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Social Support and Work-Family Balance of Manufacturing Companies' Employee with Self-Efficacy as a Mediator

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Abstract: Past studies reported that social support correlated with work-family balance. However, the role of self-efficacy in the relationship between social support and work-family balance among the manufacturing sector employees is missing. Therefore, this study examined the indirect effect of self-efficacy in the relationship between social support and work-family balance. A sample of 456 ($F=26.8\%$; mean age=31.55) manufacturing sector employees that were selected through the stratified sampling technique responded to the Work-Family Balance Scale, Social Support Questionnaire, and Self-Efficacy Scale. Results of the correlation analysis revealed that social support from family and co-workers positively associated with work-family balance. Self-efficacy was also found to relate positively to social support and work-family balance. Mediation analysis, using Hayes Process Macro, showed that self-efficacy had an indirect effect on the relationship between social support and work-family balance among employees of food and beverage companies. Improved social support from co-workers and family can assist manufacturing sector employees to balance the demands from both domains.

Keywords: Manufacturing companies; mediation; self-efficacy; social support; work-family balance

Introduction

Employees in the manufacturing sector are expected to work round the clock to meet the increasing demands of its consumers. Work-family balance, which has evolved to become a predominant issue at the workplace, may impact the capacity to work at the optimum expectations due to the negative consequences of conflicting responsibilities and commitments from both domains. Work-family balance has been defined as the extent to which individuals are equally involved in and satisfied with their work and family roles (Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2003). An imbalance between work and family roles has been linked to occupational costs such as absenteeism, work interruptions, poor quality of work, increasing rate of accidents at work, hostility, and aggression (McGuire, Kenney & Brashler, 2010; Tomazevic, Kozjek & Slovenia, 2015). Satisfaction with work-life balance has also been reported to mediate the relationship between workplace, social support and psychological distress (Barnett, Martin, & Garza, 2018).

Work-family balance presents numerous benefits to both individuals and their organizations. For the organization, it enhances productivity, performance, and employee retention (Kaur & Kumar, 2014). Employees who can balance work and family roles have been reported to be satisfied with their job, experience fewer work-family conflicts as well as better health (Sav, Harris & Sebar, 2013). This study examined the mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between social support and the work-family balance of employees in manufacturing companies.

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Literature review

Social support and work-family balance

Social support has been viewed as a relationship structure that supplies resources, both family and significant others. It reflects the availability of helpful relationships as well as the quality of such relationships (Leavy, 1983), with the goals of providing love and care. Researchers have reported a positive relationship between social support and work outcomes. For instance, Barnett, Martin, & Garza, (2018) reported that workplace social support correlated with lower psychological distress while Drummond, et al. (2016) established an association between social support (family and supervisor) and reduced psychological strain. Others have also found an association between social support and job satisfaction and career accomplishment (Marcinkus, Whelan-Berry & Gordon, 2007), as well as subjective wellbeing (Siedlecki, Salthouse, Oishi & Jeswani, 2014).

Studies have further established that people are stimulated to sustain their network of social support due to its potentiality of cushioning the effects of a stressful situation. Family and co-workers are important dimensions of social support. In other words, the dimensionality of social support has been found useful as evidenced in studies on different types of social support (Edelman et al., 2016). Furthermore, both instrumental and emotional support from the family played significant roles in the work-family balance (Leung, Mukerjee & Thurik, 2020). Likewise, support from co-workers has been found to have a positive impact on work-family balance (Žnidaršič & Bernik, 2021). We, therefore, proposed that social support (family and co-workers) will significantly correlate with work-family balance of manufacturing sector employees. Thus, it is postulated that social support will significantly correlate with work-family balance among manufacturing companies' employees.

Self-efficacy and work-family balance

Since the concept of self-efficacy emerged in literature through the work of Albert Bandura's theory of social cognition, its applicability has continued to find relevance in various domains of human behavior. Self-efficacy refers to individuals' belief in their ability to plan and execute tasks (Bandura, 1997; Niu, 2010). This indicates that self-efficacy is a function of one's belief in their capabilities to accomplish a task (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy reflects a belief system about what people can achieve within a given context (Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). Therefore, the more an individual believes in their capacities, the better they feel competent to execute their plans. Within the context of work, self-efficacy has been found to be related to other work outcomes such as job satisfaction, work engagement, and turnover intention (Yakin & Erdil, 2012; Ozyilman, Erdogan, & Karaeminogullari, 2018), as well as work performance (Celtic & Askun, 2019). Also, individuals with a high level of self-efficacy are most likely to have confidence in their capacity to properly handle demands from their workplaces and families (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010; Situmorang & Wijayanti, 2017). Based on this position in literature, the study hypothesized that self-efficacy will positively relate to work-family balance among employees in manufacturing companies.

