

## THE SPANISH AND LATIN AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF WORK LIFE BALANCE: KEYS FOR INTERVENTION

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*The current global economic crisis has led us to ask how to generate competitive advantages that have an impact on organizational effectiveness without jeopardizing the employees' quality of life. The importance of the development of health and safety policies (Montero, Araque, & Rey, 2009), and within these, family-friendly policies promoting the work-life balance (WLB) of employees (Leon & Chinchilla, 2010; Urcelay, 2005) has been pointed out by various authors in our country. This article reviews the main Spanish and Latin American contributions on work-life balance (WLB) published in the last eight years, and presents the research work of the ASH-PsicoSAO Group (University of Barcelona) related to this topic. The objective of our work is to contribute to both the scientific and the occupational fields, with particular attention to the role of supervisor.*

**Key words:** Work-life balance, Leadership, Family-friendly policies.

*La actual situación de crisis económica mundial ha conllevado que nos preguntemos cómo generar ventajas competitivas que impacten en la efectividad organizacional sin que ello suponga poner en riesgo la calidad de vida de los empleados. Diversos autores en nuestro país señalan la importancia del desarrollo de políticas de salud y seguridad ocupacional (Montero, Araque, y Rey, 2009), y dentro de éstas, las relativas a políticas familiarmente responsables que favorezcan el work-life balance (WLB) de sus empleados (León y Chinchilla, 2010; Urcelay, 2005). Este artículo hace una revisión de las principales aportaciones españolas e hispanoamericanas sobre el WLB en los últimos ocho años, presentando el trabajo investigador del Grupo ASH-PsicoSAO (Universidad de Barcelona) en relación a este tema. El objetivo de nuestros trabajos es contribuir tanto en la esfera científica como en el ejercicio profesional, prestando especial atención al papel del supervisor.*

**Palabras clave:** Work-life balance, Liderazgo, Políticas familiarmente responsables.

**W**e are currently in a global economic crisis that "threatens to derail the economic development achieved in many countries and to erode the faith of the people in the open International trading system" (Lamy, 2003, part 4). In this context, the question is how to generate competitive advantages that have an impact on organizational effectiveness without jeopardizing the quality of life for employees. Thus several authors in this country point to the importance of developing policies of occupational health and safety (Montero, Araque, & Rey, 2009), and within these, family-friendly policies that promote the work-life balance (WLB) of employees (Leon & Chinchilla, 2010; Urcelay, 2005).

The employability survey WorldatWork of 2009 indicated that 67% of management directives in response to the decrease in turnover resulting from the crisis, planned to implement development plans for the engagement and retention of employees, compared to 33% that planned to carry out a process of downsizing. Nanderam (2010) argues that business leaders believe that, while technological improvements in

organizations increase their productivity in the short term, the key factor in long term business success is the contribution of employees (Chambers, Foulon, Handfield-Jones, Hankin, & Michaels, 1998; Harter & Schmidt, 2008; Woodruffe, 2006).

In this context, there has been a growing interest in the study of WLB in recent years, in both its theoretical and interventional aspects. The demographic changes resulting from the incorporation of women into the work context (Carlier, Llorente, & Grau, 2012) and technological advances (cell phones, email, etc.) have meant that job demands interfere in personal life (Pichler, 2009), hence the development of a new organizational approach concerned with promoting the reconciliation of work and non-work areas (Martínez, 2006a, 2006b).

The aim of this paper is to show the main scientific contributions in the field of WLB. To this end, first, a conceptual definition of the term is presented. Next, we analyze the interest in the study of WLB over the last eight years, with particular focus on the Spanish and Latin American contributions. We end by presenting our research work in relation to this issue, considering its implications for professional practice. In particular, we pay special attention to the role of supervisor (van Daalen, Willemsen, & Sanders, 2006), given that leadership is considered one of the factors that most contribute to employees' perceptions about their jobs (Bass, Jung, Avolio, & Berson, 2003).

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## CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

Over the past three decades, research on the work-family or work-life relationship has grown dramatically, being “the subject of much attention from political institutions, businesses, unions, families and individuals” (Pichler, 2009, p. 449).

