

Core Self-Evaluations and Work/Family Interface as Life Satisfaction Predictors in Group of Employed Parents Compared to Group of Workers without Children

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Abstract: *The study focuses on the life satisfaction predictors investigating the predictive value of the CSE, work-family conflict (WFC), and work-family enrichment (WFE). Using a sample of 389 working adults ($M=36.48$, $SD=9.002$), which was divided into four groups based on sex and presence of children, results indicate the importance of CSE, WFC, and WFE as predictors for life satisfaction, CSE has been proven to moderate the relationship between job and life satisfaction, it has a predictive value in life satisfaction for working men (9.0%), employed fathers (14.9%), working women (71.2%), and employed mothers (10.8%). Other important predictors appear to be factors of job satisfaction: 1. nature of work, communication, and operating conditions for working men; 2. satisfaction with salary for employed fathers; 3. satisfaction with payment and fringe benefits among working women. Enrichment from family to work facilitates fulfilling life satisfaction in the group of employed fathers as well as employed mothers; enrichment from work to family contributes to life satisfaction among employed mothers. Self-efficacy appears to be important predictor of life satisfaction in the group of employed fathers.*

Keywords: *core self-evaluations; work-family conflict; work-family enrichment; job satisfaction; life satisfaction.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between core self-evaluations (CSE) and job and life satisfaction has been studied extensively - as well as the importance of work/family interface consequences (conflict and/or enrichment between work and family domain) for experiencing job and life satisfaction. But, there are rather fewer studies which have investigated above-mentioned construct concurrently, taking into account the moderating role of CSE on the relationship between job and life satisfaction and, concurrently, considering the (non-)presence of a child within a family. At the same time, we have to consider the importance of one's sex and corresponding cultural expectations about gender roles, which, obviously, are still quite different for men and women, employed fathers and mothers, e.g. [1] [2]. Thus, the current study focuses on the life satisfaction predictors among employed individuals investigating the predictive value of the CSE, work/family conflict, and work/family enrichment; separately for men with/without children and for women with/without children.

1.1. Core Self-Evaluations

The concept of core self-evaluations [3] aimed to provide a broad, latent, higher-order trait that would be a useful predictor of job satisfaction. Core self-evaluations (CSE) are defined as fundamental, bottom-line evaluations that people make of themselves [4]. The construct reflects beliefs in one's capabilities to control one's life and one's competence to perform, cope, persevere, and succeed, as such, it is broader than self-esteem. In addition, CSE includes the general belief that life will turn out well for oneself. CSE is viewed as a broad latent concept, indicated by four traits: self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, inner locus of control, and (low) neuroticism (or high emotional stability).

There is a quite massive research proving empirical relevance of CSE, i. e. [5] [6] [7] [8] and its relation to multiple psychological constructs. The suitability of the CSE construct has been confirmed by several research studies even in the cultural circumstances of Slovakia [9] [10] [11].

To date, research on CSE has largely been conducted within industrial-organizational psychology [4], it has been primarily viewed as a concept which can predict job satisfaction, job performance and leadership. However, many of the principles generalize to other areas of psychology, for example personality and social psychology, health psychology, clinical psychology, and counselling psychology. Core self-evaluations positively contributes to life satisfaction [8] [6], engagement [12], popularity [13]. Individuals with higher CSE are able to cope with external demands and experience beneficial emotions, CSE contribute to self-regulatory functioning [13]. Traits of CSE have shown to foster self-regulation as well, they are related to coping and task performance [7] [15]. And, on the other hand, CSE has the potential to contribute negatively to stress, strain, and depression.

Based on authors own research results [16] CSE contributes positively to life meaning creation and, mainly, CSE has been proved to have important relations to attachment styles within both, the family members (parents and children) and partners as well. Therefore, it is possible to claim that the suitability of the CSE construct could be a lot broader than thought and that it could have a significant role in the work/family interface research (considering work/family conflict and work/family enrichment).

