

**The Spillover Effects of Work Initiative: A Resource Perspective of Work Engagement,
Emotional Exhaustion, and Social Support**

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Abstract

Proactive work behaviour is a key determinant of organisational success; however, there is a lack of clarity regarding the personal consequences of employees who exert this behaviour – particularly for more effortful types of proactive behaviours such as personal initiative.

Although the benefits of personal initiative are prevalent, employees who display personal initiative may unintentionally cause harm to themselves. We aim to advance this field by examining why and when personal initiative may influence employees' experiences in the home domain. We hypothesised that personal initiative would simultaneously lead to work-family enrichment and work-family conflict, mediated by work engagement and emotional exhaustion, respectively. We also tested perceptions of social support at work as a moderator for the relationship of personal initiative with work engagement and emotional exhaustion.

We conducted a daily diary study assessing participants ($N = 156$) from a broad range of industries in New Zealand across five working days to analyse whether personal initiative at work may positively and negatively spillover to the home domain. Our results supported only two of our hypotheses: personal initiative positively predicted work engagement, and emotional exhaustion positively predicted work-family conflict (as well as negatively related to work-family enrichment). Our findings suggest that personal initiative may not be as detrimental to employee well-being as previously indicated, particularly when controlling for age, gender, and the number of children at home.

Keywords: proactive work behaviour, personal initiative, work-family enrichment, work-family conflict, work engagement, emotional exhaustion, social support, daily-diary

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The Spillover Effects of Work Initiative: A Resource Perspective of Work Engagement, Emotional Exhaustion, and Social Support

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered significant changes to professional and family lives, forcing employees to adapt to unconventional work situations and be more self-reliant in managing work and family demands. In New Zealand, it has been estimated that up to 31% of the workforce worked full-time from home to control the virus (Auckland Council, 2020). Additionally, a university study found that 89% of employees in industries eligible to work remotely would ideally continue to do so, at least part-time post-lockdown (Otago, 2020). The pandemic is yet another example of the increasing decentralisation of work, which raises the question of how the changing work interface impacts employees outside of work, particularly if they are required to be more self-driven and proactive (Crant, 2000). As the number of flexible work arrangements grow, so do the ways in which employees work, how work and family relate to each other, and how employees reconcile their work and family responsibilities.

Proactive work behaviour features as a self-initiated and change-oriented action with a distinct focus on the future (Parker & Collins, 2010). Rather than passively adapt to the work conditions, proactive employees challenge the status quo (Crant, 2000). They engage in anticipatory and agentic actions that have an intended impact on the employees themselves or their organisation. Researchers have identified a number of ways employees express proactive behaviour at work. The leading behaviours in the current literature include seeking feedback (Ashford et al., 2003), taking charge (Morrison & Phelps, 1999), expressing voice (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998), and taking personal initiative (Frese & Fay, 2001). Compared to the other types of proactive behaviour, personal initiative may have more significant personal consequences due to the investment in its implementation and long-term focus, making it less likely to yield immediate benefits. Furthermore, unlike voice and taking charge, personal

initiative emphasises persistence when faced with barriers, such as resistance from colleagues and supervisors (Crant, 2000; Frese & Fay, 2001). Therefore, while the outcome of personal initiative is likely beneficial to the initiative-taker and the organisation, it can also be highly taxing. As such, this research focuses on personal initiative.

A key theoretical perspective in the proactivity literature is the conservation of resources (COR) model, which argues that people are motivated to acquire resources they centrally value (Hobfoll, 1989). People invest their resources – such as time or energy – to protect against resource loss, to recover from losses, and to gain resources. This can lead to developing new skills and resources while improving psychological resilience and stress-coping abilities (Cangiano & Parker, 2015). If the behaviours require more resources than what are available, it may be draining to the individual and cause symptoms of stress or reduced well-being (Hobfoll, 1989). As proactive approaches require exerting resources (Grant & Ashford, 2008), they must be within the limits of a person's existing resource pool.

Many studies have highlighted the effects of proactivity based on the COR theory. Generally, proactivity at work has been found to result in positive long-term outcomes for employees and organisations (Thomas et al., 2010; Tornau & Frese, 2013). On the other hand, scholars have recently suggested that proactivity may have unintended adverse outcomes for employees, or a 'dark side' (Pingel et al., 2019). Due to the anticipation of the behaviour and the requirement for self-initiation and self-direction, the planning and execution of the behaviour can exhaust an individual's limited resources. However, despite theoretical reasoning, only a few empirical studies have assessed these personal consequences of proactive work behaviours and the processes leading to them (Cangiano & Parker, 2015; Fay & Hüttges, 2017; Liu et al., 2019; Pingel et al., 2019). Therefore, it is unknown whether proactive work behaviour promotes employee well-being, or whether it poses a risk to employees' mental health and well-being. This is the 'double-edged' phenomenon of

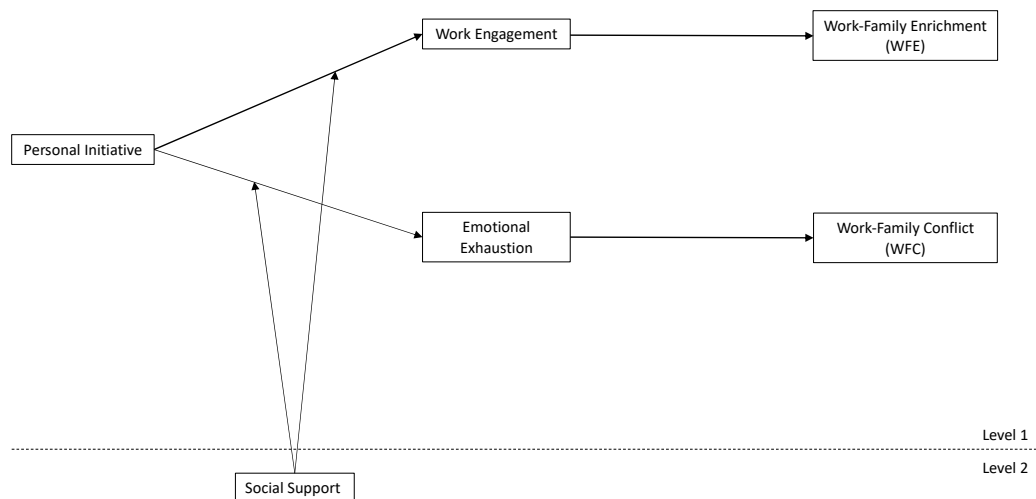
proactive work behaviour. Without a comprehensive understanding of the well-being outcomes of proactivity, organisations that depend on or push their employees to be proactive may unknowingly harm their employees' well-being. Therefore, more research is required to establish the psychological pathways by which proactive work behaviour might affect individuals, for example, through spillover effects to their home role. Thus, to provide a fuller picture of proactivity, we look at two concepts from the work-family interface as outcomes of proactive work behaviour: the resource generation pathway to work-family enrichment (WFE; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) and the resource draining pathway to work-family conflict (WFC; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

The current study aims to understand the underlying process explaining the plausible relationships between personal initiative and employee work-family interface, using a daily diary design. We test the relationships of personal initiative with WFE and WFC, and whether they are mediated by work engagement and emotional exhaustion, respectively. We do this with the background of COVID-19 in a sample of employees from various industries in New Zealand. Using the COR model (Hobfoll, 1989) as our theoretical lens, we predict that employees will invest personal resources (e.g., time, energy, cognitive effort) into personal initiative behaviours as a means of attaining further resources. This can simultaneously lead to an accumulation of resources (i.e., work engagement) and a depletion of resources (i.e., emotional exhaustion), and these experiences at the end of the workday are likely to spillover to the home domain. Thus, we expect feelings of work engagement to lead to WFE, and feelings of emotional exhaustion to lead to WFC. Additionally, social support can act as an alternative source of resources that people can draw from, particularly when their source has been depleted. Therefore, social support can increase resources as well as buffer the harmful effects of consuming resources. Thus, we hypothesise that social support at work will have moderating effects on both the relationships of personal initiative with

work engagement and emotional exhaustion, where we would expect it to strengthen and attenuate them, respectively. Our proposed model is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model of Personal Initiative and Work-Family Outcomes



This study will contribute to the literature in three ways. First, using a quantitative daily diary design, we aim to understand the downstream consequences of taking initiative at work. We will provide empirical evidence to help clarify the ‘double-edged’ debate of personal initiative, by simultaneously testing whether employees feel energised (i.e., work engagement) and drained (i.e., emotional exhaustion) at the end of the work day after displaying personal initiative. We will enhance the current state of the literature by providing evidence for both beneficial and harmful effects of personal initiative, specifically for personal consequences for employees, which have less attention in empirical research. Ultimately, we aim to create a consensus on whether personal initiative behaviour has a ‘dark side.’