The interest in the subject has facilitated the development of a set of concepts which explain the relationship between the two vital spheres, such as accommodation, compensation, resource drain, segmentation, spillover, work-family conflict, work-family enrichment, and work-family integration (Greenhaus, Collins & Shaw, 2003). However, this terminological profusion has not been accompanied by a clear conceptual definition, the resulting differences between all these concepts being imprecise and fuzzy, the term “work-life balance” emerging as comprehensive of all of them, being “the term generally used to describe the organizational initiatives aimed at improving the experience of employees between the domains of work and non-work” (McCarthy, Darcy, & Grady, 2010, p. 158).

However, from the definition proposed by McCarthy et al. (2010), “the regulations and practices refer to the conciliation initiatives introduced voluntarily by companies that facilitate the reconciliation of employees’ work and their personal lives” (p. 158), it can be observed how reconciliation is conceived only on the basis of the organization’s efforts to develop policies on responsibility and with regard for the reconciliation of work and non-work areas, called “family-friendly policies” (Martínez, 2006a, 2006b; Poelmans, Chinchilla, & Cardona, 2003) or “life-friendly policies” (Yuile, Chang, Gudmundsson, & Sawang, 2012).

But reconciliation can also be conceived as the experience the individual has of the balance or imbalance between work and non-work life. From this conceptualization, for some authors the WLB is the individual ability to meet both family and work commitments, as well as all non-work-related responsibilities and activities (Parkes & Langford, 2008). For others, it refers to the individual perception of compatibility between work and non-work-related activities that promote personal growth (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). In other cases, the WLB is understood as a state in which a variety of needs are met through the distribution of time between work and non-work roles, according to the individual priorities and demands of both contexts (Yuile et al., 2012).

All of these approaches have in common that they conceive WLB as the reciprocal influence between work and non-work contexts. This influence may be a balance or a conflict or interference (Chang, McDonald, & Burton, 2010). Balance occurs when the activities and aspirations of one domain are consistent with the activities and aspirations of the other (Pichler, 2009). Conflict or interference is understood as negative, since it comes from an imbalance in the interaction between work and personal activities outside work.

The scientific literature is largely dominated by studies that focus on the conflict or interference (Chang et al., 2010; Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeux, & Brinley, 2005). However, along with Clarke, Koch, and Hill (2004) and Comer and Stites-Doe (2006), we consider it appropriate to use the term *work-life balance* as it is a broader concept, which includes the positive and/or negative impact of this relationship (Kalliath & Brough, 2008) and involves all spheres of peoples’ lives and the reciprocal and bidirectional relationships between them. From this perspective it is worth noting the definition of Geurts and Demerouti (2003), for whom the WLB is the process in which the functioning of a worker in one domain (work or non-work -home) is influenced positively or negatively by the situations experienced in the other domain. Under this conceptualization, Geurts, Taris, Kompier, Dikkers, Van Hooff, and Kinnunen (2005) suggest that four types of interactions can occur:

- ✓ Negative interaction between *work-home (negative WHI)*: negative reactions are generated at work, hindering functioning in the non-work sphere.
- ✓ Negative interaction between *home-work (negative HWI)*: negative reactions are generated in non-work activities, hindering work performance.
- ✓ Positive interaction between *work-home (positive WHI)*: positive reactions are generated at work, facilitating functioning in the non-work sphere.
- ✓ Positive interaction between *home-work (positive HWI)*: positive reactions are generated in non-work activities, facilitating work performance.

Our studies are based on the conceptualization of work-life balance proposed by Geurts and Demerouti (2003) and Geurts et al. (2005) both with regard to the possible interactions between the two areas (work and non-work) and when operationalizing WLB.