Social support, self-efficacy, and work-family balance

We proposed an association between social support and work-family balance via self-efficacy. The mediating role of self-efficacy in related work outcomes has been reported. For instance, Chan, Kalliath, Brough, Siu, O'Driscoll, and Timms (2016) found that self-efficacy is positively related to work-family enrichment and also mediates the link between work-family enrichment and job satisfaction. Similarly, self-efficacy has been reported to mediate the association between work stress and job burnout (Yu, Wang, Zhai, Dai & Yang, 2014), job insecurity and service recovery performance (Etehad & Karatepe, 2018), transformational leadership, and extra-role performance (Salanova, Lorente, Chambel & Martinez, 2011). However, the indirect effects of self-efficacy in the association

between social support and work-family balance are lacking. Therefore, we proposed that self-efficacy will mediate the relationship between social support and the work-family balance of employees.

Methods

Participants and procedure

Permission for the conduct of the study was secured from the Academic and Research Committee of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Data collection was conducted at two selected Food, Beverages, and Tobacco companies namely: Nutricima and Patterson and Cussons (PZ). Participants were reached through the Human Resource Managers (who acted as the gatekeepers) in each of the companies. The research assistant administered the paper-and-pencil questionnaires during launch hours at their cafeterias. Participants who indicated their readiness to take part in the study signed the informed consent form and were assured of the anonymity of their responses. A total of 480 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and after preliminary data screening, 456 (95% return rate) were found to satisfy the conditions for statistical analyses.

The demographic characteristics of participants presented in Table 1 revealed that there were more male (73.2%) than female participants (26.8%). The distribution by Departments showed that the highest number of participants were from the production Department (38.6%), followed by supply with 24.1% of the participants. Participants from administrative and logistics Departments amounted to 20.6% and 16.7%, respectively. The majority of the respondents had tertiary education 53.7%, followed by secondary education (35.1%), while only a few indicated primary education (11.2%). Furthermore, distribution according to job status revealed that the majority were junior members of staff (41.7%), which was followed by senior categories (33.6%) while employees with intermediate job status accounted for 24.8% of the total participants. The majority of the respondents were married (56.6%) while those who indicated that they were single accounted for 35.5%. Others were divorced (6.4%), widowed (0.7%), and single parenting (0.9%).

Table 1: Respondents' socio-demographic characteristics (n=456)

Variable		n	%	Mean(SD)
Age				31.55(5.01)
Gender	Male	334	73.2	
	Female	122	26.8	
Department	Admin	94	20.6	
	Production	176	38.6	
	Logistic	76	16.7	
	Supply	110	24.1	
Education	Primary	51	11.2	
	Secondary	160	35.1	
	Tertiary	245	53.7	
Job Status	Junior	190	41.7	
	Intermediate	113	24.8	
	Senior	153	33.6	
Marital Status	Single	162	35.5	
	Married	256	56.6	
	Divorced	29	6.4	
	Widowed	3	0.7	
	Single Parenting	4	0.9	

Measures

Work-family balance: The work-family balance of participants was measured with the Work-Family Balance Questionnaire (W-FLQ). The W-FLQ has 12-items that were sourced from the literature. It has a Likert response format that ranged from Disagree (1) to Agree (3). Both the test re-test reliability (0.69) and concurrent validity (0.71) were established for the questionnaire. Furthermore, the Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability of 0.92 was established for this study.

Social Support: Participants' social support was assessed through the Functional Social Support Questionnaire (FSSQ) by Broadhead et al (1988). The FSSQ consists of 16 items that measure the strength of a person's social support network from family and co-workers. It has a 5-point Likert response format from 1 (much less than I would like) to 5 (As much as I would like). The Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability of 0.74 for the sample was established for the current study.

Self-Efficacy: Self-efficacy was accessed through the Self-efficacy scale developed by Sherer, et al (1998). It is a 23-items scale that has a 5-point Likert response pattern that ranges from 1 (disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sherer, et al (1998) reported a Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient of 0.76 while in Nigeria, Ayodele (1998) reported a convergent validity coefficient of 0.75. Also, a Cronbach alpha for internal consistency of 0.76 was established for the current study.

