

The Impact of Resource Loss and Resource Gain among Botswana Employees: A Test of the Conservation of Resources Theory

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Abstract

According to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, people are motivated to acquire and protect resources that help attain goals. Research elsewhere suggests that the inevitable integration of work and non-work demands is one of the most critical challenges facing organizations, families, and individuals nowadays; however, such research remains non-existent in Botswana. Of main interest in the current study was the interplay between Family-Work-Conflict (FWC)—a demand; Instrumental Support (IS)—a resource; and a performance related distress termed Sensitivity Towards being the Target of Upward Comparison (STTUC) —an outcome. Data was collected and then statistically manipulated in order to test the proposed relationships.

Keywords: Botswana employees, conservation of resources, family-work-conflict, support, social comparison

1. Introduction

Empirical evidence is mounting to indicate that the boundaries between work life and family life have been blurred, probably by the needs of the knowledge economies (i.e., flexi hours, home-based businesses, and the 24 hour work-family accessibility through technologies such as the internet; Hoobler, Hu, & Wilson, 2010). Researchers have also highlighted that this inevitable integration of work and non-work demands is one of the most critical challenges facing organizations, families, and individuals nowadays (Kossek & Lambert, 2005). The multitude of research examining the impact of juggling multiple demands is also indicative of the importance of the family and work interfaces (for reviews see, Bellavia & Frone, 2005; Gordon, Pruchno, Wilson-Genderson, Murphy, & Rose, 2012; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Hobfoll, Freedy, Lane, & Geller, 1990; Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis, & Jackson, 2003; Hobfoll, Vinokur, Pierce, & Lewandowski-Romps, 2012; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996; Wells, Hobfoll, & Lavin, 1999).

1.1 Background

To the knowledge of the author, compared to developed countries, most of the research aimed at evaluating the challenges facing employees in Botswana seems to focus primarily on socioeconomic and legislative challenges. In addition, and as far it could be ascertained, there has been no research conducted among employees in Botswana or elsewhere in the world which focused on understanding the relationship between family-work-conflicts, partner support and experiences of STTUC. While empirical research on the STTUC framework is now just crystallizing, past studies have shown that out-performance may be a challenge for some individuals (e.g. females), with the STTUC framework offering insights into this phenomenon. Some have also argued that for individuals from different societies, the impact of work on people's lives, families, communities, and nations might essentially be different (Super & Šverko, 1995). Particularly because according to Morahan, Rosen, Richman and Gleason (2011), the existing organizational cultures were established centuries ago by upper middle class, white, Euro-American men. For instance, while most Botswana aspire to get a job, one of the key challenges in that most families are female-headed households (FHHs) (International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, n.d.); so, family-work-conflicts may be more pronounced among Botswana female employees; necessitating research investigating the impact of work on the families, and even on work related performances. Generally, research also suggests that the challenges associated with integration of work and non-work demands have also been exacerbated by the growing number of women with families and/or children entering the workplace.

Both social role theory and role congruity theory (Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000; Eagly & Karau, 2002) have been used to explain how factors such as sex, gender, and/or gender role orientation could influence how work resources and work demands are experienced and/or perceived. For example, social role theory have been used to explain the ways by which gender roles influence the formation of gender stereotypes and the social roles that members of each gender would like to play (Bem, 1974; Wood & Lindorff, 2001). The Role congruity theory (Eagly *et al.*, 2000; Eagly & Karau, 2002) offers a slightly different perspective on the way in which socialized gender roles may adversely affect females in the workplaces. According to this theory, socialized gender roles may spill over into organizational roles; and thus, impacting negatively on the career progress of women. Therefore, research investigating this link is important to practitioners, policy makers, and even individual employees.

1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study

To address the identified gap in research, the main aim of the current study was to test the Conservation of Resources (COR) model in the Botswana context. The basic tenet of the COR model is that people are motivated to acquire and protect resources that help them attain goals (Hobfoll, 1989; 2011). Resources could be any physical, psychological, and/or social factors that may be functional in achieving goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). The model further explains that demands (i.e., the physical, psychological, and/or social factors that could lead to certain physiological and psychological costs; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti *et al.*, 2001) can threaten existing resources (Hobfoll, 2001) and even related outcomes.

Most studies investigating the impact of demands and resources on employees tend to focus on the common outcomes such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and employee performance. To address this gap in research, the first objective of the current study was to investigate a reaction to outperformance that has been termed Sensitivities Towards being the Target of Upward Comparison (STTUC). STTUC has been defined as the outperformer's concern about certain aspects of the outperformed person's response to outperformance (Exline & Lobel, 1997; 1999; 2001; Exline, Single, Lobel, & Geyer, 2004; Juola-Exline, 1998). In this definition, outperformance implies an achieved and/or ascribed status difference between the outperformer and those who have been outperformed (Pheko, 2012). The outperformer is an individual who has surpassed another in terms of outcome or performance, and the outperformed refers to an individual who has been surpassed in terms of outcome or performance (Pheko, 2012).