## THE SPANISH AND LATIN AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF WLB

Proof of the scientific community’s growing interest in the concept of work-life balance (WLB) is the research development that has occurred, worldwide, in recent years. Within the field of industrial organization and organizational behavior (IO/OB), there have been three major literature reviews on the WLB, produced by Eby et al. (2005), Chang et al. (2010), and McNall, Nicklin, and Masuda (2010). The first two observe that most publications focus on the conflict ( $n = 110$ , 58% in the study by Eby et al., 2005; and  $n = 140$ , 74% in the study by Chang et al., 2010). The review by McNall et al. (2010) instead focuses on those studies that have examined the impact of work-family enrichment (WFE) and family-work enrichment (FWE) finding a positive relationship between these and professional and personal satisfaction, affective commitment and social exchange.



The growing interest in the topic has also been observed in the Spanish and Latin American context. To verify this, we analyzed the set of scientific publications present in the database Web of Science® for the period 2005-2013. As a search filter, we selected the Spanish-speaking countries (with regards to the origin of the sample, authors and/or studies in other countries, but with the participation of researchers from centers located in Spanish-speaking countries). Following the work of Chang et al. (2010) we used the following as keywords: Work-life Balance, Work-life Conflict, Work-family Balance, Work-family Conflict, Work-life Interference and Work-family Interference, excluding those relating to culture, as this was not the object of our research (Work-Family Culture and Family-Work Culture). As further exclusion criteria, we did not take into account those studies whose object of study were the legal considerations of reconciliation, however we did include as part of the research those linking the knowledge and/or deployment of reconciliation policies with organizational results.

The total results obtained were 34 documents. 91.2% (n = 31) correspond to journal articles, 5.9% (n = 2) to abstracts and proceedings of scientific conferences and meetings, and 2.9% to interviews.

Below we describe the main features of the studies, analyzing the number of publications over the years, the language and source of the publication, as well as the research area from which they have been carried out. Subsequently, we will code them, based on a taxonomy adapted from a study by Eby et al. (2005), analyzing the variables included in the studies. To complete the section, we present the recommendations for intervention made in the studies analyzed.

Regarding the number of publications per year, although there are no records between 2005 and 2006, we see a growing interest from 2007 to 2009, going from one study published in 2007 to eight in 2009. In 2010 we can observe a decrease in the work focused on the subject (n = 3). Since then, there has been a progressive increase to reach ten studies in 2012, which shows the growing interest on the issue despite the current global crisis. As of the review date of this study -November 28, 2013- there had only been two studies incorporated into the Web of Science® in 2013. We have seen fit to include these, although they are not representative of the year as it had not yet ended at the time of the review.

The majority of the studies are written in English (n = 29, 85.3%), since most of the journals that have been disseminated are edited in English-speaking countries (United States and United Kingdom, 64.8%). However, it is worth noting that eight papers were published in Spanish journals (23.5%), with the Spanish Journal of Psychology (11.8%) and *Psicothema* (5.9%), being the ones with the most studies.

The research areas in which the studies were carried out are Psychology (n = 23, 67.6%), Business Economics (n = 10, 29.4%), Public Environmental Occupational Health (n = 3,

8.8%), and Engineering, Family Studies, Operations Research Management Science, Social Sciences Other Topics and Social Work, (n = 1, 2.9%), showing, despite the prevalence of psychological publications, the multidisciplinary perspective of this subject.

After this review of the literature, we propose to codify the research based on the following criteria (Eby et al, 2005): the nature of the research (quantitative vs. qualitative), the focus of the study (studies of the relationship between variables vs. validation studies), the nature of the effects (positive vs. negative) and the direction of the effects (home-work vs. work-home).

The analysis indicates that the studies are predominantly quantitative in nature (n = 33, 97.1%), analyze the relationship established between WLB and different types of variables (n = 25, 73.5%), and tend to take into account the negative nature of the effects (n = 19, 55.9%). Most papers focus on the work-home relationship (n = 12, 35.3%) or on both work-home and home-work simultaneously (n = 14, 41.2%). These results are similar to those found by Eby et al. (2005) from studies published between 1980 and 2002.

