The Consequences of Work–Family Enrichment in Families on the Behaviour of Children

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Abstract: This study considers the spillover effect of work-family enrichment in parents on the behaviour of their children. Using a mediation model with parental well-being and parenting styles, the study unravels the associations between a positive perspective on work-life balance and the outcomes in a child's live. Using 4012 parents from the data of the Australian LSAC (Growing up in Australia), the model shows that children's behaviour is influenced by parents' experience of work-family enrichment through parental well-being. Also, parenting performance functions as a mediator between work-family enrichment and the behaviour of the child. Parents show more stimulating parenting behaviour when they experience enrichment between work and their family.

Keywords: work-family enrichment; child; parenting; Australia; SEM

1. Introduction

Besides the dominant academic perspective of work and family as competing and conflictual life spheres, researchers have increasingly made a plea to study the positive side of combining these two life spheres. With the seminal work of Greenhaus and Powell (2006), the concept of work–family enrichment was introduced. The concept of enrichment between family life and work starts from the assumption that these central life spheres are not exclusively in conflict with each other but, importantly, could also interact with each other in a positive way. According to Greenhaus and Powell (2006), the concept is "the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other role". Both conceptually and empirically, work–family enrichment is not to be considered as the opposite of work–family conflict. These are distinct concepts, as studies have shown that measures of work–family conflict and work–family enrichment correlate (negatively) in a moderate way (Grzywacz and Marks 2000; Lapierre et al. 2018; ten Brummelhuis and Bakker 2012; Voydanoff 2004). As a consequence, experiencing work–life conflict can go hand in hand with considering the balance between those spheres as an enriching experience in one's life.

The current study investigates the association of work–family enrichment experienced by parents with the behaviour of children and includes parental well-being and parenting behaviour as mediators. Previous research about the consequences of work–family enrichment mainly used self-reports of adults. Positive effects were found on job performance, work engagement, family satisfaction, stress levels, etc. (for a review, see McNall et al. 2010; Zhang et al. 2018). Research also pointed out that the balance between a person's work and family can affect other family members (Vahedi et al. 2018; van Steenbergen et al. 2014). Only a few studies have addressed the effect of work–life balance on children in a family. Work–family conflict exhibits negative effects on child outcomes, while work–family enrichment shows a positive relationship with children's functioning (Dinh et al. 2017; Vahedi et al. 2018; Van den Eynde et al. 2020; Vieira et al. 2016). Studies have emphasized the inclusion of parental characteristics as mediators because the influence on children's functioning

operates through their home environment (Bronfenbrenner 1986; Dinh et al. 2017; Vahedi et al. 2018; Van den Eynde et al. 2020; Vieira et al. 2016). The current inquiry is important because protecting the development of children is paramount in all societies. Gathered insights should be taken into account when thinking about forming work and family life through policy or institutions and in practices.

There is no direct relationship between the experience of work–family enrichment as a parent and the behaviour of a child when we take the interaction of family members within their contexts into account. First, literature confirms positive outcomes of work–family enrichment on parents' overall well-being, physical and mental health, and parenting- and family-role performance (Cooklin et al. 2015, 2016). Next, children's behaviour is affected by the functioning of parents. Research shows clear evidence that parents who offer a healthy home environment, are satisfied with life, and perform adequate parenting are positively related to the development of a child (Dinh et al. 2017; Dittrich et al. 2018; Huang et al. 2010; Keyser et al. 2017; Ong et al. 2018; Strazdins et al. 2013).

The aim of the current research is to obtain more insights into the consequences of work–family enrichment on the behaviour of children. A first contribution of the current study is that it is one of a few to examine this effect in work–life balance research. The more recent work–family enrichment concept especially, along with its consequences, is still a largely uncharted domain; however, it is undisputed that this concept involves a complex mechanism, as different actors with different roles interact with each other. With this statement, the second contribution consists in the inclusion of both parental well-being and parenting performance as mediators. As a direct relationship between work–family enrichment and children's behaviour is not independent from parents' own lived experiences, using a mediation perspective enables more elaborate insight into the mechanisms at hand.

