RESEARCH PAPER

Positive Work-Life Outcomes: Exploring Self-compassion and Balance

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Abstract

With individuals and organizations seeking ways to mitigate the increasing demands of work- and non-work roles, it is important to explore how positive resources can be used to enhance perceptions of balance. The present study examines self-compassion as a function of work personal-life balance. Working professionals (N = 135) were recruited to participate in an online survey. In line with the Conservation of Resources Theory, findings indicate that self-compassion is associated with positive outcomes including increased satisfaction and reduced burnout, at work and at home. Findings provide promising evidence that self-compassion (a teachable and affordable resource) may be used to benefit individuals and organizations.

Keywords: *Self-compassion, balance, burnout, work-life, positive psychology*

Abstrait

Les individus et les organisations cherchant des moyens d'atténuer les exigences croissantes des rôles professionnels et non professionnels, il est important d'explorer comment utiliser des ressources positives pour améliorer la perception de l'équilibre. La présente étude examine la compassion de soi en fonction de l'équilibre travail-vie personnelle. Des professionnels en activité (N = 135) ont été recrutés pour participer à un sondage en ligne. Conformément à la théorie de la conservation des ressources, les résultats indiquent que la compassion envers soi-même est associée à des résultats positifs, notamment une satisfaction accrue et un épuisement réduit, au travail et à la maison. Les résultats fournissent des preuves prometteuses que l'auto-compassion (une ressource enseignable et abordable) peut être utilisée au profit de particuliers et d'organisations.

Mots clés: *Compassion de soi, équilibre, épuisement professionnel, vie personnelle, psychologie positive*

Changes in the nature of work and personal-life roles over the past several decades have led to an increased interest in how people manage various life domains. Historically, attention has been devoted to minimizing conflict that occurs between work and non-work roles, with research consistently demonstrating that work-family conflict has negative implications for individuals and organizations (e.g., Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elering, & Semmer,

2011). Over the last two decades, there has been an increased awareness that people may actually benefit from participating in multiple life roles. Known as enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), experiences in one role (e.g., work) have been shown to improve the quality of life in the other role (e.g., family), and vice versa (McNall, Nicklin, & Masuda, 2010). Thus, it is important when aiding employees' navigation of multi-role memberships, to consider the holistic person through the lens

of work personal-life balance: an overall appraisal regarding one's effectiveness and satisfaction with work and personal life (Greenhaus & Allen, 2010).

With recognition that we must consider a balanced view of the work-life interface (e.g., Brower, 2018), there has also been a renewed focus on how positive psychological resources, such as mindfulness, gratitude, and positive affect are associated with work-life balance (e.g., Nicklin, McNall, & Janssen, 2018). For instance, trait levels of mindfulness (Allen & Kiburz, 2012) and mindfulness interventions (Michel, Bosch, & Rexroth, 2014) have been positively associated with greater work-family balance. Yet, there is a shortage of literature that explores the relationships among positive intrapersonal resources and work personal-life balance, among other workplace outcomes (Allen & Kiburz, 2012; Carlson, Grzywacz, & Zivnuska, 2009). Understanding factors that lead to a balanced life is critical for health and well-being in our dynamic, connected, and modern world. Thus, the present study expands this line of research to self-compassion: a multidimensional construct that involves care and compassion toward oneself. Self-compassion has been shown to enhance well-being (e.g., Neff & McGehee, 2010), assist with coping and performance-pressures (e.g., Mosewich, Kowalski, Sabiston, Sedgwick, & Tracy, 2011), and decrease stress levels (e.g., Neely, Shallert, Mohammed, Roberts, & Chen, 2009). Much like mindfulness, self-compassion is an attractive resource for exploration because it is derived from within and can be a teachable skill (Neff & Germer, 2013). Yet, to our knowledge, little research has specifically explored if self-compassion is related to balance among work and personal-life, and if self-compassion influences other work and individual outcomes.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to advance the literature by examining if self-compassion is related to work personal-life balance; and if this in turn influences burnout and satisfaction with work and life. This topic advances the field in several ways. First, while there has been a plethora of research examining work-family conflict and enrichment, less research has taken a broader personal-life approach. This is important as the definition of "family" and what one values, varies dramatically among individuals. It is likely that individuals seek balance among many life domains, such as school, health, religion, and personal interests. Second, this study answers the call to move beyond conflict and enrichment (e.g., Carlson et al., 2009) by examining balance, an often mentioned but understudied construct. Flourishing people can successfully balance work, home, community, and self (e.g., Friedman,

