

The Work-Life Interface and Job Performance

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ABSTRACT

The work-life interface literature has not adequately examined the objective effects the work-life interface can have for individuals. There has also yet to be an investigation on how an individual's imbalance or balance between their work-life interface might affect their job performance. This thesis seeks to address these gaps in the literature by exploring the roles of work-family conflict, family-work conflict, work-family balance satisfaction, work-family balance effectiveness, and gender for one's job performance. In order to accomplish this, I examine these specific facets of the work-life interface and how they affect job performance, in terms of h-indexes, using a sample of 266 tenured and tenure-track faculty members across 25 public universities in the United States. The results support a couple of the proposed hypotheses, indicating that work-family balance satisfaction enhances job performance and that men have better job performance compared to women.

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The Work-Life Interface and Job Performance

In a society where performing well in one's job is a top goal for most people, they often experience setbacks when they have high family demands. Their life constantly shifts from being career-oriented, as they chase promotions, to being family-oriented, as they also look to provide for their children and elder family members. Eldercare can be defined as informal, unpaid caregiving to meet physical, cognitive, and/or emotional needs of older adults, often provided by spouses, children, or friends (Clancy et al., 2020). The way one manages to navigate the two life facets will determine how likely they are to be successful in their job, including how well they perform. Even though job performance is positively related to an adequate interpersonal psychological well-being (Haider, Jabeen, & Ahmad, 2018), little is known about the effects work-family conflict, work-family balance, and gender have on objective job performance.

Although there is research showing how work-family conflict is negatively correlated to job performance, the study looked at how one's supervisor's perception of an employee's work-family conflict affected their job performance (Li, Bagger, & Cropanzano, 2017). As for work-family balance, Charu & Gupta (2013) concluded that achieving work-family balance enables employees to contribute more at their workplace, to use each working hour more effectively, and to look forward to each workday more. On the contrary, having poor balance led to decreased morale and productivity (Charu & Gupta, 2013). Despite this, their study never explicitly looked at the effects work-family balance had on job performance, rather the effects it had on job satisfaction. Finally, in regard to gender and job performance. Stone et al. (2016) examines the relationship between one's job performance and their gender based on their supervisor's rating. The vast majority of literature within this scope also looks at the same parameters (Eagly & Karau, 2002 & Roth et al., 2012).

The overall goal of this paper is to address the gaps in the literature and identify the role that work-family conflict, work-family balance, and gender play in one's job performance. In order to accomplish this, I will examine the effects of the work-life interface and gender for academic job performance (i.e., their *h*-index).

Work-Family Conflict

Work-family relationships are known to be highly complex and multidimensional. When expectations and demands from work and family are incompatible, they result in a form of inter domain conflict, called work-family conflict (Netemeyer et al., 1996). When the participation and role demand at work are greater, participation in the family role becomes much more difficult. According to Gould and Penley (1984), this interface can be broken into two separate domains: the work domain and the non-work domain. Within the work domain, a person decides which career choices to use in order to decrease the time and uncertainty for the attainment of career objectives. On the other hand, within the non-work domain, a person decides the amount of time, effort, and attention to devote to their personal, family and social roles. Together, these two domains can cause a variety of conflicts, such as time-based, strain-based, behavior-based (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Now, work interfering with family demands has been shown to relate to home domain outcomes such as negative reactions from spouses or partners (Green et al. 2011). It has also been shown to impact work-related outcomes. For instance, in the Allen et al. (2000) study specific consequences of work-family were looked at. In general, work-family conflict is negatively related to an individual's well-being at work. For example, individuals with high work-family conflict typically have higher turnover intentions (Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Collins, 2001). This likely has to do with the increasing job demands and the work overload

associated with certain careers. Having this in mind, looking at how work-family conflict can affect one's job performance before they reach this point will add to the current literature.

As shown in the literature, careers have increasingly begun to pose more demands on the individual's work roles (Goncalves et al. 2018). As a result, work-family conflict is more likely to affect career outcomes (Voydanoff, 2002). Furthermore, a number of studies have shown the distinct correlation between work-family conflict and low subjective career outcomes, such as career satisfaction and perceived career success. For instance, Amstad et al.'s (2011) meta-analysis found small correlations between work-family conflict and career satisfaction ($r = -.09$), and work-family conflict and work performance ($r = -.11$). It is also interesting to note that within this large meta-analysis of 98 articles, only four of the studies investigated the link between work-family conflict and career satisfaction. Also, only ten studies investigated the link between work-family conflict and work performance. To add to this literature, the current study examines how work-family conflict affects one's job performance in the academia world, more specifically through their h-index.