Results

Results of the correlation analysis presented in Table 2 revealed a significant negative association between length of service and work-family balance ($r = -.22, p < .01$), signifying that the longer an employee stays with an employer, the less they can balance work and family roles. It also revealed a significant positive association between family support and co-workers' support ($r = .58, p < .01$). Self-efficacy was found to be significant, but negatively associated with family support ($r = -.28, p < .05$). However, both family support ($r = .11, p < .01$) and co-workers' support ($r = .16, p < .05$) were found to be significant and positively associated with work-family balance. Self-efficacy was also significant but negatively correlated with work-family balance ($r = .19, p < .01$)

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics and correlations between study variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Length of service	1.67	.76	1				
2. Family support	29.54	5.46	-.215**	1			
3. Co-worker's support	26.48	5.23	-0.072	.583**	1		
4. Self-efficacy	68.95	10.32	.211**	-.277**	-0.087	1	
5. Work-family balance	28.36	3.96	-.380**	.107*	.157**	-.193**	1

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

Table 3: Mediation effect of self-efficacy in the association between social support and work-family balance link

Model	Work-family balance		
	β	SE	95% CI LLCI (ULCI)
Constant	30.21 **	1.83	26.625 (33.800)
Social support	0.05 **	0.02	0.008 (0.085)
Self-efficacy	-0.7**	0.02	-0.101 (-0.029)
Social Support \times Self-efficacy	0.013**	0.015	0.010 (0.067)
	R^2		0.05
	$F(df)$		$F(2, 453) = 11.73**$

** Significant at .005

Mediation analysis of both the direct and indirect effects of social support and self-efficacy on work-family balance was conducted using the Hayes (2018) Process Macro, version 3.4. Process Macro by Hayes has been adjudged to be useful in mediation model estimation and confidence interval through bootstrapping approach. Results, as shown in Table 3, revealed a statistically significant direct effect of social support ($\beta = 0.05$, $SE = .02$, $p < .005$) and self-efficacy ($\beta = -0.07$, $SE = .02$, $p < .005$) on work-family balance. This suggests that each of social support and self-efficacy predicted work-family balance independently. Also, the standardized indirect effect of social support on work-family balance through self-efficacy was found to be significant at $\beta = 0.013$, $SE = .015$, 95% CI = [0 .010, .067].

Discussion

The study aimed at investigating the indirect effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between social support and work-family balance among employees of manufacturing companies in Nigeria.

Findings, from the first hypothesis, revealed a positive relationship between social support and work-family balance. This suggests that the employees' capacity to balance work and family demands is possible through available helpful relationships from family members and co-workers. This is in agreement with previous studies (Barnett, Martin, & Garza, 2018; Drummond, O'Driscoll, Brough, Kalliath, Siu, Timms, Riley & Sit, 2016; Siedlecki, Salthouse, Oishi, & Jeswani, 2014), which reported that social support assisted employees to attain better work outcomes. Our findings revealed that co-worker support was stronger for employees in the manufacturing sectors in line with the findings of Drummond, et al. (2016). Plausibly, when the helpful relationship received from co-workers improves, employees are likely to attain a good balance between work and family requirements.

Self-efficacy was also found to relate to work-family balance. Manufacturing companies' employees with sufficient belief in their capacity to plan and execute tasks at work and family domains are most likely to attain adequate balance. Past studies (Situmorang & Wijayanti, 2017; Cetin & Askun, 2019) reported that individuals with a high level of self-efficacy will have confidence in their abilities to properly handle work and family demands. When employees trust their ability to deliver their roles and work, it may likely prevent spillover effects which may, in turn, have negative effects on the demands that family responsibilities might be placed on them.

In line with our propositions, self-efficacy was found to have an indirect effect on the relationship between social support and work-family balance. That is, self-efficacy enhanced the roles of social support in balancing work and family roles. This agrees with previous studies that established the mediating role of self-efficacy in related work predictors and outcomes such as work-family enrichment (Chan, Kalliath, Brough, Siu, O'Driscoll & Timms, 2016), service recovery (Etehad & Karatepe, 2018), and extra-role performance (Salanova, Lorente, Chambel, & Martinez, 2011). Support from co-workers and family may strengthen the capacity of employees in manufacturing companies to plan and execute tasks both at home and work in a satisfying manner.

The findings of the study imply that employers may need to strengthen helpful relationships among co-workers in order to assist them in balancing work and family life. This will, in turn, enhance extra-role performance and employee trust in their organization. Similarly, psychological training that gears towards self-efficacy enhancement should be encouraged. Workers should also cherish and appreciate helpful relationships among themselves.

The study limitations revolve around the cross-sectional nature of the design that may impact the generalizability of the findings. Longitudinal design with a qualitative research approach may be considered among employees in the manufacturing sector in the future.

Further studies may also consider organizational factors such as organizational climate, structure, and leadership which might influence work-family balance in the manufacturing sector, as well as other sectors among which banking and hospitality or educational sectors.

The study concluded that social support plays important roles in manufacturing employees' work-family balance, and this is strengthened via self-efficacy. The study has contributed to the extensive pool of knowledge not only by reporting a positive association between social support (from co-workers and family) and work-family balance, but also through the correlation that was possible via self-efficacy.

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