

Effects of Work-Family Conflict on Employees' Career Compromise in Enterprises: A Case Study of Henan Province, China

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the current status of work-family conflict, career compromise, and differences in work-family conflict among employees in various demographic and family characteristic contexts within enterprises in Henan Province. It then seeks to identify the impact of work-family conflict on employees' career compromise choices. The questionnaire survey and data analysis revealed that work-family conflict has a significant impact on employees' career compromises, while work engagement serves as a mediator. The study results offer new insights into understanding the impact of work-family conflict on employees' career development, providing practical guidance for corporate management. The study's novelty lies in its incorporation of two-way work-family conflict and employees' career compromises within the same framework, from the perspective of role conflict. Still, future research needs to be further expanded due to the limitations of the cross-sectional research methodology and sample selection.

Keywords: career compromise, employees of enterprises in Henan Province, mediating role, work-family conflict, work engagement

1. Introduction

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With the development of information and communication technologies and the changing nature of families and occupations, the boundaries between family and work have become increasingly blurred worldwide. (Haslam et al., 2015). Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the number of dual-career couples in the U.S. society grew dramatically from 2009 to 2011, an increase of 2.1 million couples in a decade. Meanwhile, the working hours of urban workers in China have increased from an average of 44.7 hours/week in 2009 to an average of 3.5 hours/week in 2011. At the same time, the working hours of urban workers in China increased from an average of 44.7 hours/week in 2009 to 46.8 hours/week in 2011 (China). 8 hours/week (China Labor Statistics Yearbook, 2010, 2020). As the number of dual-career employees and the average working hours of employees have increased, the conflict between work and family has become increasingly apparent. Integrating work and family needs has become a significant concern for employees in the contemporary workplace (Lin et al., 2013). In the modern society where the pace of life is accelerating and the pressure of work is increasing, employees generally feel an intense work-family conflict. Employees must meticulously fulfill their work tasks in a competitive and stressful working environment. At the same time, they need to assume corresponding family responsibilities amidst heavy family affairs. Limited individual resources are challenging to distribute evenly between family and work, and employees are often disturbed by family matters at work, thus leading to work-family conflicts.

On top of this pressure, employees must make corresponding compromises in their career choices and development process to alleviate the imbalance in the dual dimensions of career and life. In this context, the study of the impact of work-family conflict on employees' career compromise is more realistic and more in line with the current national conditions. Career compromise refers to individuals lowering their job-seeking goals during the career choice process due to their inability to

obtain the desired position. In this paper, we take work commitment as the mediating variable of the influence of work-family conflict on career compromise, and work intrusion is the most direct psychological manifestation of an employee's attitude towards work. This paper will integrate work commitment and the impact of work-family conflict on career compromise, building on the existing research foundation.

Literature Review

2.1 Work-Family Conflict and Career Compromise

Existing research suggests that work-family conflict is an essential source of stress and negatively affects well-being and behavior. Amstad et al.'s (2011) Meta-analysis categorized the outcome variables of work-family conflict into work-related, family-related, and non-domain-specific outcomes. Frone et al. (1992) argued that the domains impacted by work-family conflict differed from those impacted by family-work conflict; the former primarily affected the family, the latter mainly affected the work domain. Differ, with the former primarily affecting the family and the latter affecting the work domain. Research has also shown that work-family conflict significantly affects the extent of women's career compromise (Yao, 2020). In addition, work-family conflict may negatively affect employees' organizational citizenship behaviors and positively affect counterproductive behaviors through the mediating role of emotional exhaustion (Zhang et al, 2020). Work-family conflict affects employees' professional identity and is closely related to related variables such as marital quality and employees' work well-being. Therefore, this paper sets the following hypothesis: see Figure 1.

H1: The effect of work-family conflict on employees' development opportunities is compromised.

H2: The effect of work-family conflict on compromising employees' career match compromises.

H3: The effect of work-family conflict on employees' social expectations is compromised.