Using the COR model as the theoretical and organizing framework, this study also examined how both Family-Work-Conflict (FWC) and Instrumental Support (IS) affected employees reactions to outperformance. The COR model explains how certain work demands can threaten existing resources (Hobfoll, 2001). The model also articulates the stress outcomes for role conflicts (i.e., resulting from either the home or work roles) and provides a framework for investigating the impact of specific demands (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999).

Other researchers have warned that while there is abundance of research investigating consequences of resource loss, there are relatively fewer studies on resources gains (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2009 as cited in Hobfoll *et al.*, 2012; Wells, Hobfoll, & Lavin, 1999). Using the COR model, research has established that resource gains may contribute to improved psychological well-being and even make individuals more resistant to resource losses (Hobfoll *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, in this study, the relationship between Instrumental Support (a resource) and STTUC were also examined.

2. Literature Review

As indicated above, there is no shortage of research examining the incompatibilities between work and family interfaces (Bellavia & Frone, 2005). The COR model (Hobfoll, 1989, 2011; Hobfoll, Freedy, Lane, & Geller, 1990) has been positioned, and used as a suitable foundation for understanding the two interfaces. Grandey and Cropanzano (1999) explained that the model offers a strong conceptual framework as it explains stress outcomes for both intra-role and inter-role conflicts. On the backdrop of these suggestions, a sizeable number of studies have used the COR theory to successfully demonstrate and explain the links between the two domains (i.e., family and work) and to also explain how the conflicts may eventually affect organizational outcomes (e.g., Netemeyer, *et al.*, 1996). Hobfoll (2011) further suggested that because what people value (e.g., well-being, peace, family, self-preservation, and/or positive views of self) appear to be universal, organizations might have no choice but to operate in accordance with people's values and motives.

Resources have been conceptualized as anything that individuals personally value (Hobfoll, 2011); and therefore, one may possess personal (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Hobfoll et al., 2003), social (Hobfoll et al., 2003; Hobfoll, 2011), material, and energy resources (Hobfoll, 2011). Hobfoll (2001) empirically developed a list of more than 70 resources relevant to the COR model. The list ranged from work-related resources to non-work related resources. Personal resources were identified as aspects of the self generally linked to resiliency (Hobfoll et al., 2003) and to better emotional outcomes in the face of stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Of interest to the current study was instrumental partner support, which could be classified as a social resource (Hobfoll et al., 2003).

1.3 Performance and Sensitivities Associated with being an Outperformer

Performance is a relatively common behavioral outcome examined in the work and family literature (Hoobler et al., 2010). For example, basing their suggestions on the COR theory, Hoobler et al., (2009) posited that workers' experiences of conflict between the work and family domains could have implications for evaluations of work performance, objective career outcomes and even the attitudinal outcome of career satisfaction. Family-Work-Conflict has also been negatively related to work performance and job attitudes (Kossek & Ozeki, 1999).

The current study investigated employees' sensitivities towards being the targets of upward comparison. The STTUC framework is an extension of the social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) which suggests that people possess fundamental tendencies towards social comparison. Of interest in the current study was an example of social comparison referred to as downward comparison. Engaging in downward comparison has been linked to outcomes such as feelings of pride (Exline & Lobel, 2001) positive affects (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1993; Wills, 1981), as well some general psychological gains (Bailis, Chipperfield, & Perry, 2005). However, contrary to these general findings and suggestions regarding the positive outcomes of engaging in downward comparison, developments in research suggests that some outperformers may be distressed by being targets of upward comparison (e.g. Buunk *et al.*, 1990; Exline *et al.*, 2004, Exline & Lobel, 1999; 2001; Henegan, 2006; Juola-Exline, 1998).

Exline and Lobel (1999; 2001) and Juola-Exline's (1998) STTUC theory posit that if both the outperformer and the outperformed individuals are aware of the difference in status, the individual who is target of upward comparison (i.e., the outperformer) may feel some concern about certain aspects of the outperformed person's response, leading to STTUC experiences. Exline and Lobel (1999; 2001) and Juola-Exline (1998) further suggested that for an outperformer to be classified as experiencing STTUC, it is essential that certain conditions be met. Of interest to the current study was the condition requiring an individual to believe that the outperformed person is threatened by the upward comparison. This discomfort will, hereafter, be referred to as the Perceived Comparison Threat (PCT).

The third condition of the STTUC framework requires an outperforming individual to be concerned about the outperformed individuals' response. The outperformer's concern may be focused on: i) Condition 3a: The well-being of the outperformed person, hereafter referred to as Concerned for the Outperformed Person (COP) and/or ii) Own well-being, hereafter referred to as Concern for the Self (CS), and/or iii): The relationship between the outperformer and the outperformed, hereafter referred to as Concern for the Relationship with Outperformed (CRO). In the current study only Concerned for the Outperformed Person and PCT were investigated as a performance related outcomes/reactions.

1.4 Family-Work-Conflict

Researchers have revealed different sources of conflict between the family and the work domains. Such conflict include time-based conflicts (i.e., conflicts resulting from the amount of time spent on each domain); behavior-based conflicts (i.e., conflicts relating from style related inconsistencies between how one is expected to behave in each domain); strain-based conflicts (i.e., conflicts resulting from either the family or work related strains; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985); and cognitive-based work-family conflicts (i.e., conflicts resulting from destructive domain-related thoughts and worries (Ezzedeen & Swiercz, 2007).