Hypothesis 1: Work-family conflict will negatively relate to h-index.

Family-Work Conflict

Contrary to work-family conflict, family-work conflict occurs when the pressures from the family and work domains are mutually incompatible, and as a result, participation in the work role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Family-work conflict can either be enhanced or hindered through parenthood. For instance, individuals who have children have to dedicate more of their time to providing and caring for their children. This in turn takes away attention they would normally be putting towards work. As a result, their job satisfaction may decrease. Amstad et al.'s (2011) meta-

analysis found a negative correlation ($r = -0.13$) between family-work conflict and work satisfaction, and family-work conflict and job performance ($r = -.20$). However, individuals who do not have children likely place more of their attention on work.

Another aspect that affects one's family-work conflict is when individuals have to care for their elder parents or in-laws. Just like childcare takes time away from the job, so does eldercare. Elderly individuals become more physically dependent as they age, requiring increased assistance with activities of daily living, such as assistance with eating, dressing, toileting, and bathing (Stone, Cafferata, & Sangl, 1987). Elders also face rising medical demands and crises until care ends with death (Scharlach, Sobel, & Roberts, 1991). According to Kossek et al. (2001), caring for elderly relatives at home significantly increases individuals' work-family conflict and lowers their wellbeing as measured by multiple indicators that show the degree of anxiety, irritability, somatic symptoms, and depression. With the stresses associated from both childcare and elder care, it is necessary to see if it carries over to an individual's job performance.

Now, as shown in the literature family stress has been associated with lower job satisfaction (Ford, Heinen, & Langkamer, 2007). For instance, there was a ($r = -.13$) correlation between family stress and job satisfaction. This makes sense, as stress at home takes away from focus at work, which potentially means less money and in turn less satisfaction with the job. Less job satisfaction could also be associated with lower job performance, because individuals would not have an adequate reason to want to perform well. If there is a negative, indirect relationship between the family stress aspect of family-work conflict, a negative relationship may also exist between family-work conflict and job performance. As a result, the current study is necessary to examine if such a relationship exists.

Hypothesis 2: Family-work conflict will negatively relate to h-index.

Work-Family Balance Effectiveness

In the past, work-family balance has been defined as a vague notion that work, and family life are integrated or somehow harmonious (Frone, 2003). Another definition of work-family balance is a lack of conflict or interference between the work and family roles (Frone, 2003). Research has shown that work-family balance can be achieved through allocating resources, changing resources and barriers, sequencing goals, and revising goals.

According to Wayne et al. (2017), work-family balance effectiveness is one's interdependent self-evaluation of meeting shared expectations across work and family roles. Furthermore, balance effectiveness is a self-evaluative construct. When an individual self-evaluates themselves, they are using both their private judgements, as well as judgements from the public (Tesser & Pallhus, 1983). The literature also shows how self-evaluations correlate to one's goals, motivations, behavioral intentions, and behaviors; as a result, balance effectiveness should also uniquely relate to attitudes and performance. Furthermore, work-family balance effectiveness has been correlated with positive attitudes in both the work and family domains (Ferguson et al. 2015).

The literature also shows that work-family balance effectiveness is related to job satisfaction, with a correlation of ($r = .08$). There is also a ($r = .22$) correlation between work-family balance effectiveness and job performance (Wayne et al. 2017). Despite this correlation, there are not many other studies out there emphasizing consistency with this finding. As a result, the current study aims to find a similar positive relationship between the two variables. If one is able to find a balance between their work and family domains, this leaves them more room to put more of their attention and energy into a domain of their choosing. Many career-oriented

individuals may choose their work domain, which means job performance is likely to increase. Wayne et al. (2017) emphasizes this point, highlighting that individual's with high work-family balance effectiveness perform better and experience more pleasurable role attitudes.

