Implications of Work-Life Balance Measures for Companies: a Review of the Literature

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Received: 26-01-2021; Accepted: 26-02-2021; Published: 29-07-2021

Abstract

Objective: The relationship between work-family balance and employee performance is a topic of great interest for organisations and, therefore, for academic research. In this context, this paper reviews the literature to identify the determining factors in company-based adoption of work-life balance measures (causes related to work-family conflict: WFC, and family-work conflict: FWC) on the one hand and, on the other, the research that has focussed on studying the effect on business results of practices to achieve a work-life balance.

Methodology: We have undertaken analysis of the academic research published over the period 1998-2018 and available on the Web of Science (WOS), SCOPUS and EBSCO databases.

Results: The review undertaken indicates that conflict can be originated in the family, in the workplace and in other environments throughout the day when we face up to the obligations arising from the roles we play in the family and at work and that affect us in both directions. In turn, work-life balance measures appear to have a positive effect, not only at the individual level for also for staff and companies as a whole.

Limitations: Descriptive research.

Practical implications: This study aims to contribute to the literature by providing updated information on the state of the art on this subject, and to highlight possible future lines of empirical research, as well as the relevance of the subject at a company level.

Keywords: balance measures; work; family; conflict; role

JEL code: M14, M51

Citation
Calzón-Menéndez, F. M., Sacristán-Navarro, M., Cabeza-García, L., 2021, Implicaciones de las Medidas de Conciliación en la Empresa: Una Revisión de la Literatura, Esic Market Economics and Business Journal, 52(3), e5231. DOI: 10.7200/esicm.168.0523.1
调解措施对企业的影响：对文献进行复查

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Recibido: 26-01-2021; Aceptado: 26-02-2021; Publicado: 29-07-2021

文章摘要

研究目标：工作-家庭与员工在工作岗位上的表现之间的调解关系是组织和学术研究的一个热点。这种情况下，对文献进行复查，以确定企业决定采取调解措施的因素（“工作-家庭”和“家庭-工作”冲突有关的原因），以及回顾重点集中在研究实践调解措施对企业效益的影响。

分析方法：对1998-2018年期间发表并在Web of Science (WOS)、Scopus和EBSCO数据库中提供的学术研究进行了分析。

研究结论：对此文献进行复查表明，冲突的根源可能来自家庭、工作和一天中在履行与家庭和工作角色有关的义务时产生的冲突，最后项冲突在家庭和工作都有影响。反过来，调解措施的存在不仅对个人工作上有帮助，而是对整个企业都有积极影响。

研究局限：描述性研究。

实际应用：本研究试图通过对此话题提供最新进展分析，并在实证层面揭示未来可能的研究方向，以及该话题在企业层面的重要性，为文献做出贡献。

关键词：调解措施；工作；家庭；冲突；角色

JEL 分类号：M14, M51

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https://revistasinvestigacion.esic.edu/esicmarket

Citation  
Calzón-Menéndez, F. M., Sacristán-Navarro, M., Cabeza-García, L., 2021, Implicaciones de las Medidas de Conciliación en la Empresa: Una Revisión de la Literatura, *Esic Market Economics and Business Journal*, 52(3), e5231. DOI: 10.7200/esicm.168.0523.1
1. Introduction

As regards corporate social responsibility (CSR), employees are one of the most significant stakeholders, as they represent the human capital that manages the company’s resources, and therefore, the company’s success depends to a large extent upon them. Undertaking CSR action in favour of employees means designing projects to improve their quality of life inside and outside the company, linking up working conditions with living conditions. Moreover, the return on social responsibility is related, among other factors, to employee motivation; the sense of permanence with - and loyalty to - the company; the retention and attraction of talent; the reduction of labour conflicts; and improvements in competitiveness (Londoño and Castagnino, 2019).