Such conflicts have been viewed as detrimental to a variety of career outcomes (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) such as job related stress (Netemeyer et al., 2005) and even lowered perceptions of person-job and person-organization fit (Hoobler et al., 2009). The conflict between the family and work domains has also been linked to phenomenon such as the glass ceiling effect (Hoobler et al., 2010).

For example, Hoobler et al.'s (2009) study revealed that when supervisors perceived their subordinates to be higher in FWC the supervisors also perceived the same subordinates to be lower performers. In the same study, the subordinates ultimately received fewer promotions. Hoobler et al., (2009) referred to this phenomenon as the FWC bias and a new way of understanding the glass ceiling effect.

1.5 Instrumental Support

The COR theory further suggests that resources are needed to deal with demands and stress, and instrumental support, has been classified as a social resource (Hobfoll et al., 2003). Some has viewed IS as both a social capital (i.e., a valuable resource contributing to enhanced health outcomes; Cattell, 2001) and as a basic building block of social, psychological and biological integrity (Hobfoll, Freedy, Lane, & Geller, 1990). King, Mattimore, King, and Adams (1995) defined instrumental support as specific behaviors and attitudes that are aimed at assisting or accommodating an employee's work requirements. Some has shown that the individuals who lost social support experienced more negative emotional outcomes; suggesting that resource mobilization may offset the negative impact of stressful life circumstances (Hobfoll, 2002).

1.6 Gender Differences

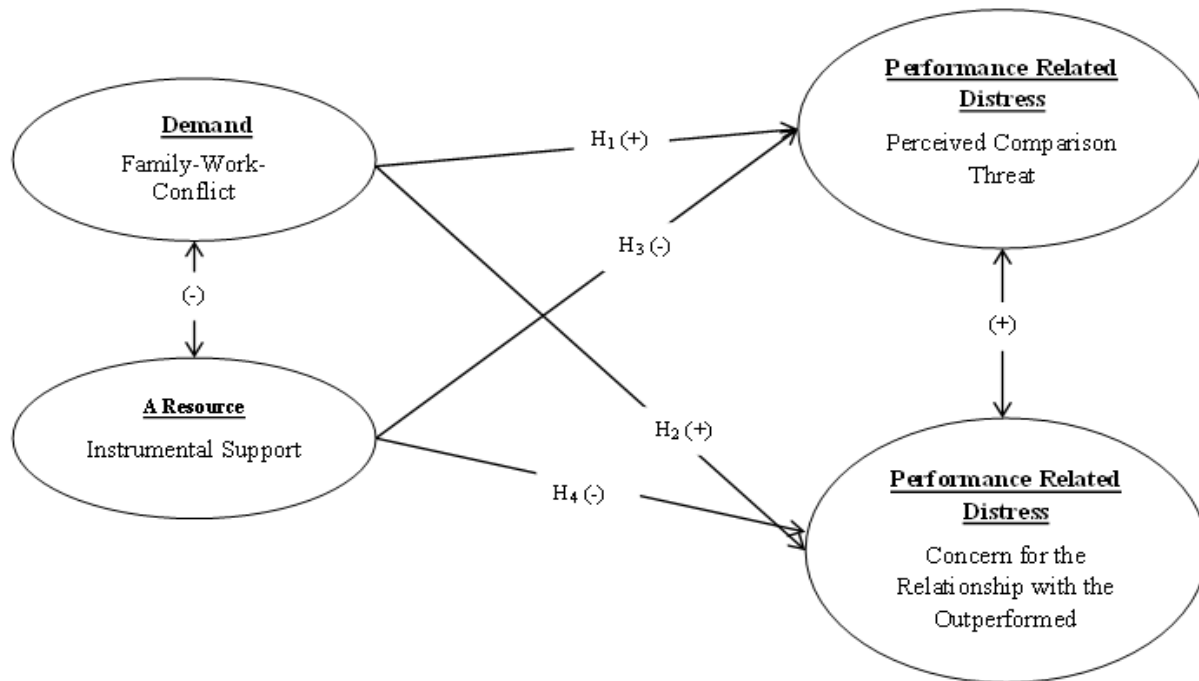
Because the work and family domains have been traditionally gendered with women mainly expected to take care of the families (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999), gender (i.e., personal resources) will also be investigated in the current study. Grant-Valona and Enshe (2011) explained that professional women could be faced with conflicting choices regarding how to manage their careers and whether to "opt in" or "opt out" of the workforce. For example, it has even been suggested that while having a partner could support the labor market advancement of men, it could restrict the labor market opportunities for career of women (Verbakel & de Graaf, 2008). This could even be more salient in contexts like Botswana where most people hold traditional gender role orientations (Pheko, 2012) in which the caring roles are assumed to be primarily the job of a woman. Gordon et al (2012) explain that these expectations may create both role overload and role conflict for the females. For these reasons, FWC is even commonly assumed to affect women more than men (Livingston & Judge, 2008). Hoobler (2007) further warned that viewing women from this non-work, caregiving perspectives could also make women's non-work demands more salient. Therefore, in the current study, gender differences were investigated because the relative of salience of work and family roles for men and women could have influenced the proposed relationships (Barnett et al., 1993).

