

Looking good and doing good: family to work spillover through impression management

Looking good
and doing
good

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine the role of four impression management (IM) tactics as mediators to help job incumbents manage the impressions others have regarding the spillover of the incumbent's family domain onto the work domain.

Design/methodology/approach – The authors examined the data from 296 matched job incumbents and coworkers. The authors tested a structural equation model and alternative models to find the best fit and subsequently tested both direct and indirect effects.

Findings – The authors found that family-to-work conflict related to job-focused and supervisor-focused IM behaviors, and family-to-work enrichment related to self-focused, coworker-focused and supervisor-focused IM behaviors. Supervisor-focused IM served as a mediator to the job incumbent's attitude (job satisfaction) while job-focused, self-focused and coworker-focused IM served as mediators to the job incumbent's behavior (job performance).

Practical implications – The research is important in that just as employees do not “leave work at the office,” they also do not “leave family at home.” Instead, experiences in the two domains affect one another in ways that are beneficial and harmful. Understanding the role that IM plays in this process adds insight into the spillover of family onto work.

Originality/value – The authors extend both the work-family and IM literatures by looking at potential family domain antecedents to engaging in IM behaviors and their impact on work life.

Keywords Impression management, Work-family issues, Work-life balance, Family-to-work conflict, Family-to-work enrichment

Paper type Research paper

Just as employees do not “leave work at the office,” they also do not “leave family at home.” Instead, experiences in the two domains affect one another both in ways that are beneficial (e.g. Grzywacz and Marks, 2000; Song *et al.*, 2008) and harmful (e.g. Mauno and Kinnunen, 1999; Song *et al.*, 2008). While much research has examined the role of the work domain on the family domain, much less has been done on the reverse – the impact the family has on the work domain. This is unfortunate as researchers have yet to uncover how individuals maintain positive reputations at work while striving to balance work and family roles.

We aim to expand the understanding of how family affects the work domain by considering how experienced conflict and enrichment play a role in employees managing the image they want to display at work. Specifically, we propose individuals engage in a variety of impression management (IM) tactics to sustain their desired images at work and these behaviors are in response to either the positive, i.e. family-to-work enrichment (FWE) – when experiences in



family improve the quality of life at work (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006) or negative interface of family-to-work (i.e. family-to-work conflict (FWC) when demands of the family domain are incompatible with demands of the work domain (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985).

IM is the process through which individuals present information about themselves so that others view them as they wish to be viewed (Schlenker, 1980). IM has been linked to enhanced performance assessments, extrinsic success (Higgins *et al.*, 2003) and favorable interviewer evaluations (Stevens and Kristof, 1995). In this study, we view FWC and FWE as contextual antecedents (Bolino *et al.*, 2008) that prompt individuals to engage in IM behaviors in order to sustain a desirable image in the workplace. FWC has been shown to contribute to work outcomes such as lower performance, higher levels of burnout and greater turnover, family outcomes such as lower family satisfaction and performance and life outcomes such as health problems and psychological strain (Amstad *et al.*, 2011) while FWE contributes to greater engagement in the work domain such as more job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions, and the family domain in terms of satisfaction as well as life as evidenced in greater physical and mental health (McNall *et al.*, 2010). Individuals that want their desired image to be different from their current image and wish to be viewed as productive, contributing and committed members of the organization are more likely to engage in IM so that they can minimize negative outcomes (of FWC) and maximize rewards (of FWE) (Leary and Kowalski, 1990). Thus, they may choose from several types of IM tactics to ensure they are conveying the "ideal worker" image (Williams, 2004) in response to FWC and FWE.

This research contributes to our understanding of how the family domain affects life at work in two ways. First, this research is among the first to combine the literatures on IM and the family-work interface (e.g. Nikandrou *et al.*, 2008). Williams (2004) noted the serious image consequences that may occur when employees perceive they do not measure up to the ideal worker. When the family domain spills over onto the work domain, IM may be an option that helps them maintain their desired images. Second, this study identifies and examines the process by which the family domain shapes the work domain by identifying IM behaviors as mediators in these relationships. We apply Bolino's (1999) looking good vs doing good framework to explain the choice of IM behaviors that result from FWC and FWE.