As for the variables included in the research (Table 1, Table 2, Table 3), we have classified these according to their nature in three main categories: psychological variables (variables that are situated at the individual level), psychosocial variables (variables that take place at group or organizational level), and those relating to the characteristics of the job. In the research, individual character variables predominate, specifically we observe that satisfaction with the work and/or family sphere (n = 14, 41.2 %) as well as health and well-being (n = 10, 29.4%) are the ones that have been most associated with WLB, noting that the greater the imbalance/interference between the two areas, the less satisfaction, health and/or well-being. In general, the authors found the effects were significant in the WH direction, but they are not seen as consistently in the HW direction (Moreno-Jiménez, Mayo, Sanz-Vergel, Geurts, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Garrosa, 2009), as was also noted in the results of our work, discussed in the next section.

Finally, some of the papers published during this period include recommendations for practical intervention at the organizational, group and/or individual level. Studies that provide recommendations at the organizational level focus, first, on the design and implementation of training courses, whether aimed at developing skills to cope with daily stress factors and recover from them (e.g. relaxation, psychological detachment from work, emotional regulation) (Masuda, McNall, Allen, & Nicklin, 2012; Moreno-Jiménez et al., 2009; Sanz-Vergel, Demerouti, Moreno-Jiménez, & Mayo, 2010) or training regarding time management (Sanz-Vergel, Demerouti, Mayo, & Moreno-Jiménez, 2011).

Other studies recommend that training should be focused on managers as "role models for their subordinates" (Mayo, Pastor, Cooper, & Sanz-Vergel, 2011, p.346) (Blanch & Aluja, 2012,

Lapierre et al., 2008; McNall et al, 2010) or even in their role as coaches (Demerouti, Bouwman, & Sanz-Vergel, 2011).

On the other hand, we find those interventional proposals centered on workplace design, reducing workload, or the establishment of breaks for recovery (Demerouti et al., 2011; McNall et al., 2010; Olson, Huffman, Leiva, & Culberston, 2013; Sanz-Vergel et al., 2010), offering rest and recreational activities (Blanch & Aluja, 2009, 2012) and implementing and communicating family-friendly policies (Blanch & Aluja, 2009, 2012; Demerouti et al., 2011; Mayo et al., 2011; Lapierre et al., 2008; McNall, Masuda, & Nicklin, 2009; Moreno-Jiménez et al., 2009; Olson et al., 2013; Sanz-Vergel et al., 2011).

At group level, it is recommended to develop mechanisms of group support (Demerouti et al., 2011; Lapierre et al., 2008; Sanz-Vergel, Rodríguez-Muñoz, Bakker, & Demerouti, 2012) and conflict management (Demerouti et al., 2011). Finally, at the individual level, the suggested measures include social support, especially outside of work (family and friends), the renegotiation of family/work roles (Sanz-Vergel et al., 2012) and the development of skills for expressing emotions, especially those of a positive nature (Moreno-Jiménez et al, 2009; Moreno-Jiménez, Rodríguez-Muñoz, Sanz-Vergel, & Garrosa, 2012, Sanz-Vergel et al, 2010).

**RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT OF THE ASH-PsicoSAO GROUP**

To the Spanish and Latin American contribution to the study of WLB, the activity of the ASH-PsicoSAO Group from the University of Barcelona should be added. Our group is based on the work carried out by Quijano, Navarro, Yepes, Berger, and Romeo (2008) in the framework of the Human System Audit

(HSA, or ASH in Spanish). The HSA “is presented as an integrated proposal, carried out from the Psychology of Work and Organizations for the Evaluation of Intangibles, the Evaluation of Quality in models of excellence, and in general for diagnosis and intervention in the Human System of Organizations” (Quijano et al., 2008, p. 92).

Although in its original formulation the model did not include the variable WLB, in subsequent developments we have considered its inclusion as a People Outcome, i.e., as the influence of “Management Systems, Structure, Strategy, and Technology on members of the organization [...] in their ways of feeling, doing and being (Quality of HR at individual and group level) [...]that in turn result in a job well done and the achievement of the organization’s strategic objectives (Organizational Effectiveness)” (Quijano et al, 2008, p. 98).