2.2 Work-family conflict and work engagement

Work engagement is a positive and fulfilling state characterized by vigour, dedication, and focus (Schaufeli et al, 2006). Energetic refers to a state in which the individual is energetic and adaptable at work; dedication refers to a state in which the individual is enthusiastically engaged in his or her work and experiences a sense of meaning; and concentration refers to a state in which the individual is fully focused and happily concentrating on his or her work. The stress caused by work-family conflict to employees can decrease an individual's level of work engagement. Resource Conservation Theory states that emotional resources are significant for each individual, and work-family conflict can lead to the depletion of emotional resources. At the same time, employees' work status is closely related to emotional resources (Powell, 2009). Work-family conflict that makes it difficult to replenish emotional resources can also decrease an individual's level of work engagement. Based on this, this paper proposes the following hypothesis: see Figure 1.

H4: The effect of work-family conflict on work engagement.

2.3 Work Engagement and Career Compromise

Chen's (2011) study found that individuals' moods are affected, and new generation employees' career compromises increase individuals' negative moods and decrease their positive moods. Secondly, Tang (2020) found that individuals' career development will be affected, and career compromise will cause more career distress and will reduce individuals' employability in the case of specific career development strategies and social capital. Therefore, the employment environment caused by career

compromise can impact individual behavior. Therefore, this paper makes the following hypothesis: see Figure 1.

H5: The effect of work engagement on employees' development opportunities is compromised.

H6: The effect of work engagement on employees' career matching compromise.

H7: The effect of work engagement on employees' social expectation compromise.

2.4 Work engagement in mediating the relationship between work-family conflict and career compromise

The scholars believe that work engagement describes the status or importance of work within the employee. The relationship between the independent variable family-work conflict and the mediator variable work engagement is positively moderated by the moderator variable sense of organizational support, and the mediation between the independent variable family-work conflict and the outcome variable career growth through the mediator variable work engagement is also positively moderated by the sense of organizational support (Gao, 2022). Some scholars have built on this foundation, and some scholars' further research findings point to a significant inverted U-shaped relationship between fun activities and both work input and employee innovative behavior, with work input playing a mediating role between fun activities and employee innovative behavior (Yang et al., 2023). Deng et al. (2023) also studied the mediating role of work engagement, and they concluded that organizational self-esteem significantly and positively affects knowledge-based employees' innovative behaviors. That work engagement can mediate the positive impact of organizational self-esteem on innovative behaviors. Therefore, this paper makes the following hypotheses, as shown in the Figure.

H8: Work input mediates the relationship between work-family conflict and employees' career match compromise.

H9: Work inputs play a mediating role in the relationship between work-family conflict and employee development opportunities compromise.

H10: Work input plays a mediating role in the relationship between work-family conflict and employee social expectations compromise.

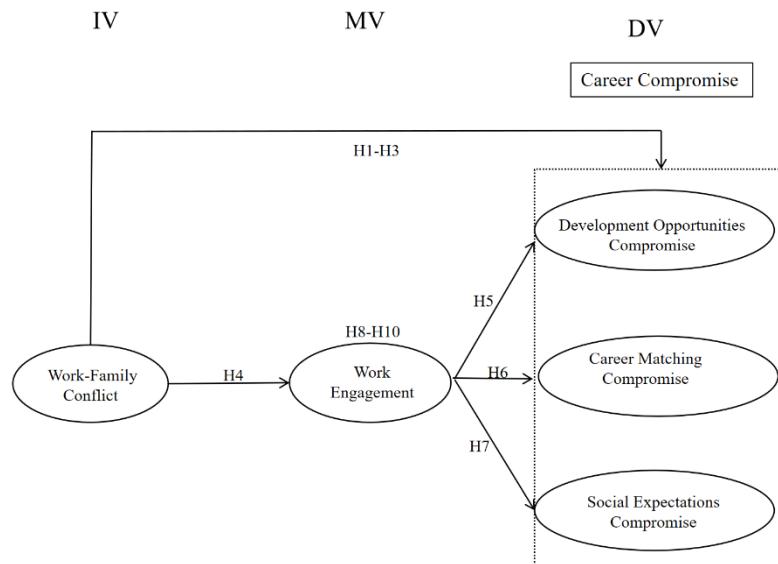


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Methodology

This research used a survey questionnaire based on a comprehensive review of related literature to collect data from the

