Don't worry, be happy! Positive affect at work, greater balance at home. A daily diary study on work-family balance

(Article begins on next page)

02 May 2024

Don't worry, be happy! Positive affect at work, greater balance at home. A daily diary study on work-family balance

Alfonso Landolfi[a], Margherita Brondino[b], Monica Molino[c], and Alessandro Lo Presti[a]

[a]*Psychology Department, University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli", Caserta, Italy*

[b]*University of Verona, Department of Human Sciences, Verona, Italy*

[c]*Psychology Department University of Turin, Turin, Italy*

Abstract

Introduction. The dynamics pertaining to work-family interface such as conflict, enrichment, etc. has received considerable scholarly attention in social sciences. However, the daily processes that are involved have been examined to a lesser extent, least of all including the role played by emotions. **Objective**. This study aimed at examining, consistently with the Affective Events Theory, if positive and negative affect experienced during the working day played a mediational role in the associations between daily levels of work-family conflict and work-family enrichment on one side, and work-family balance on the other. Moreover, the moderating cross-level role of trait emotional stability was examined. **Method**. The study included a convenience sample of 104 Italian employees who completed a diary-book over five consecutive working days. **Results**. Multilevel-modelling results highlighted, controlling for emotional stability, a mediational role of only daily positive affect in the relationships between both work-family conflict and enrichment on the one side and work-family balance on the other side. **Conclusion**. This study contributed to the literature emphasizing the role

of positive affective states experienced at the workplace and their connections with the private life. Limitations and implications for research and practice are described.

Keywords: work-family balance; work-family conflict; work-family enrichment; affective states; affective events theory; diary-study.

"Don't worry, be happy"! Affects positifs au travail, meilleur équilibre à la maison. Une étude journalière sur la conciliation travail-famille

Resume

Introduction. Les dynamiques liées à l'interface travail-famille telles que les conflits, l'enrichissement, etc. ont reçu une attention considérable de la part des chercheurs en sciences sociales. Cependant, les processus quotidiens impliqués ont été examinés dans une moindre mesure, notamment le rôle joué par les émotions. **Objectif**. Cette étude visait à étudier, conformément à la théorie des événements affectifs, si les affects positifs et négatifs ressentis pendant la journée de travail jouaient un rôle médiateur dans les relations entre les niveaux quotidiens du conflit travail-famille et d'enrichissement travail-famille d'une part, et l'équilibre travail-famille d'autre part. Par ailleurs, le rôle transversal du modérateur relatif à la stabilité émotionnelle a été examiné. **Méthode**. L'étude a porté sur un échantillon de convenance de 104 employés italiens qui ont rempli un journal pendant cinq jours de travail consécutifs. **Résultats**. Les résultats de l'analyse multiniveaux ont mis en évidence, en contrôlant la stabilité émotionnelle, l'unique rôle médiateur de l'affect positif quotidien dans les relations entre le conflit travail-famille et l'enrichissement d'un côté et équilibre travail-famille

de l'autre. **Conclusion**. Cette étude a contribué à la littérature en mettant l'accent sur le rôle des états affectifs positifs vécus sur le lieu de travail et leurs liens avec la vie privée. Les limites, les implications pour les recherches et la pratique ont été décrites.

mot-clés: équilibre travail-famille ; conflit travail-famille ; enrichissement travail-famille ; états affectifs; théorie des événements affectifs ; étude de journal.

Don't worry, be happy! Positive affect at work, greater balance at home. A daily diary study on work-family balance

Work and family represent two of the most critical fields among the range of different roles occupied by adults. Several scholars have examined the interface between these two domains (Wayne et al., 2017; Wong et al., 2014), their permeability of boundaries, as well as the relative causes and consequences for both workers and organizations (Casper et al., 2018). This interface is undergoing constant evolution. The causes are linked to different, important phenomena: changes in family models, the increasing number of couples earning a double income, sudden technological changes and job-intensification, and greater involvement of men not only in carrying out housework, but also in childcare and family chores and errands (Law, 2011). The only constant in the current and changed labour market seem to be uncertainty, lack of predictability and higher flexibility.

According to EUROSTAT (2019), around one third of EU residents have caring responsibilities. This equates to approximately 100 million people caring for children under the age of 15 and/or incapacitated relatives (sick, disabled, elderly) aged 15 and over. In 2018, 24.1% of the employed population suffered an interruption from work due to caring responsibilities and the rate was always higher for the female compared with male population. In Italy, almost 40% of 18-64 year-old workers have to modulate the time to devote to work and family, since they are engaged in a working activity and at the same time have to take care of children or relatives who are not self-sufficient. The balancing of working times with those of family life is difficult for more than 1/3 of the employed (35.1%) with responsibility for looking after children (ISTAT, 2018). Similar to other countries in the southern part of the European Union, Italy is

characterized by a culture centred on a traditional family paradigm and scarce family-friendly welfare and policies (Saraceno, 2013). In this kind of context, it remains an open issue to find a balance between work and family.

In the literature, work-family balance (WFB), conflict (WFC) and enrichment (WFE) dimensions are particularly significant and critical, not only for workers but also for organizations and families (Lo Presti & Mauno, 2016). In fact, they are constantly related to some important variables: life, job and family satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, bad physical and psychological health, absenteeism, delay and turnover intentions (Amstad et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2018).

Traditionally, the work-family interface has been studied as the negative processes connecting work and family, i.e. WFC, defined as "a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985: 77). Recently, however, the focus has shifted both to WFE, "the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other" (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006: 73), and WFB, defined by Greenhaus and Allen (2011: 174) as "an overall appraisal of the extent to which individuals' effectiveness and satisfaction in work and family roles are consistent with their life values at a given point in time". Several studies showed that WFB is the result of both WFC and WFE (Carlson et al., 2009; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007).

In this study, we tested relationships between these variables through a diaristic method. In fact, up to now, the dynamics underlying the work-family interface have been mostly analysed through cross-sectional studies and a "level" approach between subjects (Maertz & Boyar, 2011), therefore providing a "static" understanding of the involved processes. The present study adopts a different perspective, with the aim of analysing the work-family relationship from a "dynamic" point of view. In particular,

we aimed at examining daily variations of WFC (in the direction from work to family), WFE (in the direction from work to family), and WFB, recurring to a within-person daily approach that defines events (e.g. conflict) as an incident or occurrence (Maertz & Boyar, 2011; Maertz et al., 2019). This methodological approach has been used to a lesser extent than the cross-sectional one in work-family interface studies (Butler et al., 2005), however it is the most recommended to analyse daily short-term intra-individual fluctuations (Ohly et al., 2010).