Our first work in relation to the theme of WLB aimed to adapt and validate the Survey Work-Home Interaction — NijmeGen (SWING), developed by Geurts et al. (2005), for Spanish-speaking countries, developing the Survey Work-Home Interaction to Spanish Speaking Countries (SWING-SSC) (Romeo, Berger, Yepes-Baldó, & Ramos, 2014). Our ultimate goal was to respond to the need of organizations and HR professionals for reliable and valid instruments for diagnosis and intervention in the processes of WLB.

As Geurts et al. (2005) developed the SWING with the “aim of adapting the scale to European samples” (Moreno-Jiménez, Sanz-Vergel, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Geurts, 2009, p. 332), we consider it important to adapt and validate it in Spanish-speaking countries, where the hours worked affect work-related attitudes less (Spector et al., 2004) and in German-speaking

**TABLE 1  
VARIABLES INCLUDED IN THE STUDIES ANALYZED**

Variables	Variables	References	n	%
Psychological variables	Satisfaction with work/family/life	Blanch & Aluja, 2009b Calvo-Salguero, Carrasco-González, & Martínez-de-Lecea, 2010 Calvo-Salguero, Martínez-de-Lecea, & Carrasco-González, 2011 Del Libano, Iloren, Salanova, & Schaufeli, 2012 Lapierre, Spector, Allen, Poelmans, Cooper, O’Driscoll, ..., Kinnunen, 2008 Mayo, Pastor, Cooper, & Sanz-Vergel, 2011 Masuda, McNall, Allen, & Nicklin, 2012 McNall, Masuda, & Nicklin, 2009 Moreno-Jiménez, Mayo, Sanz-Vergel, Geurts, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Garrosa, 2009 Moreno-Jiménez, Sanz-Vergel, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Geurts, 2009 Sánchez-Vidal, Cegarra-Leiva, & Cegarra-Navarro, 2012 Sanz-Vergel, Garrosa, Gálvez, & Sebastián, 2008 Spector, Allen, Poelmans, Lapierre, Cooper, O’Driscoll, ... Widderszal-Bazyl, 2007 Vieira, Ávila, & Matos, 2012	14	41.2%
	Health and well-being	Blanch & Aluja, 2009b Feldman, Vivas, Lugli, Zaragoza & Gómez, 2008 Moreno-Jiménez, Mayo, Sanz-Vergel, Geurts, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Garrosa, 2009 Moreno-Jiménez, Rodríguez-Muñoz, Sanz-Vergel, & Garrosa, 2012 Moreno-Jiménez, Sanz-Vergel, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Geurts, 2009 Sanz Vergel, Demerouti, Mayo, & Moreno Jiménez, 2011 Sanz-Vergel, Demerouti, Moreno-Jiménez, & Mayo, 2010 Sanz-Vergel, Garrosa, Gálvez, & Sebastián, 2008 Sanz-Vergel, Rodríguez-Muñoz, Bekker, & Demerouti, 2012 Vieira, Ávila, & Matos, 2012	10	29.4%