Specifically, work-life balance has been an issue of enormous concern in recent decades, both in Spain and Western countries, for public administrations, families and individuals and, in turn, of permanent concern for trade unions and companies. The lack of work-life balance has an influence on the low birth rate, attributable to company-related factors (Figure 1). Thus, as can be seen in Figure 2, the natural increase in the population in Spain (i.e. the difference between births and deaths) is at an all-time low: 45,002 in the first six months of 2019, marking the fifth consecutive semester with a natural decrease. However, among the reasons that could explain this situation is not the fact of women not wishing to become mothers, since, as can be seen in Figure 1, the majority of women under 35 years of age still expect to have more children. However, from the age of 35 onwards, work or work-life balance and financial reasons seem to be the most important ones in explaining why women have had fewer children than desired.

Figure 1. Reasons why women in Spain do not have children (%)
In this context, the aim of this paper is to review the literature on work-life balance measures in companies with the aim of obtaining information to describe the factors that help employees reconcile situations of conflict between work and family and vice versa, as well as analysing the influence of policies to achieve this type of work-life balance on company results and on individuals. To this end, we have undertaken a review of the literature for the period 1998-2018, using the Web of Science (WOS), SCOPUS and EBSCO databases. Thus, this study aims to contribute to the literature by providing updated information on the state of the art and to highlight possible future lines of research at the empirical level.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 describes the topic under study, from a conceptual point of view, as regards the concept of work-life balance. Section 3 specifies the methodology of analysis and section 4 shows the main results obtained. Finally, Section 5 draws the main conclusions of the study.

2. The work-family conflict and the concept of balance

The origin of research on the ‘work-and-family’ problem dates back to the 1970s (Rapaport and Rapaport, 1972). The work-family conflict creates friction between the pressures exerted by work and family which, in some respects, become incompatible (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985), as the more the time and energy devoted to one role, the less time and energy is devoted to the other. Specifically, Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) identified three types of work-family conflict:

- Time-based: this arises when the time devoted to one role makes it difficult to be involved in another role, such as, for example, alternating working shifts, long working hours, overtime, etc.
• Stress-related: occurs when the pressure that one role puts on the individual makes it difficult for him/her to be involved in another role, such as the demands of physical or mental work, etc.
• Behavioural: this occurs when the behaviour of one role is incompatible with the behaviour of the other role. Attending to phone calls outside working hours or sleeping during the day to be able to work at night, etc., would be a couple of examples.

Pichler (2009) mentions that the balance between work and family is generated when the activities and aspirations corresponding to the two domains are compatible with each other. According to Debeljuh and Jáuregui (2004), some workers achieve this balance by their own means, while most require the manifest support of organisations to achieve this. Moreover, according to the analysis by Rodríguez and Nouvilas (2008), the same problems do not crop up if the conflict arises at work, affecting the family (Work-Family Conflict: WFC) or, on the contrary, if it is the family that is affecting work (Family-work Conflict: FWC). Thus, work-family conflict (WFC) can be created by a number of pressures at work, such as the characteristics of working hours, role-related stress factors, the status within the organisation or the characteristics of specific tasks. On the other hand, if the sources of conflict arise in the family (FWC), the stressors may be those associated with the natural evolution of the family cycle, such as the birth of a child, household chores or the death of a family member. It is worth mentioning that, as Kahn et al. (1964) point out, there may also be a third type of bi-directional conflict, the “inter-role conflict”, which incorporates the gender perspective and arises throughout the day when coping with responsibilities related to family and job and therefore affecting both directions.

Work-family conflict can have negative implications at both the individual and organisational levels. Herrera and Cassals (2005) define employee quality of life as the degree to which employees in an organisation are able to satisfy personal needs through experiences gained at work, resulting in personal satisfaction and work motivation. In any case, this quality of life can be affected, along with physical health, by work-family conflict. In this sense, Matthews et al. (2010) consider that the pressures of time, effort and behaviour required by work and family roles have an impact on the quality of life of workers. In this sense, Matthews et al. (2010) consider that the time, effort and behavioural pressures of work and family roles have an impact on the quality of life of the employee. For their part, organisations are affected by absenteeism, poor job performance (Frone et al., 1992); low affective commitment of employees to the company (Meyer and Allen, 1997); lower organisational performance (Sánchez Vidal et al., 2011); and a desire of staff to leave the company (Anderson et al., 2002).

