FACTORS INFLUENCING WORK SATISFACTION OF SINGLE PARENTS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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Abstract

There has been a documented increase in single-parent families over the years. Various causes, such as divorce, death, irresponsible fathers and choice, to mention but a few, contribute to this increase. Since 2005, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has been partaking in various peacekeeping missions on the continent. The deployment of the SANDF is, however, not limited to cross-border activities. The SANDF also deploys its soldiers within the country in border control operations. While some soldiers are deployed within and outside the borders of the country, others remain in the home bases to continue with daily tasks. These soldiers usually work from 08:00–16:00, Monday to Friday. There are instances, however, where they need to work beyond the normal working hours and over weekends to participate in training exercises or even as a result of being deployed. Because of their single-parent status, these soldiers face inherent military challenges as well as role-related ones, which may influence their work satisfaction.

The research reported here aimed to investigate the relationships between stress, work–family conflict, social support and work–family enrichment (WFE) in terms of work satisfaction of single parents in the SANDF.

The sample consisted of 200 regular force SANDF soldiers (comprising 101 single parents and 99 dual parents). All the questionnaires utilised in this study were found to be reliable in an African military sample. Structural model analysis conducted through PLS 3 revealed that only three of the four documented challenges influenced single-parent work satisfaction. Stress did not influence satisfaction, while a lack of social support, work–family conflict (WFC) and WFE influenced work satisfaction. Social support was found to have a moderating effect on work satisfaction while WFC and WFE had a direct influence. These results support the view that commanders need to be sensitised to allow more social support for single parents, and military psychologists could enrich single parents with support programmes.

Introduction

The military has proved to be a crucial part of any country or state.[347] Notwithstanding its significance, the military has been referred to as a greedy

institution.[348] The military has always been an organisation that demanded of, rather than gave to, those who enjoyed its employment.[349] It is further an organisation that dominates and places heavy expectations upon the lifestyles of military members and their families.[350] Additionally, the military expects to be prioritised while family and personal circumstances are made the second priority to accommodate the goals, objectives and missions of the military. The military does not only take from service members; it offers them economic and social support to compensate for the sacrifices they make. For example, the military contributes financially when a member moves, and provides support when a soldier is deployed or whenever military personnel come across challenges that are inherent to their jobs or consequences of the job.[351]

Families have transitioned from the traditional profile of two married heterosexual parents to homosexual and single parents.[352] In addition to the 'normal' family, the military currently also consists of single-parent families, dual-career families as well as same-sex parent families. The change in families is not only found in the military.[353] Such changes can also be seen in the civilian community.[354] A study by Minotte indicates that, although there were similarities between civilian and military communities regarding the increasing number of single parents at the time, the civilian community consisted of a majority of female single parents while six out of ten single parents in the US Air Force were male.[355]

The above-mentioned figures are expected to change as more women are recruited.[356] For example, in 2011, female soldiers made up almost 26,6% of the SANDF compared to the previous all-boys force. Out of 18,5 million children in South Africa, 12,4 million are raised in single-parent homes with the majority living with the mother.[357] The SANDF does not have exact figures for single-parent soldiers, nor is it accurately aware of whether members have dependants or not. Generally, the cause of inaccurate statistics stems from the failure by members to disclose their parental status.

Various causes, such as divorce, death, irresponsible fathers and choice contribute to single parenthood and its increase.[358] Generally, single parents are primarily made up of more women than men.[359] When translated to the world of work, the rise in single parents means that more and more organisations employ single parents and will continue to do so in future. The SANDF is not excluded from these organisations. Literature purports that single parents experience challenges, such as stress, a lack of social support, WFC as well as a lack of WFE.[360] These challenges directed the current study, which explored whether the challenges influence the work satisfaction of single parents in the SANDF.

Minotte reports that single parents have unique challenges, which will be explained shortly. It should be noted that these challenges are added to the generic ones that all military members experience, such as stress, long periods away from home, the threat of death, instability, ambiguity and the uncertainty of what could happen next during deployment.[361] Single parents have been reported to face challenges such as difficulty in integrating work and family demands, a lack of adult support in parenting and a lack

of time to meet all the demands placed upon them.[362] Such challenges influence one's well-being and work satisfaction.[363] Work satisfaction is defined as "the cognitive appraisal of a person's work situation or a person's well-being in the work context".[364] Well-being further explains the satisfaction that one experiences from one's career as well as from one's well-being in the work environment.[365] Seeing that soldiers face specific challenges that are linked to their work and because single-parent soldiers face even more challenges compared to their colleagues who have a partner with whom to share responsibilities, it was expected that experiencing difficulties would influence their work satisfaction.[366]

Research problem

An important implication of the relationship between the military and military families is that when a person joins the military, the entire family serves.[367] The reason for this is that, whatever takes place between the military and a soldier, whether positive or negative, has a profound impact on the family. Having a demanding job, such as soldiering, and looking after children, can be strenuous for a soldier.[368] A working parent is faced with dividing his or her resources between the work and family domains, managing stress experienced in the work environment, and preventing harmful spill-over into the family environment. Having a partner with whom to share responsibilities, makes a difference and increases coping.