Theoretical foundations

Based on IM theory (Bolino, 1999), we propose the negative spillover of FWC will incite job-focused and self-focused IM behaviors to ensure that the inability to fully complete one's job due to the interference of family in the work domain does not negatively impact one's reputation. The positive spillover of FWE will be related to the actions of supervisor- and coworker-focused IM as enriched employees spend energy gained in the family domain doing good in the work domain, and especially focused on their coworkers and supervisor. IM encompasses the efforts by an actor to create, maintain or protect an image held by a target audience (Bolino *et al.*, 2008). In this study, we position IM as a set of behaviors individuals enact to be viewed favorably at work. Leary and Kowalski (1990) two-component model of IM can be used to understand how the family-work interface motivates the use of IM and an individual's behavioral choices. The first part, impression motivation, occurs when the individual's goals are relevant to the desired impression (Leary and Kowalski, 1990). In the context of the family and work domains, individuals experiencing FWC or FWE would be expected to impression manage if they place value on being seen as a productive and committed member of the organization. The second part of the model, impression construction, involves determining the impression one wants to create and the techniques for creating that impression. Individuals are expected to construct images consistent with their self-concept, desired image and roles as family and organizational members. This notion is consistent with the work-devotion schema which

continually reinforces the norm that work is a sole focus of one’s life (Blair-Loy, 2003). Specifically, we frame the engagement in IM in response to the contextual antecedent of the family-work interface as a behavioral choice focused on: “looking good” or “doing good” (Bolino, 1999; Grant and Mayer, 2009). Further, we contend that those who choose IM behaviors they believe will make them “look good” or appear to be “good actors” are engaging in inwardly focused behaviors that make themselves look good, and these behaviors stem from the possibility that FWC is negatively impacting their desired image. Conversely, those who choose IM behaviors that allow them to “do good” are using outwardly focused behaviors and are using their experiences of enrichment to help them positively engage with those around them (i.e. supervisors and coworkers). We apply this framework to further our understanding of how positive and negative family-work spillover motivates individuals to engage in different IM behaviors to achieve their desired images.

Four forms of IM are examined in this research, which fall into two broad categories: “looking good” (i.e. job-focused and self-focused) and “doing good” (i.e. coworker-focused and supervisor-focused) IM behaviors (Bolino, 1999). On the looking good side, job-focused strategies are behaviors that make one appear diligent, hard-working and responsible for favorable work outcomes (e.g. self-promotion) (Wayne and Ferris, 1990). Similarly, self-focused strategies are behaviors that make oneself appear friendly and polite and create the appearance of a model employee (e.g. exemplification). While job- and self-focused IM center around how one acts in order to look good, coworker- and supervisor-focused IM are behaviors that outwardly center on doing good things for other people in order to create a positive impression (e.g. ingratiation). Coworker-focused strategies entail doing things such as helping colleagues complete work tasks or praising them to create a positive impression. Likewise, supervisor-focused strategies involve doing personal favors for, or volunteering to help, or complimenting the supervisor. We believe these IM behaviors will serve as mediators through which the negative spillover diminishes, and the positive spillover contributes, to positive job performance and job satisfaction. Figure 1 is a visual representation of our theoretical predictions of these relationships.