1.7 The Integrated Conceptual Framework and the Research Hypotheses

The COR model has specific implications for the relationship between social support and stress related outcomes (Halbesleben, 2006). Some have used the model to show how inter-role conflicts between family and work may lead to a negative state of being — including but not limited to experiences of burden, depression, anxiety, and/or tension (Gordon et al., 2012; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). In the case of the current study, such state of being could be experiences of PCT or CRO. For example, there is empirical evidence to suggest that conflicts in the family and work interfaces are negatively related to job performance (Netemeyer et al, 1996). Furthermore, using the COR theory, researchers have demonstrated how the actual or perceived scarcity of resources may lead workers to withhold effort in attempts to conserve resources in a domain—that is, on the family or the work domain (Hoobler et al., 2010). A more dynamic conceptualization of the performance process was also examined by specifically investigating reactions to outperformance. This was achieved by focusing on two forms of interplay between FWC—a demand; PS—a resource; and STTUC—an outcome. Following Frone, Russell, and Cooper's (1997) suggestions, IS's buffering effects on FWC were also investigated.

The organizing framework and theoretical model is displayed in Figure 1. Hypotheses were also based on the COR model.

Figure 1: A Hypothesized model of the relationships between Instrumental Support and Perceived Comparison Threat; Instrumental Support and Concern for the Relationship with the Outperformed; Family-Work-Conflict and Perceived Comparison Threat; and Family-Work-Conflict and Concern for the Relationship with the



The following relationships were proposed and tested:

1. Hypothesis 1: A direct positive relationship exists between outperformers' experiences of FWC and their perception that the outperformed individual is PCT.
2. Hypothesis 2: A direct positive relationship exists between outperformers' experiences of FWC and their experiences of CRO.
3. Hypothesis 3: A direct negative relationship exists between outperformers' experiences of IS and their perception that the outperformed individual is PCT.
4. Hypothesis 4: A direct negative relationship exists between outperformers' experiences of IS and their experiences of CRO.
5. Hypothesis 5: FWC and IS explain variance in outperformer's experiences of PCT.
6. Hypothesis 6: FWC and IS explains variance in outperformer's experiences of CRO.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

Participants were 464 employees from a variety of organizations in Gaborone, Botswana. Approximately 59.9% were female. The age range was between 20 and 57 years ($M = 32.69$, $SD = 7.43$) and the sample was 100% black. The majority of the respondents had completed a Bachelor's degree (41.0%). The employee level of responsibility showed that 37.1% of the respondents were in non-supervisory/non-management positions, 27.5% were in supervisory positions, and 31.1% of respondents were in managerial positions. Fifty nine percent of the respondents had at last one child ($M = 1.15$, $SD = 1.26$, S.E. Mean = 0.60).

3.2 Measures

Measures included a demographic questionnaire, which had items/questions about the participants' gender, education, income, number of children, marital status, and age. In addition, the participants completed the following questionnaires:

Family-Work-Conflict which was measured using a five-item Family-Work Conflict sub-scale by Netemeyer *et al.* (1996). Responses on the sub-scale were rated on a 4-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly Agree*). Sample item of this sub-scale included “My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work, such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, and working overtime.” The items on the sub-scale were summed together to form an index measuring FWC.

Instrumental support was measured using the Instrumental Support (IS) sub-scale of the Postpartum Partner Support Scale by Dennis and Ross (2006). Items on this scale were also scored on a 4-point scale, ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly Agree*). An example of an item on the sub-scale included: “My partner/spouse/significant other provides me with opportunities to do things for myself.” Instrumental support index was formed by summing the items.

Perceived Comparison Threat (PCT) was measured with items from Exline *et al.*'s (2004) Anticipated Negative and Positive Peer Response sub-scales. Participants were instructed as follows– While thinking about the situation in which you outperformed a significant other, please respond to the following statements by ticking a number from 1 to 5 (1 = *Not at all*, 2 = *To a Small Extent*, 3 = *To a Moderate Extent*, 4 = *To a Great Extent*, 5 = *To an Extreme Extent*) to indicate whether the statement reflects how you think your significant other may have reacted or felt as a result of the outperformance. The questions were followed by statements such as: “Felt frustrated because you performed better.” The items were summed together to form a perceived comparison threat index.

Concern about the Relationship with the Outperformed (CRO) was assessed with items from Ho and Zemaitis's (1981) Concern over Negative Consequences of Success Scale (CONCOSS), as identified by Hong and Caust (1985). Hong and Caust (1985) labeled this factor “Anxiety over the Negative Evaluation of Others.” An example of items on this sub-scale included: “Worry that you may become so knowledgeable that your significant other will not like you.” The items were summed together to form an index measuring CRO.

