

MY FAMILY ENRICHES YOUR WORK? EXPLORING THE MECHANISMS OF SUPERVISOR- SUBORDINATE POSITIVE CROSSOVER

In response to changes in the workforce and society at-large, HRM practices have sought to help employees effectively balance responsibilities central to two key domains comprising an individual's identity: work and family. Efforts from both research and practice have yielded a rich body of literature providing insight into how family life impacts work, how work impacts family life, and how organizations might assist employees in balancing the inherent tension between the two.

While conflict may exist between work and family responsibilities, each domain may support and strengthen one another. This latter perspective is referred to as enrichment, or the extent to which experiences in one domain (i.e., home) positively impact the other (i.e., work). Existing studies on work-family enrichment have focused on positive spillover, the transfer of well-being from one life domain to another (i.e., work to family) and positive crossover, the transfer of well-being from one individual to another (i.e., leader to follower).

Positive crossover and spillover offer important implications for research and practice on work-family enrichment: how can organizational leaders help employees manage the work-family interface so that balance may be achieved between work responsibilities and family responsibilities? Management researchers know little about the mechanisms necessary to facilitate positive crossover between leaders and their subordinates. In order to guide organizational practice and future research, two overarching research questions guide this study:

1) To what extent does a leader's family role positively impact the leader's work role, resulting in increased positive spillover, family-work enrichment, and work-family balance?

2) To what extent does a leader's work-family balance crossover and enhance a subordinate's work-family balance and job performance?

Primary investigator Dr. Sandy Wayne and co-investigator Eric J. Michel recently surveyed 186 employees and their supervisors within a U.S. restaurant chain.

Preliminary findings suggest:

- **Leader work-family balance is positively related to their subordinate's work-family balance.** When leaders are able to balance work and family responsibilities,

subordinates in turn are more likely to do the same.

- ***Leader family supportive behaviors and communication are positively related to subordinate's work-family balance.*** Our findings suggest leaders should share with subordinates personal examples regarding how they achieve balance. In addition, leaders should take an active role in helping subordinates juggle work and family responsibilities.

This study was funded by a grant from the UIC Institute for Leadership Excellence and Development (iLEAD) and the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Foundation. However, the interpretations, conclusions and recommendations are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the SHRM Foundation.