Hypothesis 3: Work-family balance effectiveness will positively relate to h-index.

Work-Family Balance Satisfaction

Work-family balance satisfaction is one's attitude toward resource allocation across work and family roles. Essentially, balance satisfaction is a psychological construct based on one's internal, subjective evaluation (Wayne et al., 2017). Work-family balance is beneficial for a variety of subjective outcomes, including job satisfaction. Balance satisfaction is more easily attainable when individuals have fewer demands and greater resources; one study took this idea a step further and examined outcomes, showing how balance satisfaction is related to greater work and non-work satisfaction (Grawitch, Maloney, Barber, & Mooshegian, 2013). Another study (Wayne et al. 2019), found having work resources was related to less work-family conflict and greater work-family enrichment which in turn, relates to greater balance.

The literature also shows that improving an individual's engagement at work, leads to higher job satisfaction. There is also evidence that work engagement associated with work-family balance satisfaction correlates to positive work outcomes, such as low turnover, high commitment, and higher job performance (Yu, Wang, & Zhang, 2017). Since one aspect of work-family balance satisfaction is correlated to job performance, the current study aims to look at whether work-family balance as a whole is also correlated to job performance.

Hypothesis 4: Work-family balance satisfaction is positively related to h-index.

Gender

According to Eagly's (1987) social role theory, gender stereotypes develop from the gender division of labor that characterizes a society. It refers to traditional distributions of tasks and work arrangements, which now continue to affect expectations and social norms, as well as penalties for norm violations. In our Western society, women are stereotyped to the family role, as they have more interpersonally oriented or communal traits (e.g., compassion, gentleness, nurturance, sensitivity to the needs of others), which are in turn labeled as "feminine" traits. On the other end of the spectrum, men are stereotyped to the work role, as they have more task-oriented or agentic traits (e.g., aggressiveness, decisiveness, independence, achievement), which are in turn labeled as "masculine" traits (Powell & Greenhaus, 2010). As a result, men are able to go to work without having the stress of childcare, which means they can likely focus more on their work.

A well-known gender phenomenon is that of the glass ceiling; the idea that there is an invisible barrier to advancement that women face at the top levels of the workplace. Gender acts as a control variable, as many additional barriers exist for women to achieve the same objective performance as men. One of the core reasons as to why women may be at a particular high risk of underperforming in occupations that provide little flexibility, and demand more flexibility at work than men, is that they face greater additional pressures on their time. For instance, women try to balance market and non-market work commitments, like childcare (Bertrand, 2017). Women are at a constant disadvantage for being able to achieve things they want to at work, whether that be promotions, pay raises, etc. (Kanter, 1977; DiTomaso, 1989). Taking this into consideration, the current study aims to also examine if a relationship exists between gender and job performance, since there are well-known disadvantages for women compared to men.

Hypothesis 5: Men will have a higher h-index compared to women.