2. Literature Overview

2.1. Theoretical Perspective

The conceptual model for this study is presented in Figure 1. As shown in previous studies, the consequences of experiencing work–family enrichment as a parent on the behavioural outcomes of a child operate through the parental environment—more specifically, parental well-being and parenting practices (Vahedi et al. 2018). Both the well-being and parenting performance of the parent are referred to as important influencing factors.
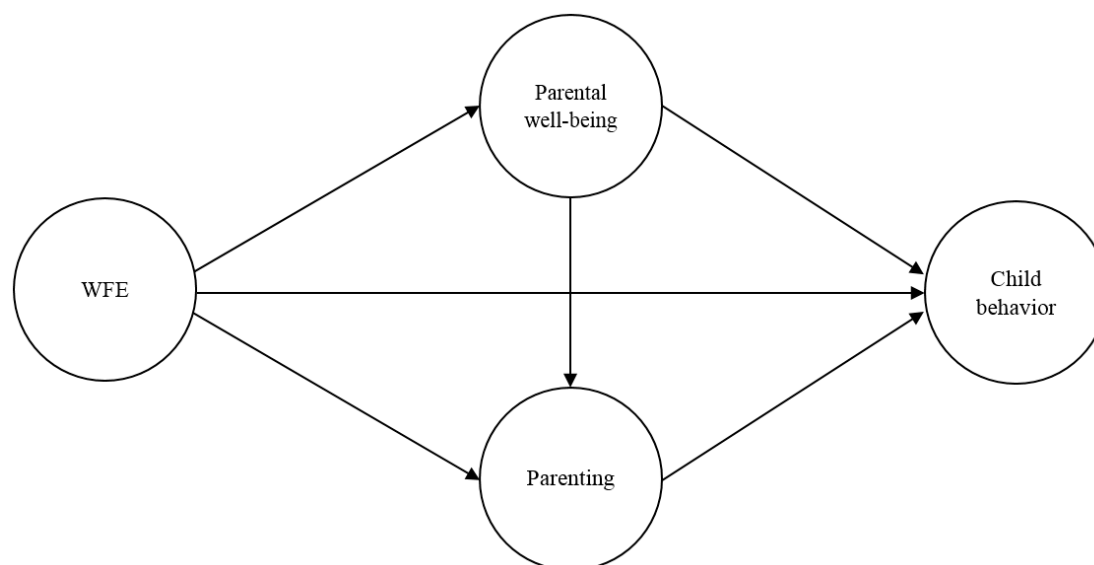
Figure 1. Conceptual model of the association between work–life enrichment and children's behavior.

First, work–family enrichment is positioned in the model as an exogenous concept. This concept can be defined as "the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the

other role" (Greenhaus and Powell 2006, p. 73). This perspective builds upon functional role theory (Biddle 1986), which originated in the early works of Linton (1936). This theory considers roles as a set of shared, normative expectations that come with social positions that people take. The multiple roles that people bear can interact with each other and lead to either role conflict (Dierckx et al. 2018) or a positive spillover from one role to the other. Role accumulation theory (Sieber 1974) considers several positive outcomes: (1) role privileges (e.g., rights), (2) buffering of status security, (3) resources from status enhancement and role performance, and (4) personality enrichment. The focus on work–family enrichment is an answer on the dominant emphasis on work–life conflict in the literature. Building upon the same role theory, work–family enrichment stresses the positive spillover between work and family rather than looking at (and measuring) negative conflict dimensions (Lapierre et al. 2018).

The quality of life in one domain goes through the resources gained from the domain of origin to the reception (Greenhaus and Powell 2006; Hobfoll 2002). A resource is an asset that can be used for problem solving or coping. Different types of resources are distinguished, namely skills (e.g., coping skills), psychological and physical resources (e.g., optimism), social capital (e.g., networking), flexibility (e.g., flexible work arrangements), and material resources (e.g., money) (Greenhaus and Powell 2006). Two ways or paths exist by which a resource can influence the enrichment process that leads to an increased quality of life. The first is the instrumental or direct path and refers to the process by which "a resource can be transferred directly from Role A to Role B, thereby enhancing performance in Role B". The second process operates through positive emotions and feelings, meaning that "a resource generated in Role A can promote positive affect within Role A, which, in turn, produces high performance and positive affect in Role B"; this process is referred to as the affective path (a transfer of affect or emotion from one role to another) (Greenhaus and Powell 2006, p. 80).

The well-being of the parent and parenting behaviour are the mediators in the model that affect the child's behaviour. The well-being of a person is a subjective evaluation of their overall psychological, social, and physical health which is associated with negative (e.g., internalizing and externalizing problems) and positive outcomes (e.g., life satisfaction and self-esteem) (Bastaits et al. 2014; Diener and Diener 2009; Helliwell and Putnam 2004). Parenting behaviours are key elements of a certain parenting style performed by a parent. A parenting style creates a certain emotional climate in which an interplay of attitudes and behaviours of the parent comes to interact with the child (Darling and Steinberg 1993). Four different parenting styles are distinguished according to the relation of two central parenting behaviours, namely support (i.e., affection and responsiveness) and control (i.e., supervision) (Baumrind 2016). These mediators are expected to be interrelated, but research indicates that the relationship from parents' well-being to parenting performance is stronger than the other way around (Conger et al. 2002; Jackson et al. 2000; McCarty and McMahon 2003; Van den Eynde et al. 2020).