Work satisfaction as a life domain plays a significant role in the general well-being of individuals.[369] When an individual is satisfied with his or her work, his or her well-being is expected to improve, which is ultimately expected to lead to higher commitment or performance. In addition to the challenges that SANDF single parents have been reported to come across, their roles and responsibilities are expected to influence their work satisfaction.[370]

Most challenges are outcomes of single-parent participation in work, i.e. WFC, work stress and/or a lack of WFE. Work seems to be at the root of most challenges that single parents encounter.[371] Paradoxically, single parents need work to function successfully. Work is a source of belonging and development for them. Work further equips single parents with financial resources, which grant them the opportunity to elicit child care and household support and to pay for counselling sessions, which may furnish them with stress coping strategies, to mention but a few. Financial resources gained as a result of work further allow single parents to develop new skills in the work environment, which may help them function more optimally in the family environment and improve their WFE than without work.

This study aimed to contribute and add to the literature by providing an understanding of the research of work satisfaction for single parents in the SANDF. The primary aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between stress, WFC, social support and WFE, as factors that influence the work satisfaction of single-parent soldiers in the SANDF. In doing so, specific research questions were formulated.

- Is there a relationship between stress and work satisfaction?

- Is there a relationship between social support and work satisfaction?

- Is there a relationship between work–family conflict (WFC) and work satisfaction?

- Is there a relationship between work–family enrichment (WFE) and work satisfaction?

- Is there a relationship between social support and stress?

- Is there a relationship between WFE and stress?

- Is there a relationship between social support and WFC?

- Is there a relationship between social support and WFE?

- Is there a relationship between work satisfaction and WFC?

The remaining part of the article is divided as follows: the literature review, the research, methodology, data collection, results and discussion of results.

Literature review

This section will cover and explain all the concepts on which the study was based, as found in the literature.

Work satisfaction

Work satisfaction is defined as "the cognitive appraisal of a person's work situation or a person's well-being in the work context".[372] Lent, Brown and Hackett conceptualised work satisfaction through the social-cognitive theory.[373] This perspective unifies subjective and psychological well-being through which cognitive, social, behavioural and affective variables are determinants of global life and domain-specific satisfaction.[374] The essential elements are discussed briefly below.[375]

- Work–educational satisfaction

Work satisfaction is assessed through overall feelings about an individual's job or his or her feelings about a certain job aspect, e.g. the work itself or rewards. The social-cognitive perspective demands adherence to theory-consistent guidelines, which dictate that predictors must be tailored to dependent variables along significant dimensions, such as the time frame or content.[376]

- Goals and goal-directed behaviour

The relationship between goals and satisfaction depends on the extent to which an individual focuses on and progresses towards reaching such goals. Goal-directed behaviour allows an individual to activate personal agency towards life and domain-specific satisfaction. The promotion of work satisfaction depends on the extent to

which individuals can set goals, pursue them and perceive efforts as useful in obtaining their goals.[377]

- Work conditions and outcomes

Certain work conditions, such as stress, conflict and overload, determine the level of satisfaction in the work environment. A determining factor for satisfaction is the perception that the individual holds towards his or her work environment. The effect of work conditions is as severe as the individual perceives it to be. As expected, there will be a difference in individual perceptions as per individual characteristics.[378]

- Personality and affective traits

The Big Five personality factors have been researched in relation to work satisfaction.[379] Factors such as conscientiousness, extraversion and neuroticism have been found to correlate with job satisfaction, which is a dimension or facet of work satisfaction. In addition, Connolly and Viswesvaran found a link between job satisfaction and negative and positive affect.[380] Research into this has, however, been contradictory, and additional research is needed to reach consensus.[381]

- Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is conceptualised as an individual's belief about his or her capability to perform behaviours necessary for the achievement of work goals. Self-efficacy is directly linked to job satisfaction, which is a contributing factor to work satisfaction.