2008), and a balanced life provides opportunities for fulfillment, happiness, health, and wellness (e.g., Morris & Madsen, 2007). Third, with research supporting mindfulness as an effective resource for promoting work-life balance (e.g., Allen & Kiburz, 2012), and findings demonstrating self-compassion as a promising resource for working professionals (Flavin & Swody, 2016), it behooves us to examine how self-compassion influences work personal-life balance, as this is a teachable skill that can affect employee well-being. Finally, this study represents an important step in integrating the relationships among resources (self-compassion), work-life balance, and organizational outcomes, which can inform future theory development and practical applications.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance embodies overall satisfaction in effectively managing the demands of work and personal life (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011) and does not suggest a causal effect of one role by another. Balance represents satisfaction in meeting the sum of demands of multi-role memberships (Valcour, 2007). The broader personal-life approach moves beyond "work-family" to be comprehensive across all domains (e.g., religion, school, hobbies, health). Based on role theory, work-life balance reduces the concern about one role while performing another, and allows individuals to purse and enjoy any role-related task that is being performed at any given time (Carlson et al., 2009). Research indicates that organizations and individuals are more successful when employees are seen as full people, with passions that extend beyond the office walls (e.g., Brower, 2018). While a relatively new construct, recent evidence is promising; showing that balance explains variance in job satisfaction, organizational commitment, family satisfaction, family performance, and family functioning above that of conflict and enrichment (Carlson et al., 2009). We seek to expand this research by examining if work personal-life balance is associated with reductions in burnout and increases in satisfaction. Based on role theory and empirical evidence, we expect:

Hypothesis 1: work personal-life balance is negatively associated with burnout at (a) work and (b) home; and positively associated with (c) job and (d) life satisfaction.

Furthermore, Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) argues that people seek to obtain, retain, and conserve resources they personally value; and are less likely to be affected by negative events after building a solid resource reservoir (Hobfoll, 1989, 2002). Resources are "those entities that either are centrally valued

in their own right (e.g., self-esteem, close attachments, health, and inner peace) or act a means to obtain centrally valued ends (e.g., money, social support, and credit"; Hobfoll, 2002, p. 312). When people face resource loss (e.g., time) they become motivated to acquire and protect additional resources or stress will occur. Those with a solid resource supply will be more successful at overcoming challenging life events and day-to-day experiences. Thus, while balancing multiple roles among personal and professional domains can result in loss of resources, causing increased stress (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985); involvement in multiple roles may actually result in gaining resources, which promotes positive outcomes (McNall et al., 2010).

For example, a person who works 70 hours a week, has two children, and is taking courses online will lose resources in the form of sleep and free time. Stress and burnout can be avoided, however, if he has a reservoir of resources from which to draw, obtained from his various life roles. Networking with classmates (social capital resource), parenting (flexibility resource), and accomplishing goal-directed tasks at work (psychological resource) provide him with the opportunity to build a reserve or resources. Gaining resources is especially important following stressful circumstances. Thus, consistent with role theory, balance can be achieved when individuals move among tasks in various life domains with their own discretion and can gain and store resources along on the way. We suggest that self-compassion is a resource that is effective for supporting work and personal-life balance.

SELF-COMPASSION

Self-compassion is "being open to and moved by one's own suffering, experiencing feelings of caring and kindness towards oneself, taking an understanding, non-judgmental attitude toward one's inadequacies and failures, and recognizing that one's experience is part of the common human experience" (Neff, 2003, p. 224). It is comprised of: self-kindness (vs. self-judgement); common humanity (vs. isolation); and, mindfulness (vs. over-identification). Research shows that self-compassion is positively associated with well-being (Neff & McGehee, 2010) and coping ability (Mosewich, et al., 2011); and negatively associated with stress (Neely et al., 2009) and anxiety (Neff, Kirkpatrick, & Rude, 2007).