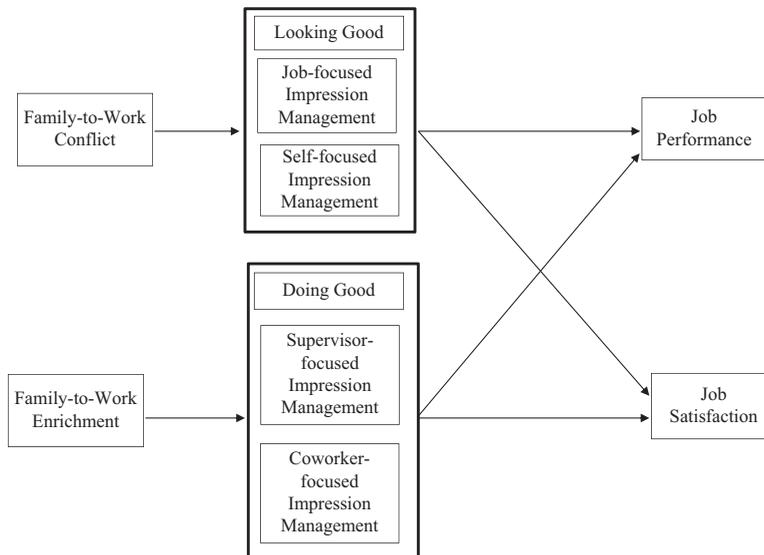


Figure 1.
Family-to-work
interface and
impression
management

Family-to-work spillover

FWC to “looking good” IM strategies. Family-work conflict is “a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985, p. 77). FWC occurs when demands from the family domain negatively spillover to the work domain through, for example, strain or competing demands on time (Carlson *et al.*, 2000). We contend that individuals who experience FWC will engage in job- and self-focused IM behaviors to “look good” (Bolino, 1999) and conceal the fact that family demands are interfering with the fulfillment of their work demands (Williams *et al.*, 2016). Given the hedonic principle that individuals seek to maximize rewards and minimize punishment (Schlenker, 1980), they are likely to engage in IM to hide these conflicts, with the aim of reaching their desired goals (i.e. impression motivation). Individuals may use IM behaviors that make them appear like solid performers such as job-focused IM strategies (i.e. impression construction) (Wayne and Ferris, 1990). Examples include arriving early, working late and ensuring the supervisor is aware of their accomplishments. Similarly, individuals may engage in self-focused IM strategies such as working hard when the boss is looking or presenting themselves as a model employee. Individuals engage in these IM behaviors to make themselves look good, and in doing so may be seen as “good actors” even when FWC interferes with the completion of job tasks (Bolino, 1999). Thus, FWC situations motivate the individual to feign competency and job performance through engaging in job- and self-focused IM behaviors:

H1. FWC is positively related to (a) job-focused IM and (b) self-focused IM

FWE to “doing good” IM strategies. FWE occurs when the family domain positively spills over to the work domain through, for example, positive affect or a skill acquired in the family domain that helps the actor be a better worker (Carlson *et al.*, 2006). Unlike the response to FWC, we contend that the FWE context motivates individuals to engage in more authentic behaviors and to actually “do good” at work in response to their enrichment (Bolino, 1999). As performance at work is multifaceted, individuals should want to appear as solid performers and as valued colleagues. Experiences in the family domain can encourage behaviors that help others in the workplace. For instance, researchers have suggested family responsibilities can carry over to the workplace in terms of enhanced interpersonal skills (Ruderman *et al.*, 2002). We believe that FWE situations can manifest in the form of other-focused “doing good” IM behaviors. Coming from an enriching family situation, one is motivated to be polite and friendly, and to engage in appropriate behaviors. To do this, individuals can engage in coworker- and supervisor-focused IM behaviors that portray them in a favorable light. We expect coworker- and supervisor-focused IM behaviors will be motivated by the positive spillover of family-to-work as individuals wish to maintain a positive self-image (impression motivation) and engage in outwardly focused IM (impression construction). Thus, we proposed the following hypothesis:

H2. FWE is positively related to (a) coworker-focused IM and (b) supervisor-focused IM.

Work outcomes

Job performance. Job performance represents the degree to which an individual successfully completes task related behavior and is a global indicator of how well s/he performs in the work domain. FWC diminishes both self- and other-rated job performance (Amstad *et al.*, 2011; Graves *et al.*, 2007; van Steenbergen and Ellemers, 2009; Witt and Carlson, 2006). What has yet to be considered is how a behavioral mechanism might help explain this negative relationship. We offer IM behaviors as a potential mediator of the work-family interface on job performance.

To compensate for the negative effects of FWC on job performance, individuals may use job- or self-focused IM tactics to make themselves look good and to conceal the interference of family with work. Unfortunately, IM behaviors do not always produce the intended effect. Researchers have acknowledged the risks associated with the ineffective use of IM as well as its overuse (Liden and Mitchell, 1988; Turnley and Bolino, 2001). Individuals using job- or self-focused IM risk a negative perception if the behaviors fail. For example, playing up one's role in a task that produced a positive outcome may appear conceited (Jones and Pittman, 1982). Individuals who overuse IM may seem inauthentic thereby increasing their risk of failure while attempting to enhance their image (Liden and Mitchell, 1988). It is possible that individuals experiencing FWC may overcompensate by engaging in extensive job- or self-focused IM behaviors to create the appearance of strong job performance. These people may actually harm themselves in terms of perceptions of their performance if the audience views their actions as a means of "looking good" rather than actual noteworthy job performance. Thus, in trying to "look good," those who engage in job- or self-focused IM as a response to FWC instead may undermine how others perceive their performance at work. Therefore, we proposed the following hypothesis:

- H3. The negative relationship between FWC and job performance is mediated by (a) job-focused IM and (b) self-focused IM.