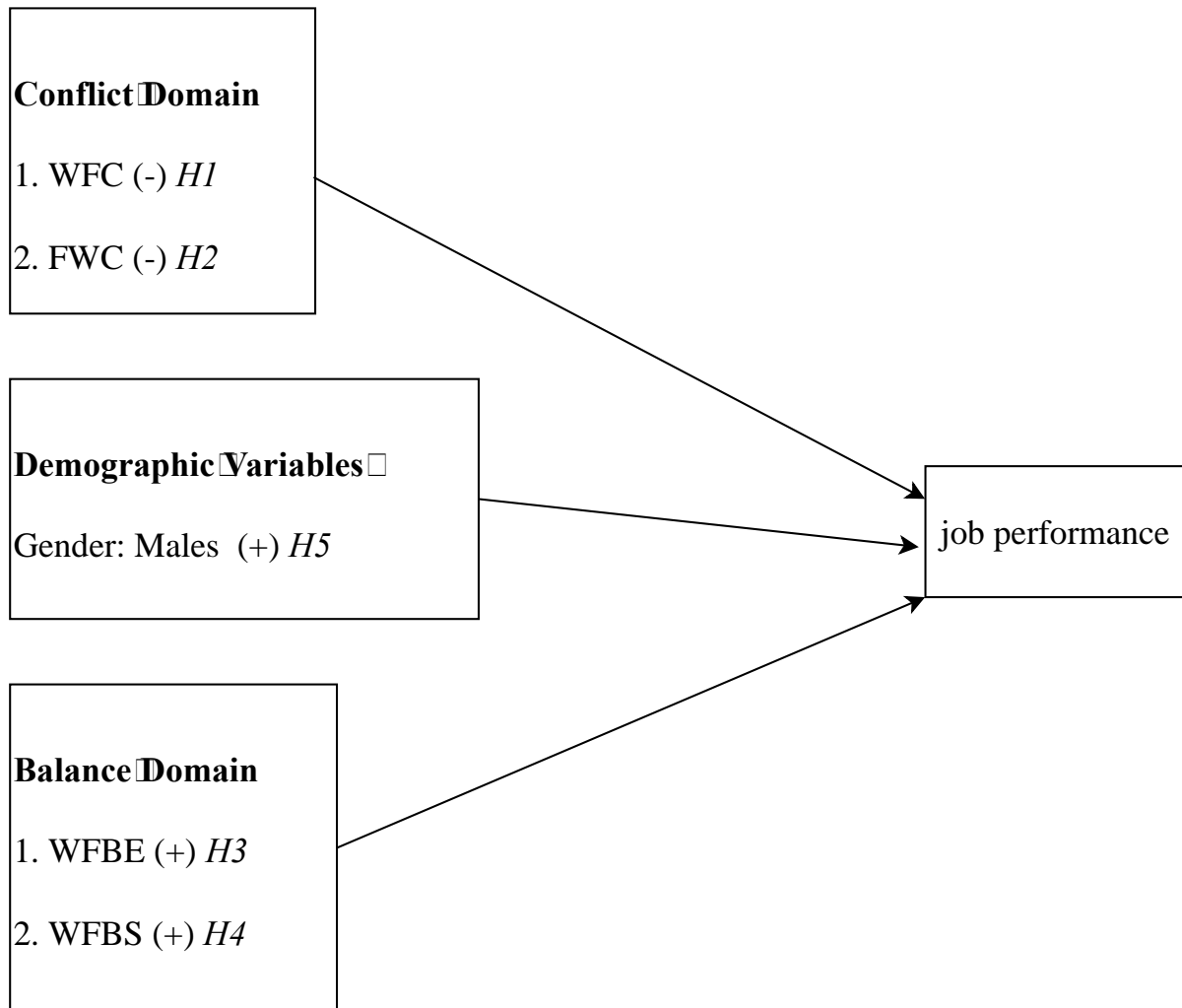


Figure 1. *Proposed Conceptual Model*

Method

Sample

3,956 tenured and tenure-track professors were recruited from science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), and social and behavioral sciences departments in 25 public universities via their publicly available emails on their websites. 458 participants completed the online survey, but after using listwise deletion, the final sample size is $n = 266$.

Measures

Work-to-Family Conflict.

The amount of work-family conflict participants had was measured using three of the four items ($\alpha = .83$) from Wayne, Musisca, & Fleeson's (2004) work-life interface scale. The instructions for the measure asked participants to indicate how often they experienced each statement. A sample item of this scale is, "Your job reduces the effort you can give to activities at home." Participants responded on a 7-point Likert scale, from 1 = never to 7 = always.

Family-to-Work Conflict.

Participants' family-work conflict was assessed using three items ($\alpha = .77$) from Wayne, Musisca, & Fleeson's (2004) work-life interface scale. Again, they were asked to indicate how often they experienced each statement. A sample item of this scale is "Responsibilities at home reduce the effort you can devote to your job." Participants responded on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 = never to 7 = always.

Work-to-Family Balance Effectiveness.

The amount of work-family balance effectiveness participants had was measured using four items ($\alpha = .90$) from Carlson, Grzywacz, & Zivnuska's (2009) work-family balance scale. Participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with each

statement. One of the items was modified to say department chair instead of supervisor in order to ensure accuracy in responses. A sample item of this scale is, “I am able to negotiate and accomplish what is expected of me at work and in my family.” Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Work-to-Family Balance Satisfaction.

