

*Work-life balance and job satisfaction among teachers **

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Summary.. With the increase in female employment rates and the consequent weakening of the traditional model of family roles division (man seen as breadwinner, responsible to provide economic resources to care for the family, and woman devoted to children and house care), attention to problems associated with the need to reconcile different roles has grown considerably. As a matter of fact, work-life balance has eventually become an essential necessity for almost all categories of workers, including those employed in teaching positions, in which the female gender is presently fairly dominant.

This article presents the results of an exploratory study conducted on 286 teachers in the province of Vicenza (Italy). It aims to investigate several theoretical constructs associated with work-life balance, and to analyze their relationship with job satisfaction. The research was performed using a questionnaire, which consisted of different scales in taken and adapted from the relevant literature. Particular attention was paid to socio-demographic variables, in order to see whether the perception of work-life balance varies according to them.

Keywords: *work-life balance, work-family conflict, work-family enrichment, job satisfaction, teachers.*

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Introduction

Work-life balance is a widely studied phenomenon in organizational literature that, over the past few decades, has tried to identify the various ways in which work and private life affect each other. Furthermore, it represents a new approach to human resource management policies intended to encourage the creation of a substantial balance between employees' working and private life. Specifically, this approach has developed in response to recent socio-demographic changes that have profoundly changed nowadays society and the labor market: in particular, the increase number of working women, the growing figures of families in which both spouses work, major changes in the traditional family unit, and the progressive aging of the population (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004). All these considerations highlight a common need for reconciliation between work and private life. This need is accompanied by a radical change in values and the importance that people attribute to their job (Smola & Sutton, 2002), along with a greater involvement of men in family responsibilities (Pleck, 1985). As a result, work-life balance is a requirement that actually covers all categories of workers, regardless of gender, age or employment status.

The literature on work-life balance is divided into two main branches: the former analyzes causes and antecedents of work-family conflict (WFC); whereas the latter is more focused on exploring the consequences that such conflict yields on workers' organizational attitudes and behavior and, more generally, on organizational performance (Burke, 1988; Frone et al., 1992; Beutell & Greenhaus, 1985; Netemeyer et al., 1996).

Within these two research stands, we can identify six main research contributions that have developed the study of these mechanisms linking work and family. The first model refers to the "spillover theory" (Piotrkowski, 1979; Staines, 1980; Crouter, 1984; Evans & Bartolome, 1986), which states that values, behaviors and emotions that arise from one's working environment influence and pour out into one's private sphere, showing a direct relationship between work and family. The second contribution, also known as "compensation theory" (Staines, 1980),

¹ A research conducted by Smola and Sutton (2002) showed that over the last 25 years employees have profoundly changed attitudes towards their job: they abandoned the belief that the job was the most important part of their life and that working hard could make them a better person.

describes an inverse relationship between work and family: many people compensate for their failures and bad feelings that emerge in a part of their lives through a greater involvement in the other. The third theory, known as the "segmentation theory" (Payton-Miyazaki & Brayfield, 1976; Burke & Greenglass, 1987; Lambert, 1990), emphasizes the absence of relationship between work and family: pursuant to this theory, these areas are distinct and, therefore, do not influence each other in any way. People hermetically separate the different areas of their lives, banishing thoughts, emotions and behaviors related to a role when they are involved in the other (Piotrkowski, 1979). The fourth contribution, referred to as "instrumental theory" (Payton-Miyazaki & Brayfield, 1976; Evans & Bartolome, 1986), states that one's achievements at work are only a tool to accomplish results in the family sphere. In particular, according to this theoretical perspective, one's job is deprived of any form of satisfaction and personal gratification, and becomes an activity aimed exclusively at providing the resources necessary to lead a peaceful and fulfilling personal life. The fifth model refers to the "conflict theory" (Greenhaus & Parasuram, 1986; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Burke & Greenglass, 1987): this theory states that work and family domains are mutually incompatible, and that success in one area inevitably entails sacrifices in the other one, in a kind of zero-sum game (Friedman et al., 1998). This theory is based on the concept of role conflict as defined by Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn and colleagues (1964). According to these researchers, role conflict derives from the existence of a definite set of conflicting pressures, values and expectations, specific to each role. Based on this definition, Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined work-family conflict as "a form of inter-role conflict in which role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect" (1985, p. 77). This construct assumes that a person's time and energy are necessarily limited and, for this reason, individuals who are simultaneously involved in multiple roles inevitably experience a form of conflict (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 2002). In recent years, the prospect of balance is giving way to an integration perspective (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2004). More specifically, this approach conceives work and family domains as so intertwined and interconnected with each other that it becomes virtually impossible to consider them separately (Burke & Greenglass, 1987; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1986; Eagle et al., 1997). In line with these views, Greenhaus and Powell (2006) have proposed a new theoretical model, called work-family enrichment, wherein work and family are configured not as enemies, but rather as allies (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000). This theory is based on the concept of role accumulation outlined by