3.3 Data Analysis

Hypotheses 1-5 were tested using Pearson correlation. Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6 were both tested using Hierarchical Multiple Regression (HMR) analysis as it was deemed necessary to separate the effects of the predictor variables from some of the control variables (Pallant, 2010). Gender, age, number of children, level of responsibility at work, level of education, and relationship status were treated as control variables and were therefore entered in the first model while the other two predictor variables (i.e., FWC and IS) were entered in the second model.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

Ethics clearances were first obtained from the University of Cape Town and the Botswana Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs. Thereafter, several organizations were invited to participate and five organizations agreed to the request. Paper-and-pencil questionnaires were distributed and then collected at a later date by the researcher and three research assistants.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

All items in each one of the sub-scales were item-analyzed and Table 1 presents the results. The table also presents the descriptive statistics and the intercorrelations among the study variables.

Table 1
Intercorrelations Among the Variables

Variables	M	SD	α	1	2	3	4
1. Perceived Comparison Threat	1.76	.865	.926	—			
2. Concern for Relationship with Outperformed	1.79	.912	.857	.600**	—		
3. Instrumental Support	3.70	1.00	.918	-.355**	-.207**	—	
4. Family-Work-Conflict	1.97	.691	.869	.248**	.235**	-.163**	—

Note: ** $p < 0.01$ level. * $p < 0.05$ level.

As shown in Table 1, for all the sub-scales, the Cronbach’s alpha values exceeded the critical cut-off value set for the study (i.e., $\alpha < 0.70$) — ranging from 0.86 to 0.93. Furthermore, on all the sub-scales, no items were identified as problematic and all items were therefore retained. Based on these results, the sub-scales were deemed to be reliable.

Hypotheses 1-4 tested direct relationship between some of the study variables and the results are also presented in Table 1. Hypothesis 1 stated that a direct positive relationship exists between outperformers’ experiences of FWC and their perception that the outperformed individual is PCT. Based on the results, this hypothesis was supported.

Hypothesis 2 stated that a direct positive relationship exists between outperformers’ experiences of FWC and their experiences of CRO. This hypothesis was also supported.

Hypothesis 3 stated: A direct negative relationship exists between outperformers’ experiences of IS and their perception that the outperformed individual is PCT. Based on the results, this hypothesis was also supported.

Hypothesis 4 stated: A direct negative relationship exists between outperformers’ experiences of IS and their experiences of CRO. The correlation results showed support for this hypothesis.

4.1.1 HMR results.

Hypothesis 5 and 6 stated that FWC and IS explained variance in outperformer’s experiences of PCT and CRO. These two hypotheses were tested using HMR and the results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting PCT and CRO

Predictor	PCT					CRO				
	Unstandardised Coefficients		SC	t	Sig.	Unstandardised Coefficients		SC	t	Sig.
	B	S. Error	Beta			B	S. Error	Beta		
Step 1: Control Variables										
(Constant)	10.901	2.879		3.786	.000	6.688	1.228		5.445	.000
Age	.093	.079	.081	1.175	.241	-.029	.033	-.059	-.880	.379
Relationship Status	-1.354	.544	-.149	-2.488	.013	-.553	.226	-.142	-2.449	.015
Children	.706	.463	.106	1.523	.129	.379	.195	.131	1.947	.052
Education Level	-.008	.156	-.003	-.053	.958	-.092	.065	-.073	-1.418	.157
Work Responsibility Level	.158	.236	.036	.671	.503	.187	.100	.098	1.880	.061
Gender	3.619	.928	.206	3.898	.000	1.362	.385	.182	3.541	.000
$R^2 = .056, F(6, 341) = 4.35, p < .05$						$R^2 = .07, F(6, 362) = 4.27, p < .05$				
Step 2										
(Constant)	14.708	3.453		4.259	.000	6.065	1.521		3.987	.000
Age	.105	.073	.092	1.447	.149	-.021	.032	-.042	-.658	.511
Relationship Status	-.843	.506	-.093	-1.665	.097***	-.420	.222	-.108	-1.891	.059***
Children	.464	.429	.069	1.082	.280	.292	.189	.101	1.545	.123
Education Level	.116	.145	.039	.796	.426	-.050	.063	-.040	-.786	.432
Work Responsibility Level	.091	.218	.020	.416	.678	.155	.097	.081	1.604	.110
Instrumental Support	-.444	.072	-.304	-6.175	.000*	-.088	.031	-.143	-2.815	.005*
Family Work Conflict	.518	.124	.206	4.180	.000*	.218	.055	.199	3.954	.000*
$R^2 = .20, F(8, 339) = 11.89, p < .05$						$R^2 = .13, F(8, 360) = 6.68, p < .05$				
$\Delta R^2 = .15, \Delta F(2, 339) = 31.88, p < .05$						$\Delta R^2 = .07, \Delta F(2, 360) = 13.41, p < .05$				

Note. * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.10$

As shown in Table 2, the findings suggested that the control variables explained 5.6% of the variance in the PCT scores: $R^2 = .056, F(6, 341) = 4.35, p < .05$. FWC and IS were added to the equation at step 2, resulting in an improvement in the prediction of the PCT scores: $R^2 = .20, F(8, 339) = 11.89, p < .05$. The two predictors explained an additional 15% of the variance in the CRO scores after controlling for gender, age, number of children, level of responsibility at work, level of education, and relationship status. The findings further indicated that both Instrumental Support ($\beta = -.304, p < 0.0$), and Family-Work-Conflict ($\beta = .206, p < 0.01$) reached significance, thus providing support for Hypothesis 5.