On the positive side of spillover, the relationship between FWE and performance has received less attention and the results are mixed. While a few researchers have reported a positive relationship between enrichment and performance (van Steenbergen *et al.*, 2007; van Steenbergen and Ellemers, 2009; Wayne *et al.*, 2004), others have failed to find a significant relationship (Graves *et al.*, 2007; Witt and Carlson, 2006). We believe that a mediating variable may provide insight into the inconsistent findings of this complex relationship. The positive affect resulting from one's role at home can lead to higher performance at work (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006). FWE is expected to carry over in terms of coworker- and supervisor-focused IM behaviors (Ruderman *et al.*, 2002), such as complimenting, doing favors, offering praise or acting politely. Thus, FWE, individuals engage in authentic IM behaviors that help them "do good" rather than just "look good," which leads to positive outcomes. When individuals use coworker- and supervisor-focused IM, we expect them to be rated high in job performance, as they are facilitating a pleasant and productive work environment and encouraging beneficial working relationships. Further, these IM behaviors carry less risk of appearing inauthentic since they are other-focused rather than self-focused:

- H3. The positive relationship between FWE and job performance is mediated by (c) coworker-focused IM and (d) supervisor-focused IM.

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is an individual's attitude toward his or her job and a key outcome considered in the work-family literature (McNall *et al.*, 2010). As individuals experience difficulty managing the demands of their work and family roles, they may perceive the organization as unsupportive, and feel less satisfied by their job. A meta-analysis supported the modest negative relationship between FWC and job satisfaction (Amstad *et al.*, 2011); however, other research found no significant relationship (Aryee *et al.*, 2005; Carlson *et al.*, 2009; Gordon *et al.*, 2007).

Again, we believe these inconsistent findings may require a mediating mechanism to consistently connect these variables. Heavy family demands may necessitate job- and self-focused IM to preserve one's work reputation. As such, we contend that engaging in behaviors to "look good" are necessary when FWC negatively interferes with work roles. For instance, job-focused and self-focused IM may require the individual to do more than is

necessary in their job such as arriving to work early or working late (Harris *et al.*, 2013). Further, IM based on the looking good motive is more cognitively demanding than acting authentically (Vrij *et al.*, 2010), and as such may undermine the satisfaction that the individual gets from the job. Thus, we proposed the following hypothesis:

H4. The negative relationship between FWC and job satisfaction is mediated by (a) job-focused IM and (b) self-focused IM.

On the positive side of spillover, FWE is thought to contribute to job satisfaction as the positive integration of roles enhances the job incumbent's emotional response to the work role. While a meta-analysis found a moderate positive relationship between FWE and job satisfaction (Carlson *et al.*, 2009; McNall *et al.*, 2010), others have failed to find a significant relationship (Aryee *et al.*, 2005). One way to explain previous inconsistent findings is to add a mediating variable, in our case, supervisor- and coworker-focused IM behaviors. We contend that in response to enrichment, individuals will be able to "do good" (Bolino, 1999) through IM behaviors that are outwardly focused on the supervisor and coworkers and this positive experience will carry over into their attitude toward their job:

H4. The positive relationship between FWE and job satisfaction is mediated by (c) coworker-focused IM and (d) supervisor-focused IM.

Method

Sample and procedure

We used the online data collection agency uSamp to collect data from job incumbents and their coworkers. We provided a link to our survey to uSamp who forwarded it to individuals in their database to serve as our job incumbent. These individuals were required to work full time, be married, and have coworkers with whom they shared a supervisor and come into contact daily. uSamp members, who participated in our study, were compensated with uSamp reward points redeemable for a variety of rewards. The coworkers received no reward for participating.

The job incumbent survey began with a request to provide the names and e-mail addresses of up to three coworkers with whom they shared a supervisor. Then, the job incumbents were branched to the survey. When the job incumbents completed their surveys, a personalized Qualtrics survey was automatically sent to the first coworker listed. The recruitment e-mail to the coworkers explained that the job incumbent, mentioned by first name, nominated them to participate in the study. The recruitment e-mail included a link to the coworker survey.

To ensure the quality of our data, quality check items and straight lining checks were implemented. Following this procedure provided us with a total of 296 matched surveys ($n = 592$) (41 percent matched response rate). For the job incumbent sample, 46 percent (104) were male, with an average age of 39.6 years, worked an average of 43 h a week, and had worked for their organization an average of 8 years. For the coworker sample, 44 percent (100) were male, with an average age of 38.8 years, and worked an average of 41 h a week. The sample represented a wide variety of both salary ranges (i.e. \$25,000 or less to more than \$150,000 annually) and industries (i.e. education, manufacturing, health care, real estate, finance, and construction, among others).

Measures from the job incumbent

The IM scales were measured on a five-point scale with anchors of 5 = regularly and 1 = never. All other scales were measured on a five-point scale with the anchors of 5 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree.