Sieber (1974) which describes the benefits of the simultaneous pursuit of multiple roles.

The existing literature has traditionally considered work-family conflict as a unidirectional construct. However, in recent years a large body of research has begun to consider separately work-family conflict ($W \rightarrow F$) from family-work conflict ($F \rightarrow W$), defining them as two sides of the same coin (Carlson et al., 2000; Frone et al., 1992; Netemeyer et al., 1996). Accordingly, Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrin (1996) defined work-family conflict as a form of conflict that arises from the interference of activities and family responsibilities on one's professional career ambitions.

The current labor force make up, characterized by high heterogeneity and a growing presence of female workers, is particularly important in the perception of work-family conflict and family-work conflict. In particular, a previous study commissioned by the PNA (2009), showed that teaching in Italy is primarily a female profession. Consequently, the "feminization rate" far exceeds the 50% for each type of institution, with peaks in which women represent make up almost the entire staff. This is the case of nursery schools (99.4%) and primary schools (95.9%). In intermediate schools the percentage of female teachers fairly drops to 77.5%, further decreasing in secondary schools (61.7%).

Pleck (1977) states that the main difference related to gender, with regard to levels of work-family conflict, is the existence of a different perception of the interference of work on the family sphere, and vice versa. In fact, past research indicated that men seem to show a greater psychophysiological involvement in working activities (Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001); conversely, women show a greater involvement in activities related to family life, apparently conforming to gender stereotypes (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1993 ; Pleck, 1985). Overall, women displayed higher levels of work-family conflict compared to men. Interestingly enough, the literature suggests that work-family conflict is also related to the number of hours spent away from home. For this reason, women occupying positions of responsibility tend to experience more intensely this form of conflict, which is reflected indirectly (Staines, 1980) also on their husbands' well-being and job satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Several studies have shown that female teachers are very busy in their work (e.g.: Acker, 1992; Biklen, 1995 Thomas & O'Brien, 1984). Previous research also showed that teaching is a stressful occupation for mothers (eg, Acker, 1992; Claesson & Brice, 1989) and that a significant friction characterizes the relationship between work and family (eg, Blase & Pajak, 1986; Spencer, 1986). A study conducted by Cinamon and Rich (2005) found that levels of work-family conflict and family-work conflict in

teachers depended on their teaching experience and the degree of school in which they taught. As a matter of fact, the organizational structure and the educational needs in primary schools are very different compared to secondary education (Rich & Almozlino, 1999). Accordingly, as a consequence of these differences, there are different levels of work-family conflict, which are presumably more significant in primary schools. Job experience is another factor to be taken into consideration. In fact, the more experience a teacher has, the more likely that he or she has completed the necessary competence and adaptive behaviors that allow them to cope with work demands without undue interference on family responsibilities. In this regard, past literature has also shown that work-family conflict increases especially when there are small children at home (eg, Lewis & Cooper, 1998).

