

UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA
FACULDADE DE PSICOLOGIA



**THE EFFECTS OF GENERALISED SUPERVISOR
SUPPORT AND FAMILY SUPPORTIVE
SUPERVISOR BEHAVIOUR ON WORK-FAMILY
POSITIVE SPILLOVER IN THE NATIONAL
REPUBLICAN GUARD (GNR)**

Letícia Figueiredo de Pina

MESTRADO EM PSICOLOGIA

**Área de Especialização em Psicologia dos Recursos Humanos, do
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Dissertação orientada pela Professora Doutora Vânia Sofia Carvalho

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*“Our greatest weakness lies in giving up.
The most certain way to succeed is always to
try just one more time”
Thomas Edison*

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the mediating role of work-family positive spillover (WFPS) in the relationship between both general supervisor support (GSS) as well as family supportive supervisor behavior (FSSB) on work engagement, and to explore which of these two types of support play a more crucial role on this well-being state. Data was collected in a sample of 500 members of the Portuguese National Republican Guard (GNR), of which 291 responded to a questionnaire. The first hypothesis was set to verify whether FSSB is more positively related to WFPS than GSS, it was confirmed that there exists a positive relationship between supervisor support (both general as well as family-specific) and WFPS, however, the results show that neither type of support is more positively related than the other, as both have an equal impact. The second hypothesis was set to verify whether there was a mediating effect of WFPS on the relationship between supervisor support (both general as well as family-specific) and engagement. The results demonstrated that WFPS has a mediating effect on supervisor support (both general as well as family-specific) and engagement. However, the results also demonstrated that there was a significant relation between supervisor support (general and work-family specific) and engagement without the mediation of WFPS, thus concluding in a model of partial mediation. The results contribute to a better understanding of WFPS in relation to supervisor support. Some practical implications, limitations and suggestions for future studies are also presented.

Keywords: Work-family positive spillover, family supportive supervisor behaviour, generalised supervisor support, engagement, Portuguese National Republican Guard

Resumo

Este estudo visa investigar o papel mediador do *spillover* positivo trabalho-família (WFPS) na relação entre o apoio geral do supervisor (GSS) e *family supportive supervisor behaviour* (FSSB) no *engagement* do trabalho, e explorar qual destes dois tipos de apoio desempenha um papel mais crucial neste estado de bem-estar. Os dados foram recolhidos numa amostra de 500 membros da Guarda Nacional Republicana Portuguesa (GNR), dos quais 291 responderam a um questionário. A primeira hipótese foi estabelecida para verificar se o FSSB está mais positivamente relacionado com a WFPS do que a GSS e foi confirmado que existe uma relação positiva entre o apoio dos supervisores (tanto geral como específico da família) e a WFPS, contudo, os resultados demonstrem que nenhum dos dois tipos de apoio estão mais positivamente relacionados do que o outro, uma vez que ambos têm um impacto igual. A segunda hipótese foi estabelecida para verificar se existia um efeito mediador do WFPS na relação entre o apoio do supervisor (tanto geral como específico da família) e o *engagement*. Os resultados demonstraram que o WFPS tem um efeito mediador no apoio do supervisor (tanto geral como específico da família) e no *engagement*. Contudo, os resultados também demonstraram que havia uma relação significativa entre o apoio do supervisor (geral e específico da família) e o *engagement* sem a mediação do WFPS, concluindo assim num modelo de mediação parcial. Os resultados contribuem para uma melhor compreensão do WFPS em relação ao apoio do supervisor. São também apresentadas algumas implicações práticas, limitações e sugestões para estudos futuros.