samples. The measurement items and sources of the questionnaire are shown in Table 1. The questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section covers the demographics of the respondents (Gender, Age, Education, Working experience, Marital status, Job level, Income). The second part is a related questionnaire scale on the impact of work-family bidirectional conflict on career compromise. The questionnaire was developed using the multiple-item method, and each item was measured based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “1=strongly disagree” to “5=strongly agree”. Pretested items were adopted from previous literature to measure the constructs. The questionnaire was pre-tested using a convenience sample of 30 employees of enterprises in Henan Province, China. After the pilot test, the survey was conducted through online questionnaires to the working employees in Henan Province. Because the size of the target population of this study is difficult to define in actual size, the formula of Cochran (1977) was chosen to calculate the sample size. With an expected 95% confidence level, the sample minimum size was 385. The author added 10% more; thus, 460 questionnaires were distributed, and through cleaning and preprocessing steps, including dealing with missing values and outliers, invalid questionnaires with missing values, contradictions between before and after items, and the same answers were deleted. Finally, 429 valid questionnaires were obtained.

Table 1: Adoption of Questionnaire Measurements

Construct	Scale Items	Source	Cronbach's alpha
	I am so busy with work that I have no time to spend with my family.		

	I am too tired to do any housework after work.	
	Long working hours often prevent me from taking care of my family.	
Work-family Conflict	I often come home from work exhausted and unable to meet my family obligations.	Xu Zikun 0.919 (2022)
	I often work overtime and cannot do much housework at home.	
	I come home from work, too tired to do any chores.	
	I have a lot of energy at work.	
	I feel strong in my work.	
Work Engagement	I am passionate about my work.	Britt (2001)
	My work inspires me.	0.932
	I feel happy when I work.	
	I am engrossed in my work and feel proud of it.	
Development Opportunities	Opportunity to acquire new job skills	
	Opportunity to accumulate new work experience	0.798
Comromise	Opportunity to learn new work knowledge	
	Future promotion opportunities	

Career Matching	The extent to which you apply your knowledge	Weng Qingxiong (2018)	
Compro mise	The extent to which you utilize your job-specific skills		0.806
	Level of alignment with personal interests		
	Degree of correlation with career aspirations and objectives		
	Consistency with family expectations		
Social Expectati ons	Consistency with friends' expectations		0.726
Compro mise	The level of compensation offered		
	Social status corresponding to your workplace and position		

Research Results

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Table 2 shows the descriptive analysis of the background variables of demographic characteristics. From the survey results, the respondents were younger. The sample size for those 20-29 years old is 203, or 47.32%; for those 30-39 years old, it is 171. Hasn't been on the job long. The sample size for 0-3 years is 159, or 37.06%. The educational level is mainly concentrated in bachelor's degrees. Positions are predominantly general staff, accounting for 82.28% of the total.

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of background variables for demographic characteristics

Background variable	Dimension	Sample size	Percentage
Age	20-29 years	203	47.32%
	30-39 years	171	39.86%
	40-49 years old	50	11.66%
Working experience	50 years old and above	5	1.17%
	0-3 years	159	37.06%
	4-6 years	91	21.21%
Education	7-10 years	83	19.35%
	11 years and above	96	22.38%
	College and below	31	7.23%
Position level	Bachelor's Degree	240	55.94%
	Master and above	158	36.83%
Marital status	Grassroots staff	353	82.28%
	Middle Managers	65	15.15%
	Senior Managers	11	2.56%
Monthly income	Married	238	55.48%
	Unmarried	191	44.52%
	Below 3000RMB	39	9.09%
	3001-4500 Yuan	119	27.74%
	4501-6000 Yuan	97	22.61%

6001-7500 yuan	60	13.99%
More than 7500 yuan	114	26.57%

4.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis

As shown in Table 1, the coefficient alpha values of each scale in Work-Family Conflict, Work Commitment, Career Matching Compromise, Development Opportunity Compromise, and Social Expectation Compromise are 0.919, 0.932, 0.798, 0.806, and 0.726, respectively, which indicates that the internal reliability of the scale is acceptable. The KMO value of the Work-Family Conflict Scale is 0.870, which indicates that the values have reached a moderate level and are close to good indicators, indicating that the correlation between the original variables is strong and suitable for factor analysis; the Sig value of the Work-Family Conflict Scale is 0.000 by the Bartlett's test, which indicates that the data are taken from a normal distribution and the scale has passed the validity test.