Secondly, we aim to examine whether personal initiative indirectly predicts WFE and WFC, via work engagement and emotional exhaustion. Our study will therefore contribute to the work-family literature by testing potential antecedents of two theory-based pathways. We

expect a resource generation pathway from personal initiative to WFE via work engagement. Conversely, we expect a resource depletion pathway from personal initiative to WFC via emotional exhaustion. We will contribute by empirically testing whether proactive behaviour might have an enriching effect and a disruptive effect on employees' family lives.

Our third contribution with this study is that we provide empirical evidence for perceived social support at work as a moderator for the relationship of personal initiative with work engagement and emotional exhaustion. Social support may act as a potential resource alternative when employees' resources are low after personal initiative. As such, we will contribute to the proactivity literature by proposing a boundary condition to the role of perceived social support at work.

Literature Review of Key Variables

Proactive Work Behaviour

People engage in proactive behaviour in an effort to improve the quality of their work environment or situation (Grant & Ashford, 2008). As such, most of the literature has focused on the positive effects of proactive work behaviour (Pingel et al., 2019). Meta-analyses have shown positive relationships between proactive behaviour and both individual and organisational outcomes. For individual outcomes, proactivity is positively associated with career success and employability (Frese et al., 1997), higher ratings on performance by supervisors (Bindl & Parker, 2011), and positive affect (Belschak et al., 2010). For organisational outcomes, proactive employees offer a great competitive advantage to employers as they are positively associated with firm success and profitability (Belschak et al., 2010). Proactivity is also highly beneficial at a strategic level – advancing new products and services, taking action for future investments, or driving the industry to new markets (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Thus, proactive behaviour can be a distinguishing factor for organisational success.

While the literature emphasises the positive effects of proactive work behaviours, some studies have also shown that these discretionary actions may have occupational consequences for employees (Belschak et al., 2010; Bolino et al., 2010). Exercising proactive behaviour can have unintended consequences, such as feelings of stress and strain for the employee (Bolino et al., 2010). Cross-sectional studies demonstrate that high levels of proactive behaviour show positive associations with job stress and role overload, as well as spillover into the family domain (Bolino et al., 2010; Grant & Ashford, 2008). Moreover, proactive behaviour may not be appreciated by other organisational members if the change is unwelcome, as it may be perceived as ‘rocking the boat’ (Belschak et al., 2010). Thus, the employee may encounter resistance by their colleagues or supervisors, or even face ostracisation from their organisation (Bateman & Crant, 1993).

Personal Initiative

One important form of proactive work behaviour that falls within the scope of the ‘double-edged’ debate is personal initiative. It is defined as “a behaviour syndrome resulting in an individual’s taking an active and self-starting approach to work and going beyond what is formally required in a given job” (Frese et al., 1996, p. 38). Personal initiative is distinguished from other types of proactive behaviour because it is in line with the organisation’s mission; focuses on the future; has a goal-driven and action-oriented approach; continually persists despite obstacles and setbacks; and is proactive and self-starting (Frese et al., 1996).

It is well known that a person's initiative leads to positive work outcomes. For instance, individuals who display personal initiative behaviours tend to have higher job performance and satisfaction, career success (Glaser et al., 2016; Seibert et al., 2001; Tornau & Frese, 2013; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). That is, workers who anticipate future demands and introduce improvements are more likely to perform better and feel more

satisfied with their work role, and feel a greater sense of emotional attachment towards their organisation. Conversely, employees may unintentionally suffer negative effects from personal initiative in the short or medium term (Cangiano et al., 2016). Research to date has found that high levels of personal initiative behaviour can lead to negative moods (Zacher et al., 2019), employee withdrawal (Pingel et al., 2019), and bedtime fatigue (Fay & Hüttges, 2017). However, despite these few findings, the personal outcomes of personal initiative is not well explored empirically (Cangiano et al., 2016). This leads to a lack of consensus regarding whether it is beneficial or costly to employees.

The antecedents of personal initiative have had greater scholarly attention. Employees are more likely to take initiative if they have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities which help deal with anticipated changes (Frese & Fay, 2001). Moreover, employees are more likely to adopt the goals of their team or organisation if they feel a sense of identification within the group (Den Hartog & Belschak, 2007). Personal initiative also has positive relations with situational antecedents such as job involvement (Crant, 2000), job autonomy (Frese & Fay, 2001), and flexible role-orientations (Parker & Collins, 2010).

Work-Family Enrichment

Work-family enrichment (WFE) is a form of positive spillover, defined as “the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other role” (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006, p. 73). Greenhaus and Powell (2006) suggest that the resources gained from work can benefit the family role in two ways: a direct transfer of resources (e.g., skills, perspectives, psychological and physical resources) from one role to the other which enhances the individual’s performance in the domain, or because positive affect (i.e., positive mood and emotions) gained in the initial role is indirectly transferred to the other role.

The effects of WFE can be differentiated into work and non-work outcomes (Morganson & Atkinson, 2017). Within the work domain, meta-analyses indicate that there is

a positive relationship between WFE and job satisfaction (McNall et al., 2010; Morganson & Atkinson, 2017), job performance (Carlson et al., 2011), affective organisational commitment (Wayne et al., 2006), and negatively with turnover intentions (Crain & Hammer, 2013).

These findings suggest that individuals who feel that their work enriches life in their family domain are more likely to reciprocate positive attitudes towards their workplace (McNall et al., 2010). Within the personal domain, greater experiences of WFE positively predict marital and family satisfaction, as well as life satisfaction (Morganson & Atkinson, 2017; van Steenbergen et al., 2014). Research also suggests that WFE may positively contribute to health-related outcomes, including both mental and physical health (McNall et al., 2010). Studies have shown that WFE has a positive relationship with mood, and is negatively associated with psychological distress, depression, and emotional exhaustion (Morganson & Atkinson, 2017).

Greenhaus and Powell (2006) argue that work antecedents are most salient for predicting WFE as opposed to family or personal antecedents (Zhang et al., 2018). Thus, the following focuses solely on workplace antecedents. Empirical studies have demonstrated that social capital resources (e.g., organisational support, family-friendly policies, family-friendly work culture) and work schedule flexibility have been positively associated with WFE (Morganson & Atkinson, 2017). Additionally, work autonomy and job variation are antecedents of WFE. As WFE is a construct that focuses on how work and family domains can be synergistic, work-family researchers are paying increasing attention to the determinants of enrichment (Lapierre et al., 2018). Therefore, our research extends this by focusing on factors that may enable WFE.

Work-Family Conflict

Work-family conflict (WFC) is a form of negative spillover; a result of pressures from work and family roles being “mutually incompatible,” and inhibiting a person’s ability to

fulfil their duties in both domains (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77). The role pressures are directional (i.e., work-to-family; Frone et al., 1992), thus, WFC occurs when experiences and commitments at work interfere with family life. This can occur in three ways: time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, and behaviour-based conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Time-based conflict occurs when an individual devotes a large proportion of time or attention to one role, thus, being unable to fulfil the expectations or responsibilities in their other role. In strain-based conflict, stressors in one domain can cause strain symptoms (e.g., tension, fatigue, apathy) which hinders the ability of an individual to meet the demands of another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Finally, behaviour-based conflict may arise when the individual's behaviour is incongruent with the expectations of their role in the other domain (e.g., habits; Michel et al., 2011).