Family-to-work conflict. We used the three-item ($\alpha = 0.73$) short form of the Carlson *et al.* (2000) conflict scale published by Matthews *et al.* (2010). An example item is “Because I am often stressed from family responsibilities, I have a hard time concentrating on my work.”

Family-to-work enrichment. We used the three-item ($\alpha = 0.86$) short form of the Carlson *et al.* (2006) enrichment scale published by Kacmar *et al.* (2014). An example item is “My involvement in my family helps me acquire skills and this helps me to be a better worker.”

Self-focused IM. We used the five-item ($\alpha = 0.86$) self-focused IM tactic scale developed by Wayne and Ferris (1990). An example item is “Let your supervisor know that you try to do a good job in your work.”

Supervisor-focused IM. The seven-item ($\alpha = 0.90$) supervisor-focused IM tactic scale developed by Wayne and Ferris (1990). An example item is “Do personal favors for your supervisor.”

Job satisfaction. The three-item ($\alpha = 0.94$) satisfaction scales developed by Cammann *et al.* (1979) was used. An example item is “All in all, I am satisfied with my job.”

Control variables. We controlled for four different variables – gender, number of hours worked, number of children, and salary.

Measures from the Coworker

Job-focused IM. We used six items ($\alpha = 0.90$) from the job-focused IM tactic scale developed by Wayne and Ferris (1990). An example item is “Play up the value of a positive event that he/she has taken credit for.”

Coworker-focused IM. The seven-item ($\alpha = 0.84$) supervisor-focused IM tactic scale developed by Wayne and Ferris (1990) was adapted for the coworker by substituting the word coworker for supervisor. Coworkers were asked how often they saw the job incumbent engage in a behavior such as: “Volunteer to help your coworker on a task.”

Job performance of job incumbent. We used a four-item ($\alpha = 0.79$) scale of performance developed by Wayne and Liden (1995). An example item is “The overall level of performance of this coworker is excellent.”

Results

As shown in Table I, none of the control variables were significantly related to our dependent variables. Thus, we elected to follow Becker’s (2005) advice and report our results without our control variables as including control variables not correlated with the dependent variables reduces power. To explore the discriminant validity of our scales, we followed the procedure outlined by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and calculated the square root of the average variance explained (AVE) which are displayed on the diagonal in Table I.

The first model, we tested was an eight-factor measurement model using LISREL 8.80. While model fit was adequate ($\chi^2(637, n = 296) = 1,492, p < 0.000; \chi^2/df = 2.34; CFI = 0.92; NNFI = 0.91; RMSEA = 0.07$), modification indices indicated that the model fit could be significantly improved if one pair of items within each of the IM scales was correlated. Given the similar wording of these items (e.g. “Do personal favors for a coworker” and “Offer to do something for a coworker which he/she was not required to do; that is, he/she did it as a personal favor”), rather than correlating the items, we retained the highest loading item in the pair and removed the other. The reduced model fit the data significantly better than the original CFA model ($\chi^2(499, n = 296) = 882, p < 0.000; \chi^2/df = 1.77; CFI = 0.95; NNFI = 0.95; RMSEA = 0.05; X^2_{diff} (188, n = 296) = 611, p < 0.01$). These results demonstrate that the scales used discriminate from one another and work in the manner expected.

Next, we added paths to the measurement model to test the fully mediated hypothesized model shown in Figure 1. The model fit the data ($\chi^2(514, n = 296) = 1,033, p < 0.000;$

Table I.
Variables of interest

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>Measures from job incumbent</i>														
1. Gender	1.58	0.49												
2. Hours worked	42.46	6.40	-0.22***											
3. Children at home	1.54	1.14	-0.04	0.08										
4. Salary	3.12	1.53	-0.22***	0.20**	0.13*									
5. Family-work conflict	2.18	0.80	0.04	-0.07	0.03	-0.12*	0.64							
6. Family-work enrichment	3.72	0.80	0.09	-0.05	-0.03	0.07	-0.19**	0.83						
7. Self-focused IM	3.93	0.73	0.13*	-0.09	-0.08	-0.08	0.00	0.22***	0.71					
8. Supervisor-focused IM	2.87	0.72	0.04	-0.01	-0.01	0.01	0.11	0.13*	0.33***	0.64				
9. Job Satisfaction	3.82	0.90	-0.01	0.08	0.00	0.06	-0.15**	0.32***	0.06	0.25***	0.91			
<i>Measures from coworker</i>														
10. Job-focused IM	2.31	0.61	0.03	-0.09	-0.02	0.01	0.14*	0.04	0.26***	0.37***	0.09	0.68		
11. Coworker-focused IM	3.37	0.76	0.29***	-0.06	0.04	0.05	-0.04	0.24***	0.25***	0.38***	0.14*	0.13*	0.72	
12. Performance	4.16	0.56	0.10	0.07	-0.00	0.11	-0.15**	0.16**	0.24***	0.16**	0.12*	-0.07	0.31***	0.68