- Goal-relevant environmental supports, resources and obstacles

Specific environmental variables play a key role in the achievement of individual goals and objectives. Variables such as material and social support promote individual satisfaction. The presence of environmental constraints and the absence of supports reduce satisfaction in the workplace.

Work satisfaction amongst military forces seems to be poorly researched. At the time of the current study, the authors could not find any literature indicating the level of work satisfaction in the SANDF, particularly for single parents, in relation to stress, social support, WFC and WFE. This research is therefore expected to make a contribution in this regard and to clarify the level of work satisfaction amongst single-parent soldiers in the SANDF.

Stress and single parents

Lazarus and Folkman define stress as "a relationship with the environment that the person appraises as significant for his or her well-being and in which the demands tax or exceed coping resources".[382] Several studies have been conducted focusing on stress and work satisfaction. Most literature points to a negative relationship between stress and work outcomes.[383]. Stress takes away one's engagement, commitment and ultimate performance in the workplace.[384]

Moreau and Mageau observed that, in their study, the majority of individuals who worked in highly stressful occupations experienced low levels of work satisfaction. In addition to the low levels of work satisfaction, the authors found that individuals in demanding work contexts experienced high levels of psychological difficulties, which were manifested in the form of stress and psychological distress.[385] Moreau and Mageau also noted that one of the contributing factors to low work satisfaction in such work environments was the lack of supervisor and colleague support, which had a negative influence on employee well-being.[386] There is therefore a need to enhance the amount of research evaluating stress and work satisfaction in the military. The little work satisfaction literature that is available focuses on the relationship between work satisfaction and job satisfaction. An understanding of work satisfaction draws its distinction from job satisfaction. Although they are both work-related outcomes, job satisfaction is merely a component of work satisfaction.

Based on the negative relationships that have been documented between stress and work satisfaction, as well as social support and work satisfaction in work environments, such as protection and security, which are as stressful as the military, it can be expected that the relationship between stress and the work satisfaction of single parents will bear similar results. The majority of single parents do not have adequate support systems, which could result in their inability to function in both their work and life domains successfully.[387]. It appears that in order for one to survive in an environment as demanding as the military, social support is a necessity.

Social support

Social support is defined as "information leading a person to believe that they are cared for and loved, esteemed and valued and integrated within a network of communication and mutual obligation".[388] For one to obtain a deeper understanding of social support, a broad description of the various perspectives to bear in mind is needed.[389]

In the context of this study, social support was evaluated through the perceptions that individuals hold (i.e. social support is subjective). The appraisal perspective describes social support in terms of the extent to which single parents perceive whether or not they receive support and the level of support they receive from their environment.[390] In this instance, the environment refers to personal relationships and the organisation. When individuals are not overwhelmed by their stressful environments, they react positively to them and cope. When single parents experience stress, their appraisal of the stress situation and the resources available to them (i.e. social support) allows them to react to the situation and cope positively.

The majority of research conducted regarding social support and satisfaction in the work domain focuses on social support and job satisfaction. The studies indicate a positive relationship where social support has either an incremental or a moderating effect on job satisfaction.[391] Job satisfaction is a facet of work satisfaction. Building on the aforementioned, the authors are of the opinion that there will be a positive relationship between social support and work satisfaction.

Work–family conflict

Greenhaus and Beutell define WFC as "a form of interrole conflict in which role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect".[392] The conflicting relationship between work and family seems bidirectional, meaning that work can influence family and vice versa.[393] According to Greenhaus and Powell, WFC occurs when participation in a particular work activity interferes with the involvement in a competing family activity or when work stress has an adverse effect on behaviour within the family domain.[394] For example, WFC may occur when a soldier is appointed in a promotional post, which will require him or her to commit more hours or travel more than before. On the other hand, WFC is experienced when stressful or disturbing issues in the family have a negative overspill into the work domain.

WFC has been found to have a significant impact on work satisfaction. According to Porfeli and Mortimer, the work satisfaction of individuals depends on their perception of the extent to which work can support their families rather than personal values or goals.[395] In the same vein, Mauno, Ruokolainen and Kinnunen found that supportive relationships, more specifically social support in the form of supervisor support, led to reduced WFC.[396] Supervisor support led to the increased utilisation of family-friendly benefits without fear of negative consequences. Due to the inherently demanding nature of the military, WFC can be said to be a negative factor regarding the relationship between the military (unit) and the soldier's family.[397] The combination of stable families and well-integrated groups leads to a positive spill-over from the family into the work environment.[398] This combination is the opposite of WFC and leads to its reduction. Supportive leaders could ensure there is little WFC, which can be expected to contribute to the increase of work satisfaction.