1.2. Work-Family Interface: The Positive and Negative Consequences

The demographic changes in the work market [17] as one of the changing family patterns and shifts in gender roles consequences along with increasing expectations of life have led to a substantial increase in the number of double income households - the model prevalent for decades in Slovakia, too [18].

A distressing result of the combination of roles is the conflict of work and family, which has the form of inter-role conflict in the situation when the strains of family and work roles are mutually incompatible [19]. As typical work/family conflict consequences, psychological distress, chronic health problems, reduction of work performance, and/or decreased life satisfaction may occur [20] [21]; further, except the job satisfaction, it predicts the absenteeism as well as the employee turnover [22]; independent meta-analyses confirm the significant impacts of being experienced work/family conflict on both, job and life satisfaction [23] [24] [25].

Positive consequences of work-family interface are represented as the potential to contribute to a higher quality and efficient functioning of an individual in different roles. It can be understood as a mutual enrichment of work and family environment, more precisely, the extent to which experience in one role improves the quality of life in other roles [26]. Commitment stemming from the parental role is associated with career satisfaction and performance, relates to a sense of enhancement, which reduces stress and strengthens positive outcomes. In addition, satisfaction with marriage has a significant relationship with job satisfaction [27] [28]. Experienced work/family enrichment may also have practical implications in terms of reducing the work absences incidence [29].

Several authors [30] [31] [32] [33] have emphasised the need to examine personality dispositions and self-regulatory characteristics as antecedents of work and family conflict, which represents a negative consequence of work and family interface. The corresponding construct for this need may be the concept of Core Self-Evaluations.

2. METHODS

Participants

Research sample consists of 389 persons ($M=36.48$, $SD=9.002$). With regard on the current study aims, we gained data from four different groups of individuals:

- The group of working men without children ($N=50$, $M=29.00$ y., $SD=7.108$)
- The group of employed fathers ($N=121$, $M=39.69$ y., $SD=8.479$)
- The group of working women without children ($N=48$, $M=26.35$ y., $SD=6.787$)
- The group of employed mothers ($N=170$, $M=39.25$ y., $SD=6.839$).

The Core Self-Evaluations Scale

Core self-evaluations is a stable personality trait which encompasses an individual's fundamental evaluation about oneself, these evaluations are identified by self-efficacy, emotional stability, inner locus of control and self-esteem. The scale CSES [34], trans. [9] consists of 12 items, each item is

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measured on a 5 point scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree). Sample CSES items include: “I am confident I get the success I deserve in life” and “Sometimes when I fail I feel worthless” (reverse scored).

Self-efficacy for Work/Family Conflict Management Scale

For work/family conflict self-efficacy assessment, the Self-efficacy for Work/Family Conflict Management Scale [30], trans. [35], was used. This scale contains two subscales, which measure the individual perception of self-efficacy to manage work-family conflict and family-work conflict. Each subscale contains 4 items using 10-point Likert scale, and question for participants to rate how confident they are in handling a given situation. High score indicates high self-efficacy.

Multidimensional Measure of Work-Family Conflict

Perceived work/family conflict has been examined using two independent scales designed to detect the situation when 1. work interferes with family life (work-family conflict), and 2. family interferes with work performance (family-work conflict) [36] [37]. Each scale is made up of nine items. Using the 5-point Likert scale, participants reflect the level of agreement with each statement. The answers may vary from 1 (strong disagreement) to 5 (strong agreement). A high score indicates a high level of conflict.

Work/Family Enrichment Scale

Work/family enrichment was assessed using two scales developed and validated by [38] based on [26] definition. Work-family enrichment is considered to be bidirectional, thus, separate scales of work-to-family enrichment (WFE) and family-to-work enrichment (FWE) were used. The whole scale is made up of 18 items, each subscale includes nine items. Participant on a 5-point Likert scale expresses the extent of agreement with each item. A high score indicates a high rate of perceived work/family enrichment.