Self-compassion is viewed as an emotionally based resource that assists with coping and performance-based pressures (Mosewich et al., 2011). In line with COR and role theory, self-compassion is an important resource for balancing multi-role memberships

because those high in self-compassion understand their strengths and limitations, value their needs and desires, and can better adapt to life's daily hardships. Those faced with challenges and stressors should have a higher sense of work personal-life balance when they have a solid resource reservoir to draw from including compassion toward oneself. While new to the work-family literature, initial research is promising. La Guardia et al. (2007) showed that self-compassion helps promote healthy relationships, intimacy, and conflict-resolution strategies and Flavin and Swody (2016) found that self-compassion was negatively related to unproductive guilt and positively related to work-family enrichment. Among working graduate students, Nicklin, Meachon, and McNall (2018) found that self-compassion was negatively related to stress and conflict, and positively related to enrichment and resilience. Therefore, based on theory (COR theory, role theory) and empirical support, we expect:

Hypothesis 2: self-compassion is positively related to work personal-life balance.

Hypothesis 3: self-compassion is negatively associated with burnout at (a) work and (b) home; and positively associated with (c) job and (d) life satisfaction.

Finally, in accordance with COR theory and previous research on work-family enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), we expect work personal-life balance to be a mediating mechanism by which resources preserve well-being and positive attitudes. Individuals with higher levels of self-compassion should experience more work personal-life balance, and thus, more favorable work outcomes. This is because positive psychological resources, such as self-compassion, should lead to increases in other resources such as affect, time, and energy devoted to multiple life domains; thus, increasing feelings of balance. Then, balance acts as the process by which self-compassion influences satisfaction and burnout. Although the research specific to work personal-life balance is limited, enrichment has surfaced as a mediating mechanism between resources and important organizational and individual outcomes (e.g., Nicklin & McNall, 2013) and Nicklin et al. (2018) provided evidence that self-compassion partially mediates the relationship between self-compassion and stress in graduate students. Given the positive attributes inherent in perceptions of balance as dictated by role theory, it is likely that work personal-life balance is a causal mechanism linking self-compassion to organizational outcomes. Given that we also expect a direct relationship, partial mediation is proposed.

Hypothesis 4: **Work personal-life balance partially mediates the relationship between self-compassion and burnout at (a) work and (b) home, and (c) job and (d) life satisfaction (i.e., self-compassion → work-life balance → workplace outcomes).**

METHOD

Participants

Participants were recruited via email, social media, or referral to take an online survey through SurveyMonkey. Of the original 171 participants recruited, we removed any participants who left more than 30% of the survey items blank (Stuart, 2010), yielding a sample size of 135. About half of the sample reported being married (51.90%) and the majority of respondents were female (78.90%) and Caucasian (86.90%). The mean age of the sample was 37.20 (SD = 13.10), working on average 42.70 hours per week, SD = 13.30. About half of the sample reported having children, (M= 1.02, SD = 1.32). Most of the participants indicating living in the Northeastern Region of the United States (85.20%) with only two participants indicating living outside of the US. Participants were from a variety of industries, with half the sample indicating health care, education, or finance. A large portion of the sample indicated that they have some flexible work hours (78.82%) and about half work from home, at least on occasion or more. See Table 1 for descriptives, reliabilities, and correlations. Participants were entered into a lottery for a chance to win a $100 gift card.

Measures

Work-life balance. Work-life balance was assessed by modifying Allen et al.'s (2010) 5-item work-family balance scale. An example item is: I experience a high level of work personal-life balance. Responses were based on a 5-point Likert-Type scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Research has supported the use of this scale (e.g., Allen & Kiburtz, 2012) and in the present study the Alpha was .93.

Self-compassion. The Self-Compassion Scale Short-Form (SCS-SF; Raes, Pmmier, Neff, & Van Gucht, 2011) was used to assess self-compassion. The 12-item measure asked participants to rate on a 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always) Likert-Type scale how often they behave in the stated matter. An example item is: "When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance." Alpha for the present study was .86.

Burnout. We used the Malach-Pines (2005) burnout measure to assess participants' perceptions of burnout at work and in their personal life. The instructions asked participants: to report when you think about your work (personal-life) overall, how often do you feel the following? The scales ranged from 1 (never) to 7 (always), and example items include: "helpless" and "difficulty sleeping." Alphas in the present study were .95 and .95, respectively.

Satisfaction. We assessed life satisfaction by using the 5-item satisfaction with life scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). This is designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) Likert-Type scale. An example item is: I am satisfied with my life (α=.89). Job satisfaction was measured with three items, on the same rating scale, generated by the researchers. An example item is: In general, I like my job. Alpha was .96 for this study.