Socioecological theories offer a theoretical framework in which the relationship between work–family enrichment, the mediators, and children's behaviour can be understood. These theories regard children not as merely static human beings on their own but rather as interactive persons who are connected to their environments. According to the long-standing ecological system theory of Bronfenbrenner (1986), a child's development process must be understood by taking into account the ecological system that surrounds the child. At the centre are the child and their biological and psychological predisposition (personality), which is surrounded first by the ecological system (namely the microsystem). This includes the direct social environment that interacts with the child, including family, friends, and school peers. Next, the mesosystem involves the interactions and relationships between these microsystem participators. The third system, the exosystem, is the broader social environment in which the child does not participate directly but which has a certain impact on their development; this includes, for example, politics, media, and social services. This system determines the conditions and settings in which the child engages. Lastly, the child grows up in a certain cultural context, also known as the macrosystem, with certain attitudes, ideologies, values, and norms. The conceptual model of this study involves different ecological systems. The work and family sphere in which the parent participates are shaped by their own direct and broader ecological

systems. These affect the actions and functioning of the parent, which in turn impact the system of the child. As an example, when a parent gets a promotion and feels appreciated at work, this can have an indirect effect on the child as a consequence of the adult, being in a decent financial situation, having more satisfaction in life and giving more appropriate care.

2.2. Empirical Evidence

The connection between work–family enrichment and children's behaviour can only be understood when one incorporates the shared family environment. The balance between work and family life and the possible positive synergies that flow from it influence the direct (and broader) settings in which parents function. These settings are consequently shared with their children, which affects their behaviour (Bronfenbrenner 1986; Dinh et al. 2017; Vahedi et al. 2018; Van den Eynde et al. 2020; Vieira et al. 2016). First, the relation between work–family enrichment and children's behaviour is assumed to be indirectly linked to the well-being of parents. Studies and meta-analyses have explored the relation between this multifaceted concept and the positive spillover. Individuals have consistently been found to report higher levels of general well-being as an outcome of work–family enrichment, as well as related outcomes, such as mental health, life satisfaction, and stress-coping strategies (Carlson et al. 2011; Carlson et al. 2014; Lim et al. 2012; Luk et al. 2008; McNall et al. 2010; Williams et al. 2006; Zhang et al. 2018). According to the empirical findings and the theoretical perspective, these findings can be rationalized by resources generated through enrichment of the work and family domains (Greenhaus and Powell 2006). As mentioned earlier, resources can constitute different types of benefits gained from the work and family domain and can facilitate the ability to cope with stress, which in turn enhances individuals' well-being (Hobfoll 2002). In the next step, the link to the behaviour of the child can be made. The functioning and development of children is vulnerable and strongly associated with the shared parental environment (Bronfenbrenner 1986). In this sense, it is crucial to take into account the well-being of parents. If parents feel good and competent, this feeling can positively spill over to children's behavioural functioning as an outcome. Studies report a positive association with and long-term impact on the behaviour of children. However, these inquiries are mainly focused on malfunctioning home environments, such as those with domestic violence or a history of parental depression (Dittrich et al. 2018; Huang et al. 2010; Keyser et al. 2017). Acknowledging these empirical and theoretical arguments, we predict that *parental well-being mediates the relationship between work–family enrichment and the behaviour of the child* (H1).

Second, parenting performance is likely to mediate the relation between work–family enrichment and a child's behaviour. When parents experience positive interactions between work and family life, positive spillover to the ability to demonstrate appropriate parenting behaviours can occur, which defines the home environment in which the child is raised. Work–family balance research has categorized parenting as a family-related characteristic that is inextricably linked to performing the role of a parent. Generally, it appears that the experience of work–family enrichment has positive relations with parent–child interactions, family role performance, and family satisfaction through the increased availability of resources, positive affect, and feelings of commitment (Cooklin et al. 2015, 2016; Vieira et al. 2016). Cooklin et al. (2016) reported enhanced effective parenting techniques in terms of more warm affective parenting and buffers against hostile parenting when interacting children among both mothers and fathers. Another study by Cooklin et al. (2015) investigated the same associations, but for mothers. Their findings suggest a clear positive association between work–family enrichment and warm and consistent parenting. Next, children may be affected by the parenting practices of parents as a behavioural expression of how parents rear their children. Furthermore, psycho-sociological literature has indicated a positive association between parenting and various child outcomes, such as physical health, mental health, and socio-emotional behaviour (Dittrich et al. 2018; Huang et al. 2010; Keyser et al. 2017; Ong et al. 2018; Roman et al. 2015). It is universally confirmed that children from a young age up to adolescence are very susceptible to the performed parenting style of parents. However, researchers have mainly inquired into the adverse and unfavourable impact of

inappropriate parenting behaviours, but the same mechanism of adequate parenting goes together with suited behavioural outcomes. Thus, based on this argumentation, we can hypothesize that *parenting mediates the relationship between work–family enrichment and the behaviour of the child* (H2).