Palavras-chave: Spillover positivo trabalho-família, family supportive supervisor behaviour, apoio generalizado do supervisor, engagement, Guarda Nacional Republicana Portuguesa

Resumo alargado

Obter apoio de um supervisor é um recurso extremamente importante para os trabalhadores. Por esse motivo, o papel crítico de um supervisor discutido num estudo de Blanco-Donoso et al. (2019), afirma que o apoio do supervisor é crucial para ajudar os subordinados a lidar com quaisquer incertezas e ambiguidades que têm a ver com as suas funções. À medida que os níveis de incerteza diminuem, esses subordinados começam a sentirem-se mais confiantes em serem capazes de abordar seus supervisores com essas dúvidas (Skiba & Wildman, 2019). No que diz respeito à relação trabalho-família e supervisores, Butts, Casper & Yang (2013), afirmam que as políticas que envolvem trabalho e família ajudam a atrair e reter o capital humano e, conseqüentemente, melhorar as atitudes e o *engagement* dos trabalhadores. Dito isso, o apoio do supervisor pode ser geral ou específico, ou seja, apoio trabalho-família, *family supportive supervisor behaviour* (FSSB) (Crain & Stevens, 2018). O apoio do supervisor é definido como a percepção dos trabalhadores quanto ao nível de qualidade do seu relacionamento com os seus supervisores (Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003), não é apenas a percepção do trabalho sobre o seu relacionamento com os seus supervisores, assim como a sua percepção da organização.

De acordo com Yragui et al. (2017), quando se trata de apoio geral de um supervisor, o foco é meramente em como os trabalhadores desempenham as funções durante o trabalho, enquanto o apoio que é mais específico do trabalho-família, ou seja, *family supportive supervisor behaviour* (FSSB), é visto como uma mais valia na medida em que demonstra ao trabalhador que o supervisor se preocupa com a sua vida fora do trabalho, e portanto, proporciona aos trabalhadores maneiras de lidar melhor com seus domínios concorrentes de trabalho e família. Na verdade, um trabalhador que tem uma relação trabalho-família equilibrada, ou seja, tanto as necessidades do trabalho quanto as físicas, sociais e emocionais da família (Burke, 1999), estará melhor ajustado aos seus domínios trabalho-família.

A indústria penitenciária é vista como uma das indústrias mais exigentes e stressantes para se trabalhar (Meier, 2013), então não é surpresa que manter o equilíbrio entre trabalho e família na força policial se tornou urgente analisar e estudar (Islam et al., 2019). Uma das maneiras de manter esse equilíbrio entre os domínios do trabalho e da família que leva ao bem-estar do trabalhador é ter FSSB, uma vez que fornece aos trabalhadores os recursos que necessitam (Yragui et al., 2017), tanto no domínio da família como no domínio do trabalho.

Manter um bom equilíbrio entre o nosso domínio de trabalho e o domínio da família é fundamental para que se possa alcançar um melhor bem-estar do trabalhador (Yragui et al., 2017; Lakshmypriya & Krishna, 2016). Para atingir este *mindset*, é necessário que haja uma fronteira bem definida entre a vida profissional e a vida familiar, embora, ao mesmo tempo, tenha em mente que esses micro-sistemas podem afetar uns aos outros independentemente desses limites (Hill, Ferris & Mårtinson, 2003; Lakshmypriya & Krishna, 2016). Uma das primeiras pessoas a reconhecer que esses dois domínios, muito importantes e fundamentais, das nossas vidas transbordam um para o outro foi Staines (1980). Este teórico preconizou que as emoções e os comportamentos vivenciados durante as atividades de trabalho transcendem os limites estabelecidos entre o trabalho e os domínios domésticos. O ato de transbordamento/*spillover* ocorre quando há uma transferência de positividade ou negatividade, devido aos eventos no ambiente de um indivíduo, que transbordam ou são transportados de um ambiente para outro, esta transferência permite que os domínios do trabalho e da família se influenciam mutuamente de forma que as experiências de um domínio sejam produzidas de maneira semelhante no outro domínio (Collins, 2019).