Flag items. Three items were included in the survey to capture careless responding. For example, "Please leave this item blank". Only one participant incorrectly answered two out of the three flag items and was removed from the overall analysis.

Procedures

The study was first approved by our University's Institutional Review Board and met all of the criteria for an expedited review. Next, participants were recruited through a referral method and using social media. Members of a research lab were asked to send the survey to at least five working professionals. Upon completion, participants were asked to share the survey with other working professionals in their networks. We also posted the survey to our social media pages (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.) and requested that our contacts share the survey with other working professionals.

After receiving the email or clicking on a social media link, participants were brought to an online survey using Survey Monkey. They first read the informed consent and chose to agree or decline to participate. After the survey, they were debriefed and entered in the drawing to win the gift card. The survey was 113 items and took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

RESULTS

Demographics

An examination of bivariate correlations in Table 1 reveals that age (r = .20, p < .01) and number of children (r = .26, p < .01) were positively related to balance; while not surprisingly, hours worked (r = -.34, p < .01) and telecommuting frequency (r = -.26, p < .01) were negatively related to balance. Similar correlations were

present for self-compassion, such that age (r = .32, p < .01) and number of children (r = .25, p < .01) were positively related to self-compassion, and telecommuting frequency was negatively related to self-compassion (r = -.20, p < .01). No other notable patterns were observed.

Tests of Hypotheses

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, work-life balance was significantly negatively related to work burnout (r = -.60, p < .01) and personal-life burnout (r = -.21, p < .05), and positively related to job (r = .34, p < .01) and life (r = .38, p < .01) satisfaction. Given the pattern of correlations identified among the demographic

variables (Table 1), we ran a series of multiple regression analyses, controlling for age, number of children, hours worked per week, and telecommuting frequency at Step 1 and balance entered at Step 2. As can be seen in Table 2, balance was consistently a significant independent predictor of all four outcome variables above the effects of demographics. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

As predicted, self-compassion was significantly positively related to work personal-life balance, r = .35, p < .01; and as shown in Table 3, was a significant independent predictor of balance when controlling for the demographic variables, supporting Hypothesis 2. Self-compassion was also significantly negatively related to the four outcome variables: work burnout (r = -.43, p < .01), personal-

Table 1

Bivariate Correlations, Descriptive Statistics, and Reliability Coefficients

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Self-Compassion	3.03	.58	(.86)													
2. Balance	3.36	1.07	.35**	(.93)												
3. Burnout work	3.04	1.12	-.43**	-.60**	(.95)											
4. Burnout life	2.65	1.02	-.46**	-.21*	.42**	(.95)										
5. Job Satisfaction	5.09	1.70	.17*	.34**	-.63**	-.10	(.96)									
6. Life Satisfaction	4.80	1.31	.36**	.38**	-.43**	-.64**	.36**	(.89)								
7. Gender	1.80	.41	.16	.21*	-.16	.09	.08	-.06	--							
8. Age	37.20	13.10	.32**	.20*	-.25**	-.16	.14	.14	.03	--						
9. Ethnicity	.87	.34	-.16	.04	.03	.05	-.02	.09	.04	.06	--					
10. Marital status	.52	.50	.05	.13	-.18	-.13	.26**	.20*	-.03	.47**	.19*	--				
11. # of children	1.02	1.31	.25**	.26**	-.22*	-.11	.12	.06	.05	.76**	.08	.40**	--			
12. Dual earner	1.33	.47	-.03	-.12	.07	.17	-.07	-.18*	.04	-.32**	-.08	-.53**	-.29**	--		
13. Work Hrs.	43.70	13.30	-.07	-.34**	.21*	-.09	-.04	.06	-.19*	.06	.02	.01	.04	-.05	--	
14. Telecommute	2.23	1.11	-.20*	-.26**	.17	-.03	.06	.01	-.06	-.03	-.05	-.06	-.17	.01	.14	--

*** p < .01, *p < .05**

1. Self-compassion – 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always); 2. Work-Life Balance - 1(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree); 3. Burnout at Work - 1 (never) to 7 (always); 4. Burnout in Personal Life - 1 (never) to 5 (always); 5. Job Satisfaction - 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree); 6. Life Satisfaction - 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree); 7. Gender – 0 (female), 1 (male); 8. Age; 9. Ethnicity – 0 (minority status), 1 (non-minority); 10. Marital status – 0 (non-married), 1 (married); 11. Number of Children Total; 12. Dual earner households – 0 (no), 1 (yes); 13. Number of Work Hours per Week; 14. Frequency of Telecommuting – 1 (never) to 5 (every day).