Job Satisfaction Survey

The questionnaire JSS [39] [40] has been used to assess the level of the satisfaction in one’s own job. The questionnaire consists of 36 items, each item is measured on a 6 point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). The questionnaire includes nine factors, with four statements in each factor: payment, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating conditions, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. Sample item: “Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted”.

Satisfaction with life scale

Satisfaction with life scale SWLS [41] is a 5 items long questionnaire, each item is represented on a 7 point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The SWLS is an instrument designed to assess global cognitive judgements of satisfaction with one’s life.

Methods of data analysis

Multiple regression analysis was used with the aim to identify predictors, which may have the malleable potential on level of the life satisfaction. Identified predictors were core self-evaluations (CSES), work-family enrichment (WFES) and work-family conflict (WFCS), aspects of work satisfaction (JSS) and self-efficacy (WFCMS).

3. RESULTS

Multiple regression analysis was used with the dependent variable of life satisfaction (the method used was Stepwise). In the table below are shown the monitored variables (job satisfaction and CSE) which have proved to be significant in terms of the life satisfaction. The general research question has been formulated with the aim to confirm the predictive role of the CSE as well as its suitability to act as a moderator in the relationship between job and life satisfaction. The amount of variance of life satisfaction predicted by independent variables is 23.2% (adj. $R^2=0.228$). From the two tested predictors, CSE is the more important predictor for life satisfaction since the amount of variance predicted by this predictor is 11.9%. The higher core self-evaluations, the higher life satisfaction ($\beta=0.379$; $p=0.000$).

Tab.1. Multiple regression analysis: Job Satisfaction and CSE as identified predictors for Life Satisfaction

	ΔR^2	B	SE	β	t	p	VIF
CSE	0.119	0.360	0.047	0.379	7.738	0.000	1.207
Job Satisfaction	0.114	0.045	0.012	0.180	3.684	0.000	1.207

$R^2 = 0.232, Adj.R^2 = 0.228$

With the aim to examine possible differences in the importance of several predictors for life satisfaction in a more precise way, the statistical operations has been conducted separately in four groups of participants. The groups have been created based on 1. sex and 2. the presence of the child.

In the case of employed childless men, several predictors have shown to have predictive values towards life satisfaction. As it is visible (tab. 2) the most important predictor is the nature of work, as one of the job satisfaction factors, since the amount of the dependent variable's variance predicted by nature of work is 62.4%. The other important predictors are communication, core self-evaluations, and operating conditions in work.

Tab.2. Multiple regression analysis: Life satisfaction of adult employed men

	ΔR^2	B	SE	β	t	p	VIF
Nature of work	0.624	1.606	0.283	0.878	5.664	0.000	2.910
Communication	0.104	0.887	0.199	0.538	4.463	0.001	1.760
Core Self-Evaluations	0.090	0.433	0.096	0.619	4.509	0.001	2.278
Operating Conditions	0.074	0.915	0.306	0.383	2.990	0.010	1.981

$R^2 = 0.893, Adj.R^2 = 0.860$

Core self-evaluations gain on the importance in the group of employed fathers (tab. 3). CSE is the most important predictor according to the explained variability of life satisfaction (14.9%). Benefits from family to work enhance life satisfaction together with self-efficacy and satisfaction in payment.

Tab.3. Multiple regression analysis: Life satisfaction of employed fathers

	ΔR^2	B	SE	β	t	p	VIF
CSE	0.149	0.230	0.103	0.217	2.079	0.041	1.278
F-W Enrichment	0.074	0.203	0.082	0.236	2.460	0.016	1.081
Payment	0.068	0.376	0.110	0.323	3.406	0.001	1.054
Self-efficacy	0.036	0.304	0.147	0.220	2.066	0.042	1.332

$R^2 = 0.327, Adj.R^2 = 0.293$

In the case of young employed women without children, the CSE take on really remarkable values of explained variability - these cover 71.2%. As another important predictors, satisfaction with salary and benefits have been proved. Thus, the life satisfaction of a childless working women is to the massive amount based on their self-evaluation and, secondary, it lays on the money earned by themselves.

