquire skills and this helps me be a better family member”), (b) affect (e.g., “My involvement in my family puts me in a good mood and this helps me be a better worker”), (c) capital/fulfillment (e.g., “My involvement in my work helps me feel personally fulfilled and this helps me be a better family member”), and (d) efficiency (e.g., “My involvement in my family encourages me to use my work time in a focused manner and this helps me be a better worker”). Note that the items ask participants to not only assess the resources from one domain (e.g., skills, positive mood) but also to estimate whether those resources affect the other domain.

Why is work-family enrichment important?

Work-family enrichment is important because it is associated with an array of attitudinal and behavioral outcomes in the workplace and in the family.

Work to Family Enrichment (WFE)

In the work domain, WFE is moderately and positively associated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Zhang et al., 2018). WFE is modestly and negatively associated with burnout and shows no significant relationship to stress. WFE is also moderately related to greater job performance and OCB. WFE is modestly and negatively associated with turnover intentions, but its relationship with turnover is unknown (Zhang et al., 2018).

WFE also has a modest, positive relationship with family performance and a moderate, positive relationship with family satisfaction (Zhang et al., 2018).

Family to Work Enrichment (FWE)

Examining the other directionality indicates that FWE has moderate, positive relationships with job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Zhang et al., 2018). FWE is modestly and negatively associated with stress but is not related to burnout. FWE has a moderate, positive relationship with job performance. FWE is not significantly related to turnover intentions and its connections to actual turnover are unknown (Zhang et al., 2018).

In the non-work domain, FWE has moderate, positive relationships with family performance and family satisfaction (Zhang et al., 2018).

Despite what the names WFE and FEW imply, the evidence suggests that both types of work-family enrichment involve positive circumstances at home and at work. WFE is associated with numerous work variables, and FIW is associated with family variables. Because the research is only correlational, the underlying dynamics and causal mechanisms are unclear, but it nonetheless seems important to try to aim for both types of enrichment.

What contributes to work-family enrichment?

A number of factors may influence whether an individual experiences work-family enrichment, including social support, organizational characteristics, job characteristics, and family characteristics.

Work to Family Enrichment (WFE)

Social support from supervisors, coworkers, and family is associated with greater WFE, as are family-friendly organizational policies and family-friendly work culture (Lapierre et al., 2017). Individuals that experience WFE tend to be those that experience more work engagement and have higher job autonomy. Facing job insecurity is associated with experiencing less WFE (Lapierre et al., 2017). Greater time spent with family, family involvement, and having more children are associated with greater WFE (Lapierre et al., 2017).

Family to Work Enrichment (FWE)

Support may be one contributing factor to experiencing FWE. Having support from one's supervisor, coworkers, organization (i.e., supportive culture and policies), and family is associated with greater FWE (Lapierre et al., 2017). Job autonomy and engagement also show positive relations to FWE. Those that are married, are more involved with their families, and have a greater number of children are more likely to experience FWE, but experiencing family role overload is associated with less FWE (Lapierre et al., 2017). Thus, enrichment may be enhanced via involvement with one's family, a good support system, and more freedom and engagement with one's work.

QIC-WD Takeaways

- ▶ Work-family enrichment occurs when individuals gain resources in one role domain that enhance one's experiences in the other role domain; researchers typically distinguish between enrichment occurring from work-to-family (WFE) or family-to-work (FWE).
- ▶ WFE is moderately related to greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment. WFE is not related to stress, but is modestly related to less burnout. WFE is moderately related to greater job performance and OCB. WFE has a modest, negative association with turnover intentions.
- ▶ FWE has moderate, positive relationships with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. FWE is not related to burnout, but is modestly and negatively associated with stress. FWE has a moderate and positive relationship with job performance. FWE is not significantly related to turnover intentions.
- ▶ Having good social supports in place at work and with one's family is important for enhancing work-family enrichment.
- ▶ Family-friendly organizational policies and culture and greater autonomy and engagement with one's work are associated with more work-family enrichment.
- ▶ Individuals are more likely to experience enrichment when they are more involved in their families.
- ▶ Those seeking to measure enrichment should consider using the 18-item Work-Family Enrichment Scale, which contains subscales pertaining to both WFE and FWE (Carlson et al., 2006).

References

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