Sentimentos de bem-estar, auto-aperfeiçoamento e realização podem ser transmitidos para o domínio familiar a partir do domínio do trabalho quando o funcionário tem um equilíbrio saudável entre a vida profissional e familiar, o que é ocasionado por *spillover* positivo (Kinnunen et al., 2006, p. 159). O *spillover* é então a transferência de estados de bem-estar de um domínio para outro. “*Spillover* entre trabalho e família e até que ponto as obrigações do trabalho se intrometem na família e as obrigações familiares se intrometem no domínio do trabalho foram discutidos e pesquisados para permitir que as pessoas se equilibrem entre os dois domínios igualmente exigentes” (Lakshmypriya & Krishna, 2016, p. 104).

Diversas teorias foram aplicadas em estudos relacionados ao trabalho-família que avaliam o FSSB, incluindo a teoria de conservação de recursos (COR) de Hobfoll (1989), bem como o *job demand-resources theory* (por exemplo, Kossek et al., 2011). No que diz respeito à estrutura do COR, o FSSB é visto como um recurso que ajuda os trabalhadores a gerir as suas vidas profissionais, bem como suas responsabilidades na vida familiar, e isso "ajuda" a obter resultados positivos nos domínios do trabalho e da família (Crain & Stevens, 2018). A teoria COR é fundamental para explicar a importância do *spillover* causado pelo suporte do supervisor, uma vez que os recursos obtidos num domínio da vida do indivíduo são então utilizados no outro domínio. Devido à importância do *spillover* positivo causado pelo apoio do supervisor, neste estudo a primeira hipótese esta relacionada ao FSSB ser mais fortemente e mais significativamente relacionado ao *spillover* positivo, do que o suporte geral.

De acordo com Hammer, et al. (2009), o objetivo do FSSB é ser capaz de auxiliar os trabalhadores no cumprimento das suas responsabilidades laborais e familiares. Incentivar e ajudar os trabalhadores a obterem os recursos necessários para gerir e ter uma vida profissional-familiar equilibrada facilita o desenvolvimento e também as conquistas dos trabalhadores de novos recursos e competências, por exemplo: maior eficiência; emoções positivas; bem como uma energia amplificada, que permite que o trabalhador se envolva mais no seu trabalho (Qing

& Zhou, 2017). O *spillover* positivo trabalho-família (WFPS) de acordo com Cho & Tay (2016), poderia prever como seria o bem-estar do trabalhador provavelmente no futuro. Além da relação entre o suporte do supervisor e WFPS, este estudo também tem como objetivo descobrir que efeito o suporte do supervisor (tanto geral como FSSB) tem no *engagement* por meio do efeito mediador do WFPS. Schaufeli (2013) descreve o *engagement* como a relação que o trabalhador mantém com o seu trabalho, bem como a relação que o trabalhador mantém com a organização como um todo. Isto nos leva à segunda hipótese deste estudo, onde o objetivo é verificar se o apoio do supervisor, tanto geral e FSSB, estará relacionado com o *engagement* através do efeito mediador do *spillover* positivo trabalho-família na Guarda Nacional Republicana. De acordo com Meier (2013), há pouca ou nenhuma pesquisa a envolvendo FSSB e agentes correcionais (polícias).

O presente estudo consiste em 500 polícias em Portugal que receberam questionários on-line através de um link enviado pela Ordem dos Polícias Profissionais. Desses 500 polícias, apenas 291 dos questionários foram utilizados. Os dados foram recolhidos com maior sigilo e anonimato e não existiram incentivos (em dinheiro ou não) para a participação neste projeto.

Para a realização da análise dos dados, foram utilizados dois programas estatísticos: IBM *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS 26.0) e a ferramenta SPSS *Process* (Hayes, 2018). Primeiramente, por meio do SPSS 27.0, foi realizada a análise das medidas de tendência central e dispersão, dos coeficientes de consistência interna (alfa de Cronbach) e dos coeficientes de correlação de Pearson (r) para todas as variáveis em estudo. Por fim, o teste de hipótese foi realizado usando a ferramenta SPSS *Process* (Hayes, 2017) com o Modelo 4. Assim, o tamanho, direção e significância estatística do efeito mediador de WFPS na relação

entre General Supervisor Support (GSS) e *engagement*, e o efeito mediador de WFPS sobre a relação entre FSSB e *engagement* foi testado.