Additionally, an important aspect impacting on the daily work-family interface dynamics concerns the affective states that are generated in the workplace. In fact, although traditionally the work context has been dominated by principles based on rationality, organization, punctuality and control of personal experiences, progressively, an increasing number of scholars underlined the role of emotions in the workplace (Grandey et al., 2002) and later some others called for heightened scholarly effort for verifying their intervening role, especially in the light of multilevel and longitudinal research designs advances (Xanthopoulou et al., 2012). Weiss (2002) originally defined work as a place where certain events can have an emotional impact on workers. In particular, Dimotakis and Koopman (2011) highlighted the importance of the subjective and fluctuating experience of emotions also in the job context. Few studies have been dedicated to the association between transient affective states and the work-family domain (Judge et al., 2006). In fact, the aspect that is of paramount importance to highlight in this study is the role of the daily affective reactions generated in the workplace. More specifically, it is essential to examine the role that either positive and negative affect plays in relation to WFB, WFC and WFE, controlling for a more stable dispositional variable, namely emotional stability.

In general, several authors have suggested giving greater consideration to

personality to understand how an individual sees and experiences multiple roles in life and how personality can affect how individuals feel and react to the work-family interface (Baltes et al., 2011). As regards the significance of the dispositional effects, the role of personality variables in experiences of conflict and enrichment between work and family has only recently begun to be explored (Baltes et al., 2011). The examination of this aspect would provide a further contribution to the limited research on the importance of individual differences in the field of the association between work and family (Blanch & Aluja, 2009).

Thus, this study intended to examine, on a daily level, the dynamic relationship between WFC, WFE and WFB by highlighting the mediating role of affective states generated in the workplace, also by analysing the role of the cross-level effects of a specific dispositional trait (emotional stability).

Work-family interface and affective states

Both conflict and enrichment can be conceptualized as bidirectional constructs (from work to family and from family to work; Butler et al., 2005). Moreover, some authors stated that the family domain is more permeable than the working one (Allen, Cho, & Meier, 2014), and this is true especially in a country like Italy, where a familiaristic society coexists with a working culture that rewards the presence, the high number of working hours, the constant availability at the expense of the family domain. Therefore, the direction from work to family has a stronger impact and salience than the opposite direction (Amstad et al., 2011). WFC and WFE have often been examined as predictors of WFB; in fact, several studies have shown that WFB is the result of both WFC and WFE (Carlson et al., 2009; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). The interaction of effectiveness and satisfaction in the family and work roles predicts the feelings of such balance (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011); WFC and WFE have an indirect effect on WFB,

since they can respectively decrease or improve satisfaction and performance (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Landolfi et al., 2020; Pattusamy & Jacob, 2017). Moreover, other few studies analyzed the effect of the work-family interface on some specific emotions (Livingston & Judge, 2008).

The dynamic relationship between the daily events (conflict or enrichment) that occur at work, the consequent experienced affective states, and the level of WFB, can be explained recurring to the Affective Events Theory (AET; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). In short, according to the AET, positive or negative affective events are influenced by the characteristics and experiences of the work context.

As for work-family interface studies, most of the episodic research dealt with the interferences (positive and/or negative) that from one domain (e.g., work) spill over into the other one (e.g., family), generating consequences related, among other things, to mood or satisfaction (Maertz & Boyar, 2011). Most of these studies were based on the emotional consequences generated by the episodes; for example, some researchers showed that negative work episodes (e.g. conflicts, time pressure) were associated with negative daily mood. Similarly, negative experiences at work during the day were related to worst interactions within the family during the evening (Maertz & Boyar, 2011).

Consequently, since affective states play a crucial role in the workplace, they are considered an important factor for organizational attitudes and behaviour (Dimotakis et al., 2011; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Many authors found that both positive and negative daily bidirectional mood spillover effects were of paramount importance (Song et al., 2008). According to Elliot and Thrash (2002) and Lyubomirsky (2001), positive emotions and moods lead people to feel, think and act accordingly, promoting both the construction of resources and greater involvement in the achievement of goals.

According to the AET (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), affective states play a determining role in the links between affective traits, work context and consequent work attitudes and behaviours. Emotions and judgment play an important role in the relationship between the experiences of a person and his/her behaviour; the affective response to workplace events also modulates the formation of work attitudes.

Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) stated that affection refers to employees' mood and emotions, while attitude is based on a cognitive and evaluative judgment about affect. It is believed that this model is particularly useful for the theoretical and empirical understanding of workplace dynamics. The application of the AET model to the work-family domain suggests that an accumulation of daily enrichment and/or conflict events will either improve or worsen daily WFB through a mediated process by positive and negative affect. When an employee enjoys daily working experiences that enrich or improve his/her experience, it is likely that the employee will feel some positive affects (Carlson et al., 2011; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Conversely, other perspectives, focusing on the negative side of the work-family interface, have suggested a relationship between conflict, mood and affect (Judge et al., 2006). For this, it can be assumed that:

Hypothesis 1: The negative relationship between daily WFC and daily WFB will be mediated by daily positive (*H1a*) and daily negative (*H1b*) affect.

Hypothesis 2: The positive relationship between daily WFE and daily WFB will be mediated by daily positive (*H2a*) and daily negative (*H2b*) affect.

Furthermore, beyond the transient affective states, more stable dispositional variables can come into play. In this study, we considered the moderating role of emotional stability. According to Barrick and Mount (1991), low emotional stability scores refer to insecurity, depression, anger, anxiety, defence, tension and concern.

9

Overall, personality traits influence behavioural patterns and the way in which people interpret events and situations in different life domains, including the working domain (Rantanen et al., 2005). According to Friede and Ryan (2004), it is fundamental to consider personality aspects to understand the work-family interface unwinding. In fact, it has been shown that individual differences can influence intraindividual processing patterns (Mischel & Shoda 1998). In addition, neuroticism (or low emotional stability) may moderate the work-family related dynamics (Bhargava & Baral, 2009; Shockley & Allen, 2015; Wayne et al., 2004). In fact, people interpret and react to situations guided by own personal characteristics. Therefore, these characteristics would also make it possible to pro-actively model the situation (Watanabe et al., 1998).