HMR was also used to test Hypothesis 6 and Table 2 still presents the results. The results indicated that all the predictor variables collectively contributed a significant amount of variance in CRO ($p < .05$). Overall, the amount of variance in CRO that was accounted for by the predictor variables was 12%. The control variables entered at step 1 explained 7.0% of the variance in the CRO scores. At step 2, FWC and IS were added to the equation and there was an improvement in the prediction of the CRO scores: $R^2 = .13$, $F(8, 360) = 6.68$, $p < .05$. The two predictors explained an additional 7.0% of the variance in the CRO scores after controlling for gender, number of children, income, education, and age. As depicted in Table 2, Instrumental Support ($\beta = -.143$, $p < 0.05$), and Family-Work Conflict ($\beta = .199$, $p < 0.01$) reached significance, thus providing support for Hypothesis 6.

Separate models for Hypotheses 5 and 6 were tested for the male and the female sub-samples and the results are presented in Table 3. The results indicated that the selected variables explained more variance in PCT scores for the female sub-sample ($R^2 = .26$, $F(7, 194) = 9.74$, $p < .05$) compared to the male sub-sample ($R^2 = .09$, $F(7, 138) = 1.90$, $p < .05$). When using CRO as a dependent variable, the findings suggested that the control variables explained more variance in CRO for the male sub-sample ($R^2 = .09$, $F(7, 138) = 1.90$, $p < .05$) than for the female sub-sample ($R^2 = .03$, $F(5, 211) = 1.38$, $p < .05$). However, the findings indicated that when IS and FWC were added at step 2, there was a higher change in R^2 for the female sub-sample ($\Delta R^2 = .08$, $\Delta F(2, 209) = 9.48$, $p < .05$) than the male sub-sample ($\Delta R^2 = .05$, $\Delta F(2, 144) = 4.36$, $p < .05$), suggesting that IS and FWC might be more important for the females than the males.

Table 3
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting PCT and CRO for the Male and Female Sub-Samples

Predictor	Males						Females					
	PCT			CRO			PCT			CRO		
	SC Beta	t	Sig.	SC Beta	t	Sig.	Beta	t	Sig.	Beta	t	Sig.
Step 1: Control Variables												
(Constant)		5.327	.000		6.788	.000		4.734	.000		5.666	.000
Age	.006	.050	.960	-.028	-.257	.798	.125	1.357	.176	-.057	-.639	.524
Relationship Status	-.165	-1.650	.101	-.258	-2.735	.007	-.154	-1.937	.054	-.076	-.999	.319
Children	.128	1.166	.246	.140	1.348	.180	.101	1.066	.288	.137	1.498	.136
Education Level	.104	1.247	.215	-.159	-2.009	.046	-.052	-.722	.471	-.034	-.483	.630
Work Resp. Level	.009	.102	.919	-.031	-.354	.724	.066	.930	.353	.143	2.078	.039
	$R^2 = .03$, $F(5, 140) = 0.94$, $p > .05$			$R^2 = .09$, $F(5, 146) = 2.88$, $p < .05$			$R^2 = .04$, $F(5, 196) = 1.68$, $p > .05$			$R^2 = .03$, $F(5, 211) = 1.38$, $p > .05$		
Step 2												
(Constant)		4.300	.000		5.224	.000		5.239	.000		3.959	.000
Age	.101	.840	.402	.043	.388	.699	.049	.590	.556	-.074	-.860	.391
Relationship Status	-.134	-1.356	.177	-.226	-2.404	.017**	-.081	-1.142	.255	-.034	-.456	.649
Children	.068	.620	.536	.093	.898	.370	.099	1.172	.242	.116	1.313	.191
Education Level	.127	1.547	.124	-.138	-1.777	.078***	.010	.157	.876	.014	.211	.833
Work Resp. Level	-.032	-.344	.731	-.058	-.672	.503	.050	.781	.436	.115	1.700	.091***
Instrumental Support	-.207	-2.342	.021**	-.168	-2.023	.045**	-.377	-5.86	.000*	-.158	-2.325	.021**
Family Work Conflict	.124	1.491	.138	.147	1.876	.063***	.248	3.851	.000*	.224	3.311	.001*
	$R^2 = .09$, $F(7, 138) = 1.90$, $p < .05$			$R^2 = .01$, $F(7, 144) = 3.40$, $p < .05$			$R^2 = .26$, $F(7, 194) = 9.74$, $p < .05$			$R^2 = .11$, $F(5, 194) = 3.774$, $p < .05$		
	$\Delta R^2 = .058$, $\Delta F(2, 138) = 4.43$, $p < .05$			$\Delta R^2 = .05$, $\Delta F(2, 144) = 4.36$, $p < .05$			$\Delta R^2 = .22$, $\Delta F(2, 194) = 28.68$, $p < .05$			$\Delta R^2 = .08$, $\Delta F(2, 209) = 9.48$, $p < .05$		

Note. * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.10$

Collectively, the results from both the correlation and HMR analyses suggested that IS — negative relationship with sensitivities towards being the target of upward comparison is a resource, while family-work-conflict — positive relationship with sensitivities towards being the target of upward comparison is a demand. The implications for the relationships are discussed in the proceeding sections.