The extent to which participants had work-family balance satisfaction was assessed using four of the six items ($\alpha = .93$) from Valcour’s (2007) work-family balance satisfaction scale. Participants were asked to indicate how satisfied they are with the statements. A sample item of this scale is, “The way you divide your time between work and personal or family life.” Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = extremely dissatisfied and 5 = extremely satisfied.

H-Index.

The *h*-index (job performance) of participants was scraped from their Google Scholar profiles. Research represents an integral part of a professor's job and *h*-index captures their objective productivity. Essentially, *h*-index is defined as the maximum value of *h* such that the given author/journal has published *h* papers that have each been cited at least *h* times. The index is designed to improve upon simpler measures such as the total number of citations or publications (Hirsch, 2005).

Demographic Covariates.

Participants’ gender, number of children, and years since starting as assistant professor were controlled in order to account for any differences in the outcome variables (Bernerth & Aguinis, 2016). These variables were chosen for theoretical reasons and since past research showed their importance for job performance and *h*-index. (Holliday et al., 2014). All three of

these controls were self-reported; gender was dichotomous (male or female), while their number of children and years since starting as assistant professor was continuous.

Results

I analyzed the data in two phases using SPSS. The first phase calculated the descriptive statistics, specifically the means, standard deviations, and correlations of each variable in the current study. Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics and correlations, which provide initial support for the hypotheses. Work-family conflict and family work conflict were negatively correlated, (-0.19) and (-0.08) respectively, with the participants job performance, while work-family balance effectiveness and work-family balance satisfaction were positively correlated, (0.13) and (0.26) respectively, with the participants job performance.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix

Variable	Mean	Standard Dev.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. H-index	22.30	15.78								
2.. Children	.77	.42	.16**							
3.. Female	.35	.48	-.19**	-.11*						
4.. Years since starting as assistant professor	15.28	10.93	.56**	.10	-	.13*				
5.. Work Family Balance Satisfaction	4.72	1.26	.26**	.08	-.01	.21**				
6. Work Family Balance Effectiveness	5.31	1.07	.13*	.00	.07	.15*	.57**			
7. Work Family Conflict	4.58	1.02	-.19**	-.05	.08	-.15*	.52**	-.36**		
8. Family Work Conflict	3.52	1.08	-.08**	.23**	-.10	-.08	.34**	.38**	.38**	

Note. $n = 266$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

The second phase tested the proposed hypotheses using hierarchical linear regression analysis. This type of linear regression allows more variables to be added to the model in separate steps to determine the variables most important for job performance. Table 2 displays the standardized beta coefficients, significance values, and the change statistics for each variable measured in the current study. Hypotheses 1-3 are not supported. Work-family conflict ($\beta = -.03$, $p = .64$), family-work conflict ($\beta = -.02$, $p = .70$), work-family balance effectiveness ($\beta = -.03$, $p = .60$) are not significantly related to job performance. Hypothesis 4 was supported, as work-family balance satisfaction was positively and significantly related to job performance ($\beta = .14$, $p = .04$). Individuals higher on work-family balance satisfaction have higher job performance. Finally, hypothesis 5 was also supported. Men did have higher job performance compared to women ($\beta = -.11$, $p = .03$), with statistical significance.

Table 2
Hierarchical Linear Regression for Job Performance

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Children	.10	.07	.09
Female	-.11	-.11	-.11
Years since starting as assistant professor	.53**	.50**	.50**
Work Family Balance Satisfaction		.16**	.14*
Work Family Balance Effectiveness		-.02	-.03
Work Family Conflict			-.03
Family Work Conflict			-.02
R^2	.33	.35	.35
Adjusted R^2	.32	.34	.34
ΔR^2	.33	.02	.00
F	43.12**	4.21*	.25

Note. $n = 266$. Standardized coefficients are reported. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Discussion

The overall goal of the present study was to examine the effects that the work-family interface and gender had on one's job performance. In order to accomplish this, I analyzed work-family conflict, family-work conflict, work-family balance effectiveness, and work-family balance satisfaction, in relation to an individual's h-index. First, I proposed a negative relationship between work-family conflict and h-index. Individuals with higher levels of work-family conflict will likely display lower job performance, since there is an imbalance between their work-life interface; their work demands are greater, which puts strain on their family life. Several studies, including Allen et al. (2000), Amstad et al. (2011), and Voydanoff (2002), suggest there is a negative relationship between work-family conflict and one's job satisfaction, as well as their commitment to their job. Inconsistent with previous research, the present study found that work-family conflict was not significantly related to job performance.