Table 2
Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 1

Job Burnout	t	p	β	F	df	p	R²
Model 1				4.49	4,107	.00	.14
Age	-1.25	.21	-.18				
Children	-.67	.50	-.10				
Average Hours Worked	2.52	.01	-.23				
Telecommute	1.62	.11	-.15				
Model 2				12.94	5,106	.00	.38
Age	-1.26	.21	-.15				
Children	.14	.89	.02				
Average Hours Worked	.57	.57	.05				
Telecommute	.50	.62	.04				
Balance	-6.34	.00	-.55				
Personal-Life Burnout	**t**	**p**	**β**	**F**	**df**	**p**	**R²**
Model 1				.85	4, 107	.50	.03
Age	-.65	.51	-.10				
Children	-.55	.58	-.08				
Average Hours Worked	-.31	.76	-.03				
Telecommute	-.35	.73	-.03				
Model 2				2.73	5, 106	.02	.11
Age	-.58	.56	-.08				
Children	-.11	.91	-.02				
Average Hours Worked	-1.40	.17	-.14				
Telecommute	-1.02	.31	-.10				
Balance	-3.16	.00	-.33				
Job Satisfaction	**t**	**p**	**β**	**F**	**df**	**p**	**R²**
Model 1				.99	4,107	.41	.04
Age	.57	.57	.08				
Children	.51	.61	.08				
Average Hours Worked	-1.17	.24	-.11				
Telecommute	.84	.41	.08				
Model 2				3.76	5,106	.00	.15
Age	.48	.63	.07				
Children	-.01	.99	-.00				
Average Hours Worked	.14	.89	.01				
Telecommute	1.67	.10	.16				
Balance	3.79	.00	.38				
Personal-Life Satisfaction	**t**	**p**	**β**	**F**	**df**	**p**	**R²**
Model 1				.56	4,107	.70	.02
Age	.98	.33	.15				
Children	-.11	.91	-.02				
Average Hours Worked	-.18	.86	-.02				
Telecommute	-.43	.67	-.04				
Model 2				7.61	5,106	.00	.26
Age	.93	.35	.12				
Children	-.99	.33	-.13				
Average Hours Worked	1.85	.07	.17				
Telecommute	.78	.44	.07				
Balance	5.93	.00	.56				

Table 3

Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 2

Work-Life Balance	t	p	β	F	df	p	R^2
Model 1				7.43	4, 107	.00	.22
Age	.33	.74	.04				
Children	1.51	.13	.20				
Average Hours Worked	-3.80	.00	-.33				
Telecommute	-2.25	.03	-.20				
Model 2				7.87	5,106	.00	.27
Age	-.28	.78	-.04				
Children	1.55	.13	.20				
Average Hours Worked	-3.64	.00	-.31				
Telecommute	-1.79	.08	-.16				
Self-Compassion	2.79	.01	.25				

life burnout (r = -.46, p < .01), job satisfaction (r = .17, p < .05), and life satisfaction, r = .36, p < .01. As shown in Table 4, with the exception of job satisfaction, self-compassion was a significant independent predictor of the outcome variables and improved model fit above the effects of the demographics. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was mostly supported.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that work personal-life balance would partially mediate the relationship between self-compassion and the outcome variables. We ran four models (Hayes, 2016) with self-compassion as the predictor variable, work personal-life balance as the mediator, and work burnout, personal-life burnout, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction as the outcome variables. We used PROCESS V2.16 (Hayes, 2016), an ordinary least squares framework for estimating direct and indirect effects in mediator models. PROCESS provides 95% biased corrected bootstrapping confidence intervals, which when they do not contain zero, are indicative of a statistically significant indirect effect (e.g., Preacher & Hayes, 2004). PROCESS also provides the Sobel test under the normal theory.