Work–family enrichment

Work–family enrichment (WFE) is defined as "the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life, namely performance or affect in the other role".[399] Enrichment takes place when the resource gains in Role A directly or indirectly improve performance in Role B. WFE is the positive side of the mostly negative work–family interface. It builds on the notion of positive spill-over.[400] To explain further, WFE occurs when resources, such as skills, perspectives, flexibility, physical, social capital and material resources generated in one domain, improve the performance in the other domain or influence the psychological state or affect.[401]

The majority of literature explains WFE as a positive construct.[402] This means it has an empowerment quality within it or it could be utilised by organisations to decrease conflict within the work and family interface.[403] Hunter, Perry, Carlson and Smith evaluated the practicality of applying WFE in team-based organisations. The results indicated that WFE could be successfully applied in organisations as individuals who work in teams benefited more from WFE than individuals who worked independently. Employees who operated in teams were found to benefit from

both work–family enrichment and from family–work enrichment.[404] Furthermore, WFE was found to be a mediator in the relationship between team resources and satisfaction. Such findings allow one to assume that WFE can be applied successfully in the military, more specifically within the SANDF, and could have a positive impact on the satisfaction and well-being of single parents.

WFE could be a valuable resource for empowering single parents, especially those in the military.[405] In most cases, the relationship between the military and the family is characterised by WFC. Having a resource that balances the scales in this relationship could go a long way in maintaining a positive interaction between the two. When single parents transfer skills learned in one domain to the other, this creates a level of understanding and appreciation between the domains.[406] As WFE has been linked to work-related outcomes that constitute work satisfaction, it can be expected that the more WFE single parents achieve, the higher the likelihood that their work satisfaction will increase. WFE can thus be expected to be an influential factor towards work satisfaction. Figure 1 below indicates the proposed model of work satisfaction for single-parent soldiers in the SANDF as rooted in the theoretical discussion and which formed the modl that was test during the empirical research.
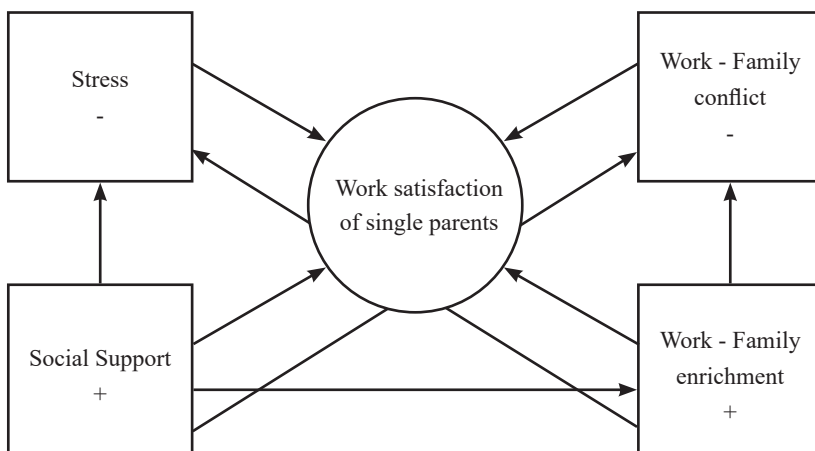

Figure 1: The proposed model of work satisfaction for single parents in the SANDF

Research Methodology

This section of the article outlines the research methodology followed in the study.

Research design

The research design adopted for this study was non-experimental in nature, with the quantitative research method applied.

Babbie and Mouton define sampling as "the process of selecting observations". [407] The convenience sampling method was used. A total sample of 200 participants (101 single parents and 99 dual parents) was selected from 2 Field Engineer Regiment, School of Engineers, 35 Engineer Support Regiment and 1 Construction Regiments through the convenience sampling method. Etikan, Musa and Alkassim say that convenience sampling is also referred to as haphazard sampling, which is a type of non-probability or non-random sampling by which individuals who meet particular practical criteria are included in the study.[408] Such criteria can range from availability to willingness to participate. Although the convenience sampling method lends itself to vulnerabilities, such as bias, its advantages outweigh the disadvantages. The technique has advantages, such as affordability and practicality as well as the availability of participants.[409] The criteria applied for the current research were suitability, availability and willingness to participate.

Measuring instruments

The following instruments were used in the study.