Neuroticism can lead individuals to experience a great deal of job (and family) stress that, in turn, would increase the degree of experienced conflict (Stoeva et al. 2002). People with this trait are generally worried or tend to focus on negative affect, thus, they may have less time to engage in their daily activities (work and family). A positive relationship has also been found between neuroticism and WFC, which implies that individuals with lower emotional stability (or higher neuroticism) experience more WFC than those with higher emotional stability (lower neuroticism; Hlatywayo et al., 2014). Lower levels of emotional stability also suggest an inability to cope with the balance between work and family (Hlatywayo et al., 2014). Hence, emotional stability (or neuroticism) has often been linked to the work-family interface (Allen et al., 2012).

Therefore, the influence of dispositional traits with respect to the daily affect generated by work experiences is discussed; in fact, it can be assumed that daily affect (positive and negative), although dynamic, can be determined by the level of the emotional stability trait. In conclusion, we assumed that:

Hypothesis 3: emotional stability trait has a positive association (cross-level

effect) with daily positive affect (*H3a*) and a negative one with daily negative affect (*H3b*).

Figure 1 shows the empirical model.

--- Figure 1 around here ---

Materials and methods

Participants and procedure

The study involved a sample of 132 Italian employees who were working in various public and private organizations; they filled in a self-report questionnaire. Before starting with the diary, participants completed a baseline version of the questionnaire. The baseline version included demographic information (gender, age, marital status, having children, educational level, occupational sector, profession, job contract, job and organizational level) and data on the general level of the variables of interest (described below in "Measures").

Among the participants, those who agreed and were willing to continue our research, received a diary booklet or received a daily link to connect to in order to complete the daily questionnaire for five consecutive working days, before dinner and in any case after work. Compared to the initial 132 participants, 104 usable diaries were filled in and returned. The questionnaire's cover sheet emphasized that participation was voluntary and that anonymity and confidentiality were respected. According to the General Data Protection Regulation, participants' informed consent has been obtained. Moreover, the study followed the Helsinki Declaration (World Medical Association, 2013).

As for participants' sex, 56 were men (53.8%) and 48 women (46.2%). Mean age was 43.8 years (SD = 10.11). Participants had, in average, 1.6 children (SD = 1.02). While the mean working hours per week was 38.8 (SD = 9.8). All participants were

married or cohabiting. As for the educational level, it was elementary or junior high school degree for the 4.8% of participants, high school degree for 30.8%, and university degree for 64.4%. In regards to the occupational sector, it was primary sector (2.9%), secondary sector (9.6%), and tertiary sector (87.5%). In relation to their professions, 23 were self-employed (22.1), eight were blue collars (7.7%), 61 were administrative workers (58.7%), eight were middle managers (7.7%), and four were top managers (3.8%). The majority of respondents had a full-time job (66.3%), while 9.6% had a fixed term one. General tenure was, in average, 20.9 years (SD = 10.6), while the mean tenure in the current organization was approximately 15.7 years (SD = 9.6). We tested the differences on demographic variables between respondents who were excluded and those who participated in our study. There was no significant difference in any of the demographic variables of the study between these two groups of participants.

Measures

General measure

General Trait of emotional stability was detected using the short version of the Big Five Inventory (BFI-10, Rammstedt & John, 2007; Italian version by Guido et al., 2015). It included two items, one of which was reversed, that respectively measured how much a person "gets nervous easily" and is able "to relax and handle stress well". Each item was evaluated on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 = completely disagree to 5 = completely agree. Cronbach's alpha in this study was .84.

Daily measures

The diary survey assessed day-level measures at the end of the day for five consecutive working days. All the used measures have been widely used in the literature; however, appropriate changes were made to make them able to detect the daily-levels of constructs.

Daily WFB was measured through 6 items (Carlson et al., 2009; Italian version by Landolfi & Lo Presti, 2020) with a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = completely disagree to 5 = completely agree. An example item is "Today, I have been able to accomplish the expectations that my supervisors and my family have for me". Cronbach's alphas in this study for the different days ranged from .91 to .96.

Daily WFC included 5 items (Netemeyer et al., 1996; Italian version by Colombo & Ghislieri, 2008) which measured work-to-family conflict with a 7-point Likert scale from 1 = completely disagree to 7 = completely agree. An example item is "Today, the demands of my work have interfered with my home and family life". Cronbach's alphas in this study for the different days ranged from .92 to .97.

Daily WFE included 3 items (Carlson et al., 2006; Italian short version by Ghislieri et al., 2011) which measured work-to-family enrichment with a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = completely disagree to 5 = completely agree. An example item is "Today, at work I have felt a sense of accomplishment and this has helped me to be a better family member". Cronbach's alphas in this study ranged from .90 to .96.

Daily Positive and ***Negative Affect***. We measured participants' daily affect by using the 10-item Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988; Italian version by Terracciano et al., 2003). Participants were asked to indicate how much they felt a certain positive (e.g., enthusiastic, excited) or negative (e.g., nervous, scared) affect in the current day using a 5-point scale from 1 = not at all to 5 = extremely. Cronbach's alphas in this study for the different days ranged from .85 to .88 for positive affect and from .83 to .90 for negative affect.

Data analysis

Initially we assessed Measurement Invariance (MI), to assess if the measurement model is stable along the five days. MI analyses tested if the covariance structure is similar

across the five days. In particular we checked for (1) configural invariance, where we allowed all the parameters to be freely estimated; (2) metric invariance, where we fixed factor loadings to be equal over the five days; and (3) scalar invariance, where the intercepts are required to be equal. We compared the models on the basis of differences in the Chi-squared values, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (Chen, 2007).

Because diary data can be manage as multilevel data, we decided to use multilevel analysis to assess our hypotheses. We ran a multilevel path analysis model, using the two-level random analysis in Mplus syntax (Preacher et al., 2010). The sample size of our study (N = 104) assured a good power to conduct robust estimations of the parameters in our multilevel mediational model (Mathieu et al., 2012). WFC, WFE, positive and negative affect and WFB were our variables at day-level, while at the person-level we used general trait emotional stability.