Figure 1 provides the direct and indirect effects for each of the models tested, and Table 5 provides confidence intervals and Sobel tests for each of the indirect effects. Work-life balance

partially mediated the relationship between self-compassion and work burnout (CI: -.57ul to -.18ll; Z = -3.76, p < .01) and self-compassion and personal-life satisfaction, CI: .09ul to .47ll; Z = 2.69, p < .01. Balance did not mediate the relationship between self-compassion and personal-life burnout, but a direct effect was present. Finally, work personal-life balance fully mediated the relationship between self-compassion and job satisfaction (CI: -.57ul to -.18ll; Z = 2.72); no direct effect between self-compassion and job satisfaction was found.

DISCUSSION

As expected, work personal-life balance was significantly related to burnout and satisfaction above the effects of relevant demographic variables. This highlights the importance of perceptions of balance as opposed to focusing only on conflict or enrichment. Consistent with role theory, our findings support that balance allows individuals to purse and enjoy many roles (Carlson, et al., 2009); thus, reducing burnout and enhancing satisfaction with work and life.

In line with COR theory, self-compassion was related to work personal-life balance, work burnout, personal-life burnout,

Table 4
Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 3

Job Burnout	t	p	β	F	df	p	R2
Model 1				4.49	4,107	.00	.14
Age	-1.25	.21	-.18				
Children	-.67	.50	-.10				
Average Hours Worked	2.52	.01	-.23				
Telecommute	1.62	.11	-.15				
Model 2				7.05	5,106	.00	.25
Age	-.44	.66	-.06				
Children	-.71	.48	-.10				
Average Hours Worked	2.30	.02	.20				
Telecommute	1.01	.32	.09				
Self-compassion	-3.87	.00	-.35				
Personal-Life Burnout	**t**	**p**	**β**	**F**	**df**	**p**	**R2**
Model 1				.85	4, 107	.50	.03
Age	-.65	.51	-.10				
Children	-.55	.58	-.08				
Average Hours Worked	-.31	.76	-.03				
Telecommute	-.35	.73	-.03				
Model 2				5.34	5, 106	.00	.20
Age	.35	.72	.05				
Children	-.59	.56	-.08				
Average Hours Worked	-.79	.43	-.07				
Telecommute	-1.21	.23	-.11				
Self-compassion	-4.76	.00	-.45				
Job Satisfaction	**T**	**p**	**β**	**F**	**df**	**p**	**R2**
Model 1				.99	4,107	.41	.04
Age	.57	.57	.08				
Children	.51	.61	.08				
Average Hours Worked	-1.17	.24	-.11				
Telecommute	.84	.41	.08				
Model 2				1.01	5,106	.42	.05
Age	.33	.75	.05				
Children	.51	.61	.08				
Average Hours Worked	-1.07	.29	-.10				
Telecommute	1.00	.32	.10				
Self-compassion	1.02	.31	.11				
Personal-Life Satisfaction	**T**	**p**	**β**	**F**	**df**	**p**	**R2**
Model 1				.56	4,107	.70	.02
Age	.98	.33	.15				
Children	-.11	.91	-.02				
Average Hours Worked	-.18	.86	-.02				
Telecommute	-.43	.67	-.04				
Model 2				2.43	5,106	.04	.10
Age	.30	.77	.04				
Children	-.13	.90	-.02				
Average Hours Worked	.11	.92	.01				
Telecommute	.11	.91	.01				
Self-compassion	3.13	.00	.31				