4.3 Correlation analysis

Table 3 shows the results of the correlation analysis. In Table 3, the correlation coefficient between career match compromise and social expectation compromise is 0.61, the correlation coefficient between developmental opportunity compromise and social expectation compromise is 0.406, the correlation coefficient between work engagement and social expectation compromise is -0.29, the correlation coefficient between work family conflict and social expectation compromise is 0.127, the correlation coefficient between developmental Opportunity Compromise with Career Match Compromise has a correlation coefficient of 0.739, Work Commitment with Career Match Compromise has a correlation coefficient of -0.302, Work Family Conflict with Career Match Compromise has a correlation coefficient of 0.132, Work

Commitment with Developmental Opportunity Compromise has a correlation coefficient of -0.174, Work-Family Conflict and Development Opportunity Compromise has a correlation coefficient of 0.176, Work-Family Conflict and Work Input has a correlation coefficient of -0.166, and Work-Family Conflict and Family Work Conflict has a correlation coefficient of 0.555. indicating that there is a specific correlation between the variables.

Table3 Correlation analysis

				Estimate
Career	Matching	Social	Expectations	
Compromise	<-->	Compromise		0.61
Development		Social	Expectations	
Opportunities Compromise	<-->	Compromise		0.406
		Social	Expectations	
Work Engagement	<-->	Compromise		-0.29
		Social	Expectations	
Work-Family Conflict	<-->	Compromise		0.127
Development		Career	Matching	
Opportunities Compromise	<-->	Compromise		0.739
		Career	Matching	
Work Engagement	<-->	Compromise		-0.302
		Career	Matching	
Work-Family Conflict	<-->	Compromise		0.132
		Development		
		Opportunities		
Work Engagement	<-->	Compromise		-0.174

		Development	
		Opportunities	
Work-Family Conflict	<-->	Compromise	0.176
Work-Family Conflict	<-->	Work Engagement	-0.166
Work-Family Conflict	<-->	Family-Work Conflict	0.555

4.4 Hypothesis testing and result analysis

Path analysis using AMOS 23.0 structural equation modeling was conducted to analyze the relationship model between six variables: work-family conflict, home-work conflict, work engagement, career match compromise, development opportunity compromise, and social expectation compromise. This study's hypotheses were tested to determine whether they are valid.

Table 4 Path Analysis

Hypothesis	Path	S.F.L.	Ustd	S.E.	C.R	P
H1	Work-Family Conflict→Car eer Matching Compromise	0.183	0.232	0.077	3.996	***
H2	Work-Family Conflict→De velopment Opportunities Compromise	0.227	0.386	0.084	3.138	***
H3	Work-Family Conflict→Soc ial Expectations Compromise	0.234	0.164	0.070	3.282	***

		Work-Family					
H4		Conflict→Wo	0.288	0.418	0.088	4.758	***
		rk Engagement					
		Work					
		Engagement					
H5		→Career	0.233	0.263	0.055	4.757	***
		Matching					
		Compromise					
		Work					
		Engagement					
H6		→Developm	0.184	0.215	0.056	3.859	***
		ent					
		Opportunities					
		Compromise					
		Work					
		Engagement					
H7		→Social	0.268	0.249	0.052	4.804	***
		Expectations					
		Compromise					

*P<0.05; **P<0.01; ***P<0.001

In the path “Work-Family Conflict→Career Matching Compromise”, the standardized path coefficient is 0.183 and reaches the level of significance(P<0.05), which indicates that this path has a significant positive effect.