Following Mathieu and Taylor (2007) recommendations, we centred the predictors variables at daily and person level using grand mean centring techniques to not cancel all between-person variance from daily level predictors and test properly cross level effects. We considered the role of time in our multilevel mediational model to capture the dynamic mediated and indirect effect between predictors, mediators and outcome (Bliese & Ployhart, 2002). Time was coded as Day1 = -2, Day2 = -1, Day3 = 0, Day4 = 1 and Day5 = 2.

We used Jamovi version 1.1.9 for the preliminary analyses and Mplus version 7.0 for all the other analyses. To evaluate the model, we used as fit indices (Kline, 2015): Chi-squared, CFI, the Tucker Lewis Index (TLI), RMSEA and the standardized root mean residual (SRMR); CFI and TLI $\geq$ .90, RMSEA $\leq$ .08, and SRMR $\leq$ .06 as cut off.

Results

Descriptive statistics and measurement invariance

At first, we verified that skewness and kurtosis values for each item of each construct and each day did not exceed 3 and 10 respectively (Kline, 2015), supporting normality assumptions. In Table 1 we reported means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations among variables.

--- Table 1 around here ---

When we ran MI analyses to check for the stability of the measures across time, models' goodness of fit indexes was acceptable for all the constructs. After constraining to be equal (metric invariance), again the invariance of the models were confirmed for all the constructs (except for WFC where we introduced a covariation between Item 1 and Item 2 to achieve metric invariance). Constraining the intercepts to be equal over time (scalar invariance), the models were confirmed invariant. For each construct, the chi-squared difference between the two nested models (M_2 vs M_1 and M_3 vs M_2) were not statistically significant. Moreover, according to Chen (2007), the change in CFI was higher than −.01 (except for the scalar model of negative affect) and the change in RMSEA was less than .015 (except for WFE). To sum up, MI confirmed the stability of the measure of all the constructs over time. In Table 2 fit indices of the models to test measurement invariance are reported.

--- Table 2 around here ---

Multilevel modelling

Before ML-SEM analysis, some preliminary operations were conducted. Initially, we assessed the between-person and within-person variability for all the day-level variables, by computing the intraclass correlation (ICC) for each variable of our hypothesized model. The ICC, that is the percentage of whole variance of the day-level

variables which is caused by differences between subjects, was significant for all day-level variables: for WFC, ICC = .41 and the percentage of variance due to within person fluctuation across days was 59%; for WFE, ICC = .42 and the percentage of variance was 58%; for positive affect, ICC = .49 and the percentage of variance was 51%; for negative affect, ICC = .57 and the percentage of variance was 43%; for WFB, ICC = .47 and the percentage of variance was 53%. These results highlighted the importance of between-person and within-person variance for all the day-level variables and therefore supported the choice of multilevel modelling. In the hypothesized multilevel mediational model, to capture the dynamic mediated and indirect effect between predictors mediators and outcome we also included time as a fixed component.

Test of the hypotheses

We ran a multilevel path analysis model, using the two-level random analysis with random slopes (see Figure 2). Our first hypotheses, according to which the relationships between daily WFC and daily WFB would be mediated by positive (H1a) and negative (H1b) affect were partially confirmed. In particular, we found a direct effect of WFC on WFB (β = -.17, $p < .001$) and a partial mediation by positive affect (indirect effect β = -.03, $p = .002$), partially confirming H1a. Including positive affect as a mediator contributed to increase WFB variance to 14%. We did not find a mediating role of negative affect (H1b), since the association between negative affect and WFB was not statistically significant (β = -.03, $p = .748$); thus, H1b was not confirmed. However, we found a positive association between WFC and negative affect (β = .17, $p < .001$).

As for the second hypothesis, the mediating role of positive affect (H2a) was partial since results showed a statistically significant direct effect from WFE to WFB (β = .17, $p < .001$). The indirect effect of positive affect was .05 ($p = .001$) and the

variance explained by the mediation was 22%. The mediation of negative affect (H2b) was not confirmed.

Our last hypotheses about the cross-level effects of emotional stability on positive (H3a) and negative (H3b) affect were confirmed. Emotional stability showed a positive association with daily positive affect ($\beta = .11$, $p = .017$) and a negative one with daily negative affect ($\beta = -.10$, $p = .018$).

--- Figure 2 around here ---

Discussion

This study contributed to the literature by examining how daily variations of WFC and WFE (for both, in the direction from work to family) are associated with WFB and how these relationships are mediated by positive and negative affect generated by work experiences. Moreover, the influence of a dispositional trait with respect to the daily affect was analysed. The study also intended to respond to the call to carry out further longitudinal studies in the work-family domain (Nohe & Sonntag, 2014). In order to capture the dynamic nature of job and family roles, participants were examined at the end of the day for five consecutive working days.

For all variables of the study, significant daily variations were found, attributable to within-person variations. In particular, consistently with available evidence concerning WFE and WFC (Butler et al., 2005) the percentage of variance due to within-person fluctuations between days was rather high and significant. These findings confirm our initial hypotheses and endorse the dynamic, evolving nature of psychosocial variables related to the work-family interface.

Furthermore, WFB was found to be positively predicted by WFE and negatively predicted by WFC; these associations are consistent with previous studies (Aryee et al., 2005; Carlson et al., 2009) and confirm that adequate levels of WFB perception depend

on a lower perception of "conflict" and a stronger perception of "enrichment". Both relationships were mediated by daily positive affect, confirming the importance of experiencing positive affect during the day, particularly in the workplace, in the wake of other studies (Grandey et al., 2002; Weiss, 2002; Xanthopoulou et al, 2012). Therefore, beyond the direct effect, the relationship between WCF, WFE and WFB also depends on perceiving positive affect. These results are also consistent with the AET model (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) and confirm that daily events of WFC and WFE generate affective reactions which in turn impact on the attitude regarding the balance between work and family.

By contrast, contrary to our hypotheses, negative affect did not show a significant mediating role. Therefore, daily negative affect, which represents the negative emotions that workers experience during the working day, did not mediate the relationships between WFC and WFE on one side, and WFB on the other. We can hypothesize that the mediating effect of daily negative affect ("Scared", "Troubled", "Nervous", "Distressed") has a lower incidence on WFB construct, compared to the mediating role of daily positive affect; as if the effects of daily negative affect tend to reside in the originating domain (work). This consideration is also in line with previous studies, in fact the positive aspects related to the workplace, when compared with the negative aspects, have a greater significance on the feeling of balance (Lo Presti et al., 2020).

