

**Family Care-Work Interference and Mid/Late-Career Motivation and Intentions:
Mediating Role of Occupational Future Time Perspective**

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Journal of Career Development, 2022, Vol. 0(0) 1–19,
DOI: 10.1177/08948453221124895

Abstract

The combination of work and family obligations can lead to two-way interference, resulting in Family Care Interference with Work (FCIW) and Work Interference with Family Care (WIFC). Both can impact late-career motivation and intentions to continue working or retire and reduce their occupational time perspective (OFTP). Through two studies, this paper shows how OFTP mediates the relationship between FCIW/WIFC and mid and late-career indicators such as early retirement intentions and motivation to continue working beyond the retirement age. Our findings contribute to increasing knowledge of how increasing family caregiving obligations may impact the career intentions of workers in their mid and late-career stages.

Key words: Caregiving, Retirement intentions, Work family interference, Mid and late-career, Occupational time perspective.

Introduction

The socio-demographic changes experienced worldwide in the last two decades have led to an increase in the number of workers facing growing demands for multiple family caregiving tasks, or “kin work” (i.e. "the unpaid work that relatives do to care for one another"; Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020, p. 429) leading to potential family-to-work interferences and conflicts (Burch et al., 2019; Converso et al., 2020; Murphy &

Cross, 2021; Reimann et al., 2020). Work-family conflict (WFC) is generally 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, p. 77). Prior research has established that the role conflict between these two life aspects is bidirectional (Carlson & Frone, 2003; Carlson et al., 2000), resulting in Family Care Interference with Work (FCIW) and Work Interference with Family Care (WIFC).

A particular experience is that faced by the so-called “sandwiched” working caregivers, namely those responsible for both their young and/or adult children or grandchildren and older adults relatives. Prior studies (Converso et al., 2020; Burke, 2017; Henle et al., 2020) found that sandwiched working caregivers received negative assessments and eventually discriminated against more in their jobs than primary child caregivers and primary older caregivers in both female- and male-dominated jobs. Regarding the effects of this dual family caregiving, prior research reveals mixed results (Burke, 2017; Hammer & Neal, 2008). Negative effects on sandwiched working caregivers' work and well-being include higher strain levels, stress and absenteeism, lower work productivity, poorer physical and psychological health, and poorer psychosocial functioning overall. In contrast, the positive benefits identified are connected with playing multiple roles (in work and family settings), with the subsequent positive work–family spillover (Hammer & Neal, 2008) and buffering effect on stress (DePasquale et al., 2016). Other positive effects include the satisfaction of providing quality care, a sense of personal growth and more meaning in life (Burke, 2017). In sum, given our aging societies and the need to prolong sustainable employment as long as possible, research into working caregivers is a priority field for work and family research in the 21st century (Griggs et al., 2020; Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020) and sustainable HR policies and practices (Murphy & Cross, 2021).

According to information provided annually by the Spanish Labor Force Survey (INE, 2022a), in recent years, there has been an upward trend in the number of people who work involuntarily part-time to have more time to care for dependent family members (children, adults, the sick, people with disabilities, etc.). The same trend is observed in unemployed people who have left the labor market and inactive people who are not seeking employment to care for dependent family members (INE, 2022a). Data from 2022 (Fundación Adecco-Gedia, 2022) indicate that, in the last year, 56,700 Spanish professionals have withdrawn from the labor market to take direct care of a dependent or family member with a disability. The profile is that of a woman (94%) over 45 years (40%). Today, inactive people in the labor market for this family condition already exceed half a million (595,700; about 4% of the employed population in Spain), an increase of 10.5% compared to 2017 (539,000) and a growth of 22% compared to two years ago (Fundación Adecco-Gedia, 2022). In a country characterized by high aging rates and an increasing dependent people proportion (the aging index $[(\text{Population} > 64 \text{ years} / \text{Total population}) \times 100]$ in 2022 in Spain reaches 133.48% [provisional; INE, 2022b]), identifying the family care needs faced by workers should be a primary social policy objective. Hence the relevance of cross-validating a measure of FCIW/WIFC in another cultural context, following its validation and application in working populations in the United States and Belgium.

The aim of this paper is twofold. First, it seeks to test the psychometric properties of the FCWC scale and to verify its two-dimensional structure (FCIW/WIFC) in the Spanish working population (Study 1); and second, it explores how the different dimensions of OFTP sequentially mediate the relationship between FCIW/WIFC and

some late-career indicators, namely early retirement intentions and motivation to continue working beyond the retirement age (Study 2).

Theoretical background and hypotheses development

From a general perspective, there is no standard definition of either “caregiver employees” or “care recipients”. One of the most commonly-used terms in the literature is “working carers”, which Ireson et al. (2018) define as “an employee who cares for a relative or friend who is vulnerable as a result of age, illness or disability” (p. e6), with this care being characterized as “informal, unpaid caregiving to meet physical, cognitive, and/or emotional needs of older adults” (Clancy et al., 2019, p. 2). For this study, the definition includes workers caring for both children or grandchildren, and ascendants (parents or grandparents) (White-Means, 2017), and encompasses the performance of two general roles: the working role and the caregiver role. These roles may conflict with one another (Barling et al., 1994; Kulik, 2019; MacEwen & Barling, 1994) and may also give rise to role overload (Gordon et al., 2012), depending on the number of daily hours that the two occupations require (Barrah et al., 2004), as well as the living situation of the care recipient and their degree of impairment (Bramble et al., 2020). Consequently, multiple work and family caregiving roles increase the likelihood of experiencing FCIW/WIFC.