Notes: $n = 296$. IM, Impression management. Values on the diagonal are the square root of the average variance explained and demonstrate discriminant validity if higher than the correlations in the row and column in which they appear. Gender is coded such that males = 1 and females = 2. Salary is coded as $1 \leq 25,000$; $2 = 25,001-50,000$; $3 = 50,001-75,000$; $4 = 75,001-100,000$; $5 = 100,001-125,000$; $6 = 125,001-150,000$ and $7 \geq 150,000$. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

$\chi^2/df = 2.00$; CFI = 0.93; NNFI = 0.93; RMSEA = 0.06). To confirm that the hypothesized model was the best fit of the data and the model was appropriately specified, we tested two alternative models. The first alternative model depicted partial rather than full mediation by adding paths from FWC and FWE to the two outcome variables. Although the alternative model fit was similar to the hypothesized model ($\chi^2(510, n = 296) = 997, p < 0.000$; $\chi^2/df = 1.95$; CFI = 0.94; NNFI = 0.93; RMSEA = 0.06), the χ^2 difference test was significant ($\chi^2_{diff}(4, n = 296) = 36, p < 0.01$), and one of the four added paths was not significant (FWE to performance).

Our second alternative model investigated whether the work-family variables were linked to all forms of IM, rather than just the two hypothesized. The second alternative model added paths from FWC to coworker- and supervisor-focused IM and paths from FWE to job- and self-focused IM. Once again, the model fit ($\chi^2(510, n = 296) = 1,013, p < 0.000$; $\chi^2/df = 1.97$; CFI = 0.94; NNFI = 0.93; RMSEA = 0.06) was similar to the hypothesized model, and the χ^2 difference test was significant ($\chi^2_{diff}(4, n = 296) = 20, p < 0.01$). However, only two of the four added paths were significant (FWE to self-focused IM and FWC to super-focused IM).

The results of our alternative model testing suggest that the alternative models fit better than the hypothesized model. Thus, we added the five significant paths found in the alternative model testing to the hypothesized model and created a final model that we used to interpret our hypotheses. The final model fit the data ($\chi^2(509, n = 296) = 976, p < 0.000$; $\chi^2/df = 1.92$; CFI = 0.94; NNFI = 0.94; RMSEA = 0.06). The standardized path loadings for this model are provided in Figure 2. As shown in Figure 2, *H1a*, that FWC is positively related to job-focused IM, was supported while *H1b*, that FWC is positively related to self-focused IM was not. Both *H2a* and *H2b* were supported as FWE was found to positively relate to both supervisor- and coworker-focused IM.

The results for the indirect effects we used to test our remaining predictions can be found in Table II. Two of our predicted indirect effects to performance were supported.

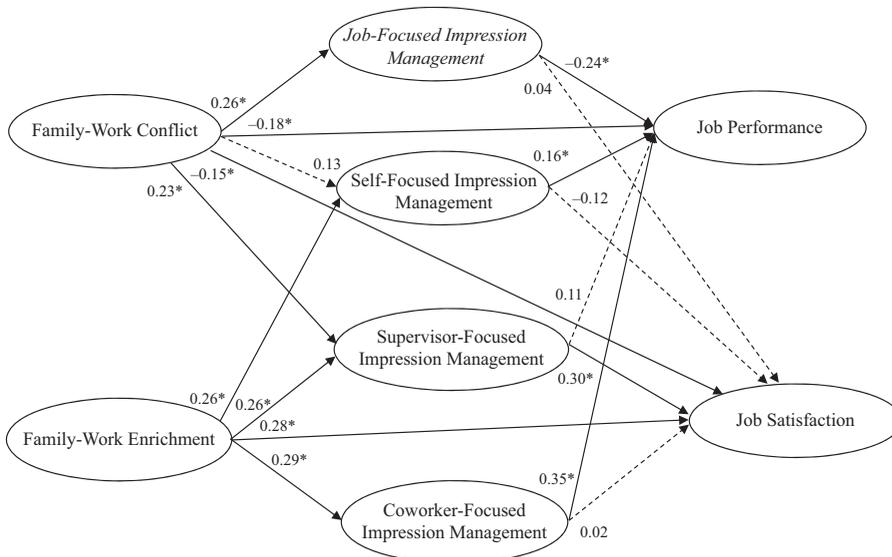


Figure 2.
Final model with
standardized
paths loadings

Notes: Scales in italics are from the coworker. Those not in italics are from the job incumbent. Solid paths are significant. Dashed paths are insignificant. * $p < 0.05$