Several studies have amply demonstrated that work-family conflict affects both workers' attitudes and the organizational behavior, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover, absenteeism and organizational citizenship behaviors (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991; Frone et al., 1992; O'Driscoll et al., 1992; Parasuraman et al., 1988). Job satisfaction expresses, in line with a classical definition proposed by Locke (1967, p. 248), "a feeling of pleasure that comes from the perception that its business is able to satisfy important personal values" and is generally considered to be an affective reaction (i.e. emotional) to a number of aspects related to the work. In the literature on work-family conflict, a notable number of researchers have analyzed its existing relationship with job satisfaction (Blegen, 1993; Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Netemeyer et al., 1996; Parasuraman et al., 1988). Carlson and Kacmar (2000) confirm the existence of a negative correlation between work-family conflict and job satisfaction, identifying in values and personal characteristics (involvement in business and / or family) factors of possible mediation. Parasuraman and Simmers (2001), in a comparative study of work-family conflict, type of employment and employees' welfare, have confirmed that work-family conflict is negatively related to job satisfaction. Nonetheless, they argued that the specific work characteristics (eg, autonomy, flexibility) affect this correlation and provide the most reliable prediction of job satisfaction. Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian (1996) suggested that there is also a negative relationship between family-work conflict and job satisfaction.

Objectives

The main aim of this research was to administer an exploratory survey on work-life balance to Italian teachers and analyze their relationship with job satisfaction. Specifically, we wanted to investigate whether teachers' job has a detrimental (work-family conflict) or beneficial effect (work-family enrichment) on family life, and vice versa (family-work conflict, family-work enrichment). Furthermore, particular attention was paid to socio-demographic variables to determine whether the perception of balance between participants' job and personal life varied according to them. Within the questionnaire were also included items related to specific constructs of work-life balance (i.e., subjective importance of work, locus of control, flexibility and work autonomy) in order to analyze the presence of possible implications and/or correlations with it.

Method

Participants

The sample consisted of 286 teachers employed in Bassano del Grappa (Province of Vicenza).

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	20	7,2%
	Female	257	92,8%
School level	Nursery School	25	8,9%
	Primary School	218	77,6%
	Intermediate School	27	9,6%
	Secondary School	11	3,9%
Employment contract	Fixed-term employment	59	22%
	Permanent Employment	209	78%
Highest	High School Diploma	166	59,9%

qualification obtained	Degree	111	40,1%
Family Status	Married	226	84,3%
	Single	42	15,7%
Presence of children	With children	170	82,5%
	Without children	36	17,5%

Table 1: Socio-anagraphic frequencies.

More than 90% of the sample is female, and about 80% of the teachers was working in primary school. The majority of teachers included in the sample was permanently employed (78%). More than 84% of workers were currently married and approximately 82% have children. Nearly 70% were aged between 30 and 50 years (mean age: 43.5 years). The average length of service was 18 years (tab.1).

Measures

The questionnaire used in the research consisted of different scales taken from past literature. More specifically, the questionnaire was divided into three main sections. In the first section constructs related to work-life balance were investigated through a 52-item scale, in which participants were asked to indicate the degree of agreement with a given statement given on a 5-point Likert scale. The second section was made of two scales aimed at measuring teachers' levels of job satisfaction. In the last section socio-anagraphic questions were asked to participants(tab.2).

² The questionnaire was distributed in compliance with the regulation in force regarding anonymity and informed consent. Participants were provided with a paper-based survey, however, for ease of completion, we also created a website in which were then published the results of research.