In the Presidency’s conclusions at the Extraordinary European Council, held in Luxembourg in November 1997, the term reconciling work and family life was formally introduced into the EU public policy vocabulary with the name of work-life balance policies. Borras et al. (2007) define these policies as a set of directives aimed at promoting
time off, flexible working arrangements, and daily care services. In recent decades, work-family balance has become a central focus of research (Molina, 2011). As a tool that can bring about positive changes in conflict-affected companies (Poelmans et al., 2003), work-family balance involves a series of practices that help employees to balance their work and family life (Lobel and Kossek, 1997). However, although organisations have much to gain from supporting their employees in achieving and maintaining a balance (Lingard and Francis, 2006), there is still a lack of awareness of the need for work-life balance policies in private companies (Blanco and Lattrich, 2012). In this direction, when companies give up supporting their workers, they also give up benefits such as legitimacy, social support, or improvements in their image, among other factors (Pasamar and Valle, 2011). According to Salanova and Schaufeli (2004), organisations need to have motivated and healthy workers in order to achieve adequate adaptation to the economic environment and this is one of the main reasons for promoting the implementation of policies towards work-life balance, tailored to the real needs of workers.

3. Methodology of the analysis

The aim of this paper, in line with previous studies (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012; Asensio et al., 2019; Sacristán-Navarro, 2002) is to review the academic literature on work-family balance. Some of these previous studies are related to our subject matter and given the small number of articles found, it was not advisable to use any other types of techniques. To this end, this quantitative analysis of the articles enables us to account for the nature and course of a discipline, thus encouraging not only its dissemination but also its development based on one of its most observable products, its publications (Camps, 2007). In our case, a search for academic literature was run on platforms accessing scientific journals through the Web of Science (WOS), SCOPUS and EBSCO databases. As a result of this search, 521 non-matching documents published between 1998 and 2018 were located, applying the search criteria using the Boolean operator "and" to connect keywords and narrow down the search, taking into account the quartile and impact factors of the journal (32 journals were consulted), criteria that yielded the results shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Search criteria

| Platforms | WOS                      | SCOPUS                  | EBSCO                  |
|-----------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Key words | “family and balance”    | “family and work and conflict” | “family and balance” |
|           | “family and life”       | “personal and work and conflict” | “family and life” |
|           | “family and work”       |                         | “family and work”     |
| Date range | 1998-2018 (all platforms) |                        |                        |
| Fields of research | “Management” “Business” | “Social Sciences” “Business” | “Social Sciences” “Business” “Psychology” |
| Total Articles | 299                      | 34                      | 188                    |
With regard to the time period under study (1998-2018), we have limited the search to 20 years in order to include different economic cycles that affect fertility, as well as regulatory changes. Specifically, from 1998 onwards, an expansive economic cycle began and the minimum level of the short-term fertility indicator was 1.15 children per woman (Muñoz and Modroño, 2013). In addition, a slow and gradual increase in the presence of women in the workplace began, which brought with it an increase in the intensity of the family-work conflict within companies. At the same time, measures to mitigate this conflict began to take shape through the adoption of international work-life balance practices and, on the other hand, the first Law on Work-Life Balance was passed in Spain on the 5th of November 1999.

4. Results

4.1. Results of the review of the literature

As a result of the interest shown by the research community in the subject analysed, the amount of literature has grown in crescendo in terms of frequency and percentage over the range of dates considered. Thus, as can be seen by dividing the period into three sections of seven years each (Table 2), showing the level of progression and concentration, we are able to corroborate the validity of the topic, since more than 59% of the total appear in the third section (2012-2018).