Figure 1: Direct and Indirect Effects of Self-Compassion on Burnout and Satisfaction
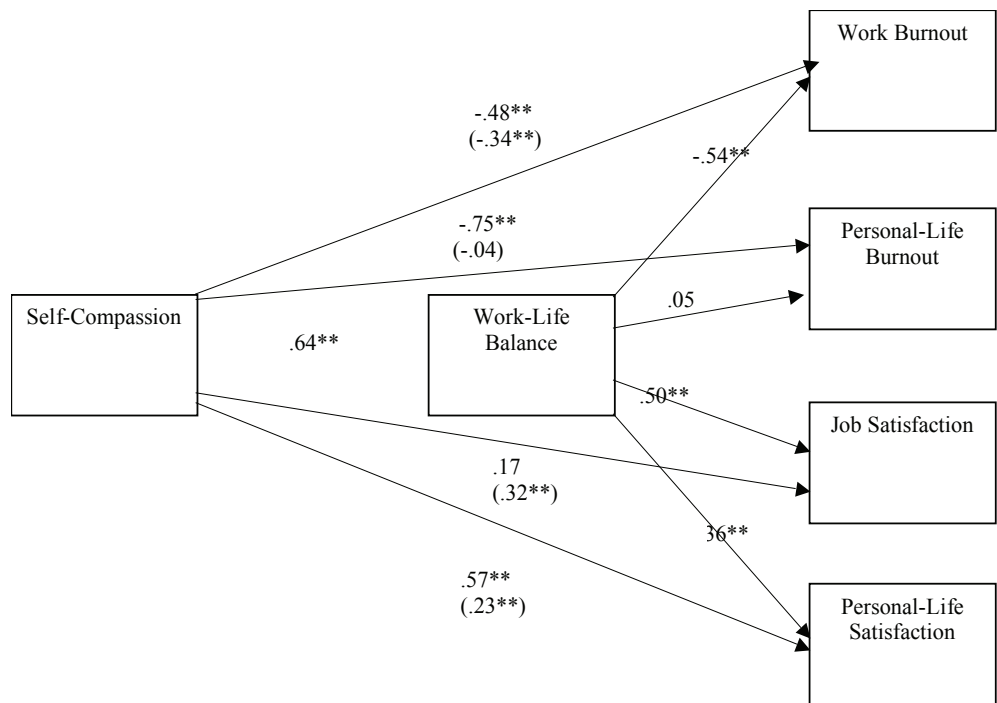
N = 133
*p < .05 **p < .01
Indirect effects are presented in parentheses

Table 5

Hypothesis 4: Tests of Indirect Effects of Balance on Outcomes

			Bootstrapping Effects				
Predictor	Mediator	Outcome	Indirect Effect	Boot SE	Boot llCI 95%	Boot ulCI 95%	Sobel Z
Self-compassion	Balance	Work Burnout	-.34	.09	-.57	-.18	-3.67**
Self-compassion	Balance	Personal-Life Burnout	-.04	.06	-.16	.08	-.67
Self-compassion	Balance	Job Satisfaction	.32	.12	.12	.62	2.72**
Self-compassion	Balance	Personal-Life Satisfaction	.23	.09	.09	.47	2.69**

*p < .05 **p < .01

and personal-life satisfaction beyond the effects of demographics. Additionally, work personal-life balance served as a partial mediator between self-compassion and work burnout and personal-life satisfaction. This is consistent with much of the enrichment research, such that the balance variable may be an explanatory factor, but a direct effect is still present (e.g., Nicklin & McNall, 2013). Recall COR theory posits that the resources derived from multiple roles can buffer the effect of stress and resource drain on individuals. Thus, self-compassion appears to be a useful resource for establishing balance (another opportunity for resource generation), to reduce burnout and increase satisfaction in working adults.

To our surprise, work personal-life balance fully mediated the relationship between self-compassion and job satisfaction; no direct effect was present. This could be because whether one is self-compassionate or not does not directly affect satisfaction in one's work; yet, balance, which is predicted by resource generation and storage (i.e., self-compassion) is the critical factor for job satisfaction. Balance did not mediate the relationship between self-compassion and personal-life burnout. We believe this might be due to the strength of the direct relationship between self-compassion and personal-life burnout. Showing kindness and understanding to the self may be a critical factor for personal-life burnout, regardless of perceptions of balance. Taken together, these findings are the first to demonstrate that among working professionals, work personal-life balance partially or fully mediates the relationship between self-compassion and some attitudinal outcomes.

Implications

Practical implications. With an increasing number of employees burned out and distressed (APA, 2017), it is critical that employers are aware of the benefits of self-compassion. There is a growing responsiveness for the costs associated with stressed employees including health conditions and diminished performance (Huffington, 2015). Thus, psychological resource enhancement programs (e.g., mindfulness interventions) are sprouting up in national corporations with quantifiable reports of savings in healthcare and gains in productivity (McCraty, Atkinson, Lipsenthal, & Arguelles, 2009). While it was measured as a trait based resource in this study, self-compassion is a teachable emotional-based resource that can be strengthened at a relatively low cost to organizations while potentially reaping great rewards. This study is an important first step for educating organizational leaders of the benefits of self-compassion for work and personal success. Our results also highlight the importance of considering both external

factors (number of work hours, number of children) and internal factors (self-compassion) when providing employees opportunities for enhancing balance. Successful positive interventions require the belief that lasting positive change is possible and the commitment to creating the desired change through self-determination and self-regulation (Comtois, 2012). Both individuals and organizational leaders must believe in and be committed to promoting balance through self-compassion. As Brower (2018) states: "Organizations will be most successful when they embrace employees as full people with families and when they recognize employees' importance beyond the doors of the workplace and beyond the hours they spend contributing to the company's goals" (p. 286).