	Construct (number of items employed)	References
1^a section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative WHI: Work negatively affects family life (7 items) • Negative HWI: Family life negatively affects work (4 items) • Positive WHI: Work positive affects family life (4 items) • Positive HWI: Family life positively affects work (5 items) 	SWING (Geurts, Taris, Kompier, Dijkers, Van Hooff , & Kinnunen, 2005)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIPL Work interferes with personal life (8 item) • PLIW: Personal life interferes with work (1 item) • PLEW: Personal life enhances work (1 item) 	Work / non-work Interference and enhancement (Fisher, Bulger, & Smith, 2009)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporal Flexibility (2 item) • Supportive Supervision (3 item) • Operational Flexibility (2 item) 	Organizational culture and work-life balance (Clark, 2001)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job involvement (2 item) • Lack of deprivation owed to unemployment (2 item) • Locus of control (1 item) 	I.P.I.L. "Inventario sulla Predisposizione all'Inserimento Lavorativo" (Boerchi, Garavaglia, & Rustici, 2006)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to family development (2 item) • Work to family affect (1 item) • Work to family capital (2 item) • Family to work development (1 item) • Family to work affect (1 item) • Family to work efficiency (2 item) 	Work-family enrichment scale (Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne & Grzywacz, 2006)
2^a section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Descriptive Index (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969) • Work attitude questionnaire (Questionario atteggiamento lavoro)

Table 2: Recapitulatory table on measured constructs, scales references and number of items administered per construct.

The survey measured the following variables:

Work-Home Interaction (WHI). To assess this construct the SWING scale was employed (Geurts, Taris, Kompier, Dikkers, Van Hooff, & Kinnunen, 2005). Particularly, 20 items of this scale were chosen related to the following components:

Negative WHI: indicates how one's job negatively affects family life.

Negative HWI: measures how family life adversely affects work.

Positive WHI: Detects the extent to which work positively affects family life.

Positive HWI: Identifies to what degree family life positively affects one's job.

Work / non-work Interference and enhancement. This variable was measured using 10 items derived from the scale devised by Fisher, Bulger and Smith (2009), which referred to the following components:

WIPL (Work Interference with Personal Life): indicates the extent to which work interferes with personal life.

PLIW (Personal Life Interference with Work): measures how personal life interferes with work.

PLEW (Personal Life Enhancement of Work): indicates how personal life enhances one's work.

Organizational culture and work-life balance. For this measure, reference is made to the scale devised by Clark (2001). Seven items related to the following components were included in the questionnaire:

Temporal Flexibility: indicates the possibility to have discretion in one's work plan.

Supportive Supervision: measures the support of supervisors for people with family responsibilities.

Operational Flexibility: Detects the degree to which a person has control over their working conditions.

Importance of work and locus of control. The 6 items chosen for these constructs were adapted from the article 'Inventario sulla Presidposizione all'Inserimento Lavorativo' (IPIL) by Boerchi, Garavaglia and Rustici (2006). The importance of work was investigated through the following components:

Job Involvement: measures how being involved at work meets some of our needs.

Lack of deprivation due to unemployment: identifies the tendency to cognitively evaluate an unemployment condition as influential on some latent functions related to employment (eg, time management, social contacts, personal identity, and the stimulus to develop one's physical and mental abilities).

The construct "locus of control" refers to the tendency to attribute to internal or external causes the results of one's behavior. Individuals with high internal locus of control tend to perceive events under their personal control, whereas people with high external locus of control are more inclined to attribute the outcome of their actions to environmental factors.

Work-family enrichment. To assess this construct we used the scale designed by Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, and Grzywacz (2006). Nine items relating to the following aspects were included in the survey:

Work to family development: indicates the extent to which job involvement allows the acquisition and improvement of skills, knowledge, behaviors, or ways of seeing things that help individuals be better family members.

Work to family affect: determines how job involvement yields a positive emotional state or attitude that helps individuals be better family members.

Work to family capital: detects how much job involvement promotes the development of psychosocial resources that help the individual be a better family member.

Family to work development: measures the degree to which family involvement allows the acquisition and improvement of skills, knowledge, behaviors, or ways of seeing things that help an individual be a better worker.

Family to work affect: indicates how family involvement yields a positive emotional state or attitude that helps individuals be better workers.

Family to work efficiency: determines how family involvement provides an ability to focus or to set priorities that help the individual to be a better worker.

Job Satisfaction: this construct was investigated through two questionnaires:

- Job Descriptive Index (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969);
- Scale work attitude.