This evidence should be further examined in order to understand if it depends on some methodological bias of our study, for instance semantic aspects of the questionnaire's items used to capture these emotions, or on the type of emotion itself.

Moreover, we controlled for the emotional stability trait and found a significant association with both positive and negative daily affect. Indeed, confirming hypothesis

3, emotional stability had a significant effect on daily affect, therefore it positively predicts positive affect and negatively predicts negative affect.

Limitations and future research

A first limitation concerns the use of self-report questionnaires. In fact, it is possible that the results regarding the relationships between the variables examined may be altered by common method variance bias. Another limitation regards the convenience sampling procedure; using this procedure could preclude the generalisability of the results, although it would seem adequate when aiming for greater heterogeneity (Landers & Behrend, 2015). A further limitation of the present study regards the role played by negative affect. It is believed that the scale used, albeit widely used in literature, does not adequately capture, at least from the semantic point of view, the negative affect connected to the interaction between the family and work context while it seems to be adequately associated with other dimensions such as the dispositional one (emotional stability). Future research should use indicators that are more appropriate in the context of work-family interface dynamics. Moreover, the use of a two-item measure to detect the general trait of emotional stability can also be mentioned as a study limitation. Finally, only the work-to family direction was taken into account. In future research the family-to-work direction should also be considered, in order to understand how daily family dynamics and consequent emotional reactions can have an impact on the working context. Given the prevalence of the dynamic component over the static component in the work-family interface (Butler et al., 2005), this study suggests to analyse, in the future, other within-person variables similar to the work-family balance, such as family and job satisfaction, or in any case to investigate other sources of intrapersonal variability related to the work-family interface. Furthermore, especially in Italy, where the traditional family paradigm contributes to generating

different role expectations for men and women, future studies should also consider gender differences.

Conclusion and practical implications

Events related to the linkage between work and family domains, both in terms of conflict and enrichment, were found having an impact on the emotional experiences of individuals (especially on the positive ones) and on feelings relating to the work-family balance. Thus, with the aim to decrease the expression of negative emotions and increase positive emotions, organizations should reduce events/episodes related to the perception of WFC and, at the same time, increase what is related to the enrichment between work and family domains.

Following research on emotional contagion (Hatfield et al., 2011), affect can also be transmitted to one's colleagues or, within the family context, to one's relatives. It has been widely demonstrated that when a worker experiences positive affect, he/she becomes a precious resource for the company, is positively evaluated by supervisors, has greater prosocial behaviours, shows better performances and greater productivity (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005) and, according to this study's findings, a higher level of WFB. Thus, a main goal of human resources policies should concern the increase of positive affect. Organizations must strive to meet the needs of the company as well as those of the workers.

Considering how important family is in Italy, a country where the traditional family paradigm persists, organizations should be able to develop and maintain a supportive work-family culture. With this aim, several tools, programmes and policies can be used and implemented: parental leave, vouchers for childcare, smart working, incentives for experimenting flexibility in work organization, wellness programs. These interventions should be promoted and available for both men and women: although the

cultural paradigm recognizes women as the main responsible for the house and the family (Saraceno, 2013), organizations should contribute to build a more gender-neutral culture for the future.

Furthermore, organizations should pro-actively act in order to reduce or avoid situations where employees have to cope with negative events, which give them a sense of "déjà vu" since they have already generated negative affective reactions. Finally, given that emotional stability has an impact on daily affect, a further aspect that could be managed by organizations is the choice, throughout the talent acquisition phase, of adequate tools aimed at capturing this dispositive personality trait.

We should ask ourselves if emotional experience is a limit or a resource in the business context. Generally, there is the belief that rational aspects are more productive and that affect, on the other hand, is an obstacle for job performance and success. Instead, as demonstrated by our results, affect detects surprisingly positive aspects also in the work domain. If properly managed, it represents a real resource for the worker, for the family and for organizations. Thus, it seems essential to foster the development of a real emotional culture in the workplace. In a nutshell, organizations should enhance the listening and understanding skills of employees and colleagues. In terms of WFE, this competence, in turn, can be transferred to the family context, improving the emotional experience also in this domain.

References

Allen, T. D., Cho, E., & Meier, L. L. (2014). Work–family boundary dynamics. Annu. Rev. Organ. Psychol. Organ. Behav., 1(1), 99-121. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-031413-091330

Allen, T. D., Johnson, R. C., Saboe, K. N., Cho, E., Dumani, S., & Evans, S. (2012).

Dispositional variables and work–family conflict: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 80*(1), 17-26. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2011.04.004

Amstad, F.T., Meier, L.L., Fasel, U., Elfering, A., & Semmer, N.K. (2011). A meta-analysis of work–family conflict and various outcomes with a special emphasis on cross-domain versus matching-domain relations. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 16*(2), 151. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/a0022170

Aryee, S., Srinivas, E. S., & Tan, H. H. (2005). Rhythms of life: antecedents and outcomes of work-family balance in employed parents. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *90*(1), 132-146. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.1.132

Baltes, B. B., Zhdanova, L. S., & Clark, M. A. (2011). Examining the relationships between personality, coping strategies, and work–family conflict. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 26*(4), 517-530. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-010-9207-0

Barrick, M. R., & Mount, M. K. (1991). The big five personality dimensions and job performance: a meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology, 44*(1), 1-26. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1991.tb00688.x

Bhargava, S., & Baral, R. (2009). Antecedents and consequences of work-family enrichment among Indian managers. *Psychological Studies*, *54*(3), 213-225. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12646-009-0028-z

Blanch, A., & Aluja, A. (2009). Work, family and personality: A study of work–family conflict. *Personality and Individual Differences, 46*(4), 520-524. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2008.12.004

Bliese, P. D., & Ployhart, R. E. (2002). Growth modeling using random coefficient models: Model building, testing, and illustrations. *Organizational Research Methods, 5*, 362-387. https://doi.org/10.1177/109442802237116

Butler, A. B., Grzywacz, J. G., Bass, B. L., & Linney, K. D. (2005). Extending the demands-control model: A daily diary study of job characteristics, work-family conflict and work-family facilitation. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 78*(2), 155-169. https://doi.org/10.1348/096317905X40097