Concerning both mediation paths, we additionally expect full mediation to be present. Conversely, this means that we have no evidence of a significant direct relationship between the level of a parent's work–family enrichment and a child's behaviour, but we do have evidence that this relationship works indirectly via parental characteristics, such as, in this case, parental well-being and parenting practices (Dinh et al. 2017; Vahedi et al. 2018; Vieira et al. 2016). This relationship is in line with the work–family conflict research of Van den Eynde et al. (2020), who differentiated between two directions of conflict and explicitly investigated these mediation paths. Moreover, for the conflict approach, it was found that this relationship could be fully explained by the parent's well-being and parenting. Therefore, the hypothesis reads: *both parental well-being and parenting fully mediate the relationship between work–family enrichment and the behaviour of the child* (H3).

3. Method

3.1. Data

We used data of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) to answer our three hypotheses. This large-scale database was established in collaboration with the Australian Institute of Family Studies, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, and the Australian Department of Social Services. The research subject of the database is focused on a broad range of information about the development and well-being of 10,000 children. Moreover, this is a longitudinal database consisting of seven waves to date. The respondents started in 2003 in the first wave and were reinterviewed biannually from then on. Every wave included two cohorts that were differentiated in the age of the child. This means that, in the first wave (2003–2004), the children of the first B-cohort (5107) were aged zero to one, and the children of the second K-cohort (4983) were four to five years old. In the seventh and last wave, the children of the first B-cohort were 12 to 13 years, and those of the second K-cohort were between 16 and 17. The multi-actor design refers in this study to the questioning of the parents (resident and non-resident), the child, teachers, and caregivers.

A subsample was selected to perform the current research. As the Family Enrichment Scale is adopted in each wave, we could have performed a longitudinal (fixed or random) regression. However, this choice would have been hampered by the dynamic nature of families and would have made a multi-parent analysis more difficult due to intra-wave attrition. As we aim to look at the relationship between Work–Family Enrichment (WFE) and a child's behaviour, we decided to use only the latest available wave (wave 7) in this study. Longitudinal information was taken into account as we used the panel data to reconstruct family decomposition (divorce and separation) and recomposition (repartnering) observed in earlier waves into a variable determining whether or not the parent currently has a partner. Wave 7 had a response rate of 78.3% for cohort B and 73.9% for cohort K resulting in 3381 and 3089 interviews, respectively. As our independent variable, the WEF scale, is crucial to the study, non-response on the scale further decreased our analytical sample to 2936 (B-cohort) and 2704 (K-cohort) respondents (5640 in total). A final reduction in the data were the datalines where we did not have information on the child's behaviour or where the parental variables were missing for both parents. The final analytical sample consisted of 4163 respondents. There were slightly more mothers (2406, 57.8%) than fathers (1757, 42.2%). Most parents (91%) were partnered (whether or not after a break-up with the biological parent of the child). On average, included families had 2.49 children with a mean age of the youngest child of 8.4 years (*SD* = 2.4) for those in the B cohort and 12.0 years (*SD* = 2.9) for the sample members in the K cohort. The data from both cohorts were used, accounting for the age differences by controlling for it in the analyses. Both partner 1 and partner 2 were used in the analysis irrespective of their coresidential status. When only one parent had answered the WFE scale,

they were adopted as an analytical unit. When both parents had answered the scale, the analytical unit was chosen at random and only one of these parents was used in the analysis.

Even though the LSAC aims to be representative for the cohorts under study, we need to underline that the study is not representative for the whole population of Australian (working) parents with children. Because we use data from cohort B and K, children's ages are limited to 12/13 and 16/17, which implies that parents are older. A consequence is that most families have a complete fertility history at that age, which also explains why the families under study are, on average, larger. In addition, we also need to point to the panel attrition of LSAC as we make use of the seventh wave of this study.