Os resultados obtidos demonstraram que existem relações significativas entre as variáveis em estudo. Para a primeira das duas hipóteses (H1), FSSB, mostrou não ter mais efeito no WFPS do que GSS, pois não há uma grande distinção no tipo de apoio dos supervisores. Assim, a H1, não foi suportada. Em relação à segunda hipótese (H2), no que se refere ao efeito mediador do WFPS sobre o apoio do supervisor e o *engagement*, os resultados demonstram que existe um efeito mediador significativo. Houve também uma relação significativa entre o apoio do supervisor e o *engagement* sem a mediação da WFPS, o que nos diz que esses resultados demonstram ser uma mediação parcial.

Isto permite que a conclusão deste estudo seja que, independentemente do tipo de suporte do supervisor, seja geral ou FSSB, o WFPS tem um efeito igual sobre os dois tipos de suporte do supervisor em relação ao *engagement*, bem como o suporte do supervisor tendo um efeito direto no *engagement* sem a presença WFPS, nesta amostra específica. O motivo pelo qual essas conclusões podem ser tiradas pode ser devido à profissão em questão, de acordo com Chambel et al. (2015), a mesma afirma que esses tipos de instituições (forças policiais), são altamente estandardizadas e altamente estruturadas, onde o papel dos supervisores sobre os seus subordinados é pertinente para entender como funcionam as regras e procedimentos do trabalho.

Introduction

Of all the different elements with which a supervisor within a policing role must interact, his superiors and subordinates are normally considered to be the most important. A superior in this context is defined as the “immediate supervisors of the ¹first-line supervisors” (Holloman, 1967, p.200). Whereas a subordinate refers to a worker who has no supervisory responsibility. So why is it important to have supportive supervisors? In policing organizations, all job posts are generally accompanied by their official job descriptions, however not all of these are very clear on how exactly and in which manner these tasks and duties need to be performed (Holloman, 1967). For this reason, the critical role of a supervisor as discussed in a study by Blanco-Donoso et al. (2019), states that supervisor support is crucial in helping subordinates deal with any uncertainties and ambiguities that have to do with their duties. As the levels of uncertainty lessen, these subordinates begin to feel more confident in being able to approach their supervisors with these qualms (Skiba & Wildman, 2019). Furthermore, employees that perceive that their supervisors exhibit extra-role support, that is, family-supportive behaviours by using resources and skills to help improve the employee’s work as well as family life, feel as though their supervisors sincerely care about their family’s needs and this allows for the employee to feel valued and appreciated (Qing & Zhou, 2017).

Work-family support, in particular support from a supervisor, can be considered an extremely important resource for an employee to have in order to manage these two domains of their life (Kossek et al., 2011). According to Yragui et al. (2017), when it comes to general support from a supervisor, this is merely focused on how the employees perform their duties while at work, whereas support that is more work-family specific i.e. family supportive

¹ First-line supervisors refer to the immediate supervisor of the subordinate

supervisor behaviour (FSSB) (Yragui et al., 2017), is seen as more valuable as it demonstrates to the employee that the supervisor cares about their life outside of work, therefore, providing employees with ways to better deal with their competing work and family domains.

In fact, an employee that has a balanced family life i.e., both the needs of the job as well as the physical, social and emotional needs of the family (Burke, 1999), is better adjusted to their work-family domains. Employees of policing organizations are immersed in both the work domain as well as the family domain, “they negotiate terms and conditions of work with the military and they negotiate the boundaries between work and non-work with their family” (Pluut, Andres, Moelker & Rones, 2019, p. 2).