Research implications. From a theoretical perspective, consistent with the positive psychology movement, we answer Dr. Martin Seligman's (1998) call to examine positive resources that make humans flourish, instead of only focusing on pathological issues (e.g., conflict). We respond also to recent calls to explore positive psychology resources relevant to the workplace (e.g., Allen & Kiburz, 2012; Nicklin, McNall, & Janseen, 2018). Furthermore, by studying balance instead of conflict and enrichment, we addressed the need to test the balance variable instead of simply discussing it. Our study also provides a more inclusive agenda for balance by going beyond work and family. By demonstrating that self-compassion is related to work and personal outcomes, and is sometimes mediated by work personal-life balance, we offer new opportunities for research and theoretical development.

The patterns of correlations among the demographic variables also suggest many possibilities for future exploration. Consistent with the literature, hours worked was negatively related to balance (Valcour, 2007), and telecommuting frequency was negatively related to both balance (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007) and self-compassion (e.g., Mellner, 2016). This is likely due to the lack of detachment for telecommuters. When there is an increased expectation of after-hours availability and low boundary control, it may be difficult for individuals to practice self-compassion, specifically the mindfulness dimension. Similarly, it is also consistent with previous theory and research (e.g., Neff & Vonk, 2009) that age was positively associated with perceptions of balance and self-compassion. This is likely due to increased life experience and reflective wisdom that increases with age (Neff, Rude, & Kirkpatrick, 2007).

What is both curious and unexpected is that number of children was positively associated with increased perceptions of balance and self-compassion. Research does show that self-compassion is a predictor of relationship satisfaction (e.g., Neff & Beretvas, 2012),

and that self-compassionate parenting leads to less anxiety and depression in children (e.g., Geurtzen, Scholte, Engels, Tak, and van Zundert, 2015). Thus, since self-compassion is a resource that can be developed, it is possible that more children provides more opportunities for practicing and strengthening self-compassion. However, the literature is less clear on why number of children was positively related to balance in the present study. Keeton, Fenner, Johnson, and Hayward (2007) and Valcour (2007) found the number of children to be negatively related to work-life balance, while Milkie, Kendig, Nomaguchi, and Denny (2010) found there to be no relationship. By definition, balance represents satisfaction in meeting the sum of demands of multi-role memberships (Valcour, 2007), so it is possible that more children enhances that satisfaction due to more opportunities, while someone with fewer or no children by default experiences less overall satisfaction because there are less opportunities to manage the demands of work and family life. Future research is needed to untangle this relationship, and our findings highlight the importance of assessing demographic variables, specifically age, number of children, telecommuting status, and work hours when exploring balance and self-compassion. We also recommend that future research explore demographic variables as moderators to the self-compassion/balance relationship.

Limitations and Future Directions

While this is the first study to demonstrate support for self-compassion as a promising resource for promoting work personal-life balance, more research is needed to untangle these findings, specifically the mediating effects. The modest sample size, cross-sectional design, and self-report data, all pose concerns for common method bias and conclusions regarding causality (e.g., Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Future research would benefit from measuring these relationships using longitudinal data collection methods and experimental designs (e.g., Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005). Additionally, this study was limited in that we only explored attitudinal outcomes (self-compassion, satisfaction, burnout); future research should include behavioral outcomes (e.g., sleeping patterns, performance ratings) in conjunction with attitudinal measures.

CONCLUSION

According to Harris Interactive (2011), 43% of employees do not feel satisfied with their work-life balance. Given that work-life balance has clear benefits to both individuals and organizations, the current study moves the field forward by taking a holistic work personal-life view of managing multi-role memberships and demonstrates the potential of self-compassion. In line with COR theory, we suggest that gaining teachable positive psychological resources, such as self-compassion, can improve balance, satisfaction, and burnout. Health, happiness, and well-being can all be enhanced by promoting balance: and self-compassion is a practical and effective place to start. ∎

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