I then analyzed the relationship between family-work conflict and h-index. Again, it made sense there would be a negative relationship between the two variables, since there is an imbalance between the two. An individual can never really focus on either their family or work because one is always placing more demands and stress. In a previous study (Amstad et al. 2011) there has been a negative correlation between family-work conflict and work satisfaction. As a result, I hypothesized that family-work conflict would also negatively relate to job performance. The results do not support the hypothesis, as there was no significant relationship between the two. Next, I proposed a positive relationship between work-family balance effectiveness and h-index. If an individual believes they are meeting both their work and family demands, this may allow for more focused time and investment in the area of their choosing. According to Wayne et al. (2017), work-family balance effectiveness was positively related to job satisfaction and

performance. However, the results of the current study do not support this or my hypothesis, as there was no significant relation between work-family balance effectiveness and job performance.

Lastly, I proposed a positive relationship between work-family balance satisfaction and h-index. Compared to work-family conflict, individuals with a higher level of work-family balance satisfaction will likely display better job performance, since there is an equal balance between their work-life interface; they successfully found a way to navigate both facets. Past studies, like Grawitch et al. (2013) and Li & Zhao (2009), suggest there is a positive relationship between work-family balance satisfaction and one's job satisfaction, as well as their commitment to their job. Consistent with and extending previous research, the present study found that work-family balance satisfaction positively relates to job performance. With regard to gender, I proposed that men will have a higher h-index compared to women since women are more disadvantaged in balancing their work and home life. Powell & Greenhaus (2010) suggest that women are stereotyped for family roles and men are stereotyped for work roles, which means the latter are likely more invested in their job. As a result, they perform better there than they would at home. The current study proved to be consistent with this and my hypothesis, as men did have better job performance than women.

Overall, the current study's results suggest that the positive aspect of the work-life interface, specifically work-family balance satisfaction, plays a role in better job performance. Thus, work-family balance satisfaction among employees may be something universities can strive for, if they want to continue seeing enhanced job performance. Although, future research would be necessary, universities should continue hiring employees who have children and implement programs that ease the family role outside of work. In doing this, there may be

continued higher levels of job performance. Such programs could be having a daycare at the university, so individuals can bring their children to work, and not have to worry about childcare, freeing up time to focus on their job. Another idea is having supportive supervisors among the faculty to help foster an adequate work-life balance (Arthur & Cook, 2003). Perhaps, even having a balance between both genders among the faculty would benefit job performance, as gender roles and the household division of labor have been increasingly changing over the last few decades (Eagly et al. 2018). Women are going out in the work force more, while men are staying home taking care of the children.

Limitations and Future Directions

The current study has several limitations that should be addressed in future research. For instance, as the current study's results went against previous literature, future studies should be conducted that can replicate and retest these results to validate them. More specifically, future researchers should address the negative relationship between academia women and their low levels of job performance. Furthermore, research may benefit from analyzing in greater depth, the relationship between the balance side of the work-life interface and job performance. This may allow for a more concrete understanding of how work-family balance satisfaction influences increased job performance, and whether universities should look for individuals who have already achieved this before working for them.

Now, a limitation of the current study and sample used is the generalization of the results to careers and companies outside of academia and higher education systems. The sample was collected from tenured and tenure-track faculty members at public universities across the United States. As a result, future studies should retest the current hypotheses in other industries to examine whether the findings are consistent across other populations. Another limitation is that

the data was collected from self-report measures. As a result, individuals could have affected their responses and overall study outcomes through the social desirability bias phenomena. Thus, additional research is needed to retest the current hypotheses with a different sample population.

Conclusion

The present study contributes to the work-life interface literature in academia by analyzing the relationships between four subset categories of the interface, as well as gender, with job performance. Through my analyses, I was able to conclude that there is a positive, direct relationship between one category of the interface and job performance: work-family balance satisfaction. Future research should continue to expand on the outcomes of work-family balance satisfaction and job performance, as well as enhancing methods and practices that promote continued both work-family balance satisfaction and job performance among individuals.

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