Correctional institutions are seen as one of the most demanding and stressful industries to work in (Meier, 2013), so it is no surprise that maintaining a balance between work and family in the police force has become a serious issue (Islam et al., 2019). One of the ways to maintain this balance between work and family domains is by having FSSB, as this supplies the employees with the resources they need, that then lead to well-being outcomes for those employees (Yragui et al., 2017), both in the family domain as well as the work domain. It is also important to note that, when an employee perceives FSSB, they begin to develop certain skills such as communication and listening skills, which consequently increases engagement (Crain & Stevens, 2018). In turn, they utilize these skills at home, thus achieving positive spillover (Escarda, Agudo Arroyo, & Pérez Redondo, 2020). Numerous studies have indicated the relation between spillover and engagement (Culbertson, Mills & Fullagar, 2012; Schaufeli et al., 2008). Engagement is described as the relationship that the worker maintains with their work, as well as the relationship that the worker maintains with the organization (Schaufeli, 2013).

According to Meier (2013), there is little to no research involving FSSB and correctional officers (police). Therefore, this present study reveals the importance of work to

family positive spillover (WFPS) caused by general supervisor support as well as by FSSB, and which of these two types of support are more pertinent to WFPS. Regarding the work-family relationship and supervisors, Butts, Casper & Yang (2013) state that policies involving work and family, help to attract and retain human capital and, consequently, improve workers' attitudes and their engagement. In addition to the relationship between supervisor support and WFPS, this study also aims to find out what effect supervisor support (both general and FSSB) has on engagement via the mediating effect of WFPS. Another objective of this study is to verify whether supervisor support, both general and FSSB, will be related to engagement through the mediating effect of the positive work-family spillover in the National Republican Guard (GNR).

Theoretical framework

Supervisor Support

Getting support from a supervisor is an extremely important resource for workers. A study conducted by Blanco-Donoso et al. (2019) states that in order for employees to be able to cope and manage their reservations about their duties, it is crucial that they have support from their supervisors. When this begins to happen, employees begin to feel more confident and comfortable in approaching their superiors when they do in fact have doubts or questions (Skiba & Wildman, 2019).

Supervisor support is defined as a workers' perception of the quality level of their relationship with their supervisors (Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003). However, it is not just the employee's perception of this relationship, but also their perception of the organization, that, leads to these same employees' possessing positive attitudes towards the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2002). Considering that supportive supervisors can decrease the levels of

uncertainties of their subordinates (Blanco-Donoso et al., 2019), one could say that support from supervisors could be deemed as a job resource. When bearing in mind Bakker & Demerouti's (2007) Job Demand and Resource (²JD-R) model, job resources are essentially ways of facilitating working conditions that employees face by having favourable work characteristics as well as social support that can essentially assist employees manage the job demands that they face. "Social support refers to a social network's provision of psychological and material resources intended to benefit an individual's capacity to cope with stress" (Charoensukmongkol, & Phungsoonthorn, 2020, p.435) and one of the main sources of social support are supervisors, this is due to the fact that they provide employees' with motivation, encouragement, rewards and protection (Phungsoonthorn & Charoensukmongkol, 2019). This in part indicates that supervisor support is a crucial aspect of job resources which significantly helps employees' (Hu, Schaufeli Wilmar, & Taris Toon, 2016).

When it comes to supervisor support, this can be either general or specific i.e., work-family support, also referred to as Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviour (FSSB). General supervisor support is mainly concerned about the employee's performance in the work domain, whereas, FSSB allows employees to be able to effectively manage both their work lives as well as their family lives (Yragui et al., 2017). "Supervisor work-family support is valuable in that it offers more than general support in buffering stress from job demands and helps to conserve resources in the two domains of work and family (Allen 2001)" (Yragui et al., 2017, p.4). Certain professions require higher levels of support, particularly support that is work-family specific, as these allow the employee to be able to replenish when outside the work domain as