Carlson, D. S., Grzywacz, J., & Zivnuska, S. (2009). Is Work–family balance more than conflict and enrichment? *Human Relations, 20*, 1-28. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726709336500

Carlson, D. S., Kacmar, K. M., Wayne, J. H., & Grzywacz, J. G. (2006). Measuring the positive side of the work–family interface: Development and validation of a work–family enrichment scale. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *68*(1), 131-164. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2005.02.002

Carlson, D., Kacmar, K. M., Zivnuska, S., Ferguson, M., & Whitten, D. (2011). Work-family enrichment and job performance: A constructive replication of affective events theory. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 16*(3), 297-312. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022880

Casper, W. J., Vaziri, H., Wayne, J. H., DeHauw, S., & Greenhaus, J. (2018). The jingle-jangle of work–nonwork balance: A comprehensive and meta-analytic review of its meaning and measurement. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 103*(2), 182. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/apl0000259

Chen, F. F. (2007). Sensitivity of goodness of fit indexes to lack of measurement invariance. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 14*(3), 464-504. https://doi.org/10.1080/10705510701301834

Colombo, L., & Ghislieri, C. (2008). The work-to-family conflict: Theories and measures. *TPM – Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology,*

15(1), 35-55.

Dimotakis, N., Scott, B. A., & Koopman, J. (2011). An experience sampling investigation of workplace interactions, affective states, and employee well-being. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 32*(4), 572-588. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.722

Elliot, A. J., & Thrash, T. M. (2002). Approach–avoidance motivation in personality: Approach and avoidance temperaments and goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 82*, 804-818. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.82.5.804

Eurostat (2019). Reconciliation of work and family life-statistics. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Reconciliation_of_work_and_family_life_-statistics&oldid=454330 (accessed on 12 October 2020).

Friede A., & Ryan A. M. (2005). The importance of the individual: How self-evaluations influence the work–family interface. In E. E. Kossek, & S. J. Lambert (Eds.), *Work and life integration: Organizational, cultural, and individual perspectives* (pp. 193-209). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Ghislieri, C., Martini, M., Gatti, P., & Colombo, L. (2011). The "bright side" of the work-family interface: A brief work-family enrichment scale in a sample of health professionals. *TPM – Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology, 18*, 211-230.

Grandey, A. A., Tam, A. P., & Brauburger, A. L. (2002). Affective states and traits in the workplace: Diary and survey data from young workers. *Motivation and Emotion, 26*(1), 31-55. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1015142124306

Greenhaus, J. H., & Allen, T. D. (2011). Work–family balance: A review and extension of the literature. In L. Tetrick & J. C. Quick (Eds.), *Handbook of occupational*

health psychology (2nd ed.) (pp. 165-183). Washington, DC: American
Psychological Association.

Greenhaus J. H., & Beutell N. J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family
roles. *Academy of Management Review, 10*(1), 76-88.
https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1985.4277352

Greenhaus J. H., & Powell G. (2006). When work and family are allies: A theory of
work family enrichment. *Academy of Management Review, 31*(1), 72-92.
https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2006.19379625

Grzywacz, J. G., & Carlson, D. S. (2007). Conceptualizing work-family balance:
Implications for practice and research. *Advances in Developing Human
Resources*, *9*, 455-471. https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422307305487

Guido, G., Peluso, A. M., Capestro, M., & Miglietta, M. (2015). An Italian version of
the 10-item Big Five Inventory: An application to hedonic and utilitarian
shopping values. *Personality and Individual Differences, 76*, 135-140.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2014.11.053

Hatfield, E., Rapson, R. L., & Le, Y. C. L. (2011). Emotional contagion and empathy.
The social neuroscience of empathy, 19.

Hlatywayo, C. K., Zingwe, T., Mhlanga, T. S., & Mpofu, B. D. (2014). Precursors of
emotional stability, stress, and work-family conflict among female bank
employees. *International Business & Economics Research Journal (IBER),
13*(4), 861-866. https://doi.org/10.19030/iber.v13i4.8695

Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (ISTAT). (2018) Rapporto Annuale 2018. *Reconciliation
between work and family life*. Retrieved from
https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/235619 (accessed on 12 October 2020).

Judge, T. A., Ilies, R., & Scott, B. A. (2006). Work-family conflict and emotions:

Effects at work and at home. *Personnel Psychology, 59*, 779-814.

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2006.00054.x

Kline, R. B. (2015). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*. 4th. New

York, NY: Guilford publications.

Landers, R. N., & Behrend, T. S. (2015). An inconvenient truth: Arbitrary distinctions

between organizational, Mechanical Turk, and other convenience samples.

Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 8(2), 142-164.

https://doi.org/10.1017/iop.2015.13

Law, L.K. (2011). The impact of work–family conflict on Chinese employees.

Marriage & family review, 47(8), 590-604.

https://doi.org/10.1080/01494929.2011.625104

Landolfi, A., Barattucci, M., & Lo Presti, A. (2020). A Time-Lagged Examination of

the Greenhaus and Allen Work-Family Balance Model. *Behavioral Sciences*,

10(9). https://doi.org/ 10.3390/bs10090140

Landolfi, A., & Lo Presti, A. (2020). A psychometric examination of the work-family

balance scale. A multisample study on Italian workers. *Current Psychology*.

https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-00893-z

Livingston, B., & Judge, T. A. (2008). Emotional response to work–family conflict: An

examination of gender role orientation. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 93*, 207–

216. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.1.207

Lo Presti, A., & Mauno, S. (2016). Are Support and Control Beneficial Stress Buffers in

the Presence of Work–Family Barriers? Findings from Italy. *International

Journal of Stress Management*, 23(1), 44-64.

https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/a0038440

Lo Presti, A., Molino, M., Emanuel, F., Landolfi, A., & Ghislieri, C. (2020). Work-

family organizational support as a predictor of work-family conflict, enrichment, and balance: Crossover and spillover effects in dual-income couples. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, *16*(1), 62. https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v16i1.1931

Lyubomirsky, S. (2001). Why are some people happier than others?: The role of cognitive and motivational processes in well-being. *American Psychologist, 56*, 239-249. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.56.3.239