Table 2. Production in 7-year periods

| 7-year period | Production | %   |
|---------------|------------|-----|
| First 1998-2004 | 53         | 10,2% |
| Second 2005-2011 | 158        | 30,3% |
| Third 2012-2018 | 310        | 59,5% |
| Total          | 521        | 100,0% |

Source: WOS-SCOPUS-EBSCO

In order to compile the articles selected, an advanced search model was applied, with two exclusion criteria set for the selection of articles. Firstly, the search criterion was applied using several keywords related to the objective of the article and, secondly, to the prestige of the particular journal, selecting the articles in journals figuring in the “Journal Citation Report (JCR)” in the fields of business, administration and management, ethics and public health. Thus, 521 articles were located, and those related to the objectives pursued by our article were selected through their abstracts. So, although the number of articles containing the key words in scientific journals is relatively considerable, after reviewing their content, 42 articles specifically related to the objective
of this article were finally selected; the rest were discarded due to a lack of link to the determinants and consequences of adopting practices to achieve family balance. Table 3 shows the number of articles selected and the journals in which they were published.

In turn, the *keyword* analysis allows us to identify the terms most frequently cited in the articles selected from the scientific publications. A total of 111 keywords were used in the 42 articles, although it should be said that not all of them used this keyword technique, especially the older ones. Of the keywords used in the articles, only four were cited more than twice, which indicates that this identification is very fragmented in the research undertaken, with no cannibalisation of keywords. Specifically, the terms ‘job satisfaction’ and ‘work-family conflict’ appeared five times, and ‘gender’ and ‘work-life balance’ three times.

With regard to the *author* analysis, this has been divided into two parts: most cited and most productive authors. Table 4 lists the authors of the selected articles that have more than 100 citations. On the other hand, according to the law of exponential growth (Lotka, 1926), through the productivity index, authors can be classified according to the number of articles published, distinguishing three levels: small producers who have published only one paper, medium producers who have published between 2 and 9 articles, and large-scale producers who have published more than 10 articles. The research selected is dominated by small producers, with three medium-scale producers standing out: Rothard, N. appearing three times, and Illies, R. and Wilson, K. twice each.

Table 3. List of articles on the subject studied in the academic journals analysed

| Journal                                      | No. of articles | %  |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------|----|
| ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT JOURNAL                | 8               | 19%|
| JOURNAL OF BUSINESS ETHICS                   | 7               | 17%|
| JOURNAL OF BUSINESS RESEARCH                 | 6               | 14%|
| JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT                        | 6               | 14%|
| BRITISH JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT                | 4               | 10%|
| ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT REVIEW                 | 2               | 5% |
| ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCE QUARTERLY             | 2               | 5% |
| STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT JOURNAL                 | 2               | 5% |
| ORGANIZATION SCIENCE                         | 1               | 2% |
| PAPELES DEL PSICÓLOGO                        | 1               | 2% |
| CENTRE D’ECONOMIE DE LA SORBONNE            | 1               | 2% |
| SOCIAL SCIENCE & MEDICINE                    | 1               | 2% |
| CIRIEC                                       | 1               | 2% |
| **TOTAL**                                    | **42**          | **100%** |

Source: Prepared by the authors
Table 4. Authors of articles with more than 100 quotes on the subject studied

| Total quotes | Authors | Journal                        |
|--------------|---------|--------------------------------|
| 712          | Edwards and Rothbard (2000) | Academy of Management Review   |
| 600          | Rothbard (2001)             | Administrative Science Quarterly|
| 293          | Carlson and Kacmar (2000)   | Journal of Management          |
| 252          | Perry-Smith and Blum (2000) | Academy of Management Journal  |
| 241          | Kreiner, Hollensbe and Sheep (2009) | Academy of Management Journal |
| 239          | Hom and Kinick (2001)       | Academy of Management Journal  |
| 206          | Perlow (1998)               | Administrative Science Quarterly|
| 200          | Rothbard, Phillips and Dumas (2005) | Organization Science |
| 190          | Martins, Eddleston and Veiga (2002) | Academy of Management Journal |
| 166          | Konrad and Mangel (2000)    | Strategic Management Journal   |
| 132          | Ilies, Wilson and Wagner (2009) | Academy of Management Journal |
| 130          | Boswell (2007)              | Journal of Management          |
| 112          | Lazarova, Westman and Shaffer (2010) | Academy of Management Review |
| 108          | Shockley and Singla (2011)  | Journal of Management          |