3.2. Analytical Strategy

To test our model, we applied a framework of structural equation modelling (SEM) (Bollen 1989; Hatcher 1994). More specifically, we used a family of models within the SEM framework that allowed for a higher-order factor structure. Of the models suggested in the literature (Mulaik and Quartetti 1997), we opted for a second-order hierarchical SEM model because it does not assume an orthogonal associations between factors, as we do not. Given that the bifactor model assumes orthogonal associations between factors (an assumption that is too strict for our conceptual model), we opted to use a second-order hierarchical SEM model (Chen et al. 2005). In this model, we start by including first-order (lower) factors that together constitute a second-order (higher) factor. In a preparatory phase, all first-order factors were tested according to exploratory factor analysis before being entered into the SEM model,[1] which was estimated in two steps. In the first step—the *measurement model*—we omitted all directional paths and focused on the first-order and second-order measurement of all latent concepts. We then estimated the *structural model*, which we used to test our hypotheses. The measurement model had a good fit (RMSEA = 0.049; CFI = 0.882). It was not necessary to add any error covariances between the first-order items to obtain an acceptable fit. The structural model also fit the data well (RMSEA = 0.049; CFI = 0.882).

The composition of all the lower-order factors is discussed in the Measures subsection. We calculated the composite reliability of all the lower-order and higher-order factors (comparable to Cronbach's alpha within the framework of exploratory factor analysis) (Hatcher 1994). Of the higher-order factors, only *parenting* (composite reliability = 0.34) failed to achieve the lower threshold of 0.70. The other two higher-order factors had high and significant factor loadings, with composite reliability values of 0.73 (*parental well-being*) and 0.70 (*child behaviour*). The fact that the higher-order *parenting* factor failed to reach the 0.70 threshold can be explained in part by the fact that it is composed of only two lower-order factors. For this reason and because the model fit the data very well, we decided to retain this factor in the final model.

In line with the proposed conceptual model and associated hypotheses, the mediating paths were tested in the structural model in three steps. First, only the direct path of work–family enrichment on the behaviour of the child was tested. Second, we added the direct path from parental well-being and parenting. Third, parental well-being and parenting were tested as mediators in the full model.

3.3. Measures

Work–family enrichment. The questioning on the level of work–family enrichment was based on the Work–Family Gains scale of Marshall and Barnett (1993). Respondents answered six items on a five-point rating scale with answers ranging from "*Strongly disagree*" to "*Strongly agree*". The scale measured with three items the gains between work and parenting (e.g., "How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements? My working has a positive effect on my child(ren); Working helps me to better appreciate the time that I spend with my child(ren); The fact that I work makes me a better parent") and with three more items the gains between work and the respondents (e.g.,

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[1] Output not shown but available from the first author on request.

"Having both work and family responsibilities: Makes me a more well-rounded person; Gives my life more variety; Makes me feel competent"). The composite reliability of the original scale was 0.86. Validation studies of the scale are reviewed by Grzywacz and Marks (2000), illustrating the empirical difference between the classic work–life conflict scales and the work–family enrichment measurement. A similar study with relation to the antecedents of the scale can be found in Lapierre et al. (2018). In our study, an exploratory factor analysis revealed a uniform factor with a minimum factor loading of 0.55. The Cronbach 's alpha elevated to 0.85 (0.86 standardized), which is similar to the original study of Marshall and Barnett (1993).

Parental well-being. The higher-order *parental well-being* factor consists of four subscales: *depression*, *difficulty in present life (reversed), coping*, and *feeling rushed*. The exploratory factor analyses pointed to a depression scale consisting of six items to be included in the SEM model and achieved a composite reliability of 0.84. Respondents answered all the items on a four-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from "*All the time*" to "*None of the time*". The following is an example of a question concerning depressive symptoms: "In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel worthless?" The subscales *difficulty at life present, coping*, and *feeling rushed* are all single-item measurements. The subscale *difficulty at life present* was reverse-coded to become a positively interpreted subscale. Respondents answered the question "How difficult do you feel your life is at present?" on a five-point rating scale, with responses ranging from "*Very many problems or a lot of stress*" to "*No problems or stress*". The coping level was indicated by using a five-point response format, with a range of "*Not at all*" to "*Extremely well*". Lastly, the respondents indicated how often they felt rushed or pressed, from 1 ("*Always*") to 5 ("*Never*").

Parenting. The higher-order *parenting* factor consists of three lower-order scales: *parenting warmth, inductive reasoning*, and *hostile parenting (reversed)*. The *parenting warmth* subscale measured the level of parenting warmth shown towards a child in the last six months. Respondents used a five-point response scale to answer six items, with ratings ranging from "*Never/Almost never*" to "*Always/Almost always*". An example of an item is "In the last six months, how often did you have warm and close time together with this child?" The confirmatory factor analysis yielded factor loadings greater than 0.40 for all items and a composite reliability of 0.91. The *inductive reasoning* subscale consists of five items (e.g., "In the last six months, how often did you give this child reasons why rules should be obeyed?"), with response options ranging from 1 ("*Never/Almost never*") to 5 ("*Always/Almost always*). The composite reliability of this factor in the measurement model was 0.93. The *hostile parenting* subscale measured how often a parent showed angry parenting behaviour towards a child (e.g., "How often are you angry when you punish this child?"). This scale consists of six items and was reverse-coded to obtain all positive responses for the factor; a five-point rating scale with response options ranging from "*Never/Almost* never" to "*All the time*" was used. The confirmatory factor analysis yielded factor loadings greater than 0.40 for all the items and a composite reliability of 0.74.