In the following sections we present the instrument used in our study to measure FCIW/WIFC. The characteristics of the Family Care Work Conflict Scale (FCWC; Henry & Desmette, 2017; adapted from Hepburn & Barling, 1996) will be tested in Study 1, and the validated scale will be used as a measure of FCIW/WIFC in Study 2. Next, we will analyze the potential impact of FCIW/WIFC on mid and late career maintenance and development, focusing specifically on its associations on early

retirement intentions and motivation to continue working beyond the retirement age. Finally, we will analyze how OFTP (Zacher, 2013), may mediate the relationship between FCIW/WIFC and late career intentions.

FCWC Measurement

The instrument developed by Hepburn and Barling (1996) included two types of interaction to measure daily inter-role conflict: work interference with parent care and parent care interference with work. Each dimension encompassed four items, and the Cronbach's alpha values of .85 for the WIPC subscale and .93 for the PCIW subscale (Hepburn & Barling, 1996) revealed adequate psychometric properties.

More recently, Henry and Desmette (2017) adapted this scale, maintaining the two original four-item dimensions, and extending parent care to grandchildren care tasks. This scale aims to measure the family and work interference of working caregivers who are likely to combine multiple caring roles (i.e., the “sandwiched working caregivers”). Family Care Interference with Work (FCIW) refers to when caring parents/grandchild interfere with work while Work Care Interference with Family (WCIF) measures when work interferes with caring parents/grandchild. When tested in a sample of Belgian workers, the psychometric properties of the adaptation were found to be adequate, with Cronbach's alpha values of .89 (FCIW) and .90 (WIFC). In our study, we adapted the version developed by Henry and Desmette (2017) to the Spanish language and validated it in a sample of Spanish working carers. Given the psychometric properties of the previous versions of both scales developed, we formulated the following hypothesis:

H1: The Spanish adaptation of the FCWC scale will have adequate psychometric properties for measuring FCIW/WIFC among Spanish working carers.

FCIW/WIFC characteristics and their consequences and working carers' late career motivation and intentions

The consequences of combining work and elder/childcare, and the potential FCIW/WIFC outcomes, are diverse. First, regarding eldercare duties, outcomes are related to maintaining one's current job and wage issues, especially for women (Bauer & Sousa-Poza, 2015; Skira, 2015), which women often reduce their working hours and their incomes (Van Houtven et al., 2013). Moreover, they encounter more difficulties when attempting to return to work or increase their working hours after an eldercare period (Skira, 2015), what may force them into early retirement (Bauer & Sousa-Poza, 2015; Van Houtven et al., 2013). The inter-role conflict is also related to higher levels of absenteeism (Hepburn & Barling, 1996), along with higher levels of psychological strain, and a negative impact on partner relations (Barling et al., 1994). Other authors have proposed that WIFC is related to withdrawal from the family, and FCIW to withdrawal from work (MacEwen & Barling, 1994).

Second, sandwiched working caregivers report more intense FCIW than their non-caregiver co-workers, as well as higher levels of absenteeism and lateness, less perceived productivity, fewer career development opportunities and diminished career mobility. Moreover, they are usually pushed (either by their care obligations or pressure from their employer) to switch from full-time to part-time jobs (Burke, 2017), rendering them more vulnerable to a reduction in financial welfare or impoverishment resulting from their dedication to multiple care tasks (White-Means, 2017). Prior studies (Stewart, 2013) shown that exceptional family caregivers face higher levels of FCIW/WIFC, have lower incomes, and receive fewer informal supports compared with family caregivers with typical care responsibilities. In addition, the lack of support policies and practices for elder/sandwiched caregivers may create intense FCIW and force some

workers to make decisions that may harm their mid and late career (Ireson et al., 2018; Van Houtven et al., 2013), such as turnover intention, unintentional reduction in working hours, withdrawal intention and early retirement among both eldercare (Burch et al., 2019; Ireson et al., 2018; Lahaie et al., 2013; Shoptaugh et al., 2004).

In sum, prior research has revealed the existence of a consistent relationship between elder/child care and the probability of involuntary intentions, which affect work preservation and professional career development (Burke, 2017; Clancy et al., 2019). Firstly, there is a positive relationship between FCIW/WIFC and a reduction in working hours (Lahaie et al., 2013; Van Houtven et al., 2013), or temporary stoppage of paid employment (Barnett et al., 2009; Smith, 2004). Secondly, the involuntary decisions associated with FCWC tend to increase involuntary decisions to enter into early retirement (Bauer and Sousa-Poza, 2015; Barnett et al., 2009; Burch et al., 2019; Carr et al., 2018; Ireson et al., 2018; Lahaie et al., 2013; Smith, 2004; Shoptaugh et al., 2004). Moreover, they tend to decrease motivation to continue working beyond the retirement age due to difficulties balancing both duties (Naegele & Bauknecht, 2019).