- Perceived Stress Survey 10 (PSS 10)410

The survey comprises 10 items. Items were designed to indicate the extent to which respondents regard their lives to be overloaded, unpredictable and uncontrollable. Each item is rated on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (almost always). Positively worded items (items 4, 5, 7 & 8) are reverse scored, and the ratings are summed, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived stress.[411] Questions in the scale were designed in a general manner, which meant that they are free of content that is only applicable to a specific subpopulation. This allows the scale to apply to any population within any work environment. In the current study, the survey reported alpha and test–retest coefficients of 0.85.[412]

- Medical Outcomes Study (MOS) Social Support Survey413

The MOS Social Support Survey is a self-report measure that consists of 20 items.[414] Development of the scale was guided by the most important dimensions of support as found in social support theories. The scale was developed to illustrate the most functional dimensions of social support, which are emotional/informational support, tangible support, affectionate support and positive social interaction. Items are measured on a five-point Likert-type scale, which ranges from 1 (none of the time) to 5 (all of the time). The survey has an overall reliability of above 0.90.[415]

- Work–Family Conflict (WFC) Scale416

The WFC scale is a self-report measure consisting of 18 items assessing six conceptually and empirically distinct dimensions.[417] Responses to all items are made on a five-point Likert-type scale (where 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The internal consistency of each of the six dimensions is estimated with alpha coefficients. In the current study, the reliabilities for each of the six dimensions

exceeded the conventional 0.70 level of acceptance:

- time-based WIF (work interference on family) – 0.89;
- time-based FIW (family interference on work) – 0.94;
- strain-based WIF – 0.93;
- strain-based FIW – 0.92;
- behaviour-based WIF – 0.94; and
- behaviour-based FIW – 0.93.[418]

In the current study, the overall scale exceeded the 0.75 alpha coefficient.[419]

- Satisfaction with Work Scale (SWWS)420

The SWWS can be utilised within any organisational context to indicate an individual's satisfaction with his or her career.[421] The scale further indicates the extent to which people are involved in their work, and the degree to which people intend to leave the organisation. The SWWS consists of five items.[422] The scale was adapted from the Satisfaction with Life Scale.[423] During validation, the test–retest reliability of the SWWS was 0.75.[424] The instrument uses a seven-point Likert-type scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

- Work–Family Enrichment (WFE) Scale425

The WFE Scale is a self-report measure, which consists of 18 items and six dimensions measured on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).[426] In the current study, the internal consistency of each of the six dimensions was estimated using alpha coefficients. The reliabilities exceeded the conventional level of acceptance of 0.70, namely:

- work to family development 0.73;
- work to family affect 0.91;
- work to family capital 0.90;
- family to work development 0.87;
- family to work affect 0.84;
- family to work efficiency 0.82; and
- the full scale 0.92.427

Data Collection

Before commencing with data collection, ethics clearance was obtained from the Stellenbosch University ethics bodies, i.e. the Departmental Ethics Screening Committee (DESC) and Research Ethics Committee (REC). Permission was also sought from and granted by the General Officer Commanding of the South African Army Engineer Corps as well as the General Officer Commanding Defence Intelligence. Before data was collected, the purpose of the research was explained to participants, which included an explanation of the confidentiality of participation.

Participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and they could withdraw at any point without any negative consequences. Participants were requested to complete a consent form, which indicated their informed willingness to participate in the study. The duration of completing the questionnaire (i.e. maximum 60 minutes) was explained to participants beforehand. All ethical requirements as stipulated by Stellenbosch University and the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) were followed strictly.

Statistical Analysis

STATISTICA 12 and partial least squares (PLS) with the software SMART PLS 3 were used to analyse the data. A 5% significance level (p < 0.05) was used as a guideline for determining significant relationships.[428]

Results

The results of the study are provided and explained in this section.

Descriptive statistics

The results showed that the sample comprised 28% female and 72% male participants. The sample consisted of Africans (85%), coloureds (11%), whites (3,5%) and Asians/Indians (0,5%). Participants' ages were distributed as follows: 8% was 24 years and younger, 52% was between 25 and 34 years, 18% was between 35 and 44 years, and 23% were 45 years or older.

Reliability analysis

The reliability of the various scales was estimated for this sample. Cronbach's alpha was applied to measure reliability. Table 1 provides the reliability of the various scales, and is followed by a discussion of their alpha coefficients.

Table 1: Scales reliability coefficients results

Variable (scale)	Cronbach's alpha (α)
Perceived Stress Survey 10	0.69
Medical Outcomes Study Social Support Survey	0.95
Work–Family Conflict Scale	0.78
Work–Family Enrichment Scale	0.88
Satisfaction with Work Scale	0.83

Reliability analysis returned acceptable and significant Cronbach's alpha levels, ranging from 0.69 to 0.95, were found. All the scales were deemed appropriate and fair in line with the study sample.

