Linking team resources to work–family enrichment and satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Work–family scholars now recognize the potential positive effects of participation in one life domain (i.e., work or family) on performance in other life domains. We examined how employees might benefit from team resources, which are highly relevant to the modern workplace, in both work and nonwork domains via work–family enrichment. Using the Resource–Gain–Development model (Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2007), we explored how team resources contribute to enrichment and resulting project and family satisfaction. Using multilevel structural equation modeling (ML-SEM) to analyze student data ($N = 344$) across multiple class projects, we demonstrated that individuals with team resources were more likely to experience both work-to-family and family-to-work enrichment. Further, enrichment mediated the relationship between team resources and satisfaction with the originating domain.

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Work–family enrichment describes the process by which experiences in one role of an individual's life improve their performance in other roles (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Enrichment between work and family roles can occur in both directions—family-to-work and work-to-family. Employees who experience enrichment between work and family tend to demonstrate improved physical health, lower absenteeism, and higher job performance (Van Steenbergen & Ellemers, 2009). Furthermore, enrichment is positively related to job, family, and life satisfaction and lower intentions to turnover (Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan, 2005; Carlson, Grzywacz, & Zivnuska, 2009; Hill, 2005; McNall, Masuda, & Nicklin, 2010; Wayne, Musisca, & Fleeson, 2004). Despite these positive outcomes, scholars have only begun to explore the many aspects of the work domain that contribute to the experience of enrichment.

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of team-based resources in contributing to work–family enrichment and subsequent domain satisfaction. As organizations increasingly rely on teams (Tekleab, Quigley, & Tesluk, 2009), it is critical to understand the role of this dimension of the work domain in developing work–family enrichment. Using the Resource–Gain–Development model (Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2007) as a theoretical foundation, we suggest that teams may offer resources at work that contribute to the experience of work–family enrichment and subsequent satisfaction. Therefore, we develop a model that posits work-to-family and family-to-work enrichment as mediators between team resources (i.e., cohesion, familiarity, and similarity) and satisfaction with both the team project and with family.

This study contributes to the understanding of work–family enrichment in a number of ways. First, this is the first study to our knowledge that examines the work–family interface in relation to a set of social resources particularly relevant for modern workers–resources garnered from involvement in teamwork. As organizations increasingly rely on teams (Tekleab et al., 2009), examining this set of resources holds practical implications for managers who wish to help their employees experience greater work–family enrichment, especially in light of the positive outcomes that can result. Second, we utilize a unique sample because many of our team members participate in multiple teams with differing team members and differing experiences of resources, allowing us to test this

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phenomenon across multiple situations for each of these participants. Finally, whereas a resource-based framework has been widely applied to the study of work–family conflict (Geurts, Beckers, Taris, Kompier, & Smulders, 2009; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Halbesleben, Harvey, & Bolino, 2009), Wayne et al. (2007) proposed that such a framework can also contribute to our understanding of work–family enrichment. Thus, we provide an empirical test of the Resource–Gain–Development model, which has not yet been empirically tested. In doing so, we incorporate both antecedents and consequences of work–family enrichment.

1. Theoretical foundation

Resource-based models have been widely applied to many areas of management research, but in the last decade, work–family scholars have found these theories useful for explaining work–family conflict (Geurts et al., 2009; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Halbesleben et al., 2009; Wayne et al., 2007). Applying resource-based models to work–family enrichment is a natural extension of this research. As Greenhaus and Powell (2006) explain, participation in multiple roles can benefit the actor because experiences from one role can carry over to improve experiences in another role. For instance, if an individual gains resources at work, such as social support and self-efficacy, the individual can then reinvest those resources in nonwork roles to garner positive outcomes (Sieber, 1974).