Based on these rationales and research findings, we propose the following hypotheses:

H2: FCIW/WIFC will be positively associated with early retirement intentions among working carers.

H3: FCIW/WIFC will be negatively associated with working carers' motivation to continue working beyond the retirement age.

FCIW/WIFC, OFTP and late career decisions among working careers

FCIW/WIFC may also reduce occupational future time perspective (OFTP). This construct refers to how much time individuals believe they have left in their future working life and their perceptions of that time concerning employment activities and

context (Zacher & Frese, 2009). The results of reviews (Henry et al., 2017) and meta-analytic studies (Kooij et al., 2018; Rudolph et al., 2018) have shown that OFTP is a relevant construct for understanding older workers' motivations, intentions, behaviors, decisions and well-being.

As in the general FTP models (e.g., Carstensen, 1991), Zacher and Frese (2009) initially distinguished two OFTP-related dimensions: perceived remaining time at work and focus on opportunities at work. The first describes individuals' perceptions of the amount of future time they expect to spend working. The second describes individuals' perceptions of the new work-related goals, possibilities, and opportunities they expect to have in the future in their working life (Henry et al., 2017; Rudolph et al., 2018; Zacher & Frese, 2009). Later, Zacher (2013) identified a third dimension of OFTP: focus on limitations, which describes individuals' perceived limitations and constraints in their work-related future.

Research into the relationship between OFTP and late career development intentions has been scarce to date. However, the results reported indicate consistent associations between these variables (Henry et al., 2017, Rudolph et al., 2018; Topa et al., 2018). In particular, the focus on opportunities dimension is closely linked to motivation to continue working beyond the retirement age (Topa & Zacher, 2018; Zacher & Yang, 2016). Moreover, the perceived remaining time dimension is positively associated with learning motivation (Kooij & Zacher, 2016) and negatively associated with retirement intentions (Topa & Zacher, 2018), whereas focus on opportunities is positively related to achievement motivation (Kooij & Zacher, 2016) and negatively related to retirement intentions (Topa & Zacher, 2018).

Contextual antecedents of OFTP in relation to the work-family interface have hardly been studied at all to date although it may be assumed that FCIW/WIFC

influences perceptions of remaining time at work (Henry et al., 2017). Only recently, Henry and Desmette (2017) showed that work-family conflict reduces the effective strategies used by individuals to address related problems through its negative influence on their OFTP. To the best of our knowledge, no research has been conducted to date on the specific relationship between FCIW/WIFC and OFTP, and no studies have yet explored the mediating role played by OFTP in the relationship between FCWC and late career decisions. Consequently, we formulate the following hypotheses:

H4: The three dimensions of OFTP will mediate the relationship between FCIW/WIFC and retirement intentions among working carers.

H5: The three dimensions of OFTP will mediate the relationship between FCIW/WIFC and working carers' motivation to continue working beyond the retirement age.

Methods

Participants

In the first study, the sample comprised 146 participants (23.1% men; 76.9% women). The mean age was 40.84 years ($SD = 7.52$); 58 (39.7%) were less than 40 years old, 71 (48.7%) were between 40 and 50 years old, and 17 (11.6%) were older than 50 years old. Regarding the frequency of care, 83% stated that they cared for their relative once a day, 5.4% several days a week, 8.8% at least once a week, 1.4% once a month, and 1.4% less than once a month.

In the second study, the sample comprised 246 participants (32.5% men; 67.5% women). The mean age was 41.5 years ($SD = 11.87$); 99 (40.2%) being under 40 years of age, 79 (32.3%) between 40 and 50 years old, and 68 (27.5%) over 50 old. The tenure was 12.61 years ($SD = 10.18$). Concerning education level, most of the participants had finished high school (30.9%) and had a university degree, (54.4%).

Regarding the occupational group, 8.9% were managers, 23.9% middle-level managers, 48.8% worked as technicians or administrative employees, and 18.3% were in unskilled jobs. Regarding work tenure, 33.1% had between 1 and 5 years, 19.5% between 6 and 10, 14.7% between 11 and 15, and the remaining 32.2%, more than 16. Regarding the frequency of care, 52.8% reported caring for their relative once a day, 25.7% several times a week, 15.9% at least once a week, 2.8% once a month, and 2.8% less than once a month.

Instruments

Family Care Work Conflict (FCWC). We validated the FCWC scale adapted by Henry and Desmette (2017). This scale comprises the 2 subscales describe above, WIFC and FCIW, each containing 4 items. An item example of WIFC is “Does your job make it difficult for you to be the kind of son/daughter/grandparent you would like to be?”, and an item example of FCIW is: “Due to the demands of caring for your parents and/or your grandchildren, do you find it difficult to be relaxed at work?”. The list of the 8 items is presented in Appendix.

