

Title: 621_The multiple identities of employed informal elderly filial carers, their impact on life satisfaction and the mediating power of caregiver-friendly workplace policies

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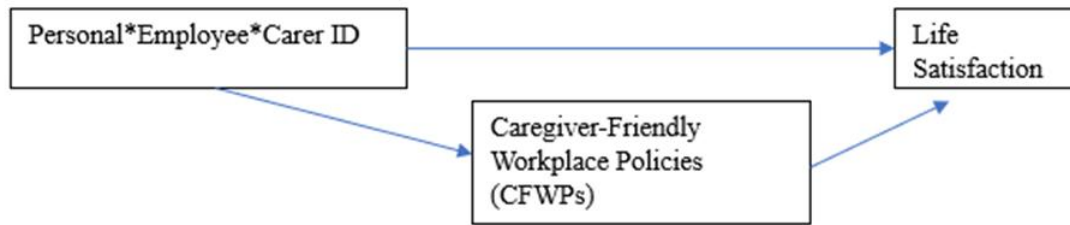
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As the population is ageing, the sustainability of eldercare may be better understood through a “nuanced understanding of how informal caregivers juggle their dual responsibilities” (Lam et. Al, 2022, p. 106). Studies on informal care to frail elderly parents, have identified negative impacts of managing employment and caring responsibilities (Kossek et al. 2001; Lam et al., 2022) However, combining multiple roles, derived from their carer, employee and personal identities, may also affect them positively (Boaz et al.,1999).

In turn, Human Resource professionals need to recognise the particularities of informal elderly filial carers, as a separate employee group from parents providing care to young children. According to Lam et al. (2022) no studies examined how personality may affect informal elderly carer wellbeing. And as Hatano et al. (2017) explain “personality traits are clearly associated with identity dimensions” (p.121).

To address this research gap, first we utilize a multiple identity theoretical perspective (Thoits, 2003; Ramarajan, 2014; Brook et al. 2008) integrating three main identities of employed informal elderly filial carers, namely carer, employee and personal. Each of these identities has been studied individually or in pairs (Arksey, 2002; Phillips, 2005; Broady, 2015; Hughes et al., 2013). However, they have not been studied together until now. Second, we explore the potential mediation effect of caregiver-friendly workplace policy (CFWPs) interventions as perceived organizational support (POS) measures, on carer life satisfaction. We are the first to propose that the co-existence of multiple identities of employed informal elderly filial carers when mediated by CFWPs, have a positive impact on their wellbeing.

Dautzenberg et al. (2000) argue that flexible work arrangements can support people who need to combine caring and employment responsibilities (Henz,2006). We focus on two well-established arrangements that have the common denominator of “time”, flexible time, and compressed work week (Hill et al.,2010; Wheatley, 2010; Baltes et al., 1999; Shockley & Allen,2007; Giovanis,2015). These arrangements offer flexibility to the carers to combine their multiple roles and identities. Our conceptual model looks as follows (see Figure 1):

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

In turn, we propose:

H1: CFWPs will mediate the relationship between the three identities and life satisfaction: this relationship will become positive.

In this cross-sectional study, we employed Qualtrics to administer our questionnaire in the United Kingdom since informal carers represent 10.3% of the UK population (Eurocarers, 2018). Before the official launch, a pilot test was conducted with a small sample of participants to assess the consistency, clarity and general usability of the items included in the questionnaire. Based on feedback from pilot testing, minor adjustments were made before launching the official survey. To recruit participants, Qualtrics used a purposive sampling strategy that targeted individuals who met predefined inclusion criteria, such as how many hours per week participants provided care to their elderly parents; being primary informal elderly filial caregivers; working full time in different employment (as an employee and not as self-employed). Participants were given a brief overview of the purpose of the study and were also assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Our questionnaire, combining existing measures from literature, contained a combination of Likert scales and closed-ended items. The sample consisted of 385 (n=385) participants, native English speakers, 50.65% male; 48.57% female and 0.78% non-binary/third gender.

We first reviewed the 3 IDs, namely Carer ID, Employee ID and Personal ID of employed informal elderly filial carers, each one separately, and its impact on life satisfaction. In the separate relationship, all 3 were significant, but when we added them all together, only Personal ID remained significant. We also tested the relationship between the 3 IDs separately and the CFWPs, and in that relationship, only Carer ID was significant. Finally, we tested the relationship between the two CFWPs (namely flexible time and compressed week) and life satisfaction, both of which were statistically significant.