Job Descriptive Index (JDI): this measure, developed by Smith, Kendall and Hulin (1969), was included in our questionnaire relative to job characteristics, which asked respondents how they would define the majority of time they usually devote to their job. More specifically, participants were asked to indicate next to a list of adjectives the word "Yes" if the adjective described their work, "No" if it did not describe it, and a "?" if they had no specific opinion in that regard. Adjectives related to the job were: interesting, useful, repetitive, annoying, satisfactory, not harmful to health, boring, exciting, good, independent, creative, frustrating, respected, simple, active, continuous, pleasant, realizing. Positive adjectives related to the job were valued as follows: yes = 3; ? = 1; no = 0.

Negative adjectives were encoded as: yes = 0, ? = 1, no = 3. As a result, the higher the score, the higher the level of workers' job satisfaction.

Work attitude questionnaire: This scale is composed of 4 items on a 7-point Likert Scale. Particularly, participant were asked to express the extent to which they were satisfied with their job. An example item is: "How often do you happen to feel professionally satisfied with your work?"; values ranged from 1 ("never") to 7 ("always").

Results

The first section of the questionnaire investigated different constructs related to work-life balance through 52 items taken from several scales. It was therefore carried out a Varimax exploratory factor analysis of principal components, which led to the extraction of 6 factors with eigenvalues higher than 2 that explained 54% of the variance. In Table 3 are presented factors name, their related constructs and the results obtained.

The analysis of mean scores suggests that teachers tend to perceive a positive influence between work and family ($M = 8.3$). Commitment, both at work and in the family, was also found to have a positive effect in the two areas ($M = 3.45$). The negative influence of work on the family stands at a neutral value ($M = 2.41$). Below the central value is instead the perception that one's family has a negative influence on the job ($M = 1.48$) (Tab.3).

Fattore	Costrutto	Scala	Risultati
1- Work-Family Conflict (WFC) (explains 20% of variance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative WHI: Work negatively affects family life 	SWING (Geurts, Taris, Kompier, Dikkers, Van Hooff, & Kinnunen, 2005)	Cronbach's Alpha: .933 N items: 16 Average: 2.41 (1-5)* Std deviation: .79
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIPL: work interferes with private life 	Work / non-work Interference and enhancement (Fisher, Bulger, & Smith, 2009)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporal Flexibility 	Organizational culture e work-life balance (Clark, 2001)	
2 – Positive influence between work and family life (explains 15% of variance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive WHI: work positively influences family life • Positive HWI: family life positively influences work 	SWING (Geurts, Taris, Kompier, Dikkers, Van Hooff, & Kinnunen, 2005)	Cronbach's Alpha: .883 N items: 9 Average: 3.08 (1-5)* Std deviation: .89
3 – Work-Family Enrichment (explains 6% of variance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to family development • Work to family affect • Work to family capital • Family to work development • Family to work affect • Family to work efficiency 	Work-family enrichment scale (Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz, 2006)	Cronbach's Alpha: .905 N items: 9 Average: 3.45 (1-5)* Std deviation: .79
4 – Family Work Conflict (FWC) (explains 5% of variance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative HWI: family life negatively affects work 	SWING (Geurts, Taris, Kompier, Dikkers, Van Hooff, & Kinnunen, 2005)	Cronbach's Alpha: .816 N items: 5 Average: 1.48 (1-5)* Std deviation: .58
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLIW: Personal life interferes with work 	Work / non-work Interference and enhancement (Fisher, Bulger, & Smith, 2009)	
5 – Subjective importance of work (explains 4% of variance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job involvement • Lack of deprivation due to unemployment 	I.P.I.L. "Inventario sulla Predisposizione all'Inserimento Lavorativo" (Boerchi, Garavaglia, & Rustici, 2006)	Cronbach's Alpha: .675 N items: 5 Average: 2.72 (1-5)* Std deviation: .82

6 – Superiors' support (explains 4% of variance)	• Supportive Supervision	Organizational culture and work-life balance (Clark, 2001)	Cronbach's Alpha: .921 N items: 3 Average: 2.6 (1-5)* Std deviation: 1.08
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Table 3 : Factor labels, factor explanations and results.