The original response scale ranged from 1 = *very rarely* to 7 = *very often*. The higher the score, the most frequent was WIFC and/or FCIW. The alpha values reported by the original adaptation were .90 (WIFC) and .89 (FCIW). Based on Barling and Hepburn (1996), a CFA was conducted using STATA (version) maximum likelihood estimation function. The hypothesized two-factor model was found to have a very good fit: $\chi^2(18) = 31,49$; CMIN/DF = 1.75; CFI= .90; GFI= .93; NFI= .93; RMSEA= .09. Figure A (in Appendix) shows the standardized factor loadings.

The FCWC scale was translated into Spanish and adapted to the Spanish context following the procedure suggested by Beaton et al. (2000), and included the following four steps: translation and adaptation, synthesis, back-translation, and committee review.

The scale's response scale ranges from 1 = *At least once at a month* to 5 = *At least once at a day*. The higher the score, the most frequent is WIFC and/or FCIW.

Occupational Future Time Perspective-SP version. We used the OFTP-SP scale adapted to Spanish (Topa & Zacher, 2018), which is based on the OFTP scale (Zacher & Frese, 2009; Zacher 2013). The instrument includes ten items based on the FTP scale developed by Carstensen and Lang (1996; Lang & Carstensen, 2002). Previous exploratory factor analyses confirmed the three-factor solution. Item examples are: "There is plenty of time left in my occupational life to make new plans" (perceived remaining time); "My occupational future is filled with possibilities" (focus on opportunities); and "I have the sense that my occupational time is running out" (focus on limitations).

Motivation to continue working. This variable was measured with three items, translated into Spanish from the Armstrong-Stassen (2008) scale. The scale was adapted to be applied to express intention to continue working in a general sense. The items are "Barring unforeseen circumstances, I would remain working as long as possible", "I expect to continue working as long as possible after my retirement age", and "If I were completely free to choose, I would prefer to continue working after my retirement age".

Early retirement intentions. Based on the work of Price (1997), and Desmette and Gaillard (2008), this variable was measured using five items.. All the items focus on plans, desires, and expectations of retiring soon. Item examples are: "I want to leave my company", "If I could, I would like to retire early", and "I intend to stop working as soon as possible".

Procedure

The Ethics Committee of the UNED (Spanish National Distance Learning University) approved the protocol for both studies in July 2018. Data for Study 1

(Sample 1) were collected by means of questionnaires distributed in different organizations by collaborators of the research team. The second sample (Study 2) was recruited via the snowball sampling technique through the research team's network of personal and professional contacts in Spain. The email invitation described the study and a link to the questionnaire via GoogleForms. Following the Spanish Law 3/2018 on Personal Data Protection and guarantee of digital rights, and the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation), before starting the questionnaire, participants read the informed consent form with information about the study and their rights and gave their consent to participate.

Data analysis

For the first study, we conducted an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of FCWC with Varimax rotation. Next, we carried out a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to test the fit of our model. For this purpose, we used the following statistics: Chi-square test, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), and Normed Fit Index (NFI). These indexes must return a value of $>.90$ to be acceptable. We also calculated the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) at a 95% confidence interval. Values of less than $.05$ on this index indicate a good fit. The scale's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha.

For the second study, we used a multivariate mediation and moderation model to test the hypotheses. We used Model 6 for the PROCESS macro, developed by Hayes (2013). All the data analyses were conducted using SPSS v.24 and AMOS v.22.

Results

Study 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In this step, a CFA was conducted using the IBM AMOS v.22 maximum likelihood estimation function. To evaluate the model's fit, we calculated its chi-squared

value. In SEM, chi-squared must be non-significant to indicate a good fit. A CMIN/DF index of below 2 also indicates an adequate goodness of fit. The hypothesized two-factor model was found to have a very good fit: $\chi^2(18) = 27.59$; CMIN/DF = 1.53; CFI= .99; GFI= .96; NFI= .96; RMSEA= .06. This result is coherent with the original two-factor construct purposed by Hepburn and Barling (1996). Figure 1 shows the standardized factor loadings.

Insert about here Figure 1

Study 1. Reliability analysis

In order to assess the reliability of the scale, we calculated the Alpha coefficient. The overall Alpha coefficient was .91; for the WIFC subscale, the Alpha was .86, and for the FCIW subscale, the Alpha was .89. These Alpha coefficients can be considered good values, and these results confirm Hypothesis 1 regarding the adequate psychometric properties of the Spanish adaptation of the FCWC scale.

Study 2 Testing the Hypotheses

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics and the Pearson correlation matrix of the study variables.

Insert about here Table 2

Regarding Hypothesis 2, we found a strong significant correlation between FCWC and early retirement intentions ($r = .46$; $p < .001$). A simple regression model confirmed that, in our sample, Total FCWC explained 21% of the variance ($R = .56$; $R^2 = .21$; $p < .001$). Thus, in our sample, FCWC is clearly and significantly associated with early retirement intentions. However, no statistically significant relationship was observed between FCWC and motivation to continue working beyond the retirement age. The results do not, therefore, provide enough evidence to confirm Hypothesis 3.