WFC is a significant societal issue, given its negative implications for both work and non-work outcomes. Meta-analytic reviews suggest that WFC compromises work performance, because of the inability to devote adequate resources such as time and energy to meet their obligations (e.g., Liao et al., 2019). Similarly, WFC has been shown to negatively affect one's organisational commitment and career satisfaction and development (Liao et al., 2019). Consequently, WFC can lead to absenteeism and turnover intentions (Michel et al., 2011). In terms of personal consequences, research suggests that WFC can negatively affect psychological health (e.g., stress, burnout, depressive symptoms, life satisfaction), as well as physical health (e.g., somatic symptoms, poor exercise and eating habits, substance abuse; Kossek & Lee, 2017). Unsurprisingly, WFC also negatively predicts marital and family satisfaction, along with family commitment (Kossek & Lee, 2017; McNall et al., 2010). WFC can also perpetuate into crossover (transmission of strain from one individual to another individual; Bakker & Demerouti, 2013) which often occurs amongst spouses. Evidently, the impacts of WFC extend well beyond the boundaries of work and home.

Antecedents of WFC include hours at work, role overload and flexibility, and demand and control over work and family domains (Liao et al., 2019). Working longer hours directly correlates with having fewer hours to devote to family responsibilities. Role overload and lack of flexibility in work schedules directly reduce the ability of the individual to perform well in both roles (Liao et al., 2019). Additionally, individuals with significant work demands are more likely to experience WFC because they must allocate more time to manage their commitments (Ollo-López & Goñi-Legaz, 2017). Job control, on the other hand, negatively predicts WFC because individuals who perceive themselves to have sufficient control over their roles are better able to manage their obligations (Liao et al., 2019). Likewise, informal social support at work and home has been shown to act as a buffer to reduce experiences of WFC (Drummond et al., 2017).

Finally, recent research has shown that the antecedents and outcomes of WFC are more similar between men and women than they are different (Shockley et al., 2017). Thus, despite claims that conflict is greater for women given gendered norms, WFC has important universal implications. This makes it critical to further understand antecedents of WFC to help alleviate its potential downstream consequences.

Hypothesis Development

Conservation of Resources Theory

The COR model by Hobfoll (1989) has been widely used as a theoretical basis to understand the consequences of proactive work behaviour (e.g., Cui & Li, 2021; Hakanen et al., 2008; Pingel et al., 2019). This theory posits that people are inherently motivated to conserve, protect, and build resources – which can be objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies – that are important to the individual or help them attain resources. In periods where an individual does not encounter stressors, they are motivated to develop a store of resources as a preventative measure for the possibility of future loss. When

individuals have a surplus of resources, they are expected to experience positive well-being (Hobfoll, 1989). In contrast, the potential or actual loss of such resources, or no gain of resources after investment, is likely to induce stress within the individual. As such, COR theory is useful to illustrate the positive and negative consequences of personal initiative for employees.

Personal Initiative, Work Engagement, and Work-Family Enrichment

Work engagement is defined as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigor, dedication, and absorption” (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p. 209). A highly engaged employee is energetic and mentally resilient (i.e., vigour); is deeply involved in their role and has a strong sense of enthusiasm and significance for their work (i.e., dedication); and is fully engrossed in their work, reaching a flow-like state (i.e., absorption; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Employees feel engaged particularly when they have favourable job-related resources, such as autonomy or job control (Halbesleben, 2006). In addition, challenges at work can foster work engagement, when employees believe that their efforts will be rewarded in some meaningful way. Personal initiative demonstrates these factors. Employees challenge themselves by increasing the complexity of their job and/or by taking on new responsibilities, and consequently, they gain a greater sense of control over their work. Furthermore, if their initiative reaps the anticipated benefits for the employee, they should experience high levels of energy and enthusiasm. Thus, in line with COR theory, employees who take initiative to increase their job resources (i.e., personal initiative) should experience greater work engagement.

A growing body of literature has shown a positive relationship between proactive work behaviours and work engagement. A recent study by Rastogi and Chaudhary (2018) found that employees who used job crafting behaviours – an example of self-initiated work behaviour – were better able to mobilise their job resources and reduce hindering job

demands, resulting in higher work engagement. Similarly, using a two-wave, three-year panel study design, Hakanen et al. (2008) found that personal initiative positively influenced future work engagement in a sample of 2,555 Finnish dentists. In support of COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), these findings indicate that initiative-taking employees seek out more challenges in their work which motivate them to perform better in their work role, promoting feelings of vigour and dedication. From these findings, it is likely that:

Hypothesis 1: On a daily basis, engaging in personal initiative behaviours is positively related to work engagement.

Previous research has linked work engagement with positive outcomes outside of the work sphere, such as WFE (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Individuals who are highly engaged at work can acquire valuable resources such as knowledge, skills, and experience, and can also experience positive emotions such as optimism and feelings of fulfilment (Schaufeli et al., 2002). According to the COR theory, people who have a solid resource reservoir are more likely to accumulate further resources compared to people with limited resources (Hobfoll, 1989). This store of enduring personal resources can subsequently facilitate performance across domains (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Work-related gains can be transferred across domains to use in the family role, and as such, work engagement should be a proximal factor which predicts WFE.

Hypothesis 2: On a daily basis, work engagement is positively related to work-family enrichment.

From the COR perspective, by investing resources to take initiative, employees anticipate a resource gain in exchange for their efforts (Hobfoll, 1989). These work-related gains may be an acquisition of knowledge, skills, or experience, which is likely to increase the level of vigour, absorption and dedication in one's work. The positive state of mind associated with work engagement can have spillover effects into the family domain, bettering

one's ability to perform spousal and/or parenting responsibilities (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Hence, we also expect:

Hypothesis 3: Work engagement mediates the relationship between daily personal initiative behaviour and work-family enrichment.

Personal Initiative, Emotional Exhaustion and Work-Family Conflict

Emotional exhaustion is defined as “a chronic state of physical and emotional depletion that results from excessive job demands and continuous hassles” (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998, p. 486). Emotional exhaustion is a key dimension of burnout, as employees feel fatigued and drained from their work, both physically and psychologically. According to the COR theory, emotional exhaustion occurs as a result of employees experiencing actual or perceived resource loss, or if their investment does not result in the anticipated returns (Hobfoll, 1989). Personal initiative is a self-starting behaviour that requires persistence, which demands cognitive resources such as time, energy, or attention (e.g., additional working hours, physical or mental effort; Hobfoll, 1989). Cognitive resources are finite, so engaging in personal initiative may negatively affect employee well-being as it can drain existing resources (Bolino et al., 2010; Hobfoll, 1989). Therefore, engaging in these behaviours is thought to lead to emotional exhaustion.

For example, in a study by Zacher et al. (2019), changes in personal initiative had indirect effects on emotional exhaustion. When employees increased their level of personal initiative, they experienced an increase in negative mood and subsequent emotional exhaustion. This suggests that the effort of engaging in personal initiative drains resources such as positive mood, and cause more enduring states of low energy and feeling worn-out (Bolino et al., 2010). Additionally, a daily-diary study by Fay & Hüttges (2017) found weak, but significant evidence of a positive association of daily personal initiative and bedtime fatigue, and that proactivity in the morning was linked with lower cortisol output (a

physiological indicator of stress) on the same day. Therefore, we propose that taking initiative makes employees' resources scarce, resulting in emotional exhaustion.

Hypothesis 4: On a daily basis, engaging in personal initiative behaviours is positively related to emotional exhaustion.