Source: Prepared by the authors

As regards the country where the research was carried out, the number of articles produced by the United States stands out above the rest, since, as shown in Table 5, this country accounts for more than 60% of the articles taken from the literature review.

Table 5. Production by country of articles on the subject studied

| COUNTRY                  | No. Articles | %     |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------|
| USA                      | 26           | 61,9% |
| UK                       | 4            | 9,5%  |
| SPAIN                    | 4            | 9,5%  |
| FRANCE                   | 1            | 2,4%  |
| ITALY                    | 1            | 2,4%  |
| GERMANY                  | 1            | 2,4%  |
| BRAZIL-HOLLAND-PHILIPPINES-KENYA | 1 | 2,4% |
| LEBANON                  | 1            | 2,4%  |
| NEW ZEALAND              | 1            | 2,4%  |
| S. KOREA                 | 1            | 2,4%  |
| GERMANY-FRANCE-UK-US     | 1            | 2,4%  |
| TOTAL                    | 42           | 100%  |

Source: Prepared by the authors
Finally, in relation to the *methodological frameworks or approaches*, it should be noted that the 42 articles reviewed contain empirical analysis and in them quantitative techniques prevail over qualitative ones. Table 6 gives details of the methodologies employed.

**Table 6. Methodologies used**

| Period     | 1998-2018 |
|------------|-----------|
| **Total, articles** | 42 |

| Methodologies          | Quantitative | Qualitative |
|------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Surveys and questionnaires processed using the following types of analysis: | 31 (73.8%)    | 11 (26.2%)  |
| - Confirmatory Factor Analysis |               |             |
| - Cluster              |               |             |
| - Correlation analysis  |               |             |
| - Factorial            |               |             |
| - Structural equations  |               |             |
| - Linear regression    |               |             |
| - Multiple regression  |               |             |
| Using the following techniques: |             |             |
| - Analysis of personal interviews |             |             |
| - FsQCA analysis       |               |             |
| - Focus group discussions |             |             |
| - Observation          |               |             |
| - Collection of materials |             |             |
| - Literature review    |               |             |
| - Critical review      |               |             |

Source: Prepared by the authors

4.2. Content analysis

In order to better understand the problem and to identify the key factors of the work-family balance dilemma, which gives rise to so much concern among the parties involved, the exploratory framework which the research is based on was divided into two clearly differentiated groups:

- Articles analysing the determinants for the adoption of measures to achieve work-life balance, from the point of view of conflict, where research focussed on the different causes related to work-family and family-work conflict.
- Studies investigating the influence of work-life balance practices on firm and individual performance, focussing on the consequences of these practices.

4.2.1. Articles analysing conflict-related determinants for the adoption of work-life balance measures

In order to establish the criteria for an analysis of the articles on the determinants, we have adopted a structure which takes into account that the relationship between work and family manifests itself through interaction between the two. Geurts et al. (2005) define work-family interaction as a process where the behaviour of a worker
in one domain (Home-Household) is influenced by certain positive or negative situations that have built up and are experienced in the other domain (Work). According to the Spillover theory (Piotrkowski, 1978), events in one sphere of life, whether positive or negative, “spill over” into the other sphere of life, i.e. the effect the family has, indirectly, on work and vice versa, and depending on the role adopted. Figure 1 summarises the determinants analysed.