Direct effects on early retirement intentions

In order to test Hypotheses 4 and 5, we developed a mediation model based on Hayes' PROCESS macro. To test Hypothesis 2, the first step in our model was to evaluate the direct effect of global FCWC alone on early retirement intentions. We found this relationship to be statistically significant ($B = .26$, $SE = .04$, 95% C.I (.18; .34), $p < .001$).

We found the direct relationship between WIFC and early retirement intentions significant ($B = .21$, $SE = .04$, 95% C.I. (.14; .29), $p < .001$).

Analyzing the relationship between FCIW and early retirement intentions, we found the direct model significant ($B = .26$; $SE = .04$; 95% C.I (.18; .34), $p < .001$).

Indirect effects on early retirement intentions

As noted above, the indirect effects model was supported by our data ($B = .06$, $SE = .02$, 95% C.I (.03; .11)). Detailed information about this model can be seen in Figure 2. We found two models that fit.

Insert about here Figure 2

Model 1 (FCWC-> Opp-> Eret; $B = .05$; $SE = .02$; 95% C.I. = .02; .09) indicated that FCWC may lead to a reduction in perceived opportunities, which can intensify early retirement intentions, and Model 2 (FCWC-> Limit-> Eret; $B = .03$; $SE = .01$; 95% C.I. = .01; .09) indicated that FCWC might increase individuals' perceptions of their own limitations, which will have the same effect.

When we consider our predictors separately we found that the indirect effects model was significant in the case of WIFC ($B = .05$; $SE = .02$; 95% C.I. (.02; .09) and in the case of FCIW ($B = .06$; $SE = .02$; 95% C.I. (.02; .10)).

In the case of WIFC we found that models 1 (WIFC-> Opp-> Eret; $B = .04$; $SE = .02$; 95% C.I. = .01; .08), and 3 (WIFC-> Limit-> Eret; $B = .02$; $SE = .01$; 95% C.I. = .01; .06), fits to our data. Whereas in the case of FCIW, we found that only model 1 (FCIW-> Opp-> Eret; $B = .04$; $SE = .01$; 95% C.I. = .01; .08), was significant. It seems that both types of factors act differently when predicting early retirement intentions.

Direct effects on motivation to continue working

When analyzing FCWC in relation to motivation to continue working after retirement (Hypothesis 3), we found that the direct relationship between the two variables was not significant ($B = .00$; $SE = .04$ 95% C.I. (-.08; .09)).

Besides, we found the direct relationship between WIFC and motivation to continue working was not significant ($B = -.00$, $SE = .04$, 95% C.I. (-.08; .08), $p > .05$).

Analyzing the relationship between FCIW and motivation to continue working, we found that the direct model was neither significant ($B = -.00$; $SE = .04$; 95% C.I. $(-.09; .09)$, $p > 0.05$).

Indirect effects on motivation to continue working

Due that we found significant correlations between FCWC and OFTP factors (see Table 2) we conducted an indirect effect model for analyzing the relationship between FCWC and motivation to continue working.

Our data show that the indirect effects model was not significant ($B = -.02$; $SE = .03$; 95% C.I. $(-.08; .33)$). Analyzing the factors separately, we found that the WIFC indirect model was not significant ($B = -.02$; $SE = .06$; 95% C.I. $(-.07; .03)$). Besides, FCIW indirect model was neither significant ($B = -.02$; $SE = .03$; 95% C.I. $(-.07; .03)$).

Discussion

The aim of this paper was twofold. Concerning to test the psychometric properties of the FCWC scale in a sample from the Spanish working population (Study 1), the results of the EFA indicated that the Spanish validation of Henry and Desmette's FCWC instrument (2017) confirmed its two-factor structure. This is consistent with previous research and validation studies. In comparison with Henry and Desmette's Belgian adaptation (2017) of Hepburn and Barling's scales (1996), our validation was found to have near reliability alpha indexes, making it an acceptable instrument for use in research. In addition, the CFA revealed a very good fit. In light of these overall results, we can conclude that the Spanish validation of the FCWC measure can be used as a reliable two-factor scale for assessing not only overall FCWC, but also its two factors. This factorial structure is coherent with the original Hepburn and Barling (1996)

scale. The above mentioned characteristics confirm that it is a robust instrument for measuring FCWC and offers a valid measure for use in working populations in Spanish-speaking countries (Central America and the Caribbean region, South America, and Spain). Since the care of dependent relatives is a highly complex and frequent phenomenon, understanding its intricacies and the ways in which it is expressed is a challenge for our societies (Clancy et al., 2020).

As previous research has shown, FCIW/WIFC is related to early retirement intentions (Barnett et al., 2009; Treadway et al., 2011) through OFTP (Zacher & Frese, 2009). Our research has expanded our understanding of this relationship, identifying which OFTP factors are involved and determining how this process may occur. Maintaining a healthy workforce, under good conditions, is one of the priorities of Work and Organizational Psychology (WOP) in the 21st century (Griggs et al., 2020), and our research provides insight into mid and late career intentions and the factors involved in work-related goals and motivation in medium-late adulthood (Alcover & Topa, 2018; Kanfer et al., 2013; Topa & Alcover, 2015).