In the path “Work-Family Conflict→Development Opportunities Compromise”, the standardized path coefficient is 0.227 and reaches the level of significance(P<0.05), which indicates that this path has a significant positive effect.

In the path “Work-Family Conflict→Social Expectations Compromise”, the standardized path coefficient is 0.234 and reaches the

level of significance($P<0.05$), which indicates that this path has a significant positive effect.

In the path “Work-Family Conflict→Work Engagement”, the standardized path coefficient is 0.288 and reaches the level of significance($P<0.05$), which indicates that this path has a significant positive effect.

In the path “Work Engagement→Career Matching Compromise”, the standardized path coefficient is 0.233 and reaches the significance level($P<0.05$), indicating that this path has a significant positive effect.

In the path “Work Engagement→Development Opportunities Compromise”, the standardized path coefficient is 0.184 and reaches the significance level ($P<0.05$), indicating that this path has a significant positive effect.

In the path “Work Engagement→Social Expectations Compromise”, the standardized path coefficient is 0.268 and reaches the significance level($P<0.05$), indicating that this path has a significant positive effect.

The above results show that the higher the work-family conflict, the stronger the occupational compromise, as verified by H1-H3. Work-family conflict refers to the conflict between an individual's work and family roles, especially when family responsibilities occupy time, making it difficult for the individual to complete his or her work, which leads to conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Zheng, 2007). This conflict not only causes negative emotions for the individual but may also trigger chronic insomnia and severe psychological stress, even affecting employees' subjective well-being. This finding is consistent with existing studies showing that work-family conflict has a significant adverse effect on occupational compromise (Zhang et al., 2020; Ma et al., 2021; Yu et al, 2021) and verifies that work-family conflict is a potential source of stress that negatively affects well-being and behavior (Geurts et al., 2003).

The effect of work-family conflict on career match compromise

The higher the work-family conflict, the stronger the career match compromise. According to the resource conservation theory, individuals tend to avoid the loss of resources because the loss of resources has long-term adverse effects (Song et al., 2023). Therefore, employees facing work-family conflict will reduce their commitment at work in order to conserve resources, which may lead to a mismatch between career interests and skills and their current job, thus compromising the career match. It has been shown that work-family conflict leads to the accumulation of negative emotions, affecting employees' job performance (Wei et al, 2020). This effect may lead employees to opt out of specific jobs to alleviate long-term negative emotions (Zhao, 2017).

The effect of work-family conflict on compromising developmental opportunities

The higher the work-family conflict, the stronger the developmental opportunity compromises. According to resource preservation theory, individuals will cope with stress by preserving important resources (Hobfoll, 2003). When employees experience work-family conflict, depletion of emotional resources may result in less commitment at work and an inability to utilize time and energy for professional growth, thus compromising developmental opportunities. It has also been shown that resource depletion can lead employees to reduce their engagement at work, which in turn affects career development (Wang, 2022).

Impact of work-family conflict on social desirability compromise

The higher the work-family conflict, the stronger the compromise of social expectations. According to Social Cognitive Career Theory, situational factors influence an individual's career interests, goals, and expectations (Lent et al., 2000). Work-family conflict makes employees feel a loss of resources, which may affect their social expectations and self-efficacy. It has been found that employees who lack support are more likely to lower their social expectations. In addition, the increased demands of work and the stress of being unable to juggle family responsibilities can further drain employee resources (Allen et al., 2000). Thus, the higher the work-family conflict, the stronger the compromise of social expectations.

Impact of work-family conflict on work engagement

Affected by work-family conflict, employees will have more stress in the work process, and these stresses will consume employees' work resources and further affect their work status. Therefore, work-family conflict negatively affects employees' work engagement, and H4 holds. The stress caused by work-family conflict to employees leads to a decrease in individual work engagement. Resource preservation theory states that emotional resources are significant resources for each individual, work-family conflict leads to the depletion of emotional resources, and the employee's work status is closely related to emotional resources (Yue, 2017).