Correlation analysis

A correlation of 0.80 to 1.00 is referred to as a high correlation and acceptable, a correlation of 0.60 to 0.79 is referred to as moderately high and acceptable, a correlation of 0.40 to 0.59 is referred to as moderate, a correlation of 0.20 to 0.39 is referred to as low, and any correlation below 0.20 is disregarded.[429]

Table 2: Spearman correlations between the variables of interest

From variable	To variable	Spearman r	p
Stress	Work satisfaction	-0.22	0.00
Social support	Stress	-0.22	0.00
WFE	Stress	-0.35	0.00
Social support	Work satisfaction	0.17	0.02
Social support	WFC	-0.20	0.01
Social support	WFE	0.40	0.00
WFC	Work satisfaction	-0.34	0.00
WFE	Work satisfaction	0.48	0.00
WFE	WFC	-0.27	0.00

The results show low to moderate relationships between variables. Only two relationships of interest between variables were found to be significant (i.e. between social support and work satisfaction, and between social support and WFC).

To confirm the reliability and validity of the model, composite reliability and average variance extracted were conducted. In PLS, a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher and a validity coefficient of 0.50 are preferred.[430] The R-squared is calculated to measure the variance proportion explained by PLS components. PLS values can be from 0% to 100%. The higher the R-squared value, the higher the model fit. Table 3 below provides results from the aforementioned PLS analyses. This is followed by a discussion of the results.

Table 3: Results overview of the model

Variables	R-squared	Composite reliability	AVERAGE
Social support		0.96	0.65
Stress	0.14	0.76	0.37
WFC	0.09	0.85	0.55
Work satisfaction	0.32	0.88	0.66
WFE	0.16	0.91	0.71

The R-squared results indicate how the model explains a good deal of the percentage in the independent variable. Table 3 indicates that stress ($r^2 = 0.14$) only explains 14% of variance to the structural equation modelling (SEM) model fit, WFC ($r^2 = 0.09$) only explains 9% of variance to the SEM model fit, work satisfaction ($r^2 = 0.32$) only explains 32% of variance to the SEM model fit, and WFE ($r^2 = 0.16$) only explains 16% of variance to the SEM model fit. Based on Table 3, all latent variables met the 0.70 level of acceptance for composite reliability (i.e. 0.76 to 0.96). Based on Table 3, only four latent variables have acceptable average values. Stress (0.37) failed to meet the required threshold of 0.50.

Following the reliability and validity overview of the model, the measurement and structural model were computed. Table 4 below provides results for the measurement model.

Table 4: Measurement model

Path	Estimate	Bootstrap lower	Bootstrap upper	Significant
Social support > MOS10	0.74	0.66	0.82	yes
Social support > MOS11	0.75	0.68	0.81	yes
Social support > MOS12	0.72	0.63	0.79	yes
Social support > MOS13	0.81	0.75	0.85	yes
Social support > MOS14	0.81	0.74	0.86	yes
Social support > MOS15	0.80	0.74	0.85	yes
Social support > MOS16	0.78	0.71	0.84	yes
Social support > MOS17	0.77	0.69	0.84	yes
Social support > MOS18	0.81	0.76	0.86	yes
Social support > MOS19	0.81	0.74	0.87	yes
Social support > MOS2	0.61	0.51	0.70	yes
Social support > MOS20	0.79	0.72	0.85	yes
Social support > MOS3	0.73	0.64	0.80	yes
Social support > MOS4	0.72	0.63	0.80	yes
Social support > MOS5	0.78	0.71	0.83	yes
Social support > MOS6	0.67	0.55	0.76	yes
Social support > MOS7	0.79	0.71	0.85	yes
Social support > MOS8	0.78	0.70	0.83	yes