An application of the COR theory suggests that emotionally exhausted employees are drained of emotional resources, and thus cope with stress by using strategies that are aimed to prevent future resource loss (Hobfoll, 1989). Accordingly, employees who are emotionally drained may devote less time and attention towards their family life to conserve their resources, making them unable to thoroughly perform their family role, resulting in WFC (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The current literature has established strong relationships between emotional exhaustion and WFC. For instance, Demerouti et al. (2004) and Jensen (2016) found emotional exhaustion predicted work-family conflict in longitudinal three-wave and two-wave studies. Therefore, we would also expect this to occur in our study:

Hypothesis 5: On a daily basis, emotional exhaustion is positively related to work-family conflict.

Put together, it is proposed that employees who go above and beyond their formally prescribed job duties by engaging in personal initiative expend more resources (e.g., time, energy, mental effort) towards the additional tasks and responsibilities, depleting their energy and resource pool. With this actual or perceived loss of resources, employees experience stress, and are motivated to limit their net loss of resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Employees may draw on resources such as time from the family domain, subsequently impairing their ability to fulfil the family role, particularly the ability to be an effective spouse and/or parent (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Therefore, it can be argued that personal initiative should lead to WFC through feelings of low energy and emotion depletion; i.e., emotional exhaustion.

Hypothesis 6: Emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between daily personal initiative behaviour and work-family conflict.

The Moderating Role of Social Support

The COR model (Hobfoll, 1989) can be further applied to understand how other resources may alter the relationships between personal initiative and the two pathways of work engagement and emotional exhaustion. A corollary of the model posits that those with sufficient resources are more resilient to resource loss, as well as being more capable of resource gain. In contrast, those who lack resources are more susceptible to resource loss, and are less likely to acquire resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018). However, when faced with potential or actual resource loss, particularly when resources are low, individuals can compensate by using alternative resources in their environment (Hobfoll, 1989). Resources from the workplace are likely to influence the strength of the relationships of personal initiative with work engagement and emotional exhaustion, as they act as a substitute source of resources for employees when their own are depleted after taking initiative. In this study, we focus on social support at work as a moderator of the relationship between personal initiative and work outcomes.

Social support can be broadly defined as “social interactions or relationships that provide individuals with actual assistance or with a feeling of attachment to a person or group that is perceived as caring or loving” (Hobfoll & Stokes 1988, p. 499). It is an essential resource that gives people a sense of belonging and makes them feel valued (Yousaf et al., 2019). Importantly, it can also provide a buffering role from environmental stressors (Halbesleben, 2006; Viswesvaran et al., 1999). Social support is a multidimensional concept which can vary in terms of its form (e.g., behaviours and perceptions), type (e.g., emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal; House et al., 1988), and source (e.g., supervisor, co-worker, spouse; French et al., 2018). It is argued that support is most effective in buffering

the effects of a stressor if the type of support received originates in the same domain as the stressor (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Furthermore, empirical evidence suggests that perceptions of social support are more closely associated with strain than supportive behaviour (Cohen & Wills, 1985; French et al., 2018). Therefore, our measure of support will assess perceptions about the degree to which an individual feels connected to their colleagues at work (e.g., “people I work with take a personal interest in me”; Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006).

People who have high levels of workplace social support have greater physical and psychological resources to help with their workload and tasks (Jolly et al., 2021). Social support at work can also increase positive affect, which can strengthen employees’ resilience when dealing with work stressors (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Previous empirical studies have shown that high levels of social support from supervisors and co-workers can help employees cope with daily negative effects of occupational stress (e.g., Pow et al., 2017; Schreurs et al., 2012). Research suggests that even the perception of social support is able to reduce stress, regardless of whether or not it is actually utilised. Merely perceiving that their colleagues will provide resources when needed can make employees re-evaluate environmental stressors, increasing their perceived ability to cope with the demands and appraise the situation as less stressful (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Therefore, employees who engage in personal initiative and perceive high levels of social support at work are more likely to view their additional work tasks as challenges and be more resilient when facing barriers and setbacks, leading to the positive, fulfilling state of mind of work engagement. Furthermore, with high social support they are more likely to reappraise the high workload from personal initiative, preventing a potential stress response and attenuating feelings of emotional exhaustion.

On the other hand, people who have low levels of workplace social support do not have the additional resource supply to draw on when dealing with work stressors. Low social support has been linked with higher risks of both physical (e.g., fatigue or headaches) and

psychological conditions (e.g., stress, anxiety, depression; Hobfoll, 2002). After resource diminishment from personal initiative, those who have low levels of social support at work are less likely to have resource substitution to restore their well-being or to offset their resource loss. Therefore, employees who engage in personal initiative but perceive low levels of social support at work are more likely to feel mentally burnt out, causing emotional exhaustion, and are less likely to feel engaged with their work. This leads to our final two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 7: Social support at work moderates the positive relationship between personal initiative and work engagement, such that the relationship is stronger under high (vs. low) social support at work.

Hypothesis 8: Social support at work moderates the positive relationship between personal initiative and emotional exhaustion, such that the relationship is weaker under high (vs. low) social support at work.

Methods

Participants and Procedure

Participants were employees from various organisations in New Zealand, recruited using a snowball sampling method by eight Organisational Psychology Master degree students and two supervisors at the University of Auckland. They were primarily recruited via word-of-mouth or through digital posters on social media pages (see Appendix A for the poster). To be eligible for the study, participants had to meet the following criteria: be 18 years of age or older; worked at least 30 hours per week between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday – Friday at a paid job; and worked at the same organisation for at least six months.

In total, 320 people showed interest in participating in our study. At the time of recruitment, New Zealand had varying degrees of lockdown restrictions based on regions

with the highest risk of COVID-19. The most populous city, Auckland, was in a strict lockdown where only essential workers travelled to work while the rest of the labour force worked from home or were unable to work. All other regions were in a less restrictive lockdown setting. This led to a decision to recruit participants in two groups: (1) people outside of Auckland who were able to work, and (2) people within Auckland once the strict lockdown had eased. This was determined by the zip codes provided by the participants. Separating our recruitment into two batches resulted in a slight drop in the number of interested participants. Therefore, our first group involved 105 people outside of Auckland recruited in late 2021, and the second group involved 74 people within Auckland recruited in early 2022. After data cleaning, the final sample included a total of 156 people. The ages of our sample ranged from 20 to 64 years, with the mean age being 38 years ($SD = 10.47$). The majority of participants were female (86.5%), New Zealand European (64.1%), full-time employees (93.6%), and were in a broad range of industries (e.g., education, healthcare, sales).

Participants who were interested in taking part emailed one of the researchers. We then sent participants an information sheet (see Appendix B) and a link to a pre-daily questionnaire which asked for their consent to participate (see Appendix C) and demographic and organisational information (including social support at work). The participants were advised that the study was voluntary, and they could leave at any point. The daily diary was completed over five consecutive working days (Monday – Friday). Three questionnaires were sent to the participants each day at 11am, 4pm, and 9pm, and participants were encouraged to fill out the surveys at the assigned times. However, we allowed a three-hour window to allow flexibility and to maximise responses. Each daily entry took approximately 5 minutes to complete, totalling 15 minutes per day. The questionnaires contained measures regarding personal initiative (11am/beginning of workday), work engagement (4pm/end of workday),

emotional exhaustion (4pm/end of workday), WFE (9pm/evening), and WFC (9pm/evening). The questionnaires were web-based and were conducted on Qualtrics. Participants who completed the general survey received a voucher valued at NZD 10, and those who completed all the dairies received up to NZD 50. They were mailed out to each participant at the end of the study.

Measures

For all measures, higher scores reflect higher levels of each construct. All items were responded using a five-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

Social Support at Work

Social support at work was measured using five items from the social support scale (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006). The items used were: “I have the opportunity to develop close friendships in my job,” “I have the chance in my job to get to know other people,” “I have the opportunity to meet with others in my work,” “People I work with take a personal interest in me,” and “People I work with are friendly.” Cronbach’s alpha was .80.