Impact of work engagement on career compromise

Work engagement reflects an individual's attitude towards work and organization, as verified by H1-H3. About the impact of work input on career compromise, empirical studies have shown that the degree of work input of employees after joining a job has a significant predictive effect on their work behavior, for example, when the degree of work input is high, the rate of employees leaving the job is lower (Scheufeli et al., 2004), and the level of work performance is higher (Bakker et al., 2012).

Based on the above analysis, job investment significantly affects career match compromise, development opportunity compromise, and social expectation compromise. Job investment is also affected by job seekers' emotional attitude and organizational factors. Therefore, this study incorporates the malefactor theory, expectation theory and social cognition theory into the model, and through empirical analysis, it explores the effects of different aspects of job compromises on work attitudes and behaviors, and the possible mediating role of work input, in order to clarify the path of job compromises on individual work performance.

Table 5: Mediating Effect Testing

path	Summary of intermediaation test results					Test Conclusion
	c Total effect	a*b Medium effect value	a*b (95%Bo otCl)	c' ct effe ct	Dire ct effe ct	
Work-Family Conflict→Work					0.1 11*	Partially mediated
Engagement→Career	0.171**	0.056	0.029~ 0.096		*	
Matching Compromise Work-Family Conflict→Work					0.1 0.1 38*	Partially mediated
Engagement→Develop ment Opportunities	0.189**	0.036	0.014~ 0.073		*	
Compromise Work-Family Conflict→Work					0.1 0.1 67*	Partially mediated
Engagement→Social Expectations	0.165**	0.031	0.009~ 0.059		*	
Compromise						

From the above table, we can see that in terms of Work-Family Conflict→Work Engagement→Career Matching Compromise, Work-Family Conflict→Work Engagement→Development Opportunities Compromise, Work-Family Conflict→Work Engagement→Social Expectations Compromise, the confidence interval does not contain 0, indicating that the mediation effect is significant. The direct effect is also significant, meaning that the mediating variable, work engagement, partially mediates these three paths. This shows that the mediating variable "Work Engagement" partially mediates in these three paths.

Work-family conflict affects occupational compromise through work engagement, a mediating variable of work-family conflict affecting occupational compromise, as verified by H8- H10. Work engagement refers to the position or importance of work within the employee. Stress caused by work-family conflict can decrease employees' level of work engagement. Resource Conservation Theory states that emotional resources are significant resources for each individual, and work-family conflict can lead to the depletion of emotional resources, and the employee's work status is closely related to the condition of emotional resources. Work-family conflict creates several negative emotions for employees, which can negatively affect their level of work engagement, thus prompting them to make career compromises. Decreased levels of work engagement make it difficult for employees to remain energized, committed, and focused on their work, to maintain a positive, optimistic attitude toward their work, and to become less physically, emotionally, and cognitively attached to their work and the organization, which can drive employees away from their original industry to a job in a different occupational type or field (Memon et al., 2018).

In addition, work-family conflict makes it difficult to replenish emotional resources can also lead to a decrease in the level of individual

work engagement, devoting a significant amount of time and energy to work and neglecting the individual's responsibilities and duties in the family, which can lead to the dissatisfaction and accusations of other family members, which can then affect the family atmosphere. When employees experience work-family conflict, they will have more pressure at work. These pressures will deplete employees' physiological and psychological resources. At the same time, due to the tense family relationship, employees cannot regulate their work emotions during non-work time. They, therefore, are unable to replenish their work resources.

In short, insufficient work resources lead to employees' inability to focus on their work and a lack of vigor and dedication to it, which leads to a decline in their level of work engagement and consequent compromise of their careers. Work engagement is an important mediating variable between work-family conflict and career compromise.

Discussion

1 Conclusions of the study

Firstly, there is the dimension of the two-way work-family conflict and occupational compromise relationship. On the one hand, the higher the work-family conflict, the stronger the occupational compromise. Specifically, for every unit increase in work-family conflict, the probability of occupational match compromise increases by 0.087 units; for every unit increase in work-family conflict, the probability of development opportunity compromise increases by 0.123 units; and for every unit increase in work-family conflict, the probability of social expectation compromise increases by 0.098 units.