**TABLE 2**  
**VARIABLES INCLUDED IN THE STUDIES ANALYZED (cont.)**

Variables	References	n	%	
Psychological variables (cont.)	Coping strategies	Moreno-Jiménez, Mayo, Sanz-Vergel, Geurts, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Garrosa, 2009 Moreno-Jiménez, Rodríguez-Muñoz, Sanz-Vergel, & Garrosa, 2012 Sanz-Vergel, Garrosa, Galvez, & Sebastián, 2008 Sanz-Vergel, Rodríguez-Muñoz, Bakker, & Demerouti, 2012 Vera-Martínez & Martín Chaparro, 2009	5	14.7%
	Rotation	McNall, Masuda, & Nicklin, 2009 Moreno-Jiménez, Sanz-Vergel, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Geurts, 2009 Sánchez-Vidal, Cegarra-Leiva, & Cegarra-Navarro, 2012 Spector, Allen, Poelmans, Lapiere, Cooper, O'Driscoll, ... Widerszal-Bazyl, 2007	4	11.8%
	Role conflict	Aguilar-Luzón, Calvo-Salguero, Salinas, & Martín, 2008 Delgado, Saletti-Cuesta, Toro-Cárdenas, López-Fernández, Luna del Castillo, & Mateo-Rodríguez, 2011 Moreno-Jiménez, Rodríguez-Muñoz, Sanz-Vergel, & Garrosa, 2012 Moreno-Jiménez, Sanz-Vergel, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Geurts, 2009	4	11.8%
	Burnout	Blanch & Aluja, 2009b Blanch & Aluja, 2012 Sanz-Vergel, Demerouti, Moreno-Jiménez, & Mayo, 2010	3	8.8%
	Commitment	Del Libano, Llorens, Salanova & Schaufeli, 2012 Sánchez-Vidal, Cegarra-Leiva, & Cegarra-Navarro, 2012	2	5.9%
	Engagement	Del Libano, Llorens, Salanova, & Schaufeli, 2012 Sanz-Vergel, Demerouti, Moreno-Jiménez, & Mayo, 2010	2	5.9%
	Absenteeism	Demerouti, Bouwman, & Sanz-Vergel, 201 de Sivatte & Guadamillas, 2012	2	5.9%
	Workaholism	Del Libano, Llorens, Salanova, & Schaufeli, 2012	1	2.9%
	Self-efficacy	Del Libano, Llorens, Salanova, & Schaufeli, 2012	1	2.9%
	Self-esteem	Feldman, Vivas, Lugli, Zaragoza, & Gómez, 2008	1	2.9%
	Personality	Blanch & Aluja, 2009a	1	2.9%
	Centrality and importance of employment	Cantera, Cubells, Martínez, & Blanch, 2009	1	2.9%
	Importance of family	Cantera, Cubells, Martínez, & Blanch, 2009	1	2.9%
	Importance of money	Cantera, Cubells, Martínez, & Blanch, 2009	1	2.9%
	Likelihood of accidents	Martín-Fernández, de los Rios, Cazorla, & Martínez-Falero, 2009		

**TABLE 3**  
**VARIABLES INCLUDED IN THE STUDIES ANALYZED (cont.)**

Variables	References	n	%	
Characteristics of the job	Demands of the job	Beléndez Vázquez, Martín Llaguno, & Hernández Ruiz, 2013 Moreno-Jiménez, Sanz-Vergel, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Geurts, 2009 Sanz-Vergel, Demerouti, Moreno-Jiménez, & Mayo, 2010 Spector, Allen, Poelmans, Lapiere, Cooper, O'Driscoll, ... Widerszal-Bazyl, 2007	4	11.8%
	Autonomy	Mayo, Pastor, Cooper, & Sanz-Vergel, 2011	1	2.9%
Psychosocial variables	Social support- superiors and colleagues	Blanch & Aluja, 2009a Blanch & Aluja, 2012 Beléndez Vázquez, Martín Llaguno, & Hernández Ruiz, 2013 Demerouti, Bouwman, & Sanz-Vergel, 2011 Mayo, Pastor, Cooper, & Sanz-Vergel, 2011 de Sivatte y Guadamillas, 2012	6	17.6%
	Social support - family, friends	Blanch & Aluja, 2009a Blanch & Aluja, 2012 Delgado, Saletti-Cuesta, Toro-Cárdenas, López-Fernández, Luna del Castillo, & Mateo-Rodríguez, 2011 Moreno-Jiménez, Sanz-Vergel, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Geurts, 2009 Spector, Allen, Poelmans, Lapiere, Cooper, O'Driscoll, ... Widerszal-Bazyl, 2007	5	14.7%
	Organizational/family culture	Beléndez Vázquez, Martín Llaguno, & Hernández Ruiz, 2013 Lapiere, Spector, Allen, Poelmans, Cooper, O'Driscoll, ..., Kinnunen, 2008 Olson, Huffman, Leiva, & Culberston, 2013 de Sivatte & Guadamillas, 2012	4	11.8%

countries, where, to date, there are no specific instruments existing to measure the positive and negative interaction between work and family.