Personal Initiative

Personal initiative was measured using three items adapted by Wang et al. (2019) from two established scales: the Self-Report Initiative Questionnaire (Frese et al., 1997) and the Proactive Personality Scale (Bateman & Crant, 1993). The items were as follows: “I looked for better ways to do things,” “I actively attacked problems,” and “I took the initiative to start new projects/tasks.” Cronbach’s alpha across all days ranged from .65 to .76 ($M = .72$).

Work Engagement

Work engagement was measured using three items from the UWES-9 (Utrecht work engagement scale; Schaufeli et al., 2019). The items were: “Today at work (a) I feel bursting with energy,” (b) “I am enthusiastic about my job,” and (c) “I am immersed in my work.”

The items represent vigour, dedication, and absorption, respectively. Cronbach's alpha across all days ranged from .70 to .82 ($M = .74$).

Emotional Exhaustion

Three items originally by Wharton (1993) and adapted by Gabriel et al. (2018) were used. The items were: "I felt used up," "I felt emotionally drained," and "I felt burned out." Cronbach's alpha across all days ranged from .85 to .89 ($M = .86$).

Work-Family Enrichment

Work-family enrichment was measured using three items from the work-family enrichment scale (Carlson et al., 2006). The items were: "My involvement in my work (a) puts me in a good mood and this helps me be a better family member, (b) helps me feel personally fulfilled and this helps me be a better family member, and (c) helps me to gain knowledge and this helps me be a better family member." Cronbach's alpha across all days ranged from .79 to .84 ($M = .82$).

Work-Family Conflict

Work-family conflict was measured using a three item scale representing time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, and behaviour-based conflict (Matthews et al., 2010). The items were: "I had to miss family activities due to the amount of time I must spend on work responsibilities," "I was so emotionally drained when I got home from work that it prevented me from contributing to my family," and "The behaviours I performed that made me effective at work did not help me to be a better parent and spouse." Cronbach's alpha across all days ranged from .72 to .82 ($M = .76$).

Multilevel Analysis

To test our hypotheses, we used SPSS (version 28.0.1.0) to prepare the data. We tested scale reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, then calculated scale scores for all the variables in the analysis. We calculated descriptive statistics and a correlation matrix. We

then computed intraclass correlations for the variables measured Monday – Friday and restructured them for multilevel linear modelling (MLM). MLM was used as the data included variables from two levels, with days (Level 1) nested within individuals (Level 2). The Level 1 variables were personal initiative, work engagement, emotional exhaustion, WFE and WFC, whereas the Level 2 variable was social support. The analyses were conducted using R (version 4.1.2). The moderation analyses were conducted with the predictor (i.e., personal initiative) and moderator variable (i.e., social support) mean centered before running the interaction effect. The moderation analyses were tested separately for work engagement and emotional exhaustion. Gender, age, and number of children at home were entered as control variables in all analyses.

Results

Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations among the studied variables are reported in Table 1. A summary of the relations between personal initiative and the two outcomes of WFE and WFC is provided in Table 2. The statistically significant coefficients are shown in Figure 2.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Study Variables

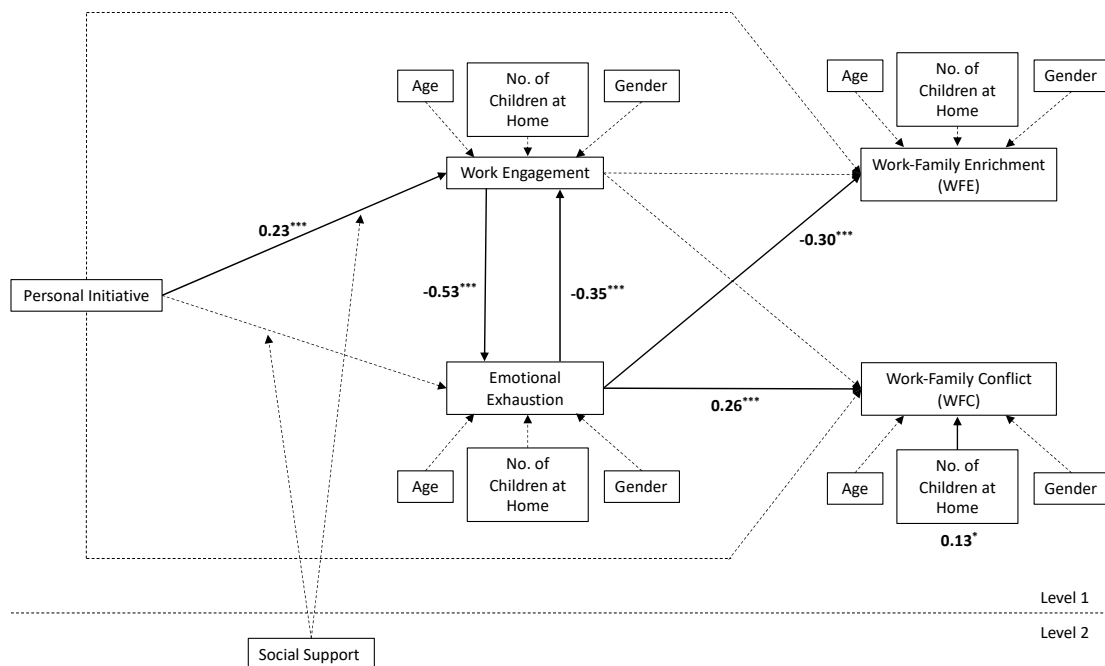
Variable	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Within-person level								
1. Personal initiative	149	3.61	.52					
2. Work engagement	149	3.22	.57	.46*				
3. Emotional exhaustion	149	2.92	.79	-.16	-.48**			
4. Work-family enrichment	148	2.99	.66	.29**	.57**	-.56**		
5. Work-family conflict	148	2.34	.75	-.14	-.33**	.65**	-.46**	
Between-person level								
6. Social support	156	3.86	.68	.16*	.23**	-.21*	.24**	-.11

Note. SD = standard deviation. * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$ and *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed).

Table 2*Results of Multilevel Modelling Analysis of Personal Initiative*

Variables	Work Engagement		Emotional Exhaustion		WFE		WFC		
	γ	SE	γ	SE	γ	SE	γ	SE	
Within-person variables									
Personal initiative	.23***	.05	-.01	.06	.01	.06	.00	.06	
Work engagement			-.53	.06	.08	.06	-.02	.07	
Emotional exhaustion					-.30***	.05	.26***	.06	
Controls									
Age	.00	.01	-.01	.01	-.00	.01	-.00	.01	
Gender	-.06	.16	-.04	.22	-.04	.18	.31	.19	
No. of children	.03	.05	.03	.07	-.01	.06	.13*	.06	
Cross-level interaction									
Personal initiative x social support	.06	.05	-.02	.06					

Note. Gender: 0 = male, 1 = female. WFE = Work-family enrichment; WFC = Work-family conflict; No. of children = Number of children at home. SE = standard error. * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$ and *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed).

Figure 2*Significant Correlations of the Multilevel Modelling Analyses*

Note. The solid arrows indicate a statistically significant relationship, and dotted lines indicate a statistically non-significant relationship. * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$ and *** $p \leq .001$ (two-tailed).

Multilevel Mediation

According to Hypothesis 1, personal initiative positively predicts work engagement at the daily level. As shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**, this hypothesis was supported ($\gamma = .23, p < .001$), showing that higher levels of personal initiative predict higher levels of work engagement. However, the following two hypotheses which states that work engagement positively predicts WFE, and work engagement mediates the relationship between personal initiative and WFE, were not supported.