Mediated Path	Indirect effect
<i>H3a: FWC → Job-focused IM → Performance</i>	-0.06*
<i>H3b: FWC → Self-focused IM → Performance</i>	0.02
<i>H3c: FWE → Coworker-focused IM → Performance</i>	0.10*
<i>H3d: FWE → Supervisor-focused IM → Performance</i>	0.03
<i>H4a: FWC → Job-focused IM → Job Satisfaction</i>	0.01
<i>H4b: FWC → Self-focused IM → Job Satisfaction</i>	-0.02
<i>H4c: FWE → Coworker-focused IM → Job Satisfaction</i>	0.02
<i>H4d: FWE → Supervisor-focused IM → Job Satisfaction</i>	0.08**
<i>Not Hypothesized</i>	
<i>FWE → Self-focused IM → Performance</i>	0.04*
<i>FWC → Supervisor-focused IM → Job Satisfaction</i>	0.08*

Notes: *n* = 296. FWC, family-work conflict; FWE, family-work enrichment; IM, impression management. Measures in italics from coworker; measures not in italics from job incumbent. **p* < 0.05; ***p* < 0.01

Table II.
Indirect effects

Specifically, *H3a*, that job-focused IM mediates the relationship between FWC and performance, and *H3c*, that coworker-focused IM mediates the relationship between FWE and performance, were supported. Neither self-focused nor supervisor-focused IM mediated the relationship between work-family and performance. Thus, *H3b* and *H3d* were not supported. Although not predicted, the indirect effect from FWE to performance through self-focused IM was significant:

H4d, which stated that supervisor-focused IM mediated the relationship between FWE and job satisfaction, was supported. However, none of the other predicted indirect effects to job satisfaction were significant. Thus, *H4a–4c* were not supported. One additional indirect effect that was not predicted – FWC to job satisfaction through supervisor-focused IM – was significant. Finally, it is interesting to note that both forms of work-family and all four IM tactics were involved in significant indirect effects.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to examine how family-to-work spillover incites IM behaviors as an explanatory mechanism for the impact of family-work spillover on a job incumbent’s work-related attitudes and behaviors. We found that FWC related to job-focused IM (*H1a*). This finding suggests individuals are aware that FWC may be harmful to their performance and therefore try to compensate by engaging in job-focused IM to protect their reputations at work – in other words they are trying to “look good” in order to manage their reputation. This finding is consistent with previous research that linked FWC to work outcomes (Amstad *et al.*, 2011). Results also indicated that FWE was positively related to “doing good” tactics of coworker (*H2a*) and supervisor-focused (*H2b*) IM. As predicted, FWE enhanced the use of IM behaviors, including helping others, volunteering and doing favors. This finding offers support for the positive spillover of FWE to the workplace (McNall *et al.*, 2010). These initial findings demonstrate how FWC and FWE differentially relate to IM tactics consistent with the doing good vs looking good theory of behavioral choice (Bolino, 1999; Grant and Mayer, 2009).

There also was support for three of the mediation hypotheses. First, job-focused IM mediated the negative relationship between FWC and performance (*H3a*). Thus, although FWC can be expected to lead to an increased use of job-focused IM as a means of controlling perceptions of job performance, this form of IM failed. Research examining FWC has shown a negative effect on coworkers including increased absenteeism and burnout

(ten Brummelhuis *et al.*, 2010). Thus, it is likely that coworkers are aware of inauthentic IM tactics and consequently provided reduced ratings of performance. Researchers have cautioned against the misuse and overuse of IM (Jones and Pittman, 1982) and these results indicate IM can indeed backfire. Second, coworker-focused IM mediated the relationship between FWE and performance (*H3c*). This “doing good tactic” was effective in enhancing perceptions of performance, again offering support for the notion that positive qualities gained in the family domain translate into beneficial outcomes in the work domain. Finally, supervisor-focused IM also mediated the relationship from FWE to job satisfaction (*H4d*). Again, this doing good tactic, produced a favorable individual outcome. While these findings support the mediating role of IM, it is possible that other variables may serve as mediators. For example, the mechanism by which FWC and FWE triggers IM could be that individuals experience an alteration of their self-view, which consequently results in IM behaviors (Bozeman and Kacmar, 1997). While we have no measure of individuals’ perceptions of themselves, this could be an area of focus in future research. Additionally, job satisfaction could serve as a potential mediator while IM could be examined as a moderator of the FWC and FWE – outcomes relationships.