* range of scores.

In the second section of the questionnaire we investigated job satisfaction through two questionnaires:

- Job Descriptive Index (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969);
- Work attitude questionnaire.

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	N items	Average	Std. Deviation
7 – Job satisfaction (JDI)	.691	18	2.34 (0-3)*	.40
8 - Job satisfaction (questionario atteggiamento lavoro)	.749	4	5.20 (1-7)*	.76

Table 4: Results of JDI and Work Attitude Questionnaire.

* range of scores.

The average score (see Table 4) is above the central value in both scales ("JDI": $M = 2.34$; "Work attitude questionnaire ": $M = 5.2$), indicating that the majority of teachers consider themselves satisfied with the quality of their job.

Relative frequencies of the adjectives in the questionnaire "JDI" are presented below:

- not harmful to health: answers to this adjective are distributed almost evenly among the possibilities ("yes" = 37%, "no" = 32%, "?" = 31%), indicating that teaching is not perceived as having no impairment to health.
- Respected: a significant percentage of teachers (35%) consider the teaching profession as not adequately respected and, therefore, without due recognition by society.

The adjectives interesting, useful, satisfying, exciting, good, creative, active, enjoyable obtained consensus higher than 84%.

An analysis of the frequencies of responses to the questionnaire work attitude shows that almost half of the sample considered (46%) think they have an exciting job and would not change it (31%), or would do so just if it was worth (45%). The majority of teachers believe that they like their job just as much as other people like their own (35%), and even more (34%). Forty percent of teachers were satisfied "many times" with their job, and a slightly smaller percentage (26%) declared to be satisfied “most of the times”.

We then performed a t-test for independent samples to analyze socio-demographic variables (as it can be seen in Table 5):

- Working has a negative influence on the family especially for primary school teachers, for graduates, for those who have an open-ended employment contract and for married teachers;
- Work has greater importance for graduates, singles, and for those who have a fixed-term employment contract;
- The support of supervisors is considered as more important by teachers with children;
- Job satisfaction appears to be higher for graduates (tab.5).

		Factor 1 (WFC)	Factor 5 (Subjective importance of work)	Factor 6 (superiors' supervision)	Sat2 (job satisfaction)
Title of study	High School Diploma	2.5164**	2.6219**		5.2970*
	Degree	2.2374	2.8811		5.1015
Employemet contract	Fixed-term	2.1463**	2.9797**		
	Open-ended	2.5020	2.6615		
Type of school	Nursery School	1.8548			
	Primary School	2.5575			
	Secondary School	2.0260			
Family satus	Single	2.1151**	3.1762***		
	Married	2.4853	2.6496		
Children	With children			2.7430*	
	Without children			2.3194	

Table 5: Socio anagraphic data related to several factors. * p< .05 , ** p< .01 , *** p< .001.

From the analysis of correlations between age, hours of service and length of service with several factors we assessed (Figure 1) it can be noted that:

- The negative impact of work on family (factor 1) is positively correlated with age ($r = .217, p < .01$), length of service ($r = .271, p < .01$) and to a lesser extent with the number of working hours ($r = .142, p < .05$);
- The importance attributed to one's work (factor 5) negatively correlates with age ($r = -.178, p < .01$) and length of service ($r = -.193, p < .01$);
- Job satisfaction (factor 8 of the work attitude questionnaire) is positively correlated with age ($r = .143, p < .05$) and length of service ($r = .142, p < .05$) (Fig.1).