² Literature on JD-R model suggests that when there is an adequate amount of job resources that can deal with the job demands, an employees' perception of stress decreases. (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)

the demands of the workplace might be quite straining (Yragui et al., 2017). FSSB recognizes that their employee's life outside of work could possibly affect their work lives and therefore, these supervisors help facilitate how the employee manages the responsibilities he/she has within these two very important domains of their lives (Crain & Stevens, 2018). These behaviours from the supervisor often, allow for there to some form of work-based flexibility that permit the employee to meet family demands (Matthews et al., 2014). According to Yragui et al. (2017), well-being outcomes that employees experience, have been shown to be the consequence of improved general as well as family-specific supervisor support.

According to Ru Hsu (2011), employees perceive supervisor support in a way that it depicts the degree to which they recognize how much their supervisor cares about their wellbeing and their personal concerns. FSSB is seen as a multidimensional construct which consists of 4 dimensions/behaviours, namely, emotional support, instrumental support, role modelling and creative work-family management. (Hammer et al. 2009; Lv, 2016; Crain & Stevens, 2018). The emotional dimension encompasses some form of communication between supervisor and subordinate, indicating that the supervisor shows concern for the employees' life outside of work i.e. family life. The instrumental dimension includes providing resources to assist the employee manage their work as well as their non-work lives. Role modelling, is when a supervisor exhibits effective management of his work-life and family-life, therefore, encouraging the employee to follow suit. Lastly, the creative work-family management covers supervisors promoting an employee's effectiveness at work, while at the same time managing the demands bought on by the employees' family (Crain & Stevens, 2018). When discussing FSSB, these 4 dimensions are taken into consideration.

Several theories have been applied in studies regarding work-family that evaluate FSSB, including Hobfoll's (1989) ³conservation of resources theory (COR), as well as job demands–resources theory (e.g., Kossek et al., 2011). In respect to the framework of COR, FSSB is seen as a resource that helps employees manage their work lives as well as their family life responsibilities, and this ‘help’ garners positive results within work and family domains (Crain & Stevens, 2018). “COR theory is a motivational theory that explains human behaviour based on the evolutionary need to protect current and obtain new resources” (Dimitrova, et al., 2020, p. 3).

Spillover

Having a good balance between our work and family domains is crucial so that one may achieve a healthy state of mind, and the best way to achieve that balance has been of great concern for many scholars (Lakshmypriya & Krishna, 2016). In order to achieve this, there needs to be a clear-cut boundary between work life and family life, while at the same time bearing in mind that these micro-systems can affect one another regardless of those boundaries (Hill, Ferris & Mårtinson, 2003; Lakshmypriya & Krishna, 2016). One of the first people to recognize that these two, very important and fundamental, domains of our lives spillover one to the other was Staines (1980), as he discovered that emotions and behaviours that were experienced during work activities transcended the boundaries set between the work and the home domains. “Supervisors who recognize that the boundaries between work and family are

³ COR theory states that in order to engage in healthy behaviours, it is necessary to prevent resource loss, maintain the existing resources one has and try to obtain new resources, it is a model of human motivation as the gaining and accumulation of resources is considered to be a vital force that initiates and maintains people's behaviour (Salanova, et al., 2010; Hobfoll, Shirom, & Golembiewski, 2000).

permeable and that what goes on at work impacts family and vice versa (Kirchmeyer, 1995) are more likely to support their employees” (Julien, Somerville & Culp, 2011, p.176).

According to Hill, Ferris & Märtinson (2003), spillover theory examines the impact that interactions experienced in our work micro systems and interactions experienced in our family micro systems either positively or negatively spillover into each other. The feeling of well-being, self-improvement and fulfilment can be passed from one domain to the other (work to family and vice versa) when an employee has a healthy work life balance, which is brought upon by positive spillover (Kinnunen et al., 2006). Escarda, Agudo Arroyo & Pérez Redondo (2020, p. 1) define spillover theory as “the influence of work environment on family, and the other way around”, they state that depending on each individual case, feelings, emotions, and behaviours can either affect these two domains positively or negatively. Most studies have focused mainly on negative spillover, however, there has been research indicating that positive spillover is also possible (Lakshmypriya & Krishna, 2016). In this study we focus on positive spillover.