Figure 1. Determinants for balance measures from the conflict viewpoint

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on Kohn et al. (1964) and Rodríguez and Nouvilas (2008)

**Family-work conflict**

When sources of conflict arise within the family, the determinants behind this may be associated with the natural evolution of the family cycle, such as the birth of a child, household chores, or the care or death of a family member.

Carlson and Kacmar (2000) concluded that setting family life priorities in the work-family conflict is related to values of family life within the conflict process. Schneer and Reitman (2002) found that the traditional male, business success model was difficult to dislodge within the family, despite the prevalence of a post-traditional family structure, along with the implementation of family-friendly policies. Illies et al. (2009) indicate that the mood at home cannot be explained by the employment situation, however it is reasonable to state that as employees involve their family roles more in their job, these are positively seen. Kreiner et al. (2009) found that, regardless of gender, excesses are similar between the work-at-home culture and interference with the job, where individuals take actions that violate their preferences towards balancing the work-family conflict. Beauregard (2013) concluded that work-related issues at home have a significant impact on employee well-being, finding that women are influenced directly, while men are influenced both directly and indirectly.

**Work-family conflict**

Among the articles exploring work-family conflict, we found six on the determinants. The study by Rodríguez and Nouvilas (2008) points out that the same problems do not occur if the conflict arises at work. Work-family conflict can be generated by a number of pressures, such as the characteristics of working hours, role stressors, status within the organisation, or the characteristics of tasks at work.

Hom and Kinick (2001) analysed job-related conflicts caused by timetables or travel, which prevent workers from undertaking family duties and give them
psychological motivation to resign without a new job offer. Edwards and Rothbard (2000) examined how people manage the boundary between work and non-work roles, examining the extent to which individuals wish to integrate or segment their working and non-work lives. Dembe (2008) reviewed the effect of long working hours on workers’ health, further exploring whether they were coerced into working beyond their capabilities or doing working hours deemed inappropriate. Martins et al. (2002) concluded that the perception of work-family conflict is strongly associated with job satisfaction, this being lower for women than for men, and the older an individual is, the stronger their negative relationship with work-family conflict and job satisfaction. Carlson et al. (2014) examined whether employees who experienced their working life overflowing into their family life opted for one of these, in order to improve their attitude towards their job, and their mood. Finally, Romeo et al. (2014) show that transformational leadership (through motivation and commitment) and transactional leadership (through rewards and punishments) maintain a strong influence on work-family balance that manifests with both positive and negative effects, especially among workers who work beyond their working hours.

**Role conflict**

At this point, as discussed above, it is essential to mention that in line with Kahn et al. (1964) there may be a third type of bidirectional conflict, “role conflict”, which incorporates the gender perspective and arises throughout the day, when coping with the responsibilities of family and work, and therefore affecting both directions. Role Theory (Kahn et al., 1964) considers that the conflict between expectations associated with different roles has negative effects on personal well-being. This theory coincides with Karasek’s (1979) stress model where work-family conflict acts as a stressor. Furthermore, the Conflict Theory (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985) considers that job satisfaction is related to the relinquishment of family roles or vice versa. This is a type of conflict whereby role pressures from either domain are incompatible with the other, in some respect.

In this regard, Rothard (2001) developed a commitment model for the multiple roles of work and family, where emotion was posited as a critical mediator in these relationships. It was found that the role of emotion in the model differed between men and women and that work-family relationships were asymmetrical. Rothard et al. (2005) examined whether or not, as organisations try to attract and maintain commitment, they introduce different policies aimed at balancing work and non-work life, finding that employees’ desires for segmentation between their work and non-work lives was at a moderate level. Gatrell et al. (2014) offer a new direction for the debate by looking at how fathers perceive and interpret mothers’ ease of access to flexible jobs and men’s ease of access to flexible work. Wilson et al. (2018) identified that dual-earner couples feel that the demands of the family are misallocated, indicating that an egalitarian approach implies that both should invest equally in the domains of work and home, in an effort to achieve a greater balance of roles. In turn, Perlow (1998) found that couples where both were employed felt pressured
from both sides: pressured to devote more time to their work and pressured to share more responsibilities at home, with there being a prevalence of cultural norms, which define how individuals are expected to respond in different circumstances. Lazarova et al. (2010) analysed the interferences in the performance of expatriate employees, in their role as spouses, on the one hand, and partners on the other. Finally, Moschion (2007) analysed that a positive managerial attitude towards work-family support could create less stressful working conditions that assisted employees in paying better attention to both roles.