Social support > MOS9	0.79	0.71	0.84	yes
Stress > PSS1	0.68	0.51	0.77	yes
Stress > PSS10	0.74	0.61	0.82	yes
Stress > PSS2	0.72	0.59	0.79	yes
Stress > PSS3	0.77	0.65	0.83	yes
Stress > PSS4	0.08	-0.21	0.34	no
Stress > PSS5	0.36	0.01	0.59	yes
Stress > PSS6	0.67	0.51	0.77	yes
Stress > PSS7	-0.23	-0.49	0.06	no
Stress > PSS8	0.11	-0.21	0.39	no
Stress > PSS9	0.74	0.62	0.81	yes
WFE > family to work affect	0.72	0.57	0.82	yes
WFE > family to work development	0.78	0.66	0.86	yes
WFE > family to work efficiency	0.65	0.48	0.78	yes
WFE > work to family affect	0.87	0.82	0.90	yes
WFE > work to family capital	0.86	0.80	0.89	yes
WFE > work to family development	0.86	0.81	0.90	yes
WFC > behaviour interference with family	0.72	0.58	0.80	yes
WFC > behaviour interference with work	0.70	0.57	0.79	yes
WFC > strain interference with family	0.81	0.73	0.86	yes
WFC > strain interference with work	0.65	0.48	0.77	yes
WFC > time interference with family	0.71	0.59	0.79	yes
WFC > time interference with work	0.57	0.38	0.72	yes
Work satisfaction > SWSS1	0.80	0.71	0.86	yes
Work satisfaction > SWSS2	0.8	0.72	0.85	yes
Work satisfaction > SWSS3	0.87	0.82	0.90	yes
Work satisfaction > SWSS4	0.79	0.71	0.85	yes
Work satisfaction > SWSS5	0.59	0.46	0.7	yes

Table 4 above indicates variables that were included in the model and shows whether they were significant or not. Only WFE and WFC were composed of dimensions, which contributed to the latent variables. Stress, social support and work satisfaction were measured as latent variables. Social support and work satisfaction had significant coefficient levels and relatively high estimates. The latent variable, stress, however, only had seven significant items with high levels. PSS 4, 7 and 8 were insignificant and had low values (i.e. 0.08, -0.23 and 0.11 respectively). WFE consists of six dimensions that were used as manifest variables to measure the latent variable. All six dimensions were found to be significant with relatively high values ranging from 0.65 to 0.87. WFC consists of six dimensions, which were used to measure the main latent variable. All six dimensions were found to be significant with relatively high values ranging from 0.57 to 0.81.

Table 5: Structural model

Path	Estimate	Bootstrap lower	Bootstrap upper	Significant
Social support > stress	0.00	-0.17	0.18	No
Social support > WFC	-0.10	-0.25	0.64	No
Social support > work satisfaction	0.01	-0.12	0.17	No
Social support > WFE	0.41	0.29	0.53	Yes
Stress > work satisfaction	-0.09	-0.24	0.59	No
WFC > work satisfaction	-0.20	-0.33	-0.61	Yes
WFE > stress	-0.38	-0.54	-0.251	Yes
WFE > WFC	-0.24	-0.42	-0.09	Yes
WFE > work satisfaction	0.42	0.23	0.55	Yes

The results in Table 5 indicate various relationships and directions between variables. The path from social support to stress was positive but insignificant. The path from social support to WFC was negative but insignificant. The path from social support to work satisfaction was positive but insignificant. The path from social support to WFE was positive and significant. The path from stress to work satisfaction was negative but insignificant. The path from WFC to work satisfaction was negative and significant. The path from WFE to stress was negative and significant. The path from WFE to WFC was negative and significant. The path from WFE to work satisfaction was positive and significant. Figure 2 illustrates the results as established in the PLS structural model.
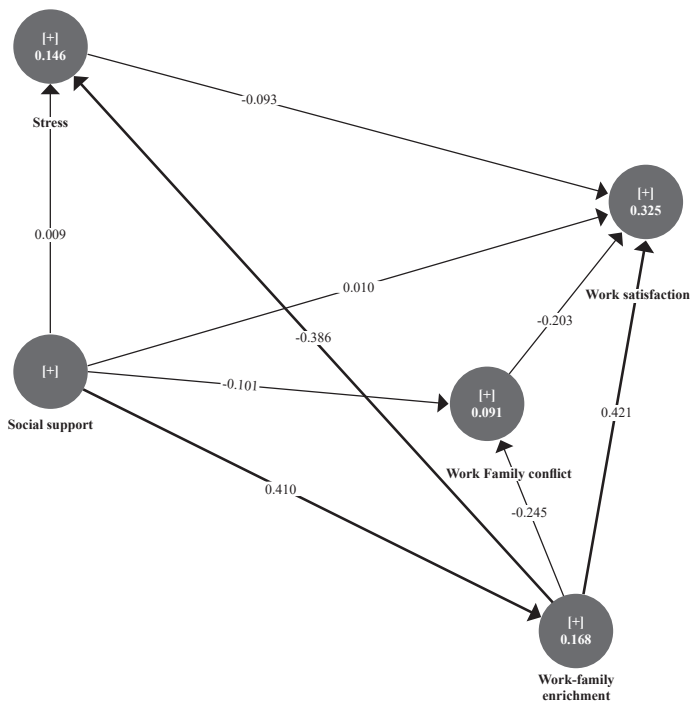
Figure 2: PLS structural model results

Discussion of results

This section of the study covers a discussion of results provided in the previous section.