Tab.4. Multiple regression analysis: Life satisfaction of employed women

	ΔR^2	B	SE	β	t	p	VIF
CSE	0.712	0.563	0.083	0.693	6.752	0.000	1.215
Payment	0.092	0.394	0.121	0.327	3.265	0.006	1.156
Fringe benefits	0.083	0.599	0.148	0.444	4.047	0.001	1.385

$R^2 = 0.887, Adj.R^2 = 0.861$

In the group of employed mothers, factors of job satisfaction do not play such an important role. Life satisfaction has been predicted by enrichment in both directions - from work to family (19.7%) and from family to work (5.3%) in the group of employed mothers. Life satisfaction is predicted as well by core self-evaluations (10.8%). On the other hand, job satisfaction factors have not proven as important in life satisfaction in the mentioned case of employed mothers.

Tab.5. Multiple regression analysis: Life satisfaction of employed mothers

	ΔR^2	B	SE	β	t	p	VIF
W-F Enrichment	0.197	0.157	0.064	0.207	2.447	0.016	1.523
CSE	0.108	0.380	0.075	0.357	5.043	0.000	1.067
F-W Enrichment	0.053	0.223	0.066	0.276	3.356	0.001	1.443

$R^2 = 0.358, Adj.R^2 = 0.344$

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

It may be claimed that results presented above have contributed to the stable position of CSE as an important predictor for several psychological constructs i. e. [5][6][7][4]. In this case, the relevance of CSE as a source of the life satisfaction has been confirmed. Corresponding results provide i.e. [42][4] and [43]. In general, the higher a person evaluates himself or herself, the higher satisfying life he or she lives.

As proposed by [8] job satisfaction influences life satisfaction in compliance with part-whole hypothesis [44] which states that job satisfaction plays a causal role in subjective wellbeing because the job is a part of life and thus it is taken into account when rating overall life satisfaction. Therefore, it can be assumed that both, CSE and job satisfaction, have the potential to influence the overall life satisfaction. In current study CSE have been proven to play a key role as a moderator of the relationship between job and life satisfaction as well as the results of research [45] have confirmed.

Results based on multiple regression analyses conducted separately in groups based on sex and fact of being a parent provide interesting insight into the changing importance of examined constructs. Whereas for the young childless working men the most important predictor of life satisfaction is the nature of the work, in the group of employed parents, other factors are gaining the importance. CSE is holding the first place in this group, but perceived enrichment from family to work seems to be significant, too. The group of employed childless men is characteristic by the higher importance of work related satisfaction, they could be intensively focused on the work itself. This result is in compliance with the presumption that satisfaction with work additive effect on an individual's happiness, life satisfaction, and perceived quality of life [46]. As claimed [47], employed fathers have stronger commitment to their job and, compared to childless men, they are more satisfied with their career. Parent role commitment is associated with job satisfaction and performance, spouse role commitment relates to enhancement, reducing strain and supporting positive outcomes [48].

Especially the comparison of women with and without children enables to follow a developmental line toward generativity [49], commitment and creation of a family. As we can conclude from the results, the most malleable potential for life satisfaction in young employed women has the CSE and, to some extent, their satisfaction with salary and fringe benefits. In contrast, the life satisfaction of employed mothers is predominantly created by perceived enrichment, stemming in work area and having positive influence on family. Indeed, engagement in work domain does not mean for women only the necessity to earn money anymore. For many of them, career could represent an opportunity to satisfy several social needs. Women consider as important motives of their work also the satisfaction based on accomplishment, personal contact with people, desire to be an example for their children, opportunity to use their education, a sense of usefulness, and so on [50] [51].

As may be noticeable, neither work to family conflict, nor family to work conflict have manifested themselves as important in the relationship with life satisfaction, which may be understood in terms of the expansionist hypothesis, which suggested that the advantages of pursuing multiple roles (from work to family, and vice versa) are likely to outweigh the disadvantages [52] [53] [54]. The results have supported this assumption as only enrichment has proven to have a predictive value towards life satisfaction.

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