Lyubomirsky, S., King, L., & Diener, E. (2005). The benefits of frequent positive affect: Does happiness lead to success?. *Psychological Bulletin, 131*(6), 803-855. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.131.6.803

Maertz, C. P., & Boyar, S. L. (2011). Work–family conflict, enrichment, and balance under "levels" and "episodes" approaches. *Journal of Management, 37*, 68-98. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310382455

Maertz Jr, C. P., Boyar, S. L., & Maloney, P. W. (2019). A theory of work-family conflict episode processing. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 115*, 103331. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2019.103331

Mathieu, J. E., Aguinis, H., Culpepper, S. A., & Chen, G. (2012). Understanding and estimating the power to detect cross-level interaction effects in multilevel modeling. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 97*(5), 951-966. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028380

Mathieu, J. E., & Taylor, S. R. (2007). A framework for testing meso-mediational relationships in organizational behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 28*, 141-172. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.436

Mischel W., & Shoda Y. (1998). Reconciling processing dynamics and personality dispositions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *49*, 229-258. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.49.1.229

Netemeyer, R. G., Boles, J. S., & McMurrian, R. (1996). Development and validation of work–family conflict and family–work conflict scales. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 81*(4), 400-410. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.81.4.400

Nohe, C., & Sonntag, K. (2014). Work–family conflict, social support, and turnover intentions: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 85*(1), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2014.03.007

Ohly, S., Sonnentag, S., Niessen, C., & Zapf, D. (2010). Diary studies in organizational research. *Journal of Personnel Psychology, 9*, 79-93. https://doi.org/10.1027/1866-5888/a000009

Pattusamy, M., & Jacob, J. (2017). A test of Greenhaus and Allen (2011) model on work-family balance. *Current Psychology, 36*(2), 193-202. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-015-9400-4

Preacher, K. J., Zyphur, M. J., & Zhang, Z. (2010). A general multilevel SEM framework for assessing multilevel mediation. *Psychological Methods, 15*, 209-233. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0020141

Rammstedt, B., & John, O. P. (2007). Measuring personality in one minute or less: A 10-item short version of the Big Five Inventory in English and German. *Journal of Research in Personality, 41*(1), 203-212. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2006.02.001

Rantanen, J., Pulkkinen, L., & Kinnunen, U. (2005). The Big Five personality dimensions, work-family conflict, and psychological distress: A longitudinal view. *Journal of Individual Differences, 26*(3), 155-166. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2008.01.001

Saraceno, C. (2013). *Il welfare*. Bologna, Italy: Il Mulino.

Shockley, K. M., & Allen, T. D. (2015). Deciding between work and family: An

episodic approach. *Personnel Psychology*, *68*(2), 283-318.

https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12077

Song, Z., Foo, M., & Uy, M. A. (2008). Mood spillover and crossover among dual-

earner couples: An event sampling study. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 93*,

443-452. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.93.2.443

Stoeva A. Z., Chiu R. K., & Greenhaus J. H. (2002). Negative affectivity, role stress,

and work-family conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 60*, 1-16.

https://doi.org/10.1006/jvbe.2001.1812

Terraciano, A., McCrae, R. R., & Costa Jr, P. T. (2003). Factorial and construct validity

of the Italian Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS). *European*

Journal of Psychological Assessment, 19(2), 131-141.

https://doi.org/10.1027/1015-5759.19.2.131

Watanabe, S., Takahashi, K., & Minami, T. (1998). The emerging role of diversity and

work-family values in a global context. In P. C. Earley, & M. Earley (Eds.), *New*

perspectives on international industrial/organizational psychology (pp. 319–

332). San Francisco: New Lexington Press.

Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief

measures of positive and negative affect: the PANAS scales. *Journal of*

Personality and Social Psychology, 54(6), 1063-1070.

https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.54.6.1063

Wayne, J.H., Butts, M.B., Casper, W J., & Allen, T.D. (2017). In search of balance: A

conceptual and empirical integration of multiple meanings of work–family

balance. *Personnel Psychology, 70*, 167–210.

https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12132

Wayne J. H., Musisca N., & Fleeson W. (2004). Considering the role of personality in

the work–family experience: Relationships of the big five to work–family conflict and facilitation. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 64,* 108-130. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0001-8791(03)00035-6

Weiss, H. M. (2002). Introductory comments: Antecedents of emotional experiences at work. *Motivation and Emotion, 26*(1), 1-2. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1015138223398

Weiss, H. M., & Cropanzano, R. (1996). Affective events theory: A theoretical discussion of the structure, causes and consequences of affective experiences at work. In B. M. Staw & L. L. Cummings (Eds.), *Research in organizational behavior: An annual series of analytical essays and critical reviews* (pp. 1-74). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press

https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.76.5.664

Wong, J. Y., Lin, J. H., Liu, S. H., & Wan, T. H. (2014). Fireman's job stress: Integrating work/non-work conflict with Job Demand-Control-Support model. *European review of Applied psychology, 64*(2), 83-91. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.erap.2013.12.002

World Medical Association (2013). WMA declaration of Helsinki—Ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects. In Proceedings of the 64th WMA General Assembly, Fortaleza, Brazil, October 2013.

Xanthopoulou, D., Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2012). A diary study on the happy worker: How job resources relate to positive emotions and personal resources. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology, 21*(4), 489-517. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2011.584386

Zhang, Y., Xu, S., Jin, J., & Ford, M. T. (2018). The within and cross domain effects of work-family enrichment: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 104,*

210-227. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.11.003

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations among studied variables.

	M	*SD*	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
1. General emotional stability	3.48	1.17	-					
2. Day-level WFB	4.11	.80	.37**	-				
3. Day-level WFC	3.10	1.75	-.32**	-.52**	-			
4. Day-level WFE	3.29	1.09	.23**	.45**	-.26**	-		
5. Day-level positive affect	3.44	.84	.31**	.62**	-.40**	.46**	-	
6. Day-level negative affect	1.62	.73	-.34**	-.41**	.48**	-.34**	-.42**	-

Note: ** *p* < .01, * *p* < .05.