Subsequently, we conducted a four-step hierarchical linear regression with life satisfaction as the dependent variable. For Step 1, we entered the control variables. Employee, Carer and Personal ID were added as predictor variables at Step 2. Since we were exploring the synergistic effect of the three identities, the Personal*Employee*Carer ID was created and added as a predictor variable at Step 3. Flexible time and compressed work week were added as predictor variables at Step 4. See Regression Model on Table 1:

Table 1
Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Life Satisfaction

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
(Intercept)	3.94***	4.15***	4.11***	4.2***	4.13**	4.2***
Age	-0.12*	-0.09	-0.09	-0.1*	-0.07	-0.09
Annual Family Income	0.1	0.001	0.009	0.001	0.007	0.002
Spouse/partner support	0.46***	0.4***	0.4***	0.36**	0.36**	0.34**
Anyone else beyond you to provide informal care	0.32*	0.32**	0.34**	0.35**	0.33**	0.34**
Usage of at least one paid elderly care-related service	0.25	0.32*	0.32*	0.26*	0.28*	0.24
Carer ID		0.13	0.01	-0.02	-0.03	-0.04
Employee ID		0.11	0.13	0.12	0.12	0.11
Personal ID		0.5***	0.4***	0.37***	0.4***	0.37***
Carer ID * Employee ID * Personal ID			0.44	0.47*	0.47*	0.47*
Flexible time				0.25***		0.22**
Compressed work week					0.17*	0.08
F	9.19***	16.56***	3.72	12.3***	5.47*	6.71***
R ²	0.11	0.21	0.22	0.24	0.23	0.25
R ² Change	0.11	0.10	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.03

The F -test for Model 1 was significant, $F(5, 379) = 9.19, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .11$. This model indicates that adding age, annual family income, spouse/partner support, anyone else beyond you to provide informal care, and usage of at least one paid elderly care-related service explained an additional 10.81% of the variation in life satisfaction. The F -test for Model 2 was significant, $F(3, 376) = 16.56, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .10$. This model indicates that adding Carer ID, Employee ID and Personal ID explained an additional 10.41% of the variation in life satisfaction. The F -test for Model 3 was not significant, $F(1, 375) = 3.72, p = .054, \Delta R^2 = .01$. This model indicates that adding Carer*Employee*Personal ID did not account for a significant amount of additional variation in life satisfaction. The F -test for Model 4 was significant, $F(1, 374) = 12.30, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = .02$. This model indicates that adding Flexible time explained an additional 2.48% of the variation in life satisfaction. The F -test for Model 5 was significant, $F(1, 374) = 5.47, p = .020, \Delta R^2 = .01$. This model indicates that adding compressed work week explained an additional 1.12% of the variation in life satisfaction. The F -test for Model 6 was significant, $F(2, 373) = 6.71, p = .001, \Delta R^2 = .03$. This model indicates that adding flexible time and compressed work week explained an additional 2.71% of the variation in life satisfaction.

Our contribution in this study is both theoretical and empirical. Theorizing on the co-existence of multiple identities contributes to existing literature by exploring this specific identity triptych for the first time. These multiple identities co-exist

(Thoits, 1983) and can relate to one another in various ways (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001). Two or more identities may be concurrently salient or activated for people, leaving space for various possible interactions between them (Hirsh & Kang, 2016; Kang & Bodenhausen, 2015; Ramarajan et al., 2017). Thoits (1992) argues that it is valuable to examine how one combines multiple identities. So, through the preview of our triptych, we propose the co-existence of multiple roles to create what Pratt and Foreman (2000) refer to as “identity synergy.” Empirically we demonstrate that the co-existence of the three identities produces higher *statistical effects* than when each identity is reviewed separately.

Further, recent studies have examined the mediating role of POS in the relationship between various types of favorable treatment and outcomes (Rhoades & Eisenberg, 2002). Zacher and Winter (2011) show that eldercare demands can lead to strain and reduced work engagement; but perceived organizational eldercare support (POES) can mitigate these effects. We enrich existing POS literature by showing how CFWPs, specifically flexible time and compressed week, contribute to employed informal elderly carers’ life satisfaction by enhancing the impact of their three co-existing core identities.

In the context of future empirical studies, several categories of employer sponsored elder care assistance programs could be reviewed (Addati et al., 2018; Bauer & Sousa-Poza, 2015; Oldenkamp et al., 2018). Further, different employee and organizational outcomes may be explored. Also, the use of methodological pluralism using a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches at different levels of analysis is recommended, facilitated by HR departments and management or NGOs to reach employed informal elderly filial carers.

Our cross-sectional design does not allow conclusions on causality, therefore future studies may adopt a longitudinal or an experimental design. Future research should also attempt to replicate the research design in different settings and contexts, investigating whether the relationships among having multiple identities and life satisfaction still hold in different groups of carers. Finally, future studies could examine the reviewed models before and after informal family caregiving events to understand whether identity changes bring intra-individual influences on the relationship between having multiple identities and life satisfaction or wider wellbeing.

Overall, the relationships introduced here are complex, but through further studies, they could offer valuable insight, informing research and policy in an era where informal elderly care by employees is very much needed across the globe. Employees will juggle between elderly caregiving, their employment or career and their personal life at some moment in time, therefore the global HR community should be able to comprehend their particularities, their needs and be actively present to accommodate for them in the workplace.

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