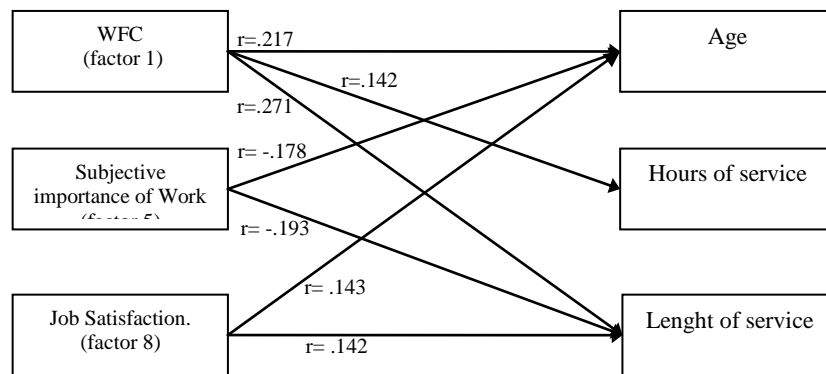


Figure 1: Correlation of factors with age, hours of service and length of service.

According to our analyses, no significant differences related to gender were found in the sample considered.

Table 6 shows correlations among the various factors we considered in this research. Interestingly, correlations are mostly positive, except in the following cases:

- Work-Family conflict (WFC; factor 1) negatively correlates with work-family enrichment (factor 3), supportive supervision (factor 6), and factors that affect job satisfaction.

• Family-Work Conflict (Factor 4) is negatively associated with factors related to job satisfaction.

There is a considerable correlation between the two questionnaires that assessed participants' job satisfaction, thus confirming therefore the reliability of this measure.(tab.6).

Correlations among factors									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 – Work-Family Conflict (WFC)	Pearson's R	1	,042	-,248**	,371**	-,034	-,193**	-,349**	-,245**
	N	283	282	282	283	282	280	276	280
2 – Work-Family Harmony	Pearson's R	,042	1	,517**	,169**	,305**	,210**	,158**	,213**
	N	282	282	281	282	281	280	275	279
3 – Work and Family Commitment yields positive effects	Pearson's R	-,248**	,517**	1	-,017	,328**	,266**	,339**	,408**
	N	282	281	282	282	282	280	275	279
4 – Famil-Work Conflict (FWC)	Pearson's R	,371**	,169**	-,017	1	,144*	,102	-,269**	-,193**
	N	283	282	282	283	282	280	276	280
5 – Subjective Importance of Work	Pearson's R	-,034	,305**	,328**	,144*	1	,137*	,136*	,177**
	N	282	281	282	282	282	280	275	279
6 – Superiors' support	Pearson's R	-,193**	,210**	,266**	,102	,137*	1	,263**	,252**
	N	280	280	280	280	280	280	273	277
7 – Job Satisfaction (JDI)	Pearson's R	-,349**	,158**	,339**	-,269**	,136*	,263**	1	,513**
	N	276	275	275	276	275	273	279	274
8 – Job Satisfaction (Work attitude questionnaire)	Pearson's R	-,245**	,213**	,408**	-,193**	,177**	,252**	,513**	1
	N	280	279	279	280	279	277	274	280

Table 6: Correlations among factors.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Conclusion

Overall, from the results it was found that teachers perceive only a moderate negative influence of work over family (work-family conflict), as the average value of this variable is only marginally significant. Instead, it can be noted to a more considerable extent the positive influence between work and family, and the perception that one's commitment in various areas has positive implications on other life spheres.

Job satisfaction measured through two questionnaires (JDI and Work Attitude Questionnaire) appears to be fairly high among respondents, and assumes a negative relationship with both work-family conflict and family-