4.2.2. Articles that analyse the consequences of balancing measures

The reciprocal influence between work and non-work (family-personal) contexts could result in a situation of balance or conflict. A negative relationship was identified between the absence or minimal presence of policies on work-life balance and the existence of work-family conflict, and the fact that the existence of work-life balance policies and social support can act as a positive effect that reduces or moderates the consequences of work-family conflict (Poelmans and Chinchilla, 2001).

This block of articles analyses the consequences (positive or negative) of practices geared towards adopting a work-life balance at both the individual and company level, in terms of performance or results.

Positive effects of the existence of family balancing measures

Work-family balance measures offer a wide range of practices that help employees to reconcile the demands of their work and family life responsibilities (Lobel and Kossek, 1997), which can have a positive effect at the company and individual level.

- Effect on firm performance

Michie and Sheehan-Quinn (2001) indicate that flexibility policies are positively correlated with short-term financial performance, although they are negatively related to innovation - which in turn conditions the financial success of the firm. Whyman et al. (2015) analysed a wide range of workplace flexibility practices and their results suggest that about half of the practices studied were likely to lead to better organisational financial performance. Perry et al. (2000) found that organisations with a wider range of work-family policies have higher levels of organisational and market performance, and sales and profit growth, identifying that work-family packages can be a source of competitive advantage. Konrad and Mangel (2000) found that firms employing higher percentages of professionals and women had a stronger relationship between the provision of extensive work-life benefits and productivity. In contrast, for firms that hired fewer skilled, fewer self-employed and lower paid workers, the productivity and work-life initiative benefits may be insignificant. Pratt and Rosa (2003) examined how organisational structure, and specifically a network
marketing organisation, was able to provide a model of how to handle work-life balance questions simultaneously with productivity issues.

- Effect on employees

Among the effects of work-life balance measures on employees, studies related to company values stood out. For example, Lee et al. (2018) found that the institutionalisation of ethics had both direct and indirect effects on employees’ work-life experiences and employee well-being. Boscha et al. (2017) indicate that working with a supervisor who encouraged family support was likely to direct employees towards taking positive actions and have prosocial motivation at work. Aryee et al. (2012) highlight the relevance of informal family support in the workplace, to help employees integrate their work and family roles, suggesting the creation of a working environment, supportive towards families, as an integral part of an organisation’s strategy. In turn, Guitian (2009) argues that the characteristics of the work-family relationship in social and economic circumstances, together with the effects of conflict, make work-family policies a significant factor in the implementation of CSR. Boswell and Olson (2007) suggest that individual differences related to ambition and job involvement in a traditional working environment are particularly important in explaining the use of ICTs outside working or office hours. This does not imply a commitment to the organisation. Finally, Prottas (2013) provides an analysis that asserts that integrity is a crucial characteristic of effective leaders in creating an environment that both benefits employees and enhances organisational performance constructively in the form of productive behaviours.

- Effect on staff retention

Bloom et al. (2009) studied the propensity of companies to implement family-oriented formulas in the workplace, since companies need to offer formulas of this type to avoid losing key employees who can be a valuable resource for the company. Martinez et al. (2018) analysed how recruitment, training, compensation, performance appraisal, and work-life balance help maintain competitive advantage and improve teacher satisfaction and retention in education. Carr and Boyar (2007) show how family-friendly policies can minimise family stress and limit interference between work and family, enabling employees to concentrate on work activities and thus stay with the company.