Positive spillover, “is facilitated by job related environment of autonomy, social support which improves job performance and in maintains a good work life balance” (Lakshmypriya & Krishna, 2016, p. 105). It has to do with the transferal of states of well-being from one domain to another. “Spillover between work and family and the extent to which work, and work obligations intrude into family and family obligations intrude into work domain has been discussed and researched to enable people balance between the two equally demanding domains” (Lakshmypriya & Krishna, 2016, p. 104). The act of spillover occurs when there is a transference of either positivity or negativity, due to the events in an individual’s environment, that spillover or are carried over from one environment to another, this transference allows that the work and family domains influence each other in such a way that the experiences from one domain are produced in a similar manner in the other domain (Collins,

2019). In other words, work related emotions and behaviours, as well as the level of engagement we have at work, cause an impact from the employee to other people, and this can occur both on the job (with colleagues) or in the home. For the purpose of this study, we are solely focusing on the impacts on the home domain and not the impacts on other colleagues. For example, if an individual has the possibility to have more work flexibility in terms of working from home or from the office, then this could possibly help the individual manage their home lives better and this therefore leads to positive spillover from work to family life, thus achieving a healthy work and family balance.

COR theory is fundamental in explaining the importance of spillover caused by supervisor support, as the resources gained in one domain of the individuals life are then utilized in the other domain. In a study conducted by Grzywacz & Marks (2000), when individuals received less support at work from both their coworkers but especially from their superiors, there was a strong association with less positive feedback from the work domain to the family. When there is a lack of supervisor support there can be negative consequences for the employees both in their personal as well as family lives, therefore having supervisors who support, listen to and guide their subordinates helps prevent conflicts (Escarda, Agudo Arroyo, & Pérez Redondo, 2020), but also helps the subordinate learn from their supervisor and helps them gain more resources that they can use and take those enriching moments and apply them to their behaviours and values at home, achieving, therefore, positive spillover (Escarda, Agudo Arroyo, & Pérez Redondo, 2020; Carvalho and Chambel, 2018). The gaining of resources brings about positive consequences which are experienced in the main domains of the employee's life (both work and family). According to Cho & Tay (2016), positive spillover can occur when these positive consequences provide abundant resources from one of the domains to the other.

According to Hammer, et al. (2009), the aim of FSSB is to be able to help employees in the fulfillment of their work and family responsibilities. Encouraging and helping employees to obtain the resources necessary to be able to manage and have a balanced work-family life, eases the development as well as the achievements employees make of new resources and skills, for example, greater efficiency, positive emotions, as well as amplified energy, which allows for the employee to be able to become more engaged in their work (Qing & Zhou, 2017). WFPS according to Cho & Tay (2016), could possibly predict how the well-being as well as the engagement of the employee would likely be in future. Family supportive supervisor behaviour (FSSB) seems to be the preferable type of support, as claimed by Julien, Somerville & Culp (2011), when a supervisor recognizes that what goes on in an employees work life impacts their home life too and vice versa, i.e., the boundaries between these domains are not solid but permeable, these supervisors are more likely to support their employees. Therefore, one could say that FSSB could be significantly more beneficial to WFPS, therefore leading to the following hypotheses:

***H1:** General supervisor support (GSS) and FSSB are both positively related to work-family positive spillover (WFPS), being that the FSSB is more strongly and more significantly related to work-family positive spillover.*