One of the most significant finding of our research is related to the mediating role played by the OFTP dimensions in the relationship between FCIW/WIFC and early retirement intentions. Consistently with previous research, focus on opportunities was found to be negatively associated with both dimensions of FCWC, as well as with early retirement intentions (Topa & Zacher, 2018; Zacher & Yang, 2016).

Upon testing the mediation models, two models were found to be supported by our data. The first model indicated that FCWC predicted early retirement intentions through a decrease in perceived work opportunities; and the second indicated that FCWC led to early retirement intentions through the perception of limitations. In other words, participants who were experiencing FCWC may have perceived more limitations

in terms of maintaining their jobs, which in turn drained their resources for coping with work demands. These two models may help us understand the organizational dynamics involved and develop prevention plans based on organizational support practices designed to buffer the effects of FCWC, thereby moving towards more sustainable organizations and societies (Almeida et al., 2015; Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020; Zacher et al., 2017). Previous research has already shown that older workers' care responsibilities in relation to child/older adults relatives is related to early retirement decisions (Bauer and Sousa-Poza, 2015; Beehr et al., 2000; Carr et al., 2018; Ireson et al., 2018), especially in the case of women (Dentinger & Clarkberg, 2002; Smith, 2004). Although sandwiched working carers are less likely to retire early, temporary time off, a shift to part-time work and the financial burdens of multiple care tasks may affect both the size of their pensions and their savings capacity for retirement (White-Means, 2017). Our results represent a breakthrough in understanding FCWC and early retirement intentions in the late career period, since they identify the role played by perceptions of reduced career opportunities and limitations/constraints to employment retention, respectively. Although remaining time was negatively related to every dimension of FCWC, as well as to early retirement intentions, consistently with that reported by previous research (Topa & Zacher, 2018), its indirect effects were not significant.

Although workers with family care responsibilities cannot be considered less productive in general, since this depends on the demands of their job and the heaviness of their care burden (Trukeschitz et al., 2013), it is possible that work-related strain arising from interference with family care is perceived as an obstacle to career development and an impediment in maintaining employment. This can also be explained by the possible activation of meta-stereotypes (Finkelstein et al., 2015), which are linked to working carers' belief that employers may perceive them as less

dedicated to their job and as having less interest in their career. In turn, these FCWC-activated meta-stereotypes may contribute to feelings of crashing into a “glass ceiling” (Hoobler et al., 2010). Future research should focus on describing why these perceptions about opportunities drop and why limitations appear and develop.

Our research has some limitations. First, we used cross-sectional data in both studies. Future research should carry out longitudinal studies in order to gain a better understanding of the evolution of these processes, as well as the potential causal relationships between the variables involved. Second, our samples mainly comprised workers with fairly high education levels. It would be interesting to test our models among working carers with a variety of education levels and occupational statuses. Closely related to the above, future studies should also explore possible differences regarding occupational groups since job demands and job and personal resources, working conditions (for example, flexibility), and potential support from organizations will exert differential effects on labor and health variables of working careers. Another limitation is the absence of measures related to the perception of organizational support and informal support at work. Given the key role played by support in buffering the negative consequences of FCWC and increasing work engagement (Miller et al., 2001; Zacher et al., 2017; Zacher & Winter, 2011), future studies should include these measures and analyze their potential moderating effect. A final limitation of our study is the imbalance of the sample composition between women and men, which has not allowed us to perform a comparative analysis and detect possible gender differences in their retirement intentions. As noted in previous research (e.g., Clancy et al., 2020; Dentinger & Clarkberg, 2002; Halinski et

al., 2020), gender needs to consider when we study the challenges working carers face in reducing the two-way interference between family caregiving and work.

Despite the limitations outlined above, our results have important practical implications for HRM policies and practices, career development, and organizational and social sustainability. Given that the progressive aging of the population is a worldwide phenomenon, societies need to start thinking about new ways of dealing with this issue (Ireson et al., 2018). Thus, in terms of the implications of our studies for career counseling practice, the most relevant is related to the risks generated by FCIW/WIFC for career maintenance and advancement in the middle and late stages, that is, from age 45 onwards, and especially for women. At present, relatives perform most family care tasks, and most of those are women (Carr & Utz, 2020; Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020). This means that workers who have to care for relatives may encounter career plateaus or impairments in the middle and final stages of their work trajectory. To attenuate these risks, organizational policies and practices aimed at increasing formal and informal support for working carers may help improve both their psychological well-being and their levels of work engagement and performance (Zacher et al., 2017). Family care support usually is provided in a variety of ways using different strategies and agents (organizational, social services, and institutional) related to the individual- and group-based psychosocial support and education for working carers (Andersson et al., 2017a). In addition to these, and with the aim of overcoming the usual barriers to receiving support and social services for working carers and the people they care for (Brimblecombe et al., 2018), in recent years web-based ICT family carer support has begun to be developed (Andersson et al., 2017b). It is a hub supported by public services that facilitate contact with peers, specialized personnel, and relevant information. In sum, access to a web-based family care support network can help

working carers become or stay informed about their concerns. In addition, it can be helpful to gain knowledge, insights, and skills regarding caregiving demands and issues, to reinforce their sense of competence, and to seek others and peers to exchange psychosocial support (Andersson et al., 2017b).