Extending the work of Greenhaus and Powell (2006), Wayne et al. (2007) proposed the Resource–Gain–Development perspective of work–family enrichment based on the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989). Resources are defined as characteristics of the environment that fulfill three major functions (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007): (1) they help individuals achieve goals, (2) they address demands (i.e., aspects of the job that require sustained effort, such as high work pressure), and/or (3) they encourage personal growth and development. The Resource–Gain–Development perspective of enrichment is grounded on the basic premise that individuals strive to grow and achieve in all domains in which they participate, which drives individuals to actively seek resources in each domain to enable growth (Wayne et al., 2007). Furthermore, these resources may spill over to enhance other domains. According to this model, work–family enrichment acts as a mediator between resources and work–family outcomes. Thus, resources may increase enrichment between work and family domains, which then may improve satisfaction at work and at home.

Researchers have only begun to explore the impact of the vast array of resources generated in the work domain on the experience of enrichment. For instance, some evidence suggests that flexible work arrangements (McNall et al., 2010), job characteristics (e.g., autonomy; Voydanoff, 2004), work support (Karatepe & Bekteshi, 2008), and job involvement (Aryee et al., 2005) are related to enrichment. However, to our knowledge, the role of team resources in this process has not yet been examined.

1.1. Team resources

Teams may offer critical social resources at work that help individuals to grow and develop, thereby enabling positive spillover between the work and family domains (Wayne et al., 2007). Although organizations increasingly depend on teams to accomplish goals (Tekleab et al., 2009), team processes and characteristics have rarely been explicitly studied in conjunction with work–family outcomes. However, because of frequent interactions with team members at work, teams can provide a valuable support network, and over time, a team might even start to represent a "family" unit at work.

Key team characteristics that may act as social resources include similarity, cohesion, and familiarity. First, team similarity is the extent to which team members are alike in terms of visible characteristics (surface-level traits such as ethnicity and gender) and nonvisible characteristics (informational traits such as personality, professional experience, and education; Hobman, Bordia, & Gallois, 2003). The similarity–attraction paradigm predicts that similar individuals are attracted to one another, forming in-groups that engage in frequent communication, effective conflict resolution, and efficient problem solving (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992). Individuals who are similar also tend to engage in less conflict overall than dissimilar individuals, instead engaging in friendly, productive, and satisfactory interactions (Tsui et al., 1992). Second, team cohesion describes the strength of the bond that pulls team members together (Beal, Cohen, Burke, & McLendon, 2003; Tekleab et al., 2009). Cohesive teams are generally united in working toward team goals, but team members also tend to experience friendships and mutual trust. Research demonstrates that team cohesion relates positively to general team effectiveness (Barrick, Stewart, Neubert, & Mount, 1998). Third, team familiarity refers to the extent to which team members know each other (Espinosa, Slaughter, Kraut, & Herbsleb, 2007). Following popular models of team development, familiarity develops over time and with collaboration experience (Guzzo & Dickson, 1996). In the early stages of team development, team members may expend significant time and energy to increase familiarity. Once familiarity is high, however, team members may anticipate and understand the unique working styles and experiences of other teammates, understand everyone's role, effectively engage all teammates in the task, and rely less on explicit communication (Balkundi & Harrison, 2006; Espinosa et al., 2007).

We suggest these three characteristics of teams act as resources by fulfilling all three functions of resources (i.e., achieving goals, reducing demands, and encouraging personal growth; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). For example, team similarity can act as a resource because similar teammates engage in more efficient and effective team interactions that contribute to achieving work goals and addressing work demands. As such, it may also aid in developing the skills and confidence of team members. A cohesive team is also better equipped (than less cohesive teams) to address demands such as high workload or time pressure (Hobfoll & Spielberger, 1992; Tekleab et al., 2009). For instance, cohesive team members may notice a peer is overloaded with tasks and offer support in completing them (Hobfoll & Spielberger, 1992). Furthermore, belonging to a cohesive team can help each member grow personally and professionally, because cohesive teammates tend to learn from each other's working styles, knowledge bases, and