The results obtained confirm the good psychometric properties of the scale Survey Work-Home Interaction to Spanish Speaking Countries (SWING-SSC) adapted to Spanish-speaking countries ( $\alpha = .84$  and CFI = .96, RMSEA = .06) (Romeo et al., 2014) and the German version Survey Work-Home Interaction - Nijmegen (SWING-DE) ( $\alpha = .79$  and CFI = .80, RMSEA = .06) (Berger, Romeo, Dimitrova, & Spieß, 2013). In both cases the four-factor structure proposed in the original version of the scale by Geurts et al. (2005) was confirmed. Furthermore, we note that the components of the negative and positive interactions are not correlated with each other, i.e., they are independent dimensions (Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Grzywacz & Bass, 2003), which confirms that they can be analyzed as independent constructs instead of as opposite sides of the same coin. This result implies that organizational bosses should be concerned with not only developing strategies and policies to reduce the negative interaction between work-home (WH) and home-work (HW), but they must also promote strategies and policies that enable the development of positive interactions between the two areas.

In this sense McNall et al. (2010) recommend that Human Resources professionals concern themselves with both designing part time jobs, with flexible hours and options for recovery at work, as well as developing an organizational culture that promotes enrichment as well as the support and sensitivity of supervisors (Kelly, Kosk, Hammer, Durhan, Bray, & Chermack, 2008). It is also important to seek concrete solutions, such as the development of advisory services on the conciliation of work and personal life (Sánchez-Vidal, Cegarra-Leiva, & Cegarra-Navarro, 2011).

To test the criterion validity of the instrument, the SWING-SSC was correlated with other relevant theoretical variables such as health (Hanson, Hammer, & Colton, 2006; van Steenbergen & Ellemers, 2009), role conflict (Bacharach, Bamberger, & Conly, 1991; Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Rau & Hyland, 2002), role clarity (Kahn, Wolf, Quinn, & Rosenthal, 1964; Lang, Thomas, Bliese, & Adler, 2007; Matsui, Hosawa, & Onglatco, 1995; Rothbard, 2001; Rothbard & Dumas, 2006; Rothbard & Edwards, 2003) and supervisor support (McCarthy et al., 2010; Taylor, DelCampo, & Blancero, 2009).

The results obtained show significant correlations between role conflict and the negative WH interaction, between role clarity and positive WH interaction, and supervisor support and positive WH interaction. All this again suggests that the negative and positive interactions are not related, and that certain variables contribute more to increasing the negative aspects of the interaction and others to promoting positive interaction.

In relation to health, we note that the negative WH interaction

and negative HW interaction are associated with poor health. Employees who experience high levels of negative interaction between their work and non-work-related areas have worse levels of mental health. In this regard, McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki (2005) identified, as consequences of the negative interaction, increased levels of anxiety and depression. However, in our study we did not find a significant relationship between health and positive WH interaction, as was also found in the studies by Frone, Yardley, and Markel (1997), Schmidt, Colligan, and Fitzgerald (1980), Parasurman and Simmers (2001), Stephens, Franks, and Aienza (1997). From this we can conclude that while negative interaction worsens the health of individuals, the existence of a positive interaction does not guarantee the improvement of their health, once again confirming the independence between the two types of interaction.

After these studies of a psychometric nature, our research activity has been focused on three branches. The first aims to analyze the factors facilitating the work-life balance. In particular, based on the studies by McCarthy et al. (2010) and van Daalen et al. (2006), we now focus our interest on exploring the relationship between the work-life balance perceived by workers and the role of the leader in this perception. The second branch considers the cultural context of the WLB phenomenon and its link to leadership as a facilitating element. Based on this branch, we have analyzed the work-life balance in four countries: Germany (Berger et al., 2013), China (Romeo, Berger, Yepes-Baldó, & Jiang, 2013), the Philippines (Berger, Romeo, Yepes-Baldó, Garcia, & Bolina 2013) and Mexico (Romeo et al., 2014). The third branch is based on the studies of van Steenbergen & Ellemers (2009), Bloom, Kretschmer, & van Reenen (2009), Cegarra-Leiva, Sánchez-Vidal, & Cegarra-Navarro (2012), and Wallace & Young (2008) and it explores the relationship between work-life balance and organizational effectiveness in companies that apply family reconciliation measures (Romeo, Berger, Yepes-Baldó, & Torres, 2013).