5. Discussions

To the knowledge of the author, no empirical research has previously been undertaken in Botswana to investigate the impact of work and family interfaces and the resulting outcomes. In this study, the COR model was used to provide a theoretical basis for understanding such interfaces. This type of research is important because some demands are “necessary evils,” and research has revealed that efforts to juggle multiple demands may result in both negative physiological and/or psychological costs (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). The findings presented above also support these assertions and to a greater extent, confirm some findings from previous research. For example, research has positively linked instrumental support to outcomes such career commitment (Ülkü-Steiner, Kurtz-Costes, & Kinlaw, 2000) and job satisfaction (King *et al.*, 1995). The current study added to this list by relating partner support to the experiences of STTUC (specifically, CRO and PCT).

An examination of the relative effects of FWC on PCT and CRO, showed that as predicted in Hypothesis 5 and 6, FWC had a positive relationship with both CRO and PCT; positioning FWC as a demand. In using the COR model, one can begin to understand how FWC may drain resources as the resources expended in fulfilling family roles reduce the resources available for the work roles (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Witt & Carlson, 2006). Negative relationships were also revealed between IS and both PCT and CRO. This indicates that IS can be used as a resource to prevent the occurrence of STTUC experiences. Likewise, the negative relationship between IS and FWC also positions IS as a valuable resource that could be used to cope with the family-work demands.

The findings presented in Table 2 further revealed that gender also explained variance in both CRO and PCT. To understand this further, Hypotheses 5 and 6 were tested using both the male and female sub-samples. The findings presented in Table 3 indicated that the two variables of interest (i.e., IS and FWC) explained more variance in both CRO and PCT for the female sub-sample than for the male sub-sample. Detailed analysis of the control variables also revealed some interesting and informative findings for both criterion variables, but more so for CRO. For instance, for the male sub-sample, the demographic explained more variance in CRO than the two predictors.

The findings further suggested that work responsibility was a significant predictor of CRO for women and education was a significant predictor of CRO for men. The same findings further indicated that the direction of the relationships between both CRO and work responsibility level and PCT and work responsibility level was negative for men but positive for women. This discrepancy was also repeated for the relationship between CRO and education level as the direction was negative for men but positive for women. These findings are important and informative as they suggest that the two genders could be relating and reacting to some of the so called resources differentially. From the COR perspective, and looking at the direction of the relationships, it could also be stated that for women, work responsibility level and education level could be more of demands whereas for men the two could indeed be resources.

Hobfoll's (2001) theory also elucidate on the process by which resources operate. His theory suggests that resources may be acquired for their own rights and/or for the contribution they make in maintaining a strong resource reservoir. Hobfoll (1998; 2001) further posited that resources can aggregate in resource caravans to be used immediately and/or in one's life span. Education is one of those resources that could be acquired for the purpose it serves for both personal and career development (i.e., future use). However, the findings in this study suggest that perhaps education is a resource for men but not for women, at least in relation to performance related distress. The STTUC theory has also been used to explain such phenomenon. According to this theory, outperformance may pose a threat to the outperformer based on the following factors: 1) the characteristics of the outperformer (e.g. personality, gender, level of education), 2) the characteristics of the outperformed person (e.g. gender, personality, level of education), 3) the nature of the relationship between the outperformer and the outperformed (e.g. close, friendly), and/or 4) the situational context of comparison (e.g. competitive versus cooperative). It can therefore be implied that certain characteristics of the outperformer, in this case gender, coupled with other variables might complicate the ways by which some of the resources are experienced.

The results pertaining to gender differences in appraisal of resources can also be understood from the gender role perspectives, particularly the traditional gender role orientation perspective and role congruity perspectives. It is commonly reported that in collectivistic cultures, such as Botswana, where most people hold traditional gender role orientations (Pheko, 2012). In such cultures, men are expected to be breadwinners whilst women are expected to participate more in the caring roles (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Grant-Valona, & Enshe, 2011; Livingston & Judge,

2008). It has also been suggested that women may be subjected to incompatible expectations in respect of managerial roles as well as general female roles (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Using such theoretical arguments, the findings from the current study can be interpreted to mean that as men acquire higher education and go up the corporate ladder, they tend to be more content with being targets of upward comparison as such attainments are socially expected of them. The same cannot be stated for women as the findings indicated positive relationships with both education and work responsibility levels.

5.1 Theoretical Contributions and Managerial Implications

This study makes several contributions to the literature. First, the findings suggests ways by which demands and resources are associated in the Botswana population, yielding new information about how demands and resources interplay in a different culture and ultimately contributing to the debate on work and family cross-domain effects. Collectively, the findings imply that family-work conflict is a problem for both individuals and organizations regardless of the culture or the nationality.