**Negative effects of the absence of family balance measures**

Work-family conflict can have negative implications at either individual or company level, or both of these.
• Negative effect on workers

Bhuiana et al. (2002) analyse the behaviour of salespeople when they perceive an increase in the level of job stress, which leads to an increase in their intention to change jobs. Almer et al. (2004) suggest that the use of work-life balance measures may have a detrimental effect on both men and women, as they may be seen as valuing their careers less, due to timetables aimed at accommodating their families. Finally, Carr and Boyar (2007) found that work interference with family has an impact on job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation and can lead to job turnover in a significant number of cases, depending on personal and family circumstances.

• Negative effect at company level

Boyar et al. (2003) analysed the relationship between two-way work-family conflict, based on three non-attendance behaviours (absenteeism, leaving work early and late arrival at work), indicating that no generalisable conclusions can be drawn. However, to some extent, people with fewer job responsibilities (mostly women in the research) prioritised their work-life balance problems and, therefore, felt less obliged to comply with attendance at work. For their part, Adame et al. (2016) indicate that incompatibility between work and family life can cause negative physical and psychological effects and this worsens workers’ performance. Moreover, some studies indicate that the absence of women in management positions increases the likelihood that the company will not implement policies of that nature (Adame et al., 2015).

• Negative effect on both workers and companies

Leslie et al. (2012) concluded that, although flexible working practices have the potential to benefit employees and organisations alike, facilitating career development when their use is attributed to a desire to increase productivity, they can also restrict career development when their use is attributed to a desire for personal convenience. Meanwhile, Karkoulian et al. (2016) define that a low level of work-life balance can negatively influence employees and organisations, and therefore organisations should ensure that all employees enjoy healthy levels of work-life balance and control through the implementation of appropriate training programmes and workshops.

5. Conclusions

The aim of this paper has been to undertake a review of the academic literature on work-life balance in order to identify, on the one hand, the determinants of company adoption of work-life balance measures (causes related to work-family
and family-work conflict) and, on the other hand, the research that has focussed on studying the influence of work-life balance practices on results at both company and individual level.

Firstly, there has been a noticeable and growing interest in academic production in the last decade, as regards both the topic addressed and the relevance of the journals where these articles were published. This has been seen through the review of literature figuring in journals on business, business management and human resources. At the same time, academic production in this area is dominated by small producers, with most of the research being quantitative in nature. The country where most of the research has been carried out is the US (61.9%), followed by the UK and Spain: 9.5% in each case. Furthermore, the results of the review, from the point of view of the determinants, indicate that the causes of the conflict arising due to clashes in the work-life balance are of a diverse nature, depending, on the one hand, on the environment where they arise - either family or work - and, on the other hand, on gender, with its two-way effect.

In addition, there is a broad consensus that the existence of work-life balance measures within companies has positive effects, and that in the absence or scarcity of these measures, negative effects will be seen, both for individuals and companies.

In general, the interest shown in the academic literature on this subject, the variety of perspectives analysed in the literature and the need for further research from the company viewpoint, have all become evident, as most of the studies have been run at individual level. We believe that the effect of the results from both the determinants and the measures taken towards work-life balance is still worthy of attention. In any case, it is true that our study is not without limitations that may thus open the door to future lines of research. Firstly, the research is descriptive in nature, based on the interpretation and explanation of what has been observed by different authors, usually involving a significant dose of subjectivity. In addition, the variety of works analysed, with their different approaches and fields of research, makes it difficult to compare results. We have also restricted the search to certain academic databases of recognised quality; however, the use of other databases (e.g. Google Scholar) could increase the number of articles reviewed. Finally, in the future it would be interesting and necessary to apply bibliometric techniques to the analysis of the literature review or to carry out a meta-analysis based on the empirical articles published on the subject.

Acknowledgements

The authors gratefully acknowledge the funding received from the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness (PID2019-105140RB-I00) and the project RTI2018-097447-B-I00 of the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities (Spain).
Declaration of conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest in relation to the research, authorship or publication of this work.

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