Child's behaviour. The behaviour of the child in question was measured according to the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman 1997; Woerner et al. 2002). The questionnaire was presented to parents with respect to the behaviour of their children as well as to children about their own behaviour. The current study is based on the information provided by the parents. This questionnaire was originally composed of five subscales that indicated the child's overall well-being, functioning, and behaviour. Based on the results of factor and reliability analyses, however, we could retain only two subscales in the measurement model, namely *prosocial behaviour* and *emotional problems (reversed)*. Respondents indicated how much their child showed a certain behaviour in the past six months or during the school year, and all subscales had the same response format, with options ranging from 1 ("*Not true*") to 3 ("*Certainly true*"). The *prosocial behaviour* subscale consists of four items (e.g., "Considerate of other people's feelings", comp. reliability = 0.70). All five items of the subscale *emotional problems* were retained in the model, with a composite reliability of 0.72. The scale was reverse-coded, and an example item is "Often unhappy, depressed, or tearful".

Control variables. Based on previous research, we identified a number of demographic and work- or family-related characteristics that were associated with our main constructs and the paths of the

proposed model. Parent gender (2406 mothers, 1757 fathers), relationship status (3800 in a couple, 363 single), household income (logged) ($M = 7.38$, $SD = 1.80$), age of the youngest child ($M = 10.09$, $SD = 3.2$), and number of children in the household ($M = 2.49$, $SD = 0.90$) were selected as relevant control variables.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Results

We started by calculating summed scores for the final factors tested in the structural model. For Work–Family Enrichment (WFE), the summed scores ranged between 6 (*no conflict*) and 30 (*a lot of conflict*). The subjects in our sample scored a mean of 23.0 (out of 30) with a standard deviation of 3.7. The average score for parental well-being was relatively high ($M = 27.3$, $SD = 3.1$), with a minimum score of 6 (*very low well-being*) and a maximum score of 30 (*very high well-being*). The average summed score for parenting behaviour was high ($M = 59.5$, $SD = 7.9$), with a minimum score of 23 (*highly negative parenting*) and a maximum score of 75 (*highly positive parenting*). Similarly, the results revealed a high average summed score for child behaviour ($M = 24.0$, $SD = 2.5$), with scores ranging from 11 (*very negative child behaviour*) to 27 (*very positive child behaviour*).

4.2. Measurement Model: Higher-Order Factors

The standardized factor loadings in the measurement model for each higher-order factor are presented in Table 1, along with the standard errors and two-tailed *p*-values. Within each higher-order variable, all factor loadings were greater than 0.40 and were highly significant, meaning that the lower-order factors had a significant and strong association with the higher-order variables. The lower-order factors of *prosocial behaviour* and *emotional problems* are exceptions, though, as these factors did not reach the 0.40 criterion. As stated previously, the good fit of the measurement model and theoretical importance of these lower-order factors prompted us to retain both in the structural model.

Table 1. Structural equation modelling (SEM) measurement model—higher order factor loadings of constructs (see also Figure 1).

Higher Order Factor	Lower Order Factor	*β*	*SE*	*p*-Value
Parental well-being				
	Depression	0.686	0.013	0.000
	Difficulty at life present (reversed)	0.698	0.012	0.000
	Coping	0.736	0.012	0.000
	Feeling rushed	0.402	0.016	0.000
Parenting				
	Warmth parenting	1.000	0.024	0.000
	Inductive reasoning	0.409	0.017	0.000
	Hostile parenting (reversed)	0.501	0.019	0.000
Child behavior				
	Prosocial behavior	0.005	0.005	0.271
	Emotional problems (reversed)	0.008	0.007	0.266

$N = 4163$.