In short, the priorities of career counselors (Killam, 2021) should be to encourage human resource managers and working women to seek and negotiate flexible work arrangements. Also, to encourage women to continue building solid support systems (on and off the job) and networking with others in their profession, as well as to generate attitudes of openness to other employment options that will further their careers (Killam, 2021). In this sense, career renewal, defined as an opportunity for personal and professional growth (Wang et al., 2013), can be an alternative in the mid and late stages for working carers to seek employment options that make it possible to reconcile work obligations and family care responsibilities.

And regarding the implications for career theory, our results highlight the importance, in line with lifespan perspectives, of considering individual and contextual factors contributing to life-long career development (Nagy et al., 2019) and sustainable employability (Alcover et al., 2021), as well as considering the mid-and late-stage careers as a series of transitions to retirement, rather than an abrupt change in life status (Bordia et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2013). In this way, several scholars (e.g. Gounden Rock et al., 2019; Kossek et al., 2021) are calling for future research that analyzes how micro-and macro factors interrelate in the management of careers, and how they have reciprocating effects when caregiving and family responsibilities converge.

In a context of increasing multigenerational family caregiving (Keene et al., 2017) and kin work (Perry-Jenkins & Gerstel, 2020), and where older adults who, in addition to maintaining in working, have increasingly changed their role from that of

recipient to that of a provider of family care (Carr & Utz, 2020), current and future societies must seriously consider implementing policies and practices designed to ensure that children, older adults, and people with disabilities are well cared for, while at the same time enabling working carers to keep their jobs and maintain their professional growth, health, and well-being.

Conflict of interest: On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

Data availability: The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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Table 1. *Exploratory Factor Analysis, rotated factor loadings.*

Item	WIFC	FCIW
Item 1	.73	.37
Item 2	.89	.24
Item 3	.88	.26
Item 4	.54	.55
Item 5	.37	.71
Item 6	.34	.80
Item 7	.21	.88
Item 8	.26	.87

Note: *WIFC* Work Interference with Family Care; *FCIW* Family Care Interference with Work.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation matrix

	M	SD	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.Age	41.54	11.87	-	-									
2.Work tenure	12.61	10.18	-	.63**	-								
3.Care Freq.	4.22	.99	-	.15*	.00	-							
4.FCWC WIFC	3.91	1.78	.89	.07	.00	.27**	-						
5.FCWC FCIW	3.48	1.78	.92	.01	-.02	.26**	-.83**	-					
6.FCWC Total	3.70	1.70	.94	.044	-.01	.28**	-.96**	.96**	-				
7.OFTP Opp.	3.14	1.11	.89	-.35**	-.13*	-.16*	-.19**	-.24**	-.22**	-			
8.OFTP Rem.	2,89	1,11	.82	-.51**	-.23**	-.13	-.21**	-.19**	-.21**	.71**	-		
9.OFTP Lim.	2,88	1,22	.79	.24**	.17**	.14	.30**	.37**	.35**	-.24**	-.34**	-	
10.ERET	2,46	1,20	.87	.01	-.08	.09	.40**	.48**	.46**	-.31**	-.19**	.30**	
11.Motivation	2,17	1,20	.89	-.23**	-.01	-.06	-.02	-.02	-.03	.34**	.24**	.07	-.12

Note: ** $p < 0.01$. M= Mean; SD= Standard Deviation. FCWC = Family Care Work Conflict; Opp= OFPT Opportunity; Rem= OFTP Remaining time; Limit= OFTP Limitations; Eret= Early Retirement

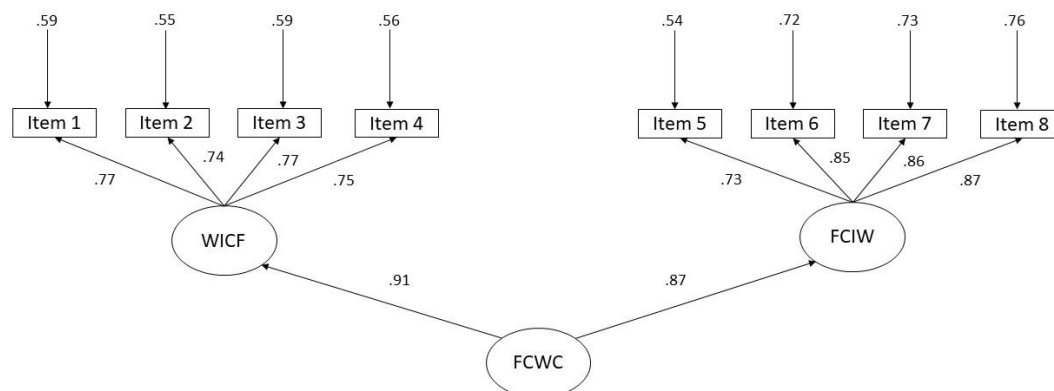


Figure 1. Path diagram and estimates for the two-factor model suggested for this instrument. *Note:* FCWC = Family care work conflict; WICF= Work interference with family care; FCIW= Family care interference with work.