Hypothesis 4 states that personal initiative positively predicts emotional exhaustion at the daily level. This hypothesis was unsupported. Hypothesis 5, which states that emotional exhaustion positively predicts WFC, was supported ($\gamma = .26, p < .001$). For Hypothesis 6, it was predicted that emotional exhaustion would mediate the relationship between personal initiative and WFC, though this relationship was not significant. Thus, Hypothesis 6 was unsupported.

Moderation

In the moderation analyses, social support did not significantly moderate the relationship between personal initiative and work engagement, or between personal initiative and emotional exhaustion. Therefore, Hypotheses 7 and 8 were not supported.

Discussion

To investigate the ‘double-edged’ phenomenon of personal initiative at work and how it impacts the family domain, we use a daily diary approach and multilevel modelling to examine two processes that result from personal initiative – work engagement and emotional exhaustion – and whether these lead to WFE and WFC. However, our findings only support two of our eight hypotheses. First, we find that personal initiative is positively related to work engagement. Based on Hobfoll’s (1989) COR theory, employees engage in personal initiative as a process of obtaining resources and developing a surplus to compensate for the possibility

of future resource loss. Thus, this positive finding is consistent with COR theory. This relationship also aligns with the findings from Hakanen et al.'s (2008) three-year cross-lagged panel study, where they found reciprocal relationships between personal initiative and work engagement over time. Notably, our study shows that the positive relationship between personal initiative and work engagement can occur at a daily level. We also found that emotional exhaustion is positively associated with WFC, which is consistent with previous empirical studies (e.g., Demerouti et al., 2004; Greenbaum et al., 2014). When an employee is emotionally exhausted from work, they have no time or energy left to devote to their families. As they have no additional resources to spend, they experience WFC as their work role and family role are mutually incompatible.

In contrast, there are six non-significant relationships in this study. First, we do not find a significant relationship between work engagement and WFE. The non-significant relationship between work engagement and WFE is not consistent with previous research. For example, Hakanen and Peeters (2015) found a reciprocal relationship between work engagement and WFE with four follow-up surveys over a period of seven years. Similarly, Siu et al. (2010) identified work engagement as the most proximal predictor of WFE, based on a questionnaire administered twice over six months. It may be that the relationship between these two variables takes a long time to unfold and is not observable at the daily level. This nonsignificant finding may also be attributed to the fact that our study took place when many employees worked from home or in unconventional work settings due to COVID-19. The disruption to peoples' work and family lives, and the fact for many people they share the same physical environment may prevent employees from being dedicated to and absorbed in their work, which are key components for work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Therefore, the blurred boundary of the work-home interface may have impacted employees' experiences of WFE. Moreover, because work engagement is not significantly

related to WFE, our hypothesised indirect effect of personal initiative to WFE mediated by work engagement is also not supported.

Third, contrary to our hypothesis, we fail to find a significant relationship between personal initiative and emotional exhaustion. We suspect that this might be due to social desirability bias where participants may have been unwilling to tell the truth to match the image of an 'ideal' employee. The data show that people tend to report relatively high levels of personal initiative ($M = 3.64$) and lower levels of emotional exhaustion ($M = 2.91$). Despite guaranteeing anonymity, self-report studies are still vulnerable to social desirability bias since most participants are concerned about their answers being discovered (Podsakoff, 2003). Another potential explanation is that our findings may be affected by selection bias. As participation was voluntary, people who are very emotionally exhausted or drained are not likely to have participated in a time-consuming study. Because we did not find a significant relationship between personal initiative and emotional exhaustion, our hypothesised indirect effect of personal initiative on WFC via emotional exhaustion is also unsupported.

Finally, social support at work does not moderate the relationship between personal initiative and work engagement or between personal initiative and emotional exhaustion. The type of social support measured in this study is individual perceptions of support from work colleagues, specifically on friendships at work and how interested colleagues are in them. We hypothesised social support would act as a resource for employees by fulfilling their need to belong (Hobfoll, 1989) and providing a buffer to replenish resources that may be lost from engaging in personal initiative. As social support can be differentiated by the kind of support provided (i.e., emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal; House, 1981), it may be that the type of support assessed in this study did not fit well with the needs in the case of personal initiative. Perhaps a different form, such as instrumental social support, may serve as a significant moderator as it can directly help individuals achieve their work goals through

tangible aid and services, and therefore facilitate work engagement. Social support can also be distinguished by the source (French et al., 2018). Particularly under the work from home circumstances due to COVID-19, employees may have needed to rely more on their spouse or family members who could readily give support, or perhaps instrumental support from their supervisors on how to navigate novel work arrangements. Further, there may have been fewer informal interactions with coworkers throughout the course of a typical workday without all workers being on-site, which would normally have reinforced feelings of friendship in the workplace. This may have negatively affected employees' perceptions of support at work in this study. Future research might examine this moderating effect of social support based on the type and source of social support provided.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the proactivity and work-family literatures in three ways: we provide empirical evidence for the existing debate of the 'double-edged' nature of personal initiative, explore potential pathways leading from personal initiative to the family domains, and identify a boundary condition for the role of perceived social support for improving these work experiences.

We first sought to create a consensus among the current discourse on personal initiative, whether it has an unintended 'dark side' along with its apparent benefits. Our results show that personal initiative is a meaningful predictor of work engagement, but not of emotional exhaustion. These findings suggest that on mornings when employees initiate new tasks or find effective solutions for work tasks, they are more likely to experience work engagement at the end of the workday. However, engaging in personal initiative does not affect an individual's daily likelihood of experiencing emotional exhaustion. On the other hand, our lack of evidence regarding emotional exhaustion is also theoretically important as previous findings suggest that proactive work behaviours (Fay & Hüttges, 2017; Pingel et al.,

2019; Strauss et al., 2017; Zacher et al., 2019) can be draining for employees, yet our results show this is not necessarily the case. Importantly, however, both the studies by Strauss et al. (2017) and Pingel et al. (2019) found the proactivity-strain relationship under the condition that personal initiative was externally motivated. When tested without this moderating effect, there was a small or nonsignificant relationship between personal initiative and strain. According to our research, if personal initiative has a ‘dark side’, it occurs through a process unrelated to emotional exhaustion or is not predictable on a daily basis.

Secondly, according to this study, personal initiative does not indirectly enrich or cause conflict between employees’ work and family roles when the number of children at home are considered. While we find that emotional exhaustion positively predicts WFC and negatively predicts WFE – that is, the more emotionally exhausted an employee feels at the end of the workday the more likely they are to experience an inter-role conflict and feel that their work role hinders their ability to perform their familial responsibilities – personal initiative does not play a role in predicting either of these family outcomes. Siu et al.’s (2010) research showed that work engagement significantly mediated the relationship between role resources and WFE. However, they did not control for the number of children at home and included participants who were of both parental and non-parental demographics. Similarly, Rastogi and Chaudhary (2018) found that work engagement significantly mediated the relationship between job crafting behaviours and WFE. Although they controlled for marital status, they did not control for parental status or children. It is problematic not to control for the number of children at home because while interrole conflict affects individuals across all life stages, it can differ significantly for families with children, particularly those with adolescents or young children (Bennet et al., 2017; Erickson et al., 2010). The expectations of family demands are significantly less for single individuals or couples without children. This current study found that the number of children at home had a significant positive association

with WFC. Thus, to rigorously examine the relationship of personal initiative and WFE and WFC, our study controlled for the number of children at home along with age and gender, leading to non-significant indirect relationships. Therefore, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of personal initiative on the work-home interface.