4.3. Structural Model

The structural model tests the hypothesized paths between WFE and the higher-order factors. The standardized factor loadings, standard errors, and two-tailed *p*-values of each path are presented in Table 2. The results displayed in Table 2 are visually depicted in the complete path model presented in Figure 2. First, it is important to notice that the behaviour of children was not directly affected by parents' experience of WFE ($β = 0.028$, $p = 0.751$). Instead, the results suggest that the associations of work–family enrichment were mediated by the other higher-order factors. In line with our first hypothesis (H1), WFE was a significant predictor of parental well-being. Parents who experienced

more work–family enrichment (β = 0.264, *p* < 0.000) scored significantly higher on the well-being factor. In turn, higher levels of parental well-being were associated with more positive behaviour on the part of children (β = 0.546, *p* = 0.032). The relationship between work–family enrichment and children's behaviour was thus mediated by parental well-being, thereby confirming our first hypothesis.

Table 2. Structural model—directional paths.

From Factor	To Factor	β	SE	*p*-Value
WFE	Child behavior	0.028	0.087	0.751
WFE	Parental well-being	0.264	0.018	0.000
WFE	Parenting	0.072	0.017	0.000
Parental well-being	Child behavior	0.546	0.255	0.032
Parenting	Child behavior	0.415	0.199	0.037
Parental well-being	Parenting	0.166	0.019	0.000

N = 4163.
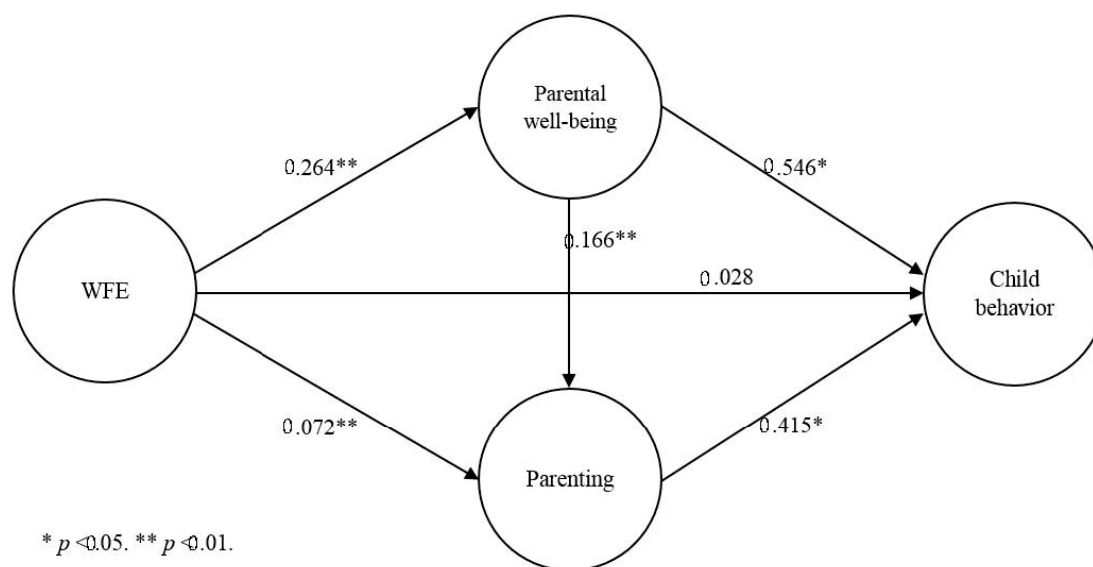
Figure 2. Structural model—directional paths.

Regarding parenting, the analysis indicates that parents with a higher WFE are significantly more likely to exhibit positive parenting behaviour (β = 0.072, *p* < 0.000). In turn, parenting behaviour has a significant positive association with children's behaviour (β = 0.415, *p* = 0.037). Taking into account the indirect path of WFE on parenting, the results provide support for our second hypothesis (H2), which predicted that parenting mediates the relationship between work–family enrichment and children's behaviour.

To accurately test the mediating paths of parenting and parental well-being, we fitted the structural model in three steps. First, we considered only the direct path of WFE on children's behaviour (along with the control variables), which was highly significant (β = 0.169, *p* = 0.000). In the second model, we added the direct path from parental well-being and parenting to children's behaviour. This addition maintained the significant direct path from the first step (β = 0.067, *p* = 0.01). The effect decreased and significance dropped substantially. The model fit marginally increased as the RMSEA slightly decreased from 0.0499 to 0.0497 and the CFI increased from 0.8781 to 0.8790. We tested the significance of this enhancement and confirmed it with a χ^2-test ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 563.77, Δdf = 2). In the third and final model, we added the mediated path of WFE on children's behaviour through parental well-being and parenting (H3). In light of this mediation, the direct path of WFE became insignificant and was now fully explained through parenting and parental well-being (see infra, Table 2). As a χ^2 test again

indicated a significant improvement for the model fit ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 247.60, Δdf = 2), we can conclude that the mediation paths are indeed crucial to understanding the antecedents of children's behaviour.