Table 2

Summary of Fit indices of measurement invariance tests.

|	χ^2 (*df*)	*p*	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	$\Delta \chi^2$ (Δ *df*)	Δ CFI	Δ RMSEA
Work-family balance									
M_1	113.18 (45)	< .001	.961	.935	.121	.029			
M_2	140.10 (69)	< .001	.959	.956	.100	.133	26.92 (24)	−.002	−.021
M_3	176.35 (93)	< .001	.952	.961	.093	.141	36.26 (24)	−.007	−.007
Work-to-family conflict									
M_1	81.74 (25)	< .001	.939	.878	.148	.026			
M_2	114.86 (45)	< .001	.925	.917	.122	.060	33.13* (20)	−.014	−.026
M_1	36.46 (20)	.014	.982	.956	.089	.017			
M_2	60.45 (40)	.020	.978	.973	.070	.057	24.00 (20)	−.004	−.019
M_3	84.76 (60)	.019	.973	.978	.063	.074	24.31 (20)	−.005	−.007
Work-to-family enrichment									
M_1	.000 (0)	< .001	1.00	1.00	.000	.000			
M_2	12.71 (12)	.390	.999	.999	.024	.143	12.71 (12)	−.001	.024
M_3	29.75 (24)	.193	.991	.994	.048	.191	17.03 (12)	−.008	.024
Positive affect									
M_1	78.96 (25)	< .001	.942	.884	.144	.044			
M_2	103.88 (45)	< .001	.937	.930	.112	.113	24.93 (20)	−.005	−.032
M_3	125.29 (65)	< .001	.935	.950	.094	.116	21.40 (20)	−.002	−.018
Negative affect									
M_1	85.60 (25)	< .001	.904	.809	.153	.049			
M_2	79.18 (45)	.001	.946	.940	.085	.104	−6.43 (20)	.042	−.068
M_3	110.63 (65)	< .001	.928	.945	.082	.104	31.46 (20)	−.018	−.003

Note: * $p < .05$.
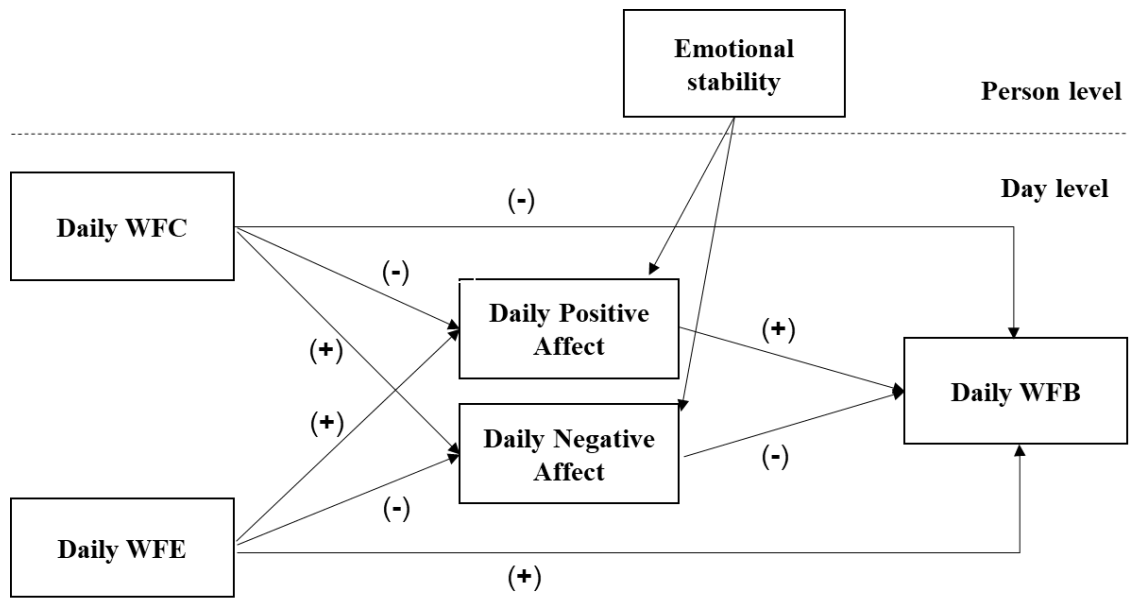
Figure 1. Empirical model.
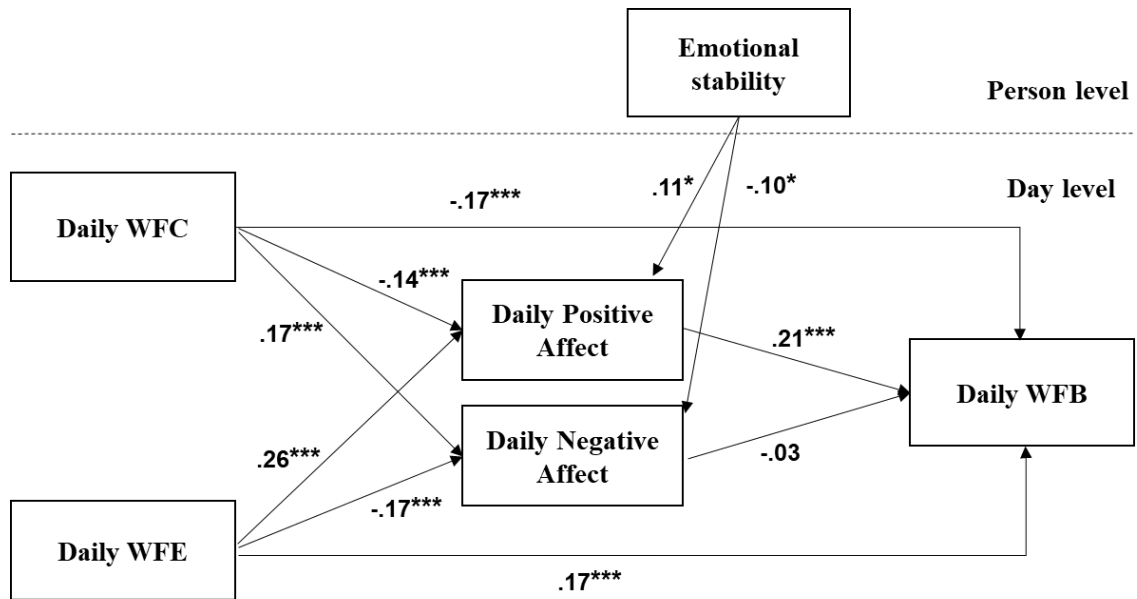
Note: *** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$.

Figure 2. Multilevel path analysis model (standardized coefficients).