Finally, we provide a boundary condition to the role of perceived social support at work. Our findings show that social support at work may not be sufficient to strengthen employee work engagement or attenuate emotional exhaustion caused by personal initiative. According to our study, perceiving close friendships at work or ample opportunities to interact with colleagues does not change the relationship between personal initiative and work engagement or emotional exhaustion. There is theoretical significance to these null moderation effects since organisational research is striving to fully clarify which types and sources of social support are most conducive to employee well-being and productivity (i.e., work engagement), and burnout reduction (i.e., emotional exhaustion). COR theory considers social support a resource in the sense that it can support or facilitate the preservation of valuable resources (Hobfoll, 1989). It can, however, be meaningless if it does not match an individual's situational needs. Our study shows that despite the apparent benefits of friendships at work, employee perceptions do not lead to greater engagement at work or less exhaustion after personal initiative. Friendships at work might be a distraction to employees and prevent them being fully absorbed in their work, consequently decreasing their likelihood of experiencing work engagement. Likewise, suppose co-worker relationships do not support the employees' goals or work tasks, or require the employee to give up their own time. In that case, social support might not be able to alleviate emotional exhaustion as it does not provide the resources required by the proactive employee. In addition, with the increases of work from home and alternate work situations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ways in which social support is exchanged and required is likely to have changed (Powell, 2020).

Nevertheless, this finding extends the current literature by providing empirical evidence about the non-significant relationship of perceived co-worker social support for increasing work engagement or reducing emotional exhaustion after displaying personal initiative.

Practical Implications

First, our findings suggest that employees should engage in more personal initiative behaviours to increase their level of work engagement. While it may come more naturally to employees with proactive personalities, those who do not can learn how to take initiative with training interventions. For example, Frese et al. (2016) taught employees how to use proactive, self-starting approaches to planning, innovation, time management and goal setting, as well as how to overcome barriers. They found this successful with more employees in the intervention group taking initiative after the training than the control group. In addition, organisational leaders and managers should focus on providing appropriate environmental conditions that encourage their employees to take more initiative. For example, job redesign which allows more employee autonomy or flexibility should lead to more personal initiative, which then should facilitate greater work engagement (Morganson & Atkinson, 2017).

Secondly, this study suggests that emotional exhaustion at work is a proximal predictor of WFC. Therefore, organisational leaders and managers need to promote workplace health to reduce emotional exhaustion and organise job roles in ways that minimise the employee's resource loss. For example, clarifying the roles and responsibilities required of employees and increasing work schedule flexibility have been shown to reduce emotional exhaustion (Jensen, 2016). Furthermore, managers should be made aware of employees who may be more susceptible to WFC, such as single parents, to increase their job resources with more supervisor or co-worker support (Jensen, 2016).

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite its contributions, this current study has several limitations. First, our data are solely based on self-reported surveys, which may raise concerns about common method bias (Podsakoff, 2003). However, the constructs studied are either private experiences (personal initiative, work engagement, emotional exhaustion, WFE, WFC), or perceptions (social support). Therefore, they cannot readily be translated into observable behaviours. We also show construct validity with appropriate reliability evidence (Feldt & Brennan, 1989, as cited in Osburn, 2000). In future research, supervisor reports and spousal reports may be useful as a complement to the data, however, alone they may not produce as accurate results as self-report, and they too are subject to biases (Conway & Lance, 2010). Hence, while common method is a limitation, we believe self-reports are the most appropriate measure for this study.

Next, as with most studies of this nature, we cannot attribute a causal relationship between our variables (Spector, 2019). While our model is grounded in prior theory and variables were measured at different time points (personal initiative measured in the morning survey; emotional exhaustion and work engagement in the afternoon survey; WFC and WFE in the evening survey), we are unable to determine directional effects. For example, rather than our hypothesised effect, it could be that work engagement predicts more personal initiative behaviour, or high WFC predicts greater emotional exhaustion the next day. Future research could use an experimental design to clarify the directionality of these effects. However, existing studies have suggested that these processes work in reciprocal directions (Demerouti et al., 2004; Hakanen & Peeters, 2015). Thus, establishing the relationship with its respective timeframe (i.e., daily diary design) is arguably more important than establishing the direction (Spector, 2019), as the increase (e.g., personal initiative) or decrease (e.g.,

emotional exhaustion) in one is likely to be associated with a respective change in the other variable (i.e., work engagement or WFC).

Another potential limitation is that the findings in this study may have limited generalisability due to the use of a convenience sample. Specifically, a large majority of the participants in this study were female (86.5%). Currently, in New Zealand, women represent approximately 48% of the total workforce (Stats NZ, 2022); therefore, more demographically representative samples should be used in the future. It is plausible that this disproportionate sample may not largely influence our results, as we have controlled for gender in our analysis, and there is ample evidence indicating the effects of WFC and WFE are not largely moderated by gender (e.g., Allen et al., 2012; Lapierre et al., 2018; Siu et al., 2010). However, future studies should aim to represent the wider population as much as possible.

It is also noteworthy to mention the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our research. The significant social and psychological distress caused by the pandemic may have heightened peoples' negative affect and influenced responses, particularly on factors such as emotional exhaustion and perceptions of social support. However, this pandemic has also exacerbated the need for empirical studies on personal initiative and the work-family interface; and, due to the data collection occurring in two batches to ensure employees were returned to their workplaces, the findings from this study are likely to still be valid.

Future research should consider additional outcomes of personal initiative and the pathways leading to improvements or interferences with employees' well-being outside of work. Theoretically, personal initiative behaviour requires significant cognitive effort and time to plan, initiate, and implement long-term improvements (Frese & Fay, 2001). Despite not being associated with emotional exhaustion as suggested by this study, personal initiative is still likely to lead to negative consequences such as work stress in the short term. Using daily diary designs, future research should examine other outcomes associated with personal

initiative on a daily basis such as recovery from work (e.g., psychological detachment), and the subsequent effects on inter-role conflict. Employees deeply invested in bringing about change (i.e., through personal initiative) may ponder about it even outside the workplace, hindering their ability to mentally detach from their work environment and engage in recovery, which should have negative spillover effects into the family domain.

Additionally, future studies should consider the long-term negative consequences of personal initiative. For example, highly motivated and proactive employees may show signs of workaholism over time (“the tendency to work excessively hard in a compulsive way,” Schaufeli et al., 2008, p. 204). Although workaholism is often attributed to dispositional characteristics, high job demands may be a contributing factor. For personal initiative, the longer it takes for an employee to reach their goal, the more likely they are to ponder about work related matters over time. This may lead to working excessively as a coping strategy to deal with work-related reflection or rumination, which can have adverse personal, professional, and familial costs. These relationships may be moderated by factors such as job control appraisal, impression management concerns, job insecurity, psychological safety, or organisational climate (i.e., how much emphasis is placed on employees to be proactive), to name a few.

Conclusion

Building on the notion of a ‘dark side’ of proactive work behaviour, this study helps paint a clearer picture of whether personal initiative has unintended personal costs on employee well-being. Our study has taken a COR approach to understand the implications of personal initiative behaviour at work in the New Zealand context, against the background of COVID-19. We find that personal initiative does not have indirect relationships with work-family enrichment or conflict; however, we find that personal initiative is a significant predictor of work engagement, and emotional engagement is a significant predictor of WFC

and WFE at the daily level. We also find that perceived work social support does not moderate the relationships of personal initiative with work engagement and emotional exhaustion. Thus, based on our findings, personal initiative does not cause harm to employees who engage in this type of proactive behaviour. We hope our research encourages organisations to promote and provide appropriate conditions for employees to engage in personal initiative behaviours and increase their engagement at work. We also hope future research continues to clarify the boundary conditions of personal initiative, as well as the types and sources of social support which are beneficial to improving these work situations.

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Appendix A Poster



SCIENCE
SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY

Participants needed for a workplace study!



ABOUT THE STUDY

We are looking for participants for a 5-day survey study examining how daily work experiences may impact employee family/home life outside the workplace. This will involve completing a daily diary three times a day over five working days (Mon - Fri) about your work experiences. If you are interested in how daily work experiences affect your life outside of work, then we would love to hear from you!