The final model included four significant paths that were not in the initial theoretical model. First, FWC was directly and negatively related to peer ratings of job performance. This finding is consistent with previous research that indicates FWC is negatively related to second party ratings of performance (van Steenbergen and Ellemers, 2009; Witt and Carlson, 2006). Thus, coworkers may in fact notice the effects of their colleagues’ FWC and likely believe there is an impact on performance. For instance, working with colleagues who take additional time off for family needs may cause those at work without family conflicts to take on additional responsibilities. Second, FWE was directly and positively related to job satisfaction (Carlson *et al.*, 2009). FWE results not only in “doing good” tactics, but also positive attitudes toward the job. The final two paths identified in the alternative model were from FWC to supervisor-focused IM and from FWE to self-focused IM. Counter to our theoretical predictions, individuals experiencing either or both FWC and FWE engage in both forms of IM. This finding adds to the evidence demonstrating that individuals engage in a variety of IM behaviors to both do good and look good at work (Bolino, 1999; Grant and Mayer, 2009).

Contributions to research and theory

The present study makes a number of contributions. First, using IM theory (Bolino, 1999; Leary and Kowalski, 1990), this research theoretically and empirically combined the literatures on IM and FWC. Although it is somewhat intuitive that those managing multiple and competing roles would feel it necessary to actively manage the impressions others have of them, especially in the work domain, we were able to find just a single article in which these two research areas were combined (Nikandrou *et al.*, 2008). Thus, the present research went beyond the traditional context of interviews and performance appraisals in the study of IM. Second, this research demonstrates how IM serves as a mediating mechanism through which the family-work domain affects job performance and satisfaction. While previous research showed mixed results for the FWE to job performance relationship (Graves *et al.*, 2007; Witt and Carlson, 2006), this research provided alternative mediating paths to consider. The model presented here contributes to our understanding of how the experiences of FWE and FWC manifest in a variety of IM tactics that can subsequently affect important work outcomes. Lastly, the final model provides evidence that individuals do indeed engage in both looking good and doing good IM to boost their performance at work (Grant and Mayer, 2009). These results suggest which IM tactics are effective and which may backfire. Specifically, focusing IM efforts on a supervisor and coworkers appears to result in more favorable outcomes while job-focused IM appears to

have deleterious effects. Positive spillover occurred from FWE and FWC to job satisfaction and performance through self-, supervisor- and coworker-focused IM tactics. However, negative spillover occurred from FWC to job performance through job-focused IM. Thus, there are simultaneous positive and negative spillover effects from the family domain to the work domain through IM. Finally, while we examined the IM strategies outlined by Wayne and Ferris (1990), there are many other IM tactics that future research could consider. For example, while we investigated the self-focused tactic of exemplification, Jones and Pittman (1982) also identified supplication as a self-focused tactic that would likely operate in an opposite manner.

Implications for practice

Clearly, the family-to-work interface plays a role in job incumbent behaviors at work. This research suggests that individuals increase their use of job-focused IM following FWC. This emphasizes the value that organizations could find in helping employees balance work and family, and keep the two domains from interfering with one another, especially since the two directions of work-family conflict are highly related to one another (Carlson *et al.*, 2000). This kind of support may make employees feel less compelled to engage in IM to “look good” but rather perform more authentic behaviors (i.e. doing good), which would benefit both the employees and the organization in terms of improved performance. For instance, work-family policies such as family leave have a beneficial impact on both directions of WFC, whereas work-family support policies more broadly serve to reduce WFC. Thus, it would behoove organizations to identify policies or other forms of support that could be important resources to aid employees in keeping work and family from interfering with one another.

As suggested in the current research, coworker-focused IM actually promotes positive outcomes within the organization. These IM behaviors may be natural and thus should not require excessive efforts, but when actors consciously engage in IM tactics, more significant effort is required. Training and coaching within organizations can increase employee awareness of the IM behaviors in which they engage and help them recognize the most effective types and levels of IM behavior to display to balance image management and organizational needs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research provides a foundational step in the integration of the IM and work-family literatures to understand the complex phenomenon of how the family domain prompts IM behaviors in the work domain. Our findings suggest that the family-to-work interface does play a role in the job incumbent’s experiences at work (job performance and satisfaction) through IM behaviors. Engagement in IM behaviors as a strategic means to manage one’s performance and satisfaction can be effective when the appropriate IM behaviors are utilized.

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