work conflict. This result is in line with previous research in this field (for example, Blegen, 1993; Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Netemayer et al., 1996; Parasuraman et al., 1988). The majority of teachers reported feeling satisfied with their jobs: adjectives such as interesting, useful, satisfying, exciting, good, creative, active and pleasant, received a consensus higher than 84%. Moreover, a vast part of our sample consider their job exciting and would hardly change it with another one. On the other hand, it should be noted that teaching is perceived as not adequately respected by society. Furthermore, there seems to be a general concern over occupational health safety: a considerable number of respondents did not exclude negative effects of teaching over their health. Altogether, people employed in teaching appear to have high levels of job satisfaction but, at the same time, do not perceive outside society to properly recognize and respect their profession. These results are in line with research conducted by Lodolo D'Oria, Pocaterra and Pozzi (2003), who carried out a survey in which they administered a questionnaire to 1252 Italian teachers of primary and secondary school, which revealed that 55% of respondents perceived the lack of social recognition of their job as a major cause of occupational stress. Arguably, the perception that teaching may harm teachers' health might be tightly connected with the lack of social recognition and stress our respondents reported. Therefore, further investigation is needed in this regard.

As predicted, work is considered more important by people with fixed-term contracts as well as singles, rather than people with family. However, the latter result could be due to the sample population being mostly of female gender (93%). In fact, it could be speculated that having husbands with financial ability to hold up the family might decrease the perceived importance of work for their spouses.

Work-family conflict is mostly sensed by primary school teachers, who constituted the majority of our sample (77%). Therefore, it is likely that this prevalence to some extent may have had relevance in determining the results. Interestingly, workers with children felt the support of superiors as particularly important. In line with current research literature (Burke, 1988; Galinsky & Stein, 1990; Greenhaus, Bedeian, & Mossholder, 1987, Merton, 1957; Repetti, 1987), this construct is negatively correlated with work-family conflict and positively correlated with job satisfaction.

Items related to temporal flexibility, operational flexibility and locus of control did not saturate in any factor. This result seems to suggest that these factors are just marginally involved in determining teachers' work-life balance and job satisfaction compared to other professions. Conceivably, this effect could be due to the intrinsic features of teaching as a profession,

which allows people to have more time to devote to family and greater autonomy at work.

The length of service, in our research, had a positive relationship with work-family conflict. It would be plausible to think that more experience means greater professional competence, along with the development of adaptive behaviors that help employees cope with job demands without interfering with family responsibilities. Thus, as highlighted in the literature (eg, Claesson & Brice, 1989; Cinamon & Rich, 2005), work experience should be associated with a reduced work-family conflict. However, our data do not allow us to understand the real reason for the discrepancy of these results with previous studies; nonetheless, it can be assumed that this may be due to the major changes society and family in particular are currently undergoing. Our sample had a mean age of 43 years, with average length of service of 18 years. Given the greater tendency to procreate at a more and more later time, and create "second" families, it is likely that a large part of our sample have small children or that, because of divorce, only a single parent takes care of family responsibilities. In this regard, past literature has showed how the presence of children within a family increases the perception of work-family conflict (for example, Lewis & Cooper, 1998); hence, the result of our research may be due precisely to this particular aspect. It should be also acknowledged that also the educational field has undergone massive changes over the recent decades, both institutional (e.g., reforms) and socio-cultural (in terms of expectations). This could result in teachers needing a continuous renovation and a experiencing a sense of inadequacy generated by the ever-changing demands. As a matter of fact, the introduction of new technologies might also have played a significant role, especially for teachers with many years of service, who may have had to experience several difficulties to adapt. Overall, this could generate among teachers a considerable workload and difficulties to adapt, which becomes more significant for elder employees. As a result, there could be a consequent increase in work-family conflict. It is important to note, however, that this situation may be rather different in other nations wherein similar research was conducted at an earlier stage.

In light of these considerations, new surveys should be designed in order to investigate the effects of young children's presence in the family, the effect that single parents might experience at work, determine whether constant changes in the field of teaching may have some consequences towards teachers' work-family conflict, and whether this increases over time.

Undoubtedly, this research is affected by the peculiarities of the sample we considered: the predominance of primary school teachers, the geographical context, and subjective performance requirements by teaching institutions should be taken into account. It would therefore be appropriate to conduct research in other contexts, with an equal number of representatives of the various types of schools (nursery, intermediate and secondary schools). It would also be interesting to carry out a longitudinal study to track changes over time, so as to account for changing demands and school conditions.

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