In the interest of legibility, we describe only the significant associations with the control variables. First, work–family enrichment was affected by household income (β = 0.036, p = 0.033). Having a partner in life (β = 0.131, p < 0.000) and having fewer children (β = −0.053, p = 0.007) went together with higher levels of parental well-being. For parenting, we found that the age of the youngest child (β = −0.122, p < 0.000), the number of children (β = −0.183, p < 0.000), and the gender of the parent (β = −0.288, p < 0.000) were significantly related to parenting. Finally, children's behaviour was negatively related to the age of the youngest child in the household (β = −0.604, p = 0.028).

5. Discussion

The quality of life in the work and family domain due to enrichment can positively spill over to other involved family members. The current inquiry investigated the relationship between parents' experience of work–family enrichment and children's behavioural outcomes. All family members share and interact in a reciprocal environment. Thus, it is theoretically and empirically acknowledged that this relationship can only be understood when one incorporates parental characteristics. Therefore, we included both parental well-being and parenting performance as mediators in the model.

The first hypothesis predicted the mediating role of parental well-being on the relationship between work–family enrichment and children's behaviour. The results confirm that children's behaviour is related to the parents' experience of work–family enrichment trough the parental well-being. Thus, children show more positive interpretable behaviour as parental well-being increases by experiencing a positive interface between work and family.

Second, the results also revealed that parenting performance functions as a mediator on the relationship between work–family enrichment and children's behaviour. With this finding, the second hypothesis is confirmed as well. Parents show more appropriate parenting performance when they experience enrichment between their work and family. Subsequently, this relation positively affects the behaviour of an involved child (Cooklin et al. 2016; Dinh et al. 2017).

These results form a confirmation for the underlying mechanism of the different surrounding environments that interact with each other. As the ecological system theory of Bronfenbrenner (1986) proposes, these interacting environments that surround children affect their development. Applied to the subject of the current study, the interface of work and family can be associated with a spillover of related resources that can enrich an individual's role and functioning as a parent. This spillover is beneficial to the behavioural outcomes of a child who grows up in a shared home environment created with a parent as a result of positive exchanges between work and family environments.

Thus, the mediating role of parental characteristics in the home environment plays an significant role in the relationship between a parent's experience of work–family enrichment and the behavioural outcomes of a child. Moreover, the intervening variables of parental well-being and parenting performance fully mediate the relationship between work–family enrichment and children's behaviour, confirming our third hypothesis. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that the level of parents' well-being has a significant positive relationship with parenting performance, confirming the findings of previous inquiries (Conger et al. 2002; Jackson et al. 2000; McCarty and McMahon 2003; Van den Eynde et al. 2020).

After critically reflecting on the current study to give suggestions for future research, we must acknowledge a number of limitations. First, although we had the objective of investigating a network of relationships by using SEM analysis and attempted to account for reversed causality by including measurement of children's behaviour in the last wave as a lagged variable in our model, we cannot make any statements about changes over time. In practical terms, we had to work with scales and items that were only adopted in certain waves. In theoretical terms, reciprocity is assumed, but empirical (longitudinal) research should further investigate potential reversed causation mechanisms between children's behaviour and parental characteristics. A second limitation in the current study is that the measurements of interest were subjective in nature by self-reporting (work–family enrichment,

well-being, and parenting) or an interpretation of another person's functioning (child's behaviour). Third, notwithstanding that the focus on enrichment of work and family is a value added to the existing literature on work–family balance, the LSAC database did not offer more in-depth insights into different possible ways of experiencing two directions of enrichment—namely, work that enriches the family domain (WEF) and family that enriches the work domain (FEW). The enrichment concept is complementary to the concept of work–family conflict and is also theoretically distinguished (Greenhaus and Powell 2006). A last limitation is the uniform way we treated families in this study (e.g., see: Mortelmans et al. 2016). Due to the limited sample size, we could not distinguish multiple family forms in order to discover how the mechanisms shown in this study could differ across family forms.

In conclusion, this study added to the literature by focusing on the consequences on children's behaviour of parents experiencing possible enrichment between work and family life, and it confirmed parents' well-being and parenting as crucial mediators. Adults and parents spend a remarkable amount of time at work and at home. The positive interaction between these life spheres and the associated spillover of resources can lead to beneficial consequences for one's role as a parent. Through intergenerational transfer, children's functioning and development are at stake in complex yet powerful interacting systems (Bronfenbrenner 1986), which in this case means that positive work–family spillover can transfer to an involved child. In the context of policy and practices, this perspective should not be forgotten in order to highlight this in its elaboration besides measures to deal with work–family conflict. Nonetheless, it is clear that a complex system is at work here which should be further disentangled in future research.

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