Correlation results

The results between stress and work satisfaction showed a low but significant negative correlation ($r = -0.22$; $p = 0.00$) and were accepted in accordance with the criteria stipulated.[431] These results are in agreement with previous research results, which emphasised the negative relationship between stress and work satisfaction or outcomes.[432] These results emphasise the need that military psychologists could support single parents with stress management programmes to support better work satisfaction. The results between social support and stress showed a low but significant negative correlation ($r = -0.22$; $p = 0.00$) and these results were accepted in accordance with the criteria stipulated.[433] These results are in agreement with previous results, which emphasised the positive nature of social support.[434] When social support increases in an individual's life, stress – among other challenges – decreases; hence, the negative relationship.

The results between WFC and social support showed a low but insignificant negative correlation (r = -0.20; p = 0.01) and were rejected in line with the criteria as stipulated.[435] These results were contradictory to results found in previous research studies where the negative relationship between social support and WFC was established.[436] The results of the relationship between social support and WFE showed a moderate and significant positive correlation (r = 0.40; p = 0.00) and were accepted in line with the stipulated criteria.[437] These results are in line with results from previous research, which emphasised the positive and supportive nature of social support.[438] Results of the relationship between social support and work satisfaction showed a negligible and insignificant positive correlation (r = 0.17; p = 0.02).[439] These results are contradictory to results found in previous studies, which emphasised the relationship between social support and work satisfaction or outcomes.[440]

Results of the relationship between WFC and work satisfaction showed a low but significant negative correlation (r = -0.34; p = 0.00) and were acceptable in accordance with the criteria stipulated.[441] The results were in line with results from previous WFC studies, which emphasised the negative influence that conflict between work and family demands has on work-related outcomes.[442] The results between WFE and WFC showed a low but significant negative correlation (r = -0.27; p = 0.00) and were acceptable according to the criteria stipulated.[443] The results were in line with some of the previous research results, which emphasised the positive nature of WFE and the positive influence it has on the work–family interface.[444] The results of the relationship between WFE and stress showed a low but significant negative correlation (r = -0.35; p = 0.00) and were accepted based on criteria as stipulated.[445] These results were in line with some of the previous research results, which emphasised the positive nature of WFE and the way its availability could lead to a reduction in stress experienced.[446] The results of the relationship between WFE and work satisfaction showed a moderate and significant positive correlation (r = 0.48; p = 0.00) and were acceptable according to the criteria stipulated.[447] These results are in line with some of the results from previous studies, which emphasised the positive nature of WFE and the positive influence it has on work satisfaction or outcomes.[448]

Measurement model analysis

The quality of the measurement model was tested by setting the parameter estimates using the bootstrap technique with intervals set at the 95% level.[449] The bootstrap method also allows for the testing and estimation of path coefficient and estimate levels.[450] Positive and significant results were found for social support, stress, WFC, WFE and work satisfaction. Based on the reliability and validity values of the items, reliability and validity were confirmed for all the constructs.

Structural model analysis

The interaction between variables of interest was tested using the PLS structural model analysis. The path coefficient results confirmed that WFC and WFE each had a direct non-mediated effect on work satisfaction. Although no direct effect

from social support to work satisfaction was established, the path coefficient results revealed that social support had a mediating effect on work satisfaction through WFE. WFC influences various life- and work-related outcomes ranging from organisation commitment to turnover, job dissatisfaction and satisfaction with life.[451] While WFE occurs when resources, such as skills, perspectives, flexibility, physical and social capital and material resources in one domain (work) improve, life in the other domain (home) will also improve.[452] This is also an opportunity where military psychologists could contribute with programmes to minimise WFC and support WFE for better work satisfaction of members.

Concluding Summary

According to the structural model results, the work satisfaction of SANDF single parents is directly and significantly influenced by WFC and WFE. Stress does not have a significant or indirect influence on single-parent work satisfaction. Social support was revealed by the structural model to have an indirect and significant influence on work satisfaction through WFE. WFE proved to be a strong predictor of work satisfaction. Efforts towards increasing WFE can be expected to increase the work satisfaction and well-being of single parents in the SANDF. The incorporation of these results in support programmes and planning will allow the SANDF to provide accurate and effective support services to single parents. Military psychologists and social workers could develop programmes for stress management, social support, sport days, family weekends and WFE. This in turn would increase the work satisfaction of single parents, which would lead to their improved effectiveness in both the work and home environment.

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