Serial mediation model 6 linking Total Family Care Work Conflict and Early retirement intentions.

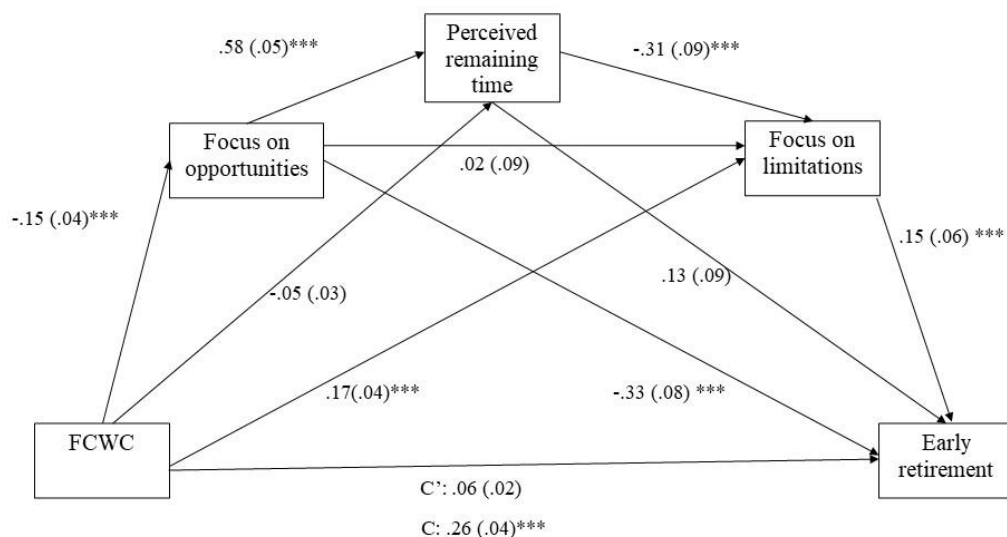


Figure 2. Serial mediation model 6 linking Total Family Care Work Conflict and Early retirement intentions. Standardized effects are presented outside the parentheses with bootstrapped SEs in the parentheses. C'=indirect effect of Total Family Care Work Conflict to Early retirement; C=direct effect of Total Family Care Work Conflict to Early retirement.

Appendix : FCWC = Family care work conflict

Work interference with family care (WIFC)

Do you come home from work too tired to do some of the things you want to do for you parents and/or your grandchildren?

Due to the demands of your jobs, are you irritable when caring for you parents and/or your grandchildren?

Due to the demands of your job, is it difficult for you to be relaxed when you are caring for your parents and/or your grandchildren?

Your job has made it difficult for you to be the type of son/daughter/grandparent you would like to be?

Family care interference with work (FCIW)

After caring for your parents and/or your grandchildren, are you too tired do some of the things you have to do at work?

Due to the demands of caring for your parents and/or your grandchildren, are you irritable at work?

Due to the demands of caring for your parents and/or your grandchildren, is it difficult for you to be relaxed at work?

Caring for your parents and/or your grandchildren makes it difficult for you to be the type of worker you want to be?

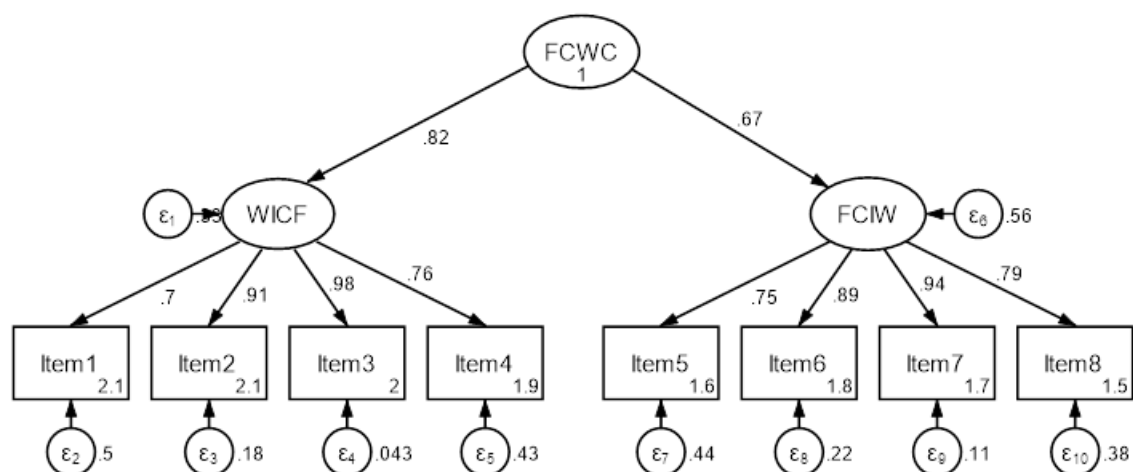


Figure A. Path diagram and estimates for the two-factor model suggested for this instrument. *Note:* FCWC = Family care work conflict; WIFC= Work interference with family care; FCIW= Family care interference with work. N=74 workers concerned with family care (mean age = 50,53, SD = 7,69; gender = 57 (77%) women)