Another contribution of the current study is that while there has been an explosion of work and family interfaces related research, such research remains non-existent in the Botswana context — that is, as far as it could be ascertained.

In addition, research investigating the family and work interfaces tend to mainly examine the incompatibilities between the work and the family domain (Bellavia & Frone, 2005). However, research suggest that there could be both positive and negative consequences of the work and family integration (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Bellavia & Frone, 2005) as work can enrich family and family can enrich work, leading to more positive outcomes (Bellavia & Frone, 2005). Therefore the fact that the current study investigated the role of partner support in experiences of STTUC can be seen as another unique contribution of the current study.

Furthermore, instead of measuring the common performance outcomes, the current study investigated how FWC and IS relate to sensitivity towards being the target of upward comparison variables. The findings suggest that while family work conflict could expose someone to being sensitive about being the target of upward comparison, IS can protect the individuals from such experiences. The finding that IS can prevent the outperformer from such experiences also point to potential interventions for dealing with FWC.

5.1.1 Managerial implications

In addition to the theoretical contributions, this research also has practical implications. While the results of the current study were largely consistent with the proposed model, Alarcon, Edwards, and Menke, (2011) warns that, “what is critical is not just that people are experiencing demands and have resources” (p. 223). Organizations need to explore ways by which demands can be managed. It has been suggested that to replace or protect the threatened resources, employees may decide to opt out of one of the roles (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). In light of findings from the current study, both individuals and organizations are advised to identify ways that can prevent the demands from negatively impacting on the individual employees. The findings position IS as a potential intervention for individuals experiencing FWC and STTUC. Past research has also linked informal support to outcomes such line job and family satisfaction, and even turnover intentions (Carlson & Perrewé, 1999; King *et al.*, 1995; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). The current findings show how partners may represent an important source of support for their working partners. On the backdrop of these findings, employers could institute some family-work programs to prevent the strains resulting from FWC to negatively impact work outcomes (Osterman, 1995). In addition, organizations could design work schedules and programs that encourage workers with partners to provide support to their partners. Such programs may include on-site day care and/or flexible hours (Osterman, 1995).

5.2 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study, as all studies, has limitations. Though necessitated by cost and time constraints, the use of a convenient sample precludes the possibility of generalizing the results to a broader population. The study also used a cross-sectional design; therefore, presenting only a single snapshot of the findings and also exposing the study to the problem of common method bias (Spector, 1994).

Thirdly, while the findings are informative, the use of self-report instruments could have created the problem of common method bias (Spector, 1994). In the future, objective instruments such as supervisor assessments and daily diaries of the individuals and/or their partner could be used to improve the reliability, validity and generalizability of the findings.

Furthermore, empirical evidence is increasing that when individuals are placed in situation where they have outperformed other(s), some may be confident and/or self-aggrandize, whereas others may be less confident or even self-deprecate (Brown, Uebelacker, & Heatherington, 1998; Exline & Lobel, 2001; Exline *et al.* 2004). Therefore, research exploring this is needed. In addition, it has been revealed that outperformers who are STTUC may engage in strategies such as, avoiding the outperformed person (Exline & Lobel, 2001; Exline *et al.* 2004; Juola-Exline, 1998), self-depreciation, appeasement (Exline & Lobel, 2001; Geyer & Exline, 2004; Henagan, 2006), and even underachievement (Henagan, 2006; Henagan & Bedeian, 2010). The strategies used to minimize the distress associated with STTUC distress were not within the scope of the current study. However, given the potential negative impact of the identified strategies, it is recommended that future studies investigate strategies used in the Botswana context.

The results also demonstrated that IS can help reduce FWC and potentially the resulting role strain in the work and family domains. Therefore, more research is needed in Botswana to investigate other potential demands and resources.

Furthermore, looking at the directions of the relationships between the two criterion variables and education and work responsibility levels across the two genders, it can be suggested that before uniformly classifying certain things as resources, research is needed to assess whether people with different backgrounds and demographics interpret them accordingly. It seems as though other factors may exacerbate performance related distress for females compared to males. Additional research should therefore be conducted with diverse list of resources.

In the future, researchers could also study the work family interactions from both directions (i.e., both FWC and WFC) and the impact of support within and across domains (e.g. various aspects of work related support and family support). Such a focus of research may better allow for understanding the complex relationships among the different types of demands and resources, especially within the work-family interface.

5.3 Conclusion

As a concluding remark, it is worth a mention that while the current study was not about the glass ceiling phenomenon (i.e., the invisible barriers which exclude the majority of women from higher organisational positions by enabling them to see but not reach the senior positions (Heilman, 2001), it is difficult not to mention the phenomenon. This is so because glass ceiling phenomenon is complex and dismantling it requires understanding of the barriers women face in their advancement including both subtle and overt barriers (Ragins, Townsend, & Mattis, 1998). From the findings of the current study and the fact that women and men appraised some of the so called resources differently, it can be suggested that this area of research deserves more attention as it may hold a key to understanding the persistence of the glass ceiling effect.

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