Second, the relationship between work-family conflict and work engagement dimensions. Work-family conflict has a significant impact on work engagement. Specifically, for every 1 unit increase in work-family conflict, the probability of work engagement decreases by 0.162 units,

indicating that the higher the work-family conflict, the lower the work engagement. For every 1 unit increase in family-work conflict, the probability of work engagement decreases by 0.133 units, indicating that the higher the family-work conflict, the lower the work engagement.

Third, the relationship between work engagement and the career compromise dimension. Work input has a significant effect on career compromise. Specifically, for every 1-unit increase in work input, the probability of career match compromise increases by 0.145 units, indicating that the higher the work input, the stronger the career match compromise. For every 1-unit increase in work input, the probability of development opportunity compromise increases by 0.074 units, indicating that the higher the work input, the stronger the development opportunity compromise. For every 1 unit increase in work input, the probability of social expectation compromise increases by 0.108 units, indicating that the higher the work input, the stronger the social expectation compromise.

Fourth, the mediating relationship dimension. On the one hand, work input mediates the relationship between work-family conflict and employee career compromise. Specifically, for every unit increase in work-family conflict, the direct effect of occupational matching compromise rises by 0.087 units, the mediating effect of work input decreases by 0.162 units, and the combined effect of occupational matching compromise rises by 0.063 units, suggesting that work-family conflict affects occupational matching compromise through work input. That work input mediates the work-family conflict affecting the occupational matching compromise Variable. For every 1-unit increase in work-family conflict, the direct effect of developmental opportunity compromise rises by 0.123 units, the mediating effect of work input rises by 0.162 units, and the composite effect of developmental opportunity compromise rises by 0.111 units, suggesting that work-family conflict affects the developmental opportunity compromise through work input. That work input is the

mediating variable of work-family conflict affecting the developmental opportunity compromise. For every unit increase in work family conflict, the direct effect of social expectation compromise rises by 0.098 units, the mediating effect of work input rises by 0.162 units, and the combined effect of social expectation compromise rises by 0.080 units, suggesting that work family conflict affects social expectation compromise through work input. That work input is the mediating variable of work-family conflict affecting social expectation compromise.

2 Research Contributions

First, the contribution of the research perspective. This study innovatively adopts the role conflict perspective to place work-family conflict and employees' career compromise within the same research framework, unveiling the specific mechanism of action of work-family conflict on its negative impact on employees' career compromise, and enriching the outcome variables of work-family conflict and the antecedent variables of career compromise. The current research on antecedent variables of employees' career compromise mainly reflects the perspective of employees' psychology and behavior, organizational system and behavior, and the perspective of situational factors, but lacks the research linking family and work from the perspective of conflict. In response to this lack of research perspective, this paper, in the process of combining related theories and literature, combined with the current social hotspots, selected the work-family conflict, which is closely related to career development, as the independent variable to explore the factors affecting employees' career compromise.

Second, the contribution of research content. This study explores the influence of work engagement on career compromise in the second half of the path by taking work engagement as a mediating variable, which makes up for the current research situation of exploring the influence of work engagement on career compromise unidirectionally

based on the model of “Stimulus, Cognition, and Response”, enriches the research on the relationship between the two and expands the scope of application of the social exchange theory. It enriches the research on the relationship between the two and expands the scope of application of social exchange theory. In this way, this study innovatively explains and explores the influence of work engagement on career compromise based on the social exchange theory.

3 Research limitations

Firstly, the study mainly adopted a cross-sectional approach and did not track the phased study longitudinally, thus failing to reflect the dynamic impact of work-family bi-directional conflict on employees' career compromises. In addition, due to time constraints, the study was mainly limited to intra-organisational career compromises. It could not examine employees' inter-organisational career compromises over more extended years.

Secondly, the study only considered the mediating role of work engagement in influencing the impact of work-family conflict on employees' career compromises, where other factors such as employees' attitudes and behaviours may also impact. As a new relationship mechanism study, the relationship between work-family conflict and career compromise may have different mechanisms depending on the industry, occupation, and other factors.

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