ELIGIBILITY

- Over the age of 18
- Are in paid employment for at least 30 hours per week between the hours of 7am - 7pm Monday to Friday
- Have worked at the same organisation for more than 6 months

Participants will receive up to \$60 in vouchers (choice of petrol or grocery) to thank you for your time

If you are interested in participating or would like more information, please contact me at **fnai255@aucklanduni.ac.nz**

This study has been approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 16/08/2021 for three years (16/08/2024). Reference number UAHPEC22761
Image retrieved from <https://www.pexels.com/>

Appendix B

Participation Information Sheet



SCIENCE
SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY

Science Centre
23 Symonds Street, Auckland,
New Zealand
T +64 9 923 8557
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The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland 1142 New Zealand

Participant Information Sheet

Date:	June, 2021
Title of Project:	A daily diary study of work-home interface among employees
Principal Investigator:	Senior Lecturer Dr Lixin Jiang School of Psychology, University of Auckland Science Centre, Building 301, Room 235B Phone: 09 923 9278 E-mail: l.jiang@auckland.ac.nz
Co-Investigator:	Lecturer Dr Zitong Sheng School of Psychology, University of Auckland Science Centre, Building 301, Room 211 E-mail: zshe257@uoa.auckland.ac.nz

Researcher Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Senior Lecturer Lixin Jiang, Lecturer Zitong Sheng, and Master Students of Organisational Psychology from the School of Psychology at the University of Auckland. The data collected in this study will be used for students' Masters' theses/dissertations as well as academic publications. The purpose of this sheet is to provide you with information about the study to help you decide if you would like to be a part of the study.

The Study Purpose

Adults employed full time in New Zealand work an average of 40 hours per week, which is a big part of our waking life. Our daily work experiences have a significant impact on our family/home life. This research study is to examine how daily work experiences may impact employee family/home life outside the workplace.

To be eligible, participants must be 18 years of age or older, work at least 30 hours per week between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday—Friday at a paid job, and work at the same organisation for more than 6 months.

Project Procedures

All questionnaires are web-based and hosted by Qualtrics. If you are interested in participating, please register your interest via the survey link where we ask you to provide us with your email address (any email address that you have access to; not necessarily your work email). We will then send you the *pre-diary questionnaire* via the email. In this pre-diary questionnaire, you will be asked to complete a variety of measures assessing a range of individual differences and general work experiences. You will also have the option to provide your cell phone number if you prefer to provide your daily diary responses via your phone. This pre-diary questionnaire will take around 15 minutes of your time.

Once you have completed the pre-diary questionnaire, you will then be asked to complete a *daily diary* three times a day over five working days (Monday — Friday). Specifically, we ask you to report on your work experiences around lunch time (around 11 a.m.) and before you get off work (around 4 p.m.), and on your family experiences before you go to bed (around 9 p.m.). Each diary entry should take about 5 minutes of your time to complete; together, three diaries (i.e., at 11 a.m., 4 p.m., and 9 p.m.) will take about 15 minutes of your time each day. The resulting data from both the pre-diary questionnaire and the daily diary will be combined across the entire sample.

Benefits of Participation

Your participation in this study will contribute to our understanding of the work-home interface. Eventually, the knowledge gained will allow us to design better work life and improve employee work and home life.

Your participation will also help our Master students to complete their degree as they will analyse the data collected in this study to write up their theses or dissertations.

Finally, to thank you for your time and effort as well as your contribution to the study, you will receive up to \$60 (petrol or grocery gift vouchers) for completing the study in full. Specifically, participation in the pre-diary questionnaire will lead to a \$10 voucher, while participation in three daily diaries each day will lead to a \$10 voucher (for a total of \$50 for Monday to Friday). Finally, you can choose either petrol or grocery gift vouchers. Upon request, a summary of the results will be shared with you via your email.

Confidentiality and Privacy

No one in your workplace will ever see your individual responses. All surveys will be handled by University of Auckland lecturers, Masters students, and research assistants. Your answers will be coded and kept at University of Auckland.

Please note that all of your responses are strictly confidential and private. We will not ask your name at any point. To link your questionnaire responses to your diary records, you will be asked to answer a set of questions as your personal ID code that only you will know. Your responses and diary data will be converted to anonymous numbers in a secure data file, and your identity will never be associated with your pre-diary questionnaire or diary responses at any time. Your responses will be stored on password-protected files in a University managed server. Only Dr Jiang, Dr Sheng, and Master students of Organisational Psychology will have access to the aggregated data.

Data storage/future use

At the end of the 5-day data collection period, all data will be combined across the sample, preserving the anonymity of each participant's data. All data will be stored indefinitely for research purposes but will at no time be identifiable as yours. Finally, in addition to the Masters theses or dissertations by Masters students, the results of this study may also be published or presented at professional meetings, but the identities of all research participants will remain confidential.

Right to Withdraw from participation

Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. Prior to beginning the questionnaires, you are invited to practice any tikanga Māori protocols that you deem to be appropriate. You may choose not to be a part of this study. There will be no penalty to you if you choose not to take part. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time without giving reason. Please note that you will have till *1st Dec 2021* to withdraw any information provided to the researchers. If you wish to do so, please email Dr Jiang. You will be asked to enter your personal code so that we can identify your responses.

Potential risks

The potential risks from taking part in this research are discomfort resulting from answering questions that remind you of negative work experiences. This research is designed to minimize risks and discomfort, but if you experience any distress, you may feel free to *skip* any question that you don't feel comfortable answering, or you may *quit* your participation at any time with no repercussions in respects to your current or future employment.

THIS STUDY IS APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE ON 16/08/2021. Reference Number UAHPEC22761.

If you need further support, please use these links below.

- The Ministry of Health (Mental Health Services): <https://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/mental-health>
- Worksafe: <https://worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/>
- Māori health service: <https://www.raukura.org.nz/?url=/>
- Youthline (0800 376 633)
- The Depression Helpline (0800 111 757)
- Healthline (0800 611 116)
- Lifeline (0800 543 354)

Contact details

For any questions regarding this project, please contact Dr Jiang (l.jiang@auckland.ac.nz), Dr Sheng (zshe257@uoa.auckland.ac.nz), or the Head of the School of Psychology, Professor Suzanne Purdy, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland. Phone 373 7599, extn 82073.

UAHPEC Chair contact details

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, Office of Research Strategy and Integrity, The University of Auckland, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

We thank you for your help and hope that you will find this study interesting.

Appendix C Consent Form

Consent Form

Title: A daily diary study of work-home interface among employees

Principal Investigator:	Senior Lecturer Dr Lixin Jiang School of Psychology, University of Auckland Science Centre, Building 301, Room 235B Phone: 09 923 9278 E-mail: l.jiang@auckland.ac.nz
Co-Investigator:	Lecturer Dr Zitong Sheng School of Psychology, University of Auckland Science Centre, Building 301, Room 211 E-mail: zshe257@uoa.auckland.ac.nz
Head of Department:	Professor Susanne Purdy Head of School of Psychology, University of Auckland Email: sc.purdy@auckland.ac.nz Phone: 09 923 2073

I have read the Participant Information Sheet and understood the nature of the research and that I am eligible to participate. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction.

By clicking on the "I consent and would like to continue" button below, I indicate that:

- I understand the information given to me in this sheet and the Participant Information Sheet, which includes the contact details for support.
- I understand the research study and the potential benefits and risks that are involved.
- I understand that the information I provide in the pre-diary questionnaire and daily diaries will be a part of this research study unless I withdraw the data (till 1st Dec 2021).
- I understand that all data will be stored indefinitely on the PIs' university computer with password protection for research purposes but will at no time be identifiable as mine.
- I understand that the researchers will use the email address and/or my cell phone to invite me to complete anonymous follow-up daily diaries, until the completion of this research study.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I may withdraw from the study, without giving any reason, at any time.

Statement of Consent

By clicking "I consent and would like to continue" I give my voluntary consent to take part in this study. I may print a copy of this consent document for my record.

- I consent and would like to continue.
- I do not agree to participate in this study.

**Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics
Committee on XX/07/2021 for three years. Reference Number XXXXX.**

BEGIN SURVEY