The results obtained from our research in these three branches show, first, that transformational and transactional leadership maintain a strong relationship with the positive and negative interaction of WLB (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Specifically, transactional leadership (TAL), referring to "the relationship of exchange between the leader and the follower to satisfy their own interests" (Bass, 1999, p. 10), is negatively related to negative WH interactions, and positively related to positive WH interactions. Additionally, transformational leadership (TFL), that is, when "the leader makes the follower move beyond their own interests through idealized influence (charisma), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration" (Bass, 1999, p. 11), is negatively related to negative WH interaction and positively related to positive WH interaction. In addition, both leadership

styles increase positive HW interaction. However, transformational leadership serves this purpose slightly better in further promoting the reconciliation of employees' work and personal lives than transactional leadership (Berger, Romeo, Yepes-Baldó, & Prado, 2013).

In the business environment, the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Navigation of Barcelona in its Guidelines for Healthy Companies (2009) in line with our results, states that "the role of leaders is key. With transformational leadership, it is more feasible and accessible to achieve success. Transformational leadership is leadership that is able to influence individuals' behavior and ways of thinking" (Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Navigation of Barcelona, 2009, p. 10).

According to this institution, management assumes responsibility with workers and groups linked to the company and in the implementation of the strategies that enable them to achieve maximize benefits.

With respect to the second branch, and comparatively analyzing the results obtained in all of the countries that participated in our studies (Germany, China, the Philippines and Mexico), we observe that while a significant number of employees work beyond their normal working hours, a greater number of positive WH and HW interactions occur than negative ones. These results agree with those found by Spector et al. (2004). For the author, working hours affected attitudes related to work less in China and Latin America than in Anglo-Saxon countries, since "for U.S. and other individualistic societies, excessive working hours are perceived in a negative way, as it is considered an abandonment of the family, creating a conflict. Thus the perception of interference between work and family (WIF) is a source of stress. But for Chinese and other collectivist societies, long working hours are seen as a self-sacrifice and the individual's contribution to the family, which means that the family will thank and support the worker, trying to relieve the pressure they suffer between work and family" (Spector et al., 2007, p. 809).

In any case, in all of the countries analyzed, we find the negative influence between WH and HW is lower compared to the perceived positive effects, confirming the negative relationship of transactional and transformational leadership with the negative WH interaction (Howell et al., 2007). At the same time, we note that, regardless of the cultural context, transformational leadership helps to reduce the negative WH interaction and positively influences the positive HW interaction, while transactional leadership positively influences positive WH interaction.

Finally, regarding the third branch of our work, focused on the analysis of the relationship between work-life balance and organizational effectiveness, we started from the consideration

of effectiveness in the sense expressed by Keh, Chu and Xu (2006, p. 266), "doing the right things". From this conceptualization we find a negative relationship between the negative HW interaction and effectiveness (Romeo, Berger, Yepes-Baldó, & Torres, 2013). That is, a lesser interference of the non-work-related sphere on the work sphere has a slight improvement in effectiveness. These results agree with those obtained in other studies, the analysis showing negative relationships between WLB and other measures of effectiveness such as productivity (Wallace & Young, 2008) or intention to change jobs (Parkes & Langford, 2008).

To conclude, we note that at present the scientific literature shows limited development in regard to the evaluation of the impact of reconciliation policies in the WLB perceived by employees (Yuile et al., 2012), as well as the absence of empirical research that describes the relationship of these policies with corporate social responsibility. Thus our research group is currently working on this aspect. We start from the premise that effective measures should allow us to evaluate the deployment of policies, and their impact on perceptions of WLB and the effectiveness of the organization. All this will allow us to provide companies with a tool, the use of which could bring research closer to their own measurements and indicators of effectiveness and, additionally, to make comparisons between different studies. Our research work must contribute, with empirical evidence, to convince companies that the reconciliation of personal, family and work life "pays", as asserted by the National Commission for the Rationalization of Spanish Schedules (2013).

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