Spillover and engagement

There is a clear relation between spillover and engagement, numerous studies have demonstrated that employees tend to exhibit higher levels of engagement when there appears to be positive spillover effects from work to home – or vice versa – in comparison to those that do not have that positive cross-over between these two domains of their lives (Culbertson, Mills & Fullagar, 2012; Schaufeli et al., 2008). “Theorists have long posited that involvement in

multiple roles has positive spillover effects and enhances functioning in both work and family roles (Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974)” (Culbertson, Mills & Fullagar, 2012, p.1157). Engagement has been termed as several things: commitment, enthusiasm, involvement, passion, zeal, dedication, energy, absorption and so on (Schaufeli, 2013). The term engagement refers to “employee engagement” or “work engagement” and usually these are used interchangeably, however, the definition that Schaufeli (2013) gives is “work engagement refers to the relationship of the employee with his or her *work*, whereas employee engagement may also include the relationship with the *organization*” (p. 1). Work engagement is defined as the antithesis of burnout and is considered a positive, fulfilling and motivational state of mind in employees (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). It can be characterized in 3 parts: *vigor*, *dedication*, and *absorption* (Schaufeli et al. 2002). *Vigor* signifies high levels of energy while working, investing effort into the work being done and being persistent, while at the same time not getting easily tired. *Dedication*, strong involvement in the work being done, while feeling enthusiastic, inspired, and proud. Lastly, *absorption*, being completely preoccupied with one’s work, fully concentrated, not realizing the time going by with some difficulty to let go of the work (difficulties detaching) (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006).

In a study by Escarda, Agudo Arroyo, & Pérez Redondo (2020), the authors mention two different studies that consider the (Spanish) armed forces, in other words, correctional institutions, as well as the family, to be greedy institutions as they both require extreme dedications and demand large amounts of time and energy from their officers. In regard to correctional institutions and families, there are incongruent aspects as there can be some degree of difficulty in adaptation to, for example, the mobility and risk that the soldiers face. At times families need to face possible relocation, separations (when the member of the family that is part of the correctional institution needs to go on assignment away from the family home), this

deeply affects not only the officers but also their families at home. When it comes to families that have both members of the couple in correctional institutions the problems multiply (Escarda, Agudo Arroyo, & Pérez Redondo, 2020).

According to Bakker & Geurts's (2004) dual-process model of work-home involvement, job resources, which are primarily related to work-related ⁴flow, are strongly related to work engagement and therefore brings about positive work-home spillover. This statement is also confirmed by Straub, Beham & Islam (2019), who affirms that this model has the capability to motivate positive work outcomes such as engagement that therefore allow for performance enhancement and consequently work-family positive spillover (WFPS). This relationship between WFPS and engagement can also be explained by the gains spiral⁵ in the COR model, based on the argument that the more resources an individual possesses the more engaged in their work they become, which in turn, mobilizes the resources they possess and have accumulated and utilize them in their personal lives, and vice versa, the resources they gain in their home domain can spillover to work, leading to more engagement (Matthew et al., 2014; Eldor, 2016).

Supervisor support on spillover and engagement

Considering that general supervisor support is a job resource, it allows for employees to overcome issues that they might be facing through the guidance provided by their supervisors. Supervisor support not only bolsters positive effects and well-being of the

⁴ Flow is defined as an optimal experience whereby an individual is completely concentrated and engrossed in in their work, that could lead to a distortion of time. Bakker, A. B., & Geurts, S. A. (2004).

⁵ Hobfoll (1989), suggested that when an individual has a more substantial number of resources, they are less likely to be vulnerable to resource loss, on the contrary, they are more susceptible to resource gain; the more the individual gains in resources is termed as a gains spiral.

employees, but it also serves to buffer any negativity that the employee might face (Mohr, Hammer, Brady, Perry & Bodner, 2021). Studies show that daily supervisor support does in fact increase work engagement as well as diminish any negative effects that may arise (Pattnaik & Panda, 2020; Mohr, Hammer, Brady, Perry & Bodner, 2021). When supervisors show any form of support to their subordinates, this has been shown to be associated with more satisfied employees (Holland, Cooper & Sheehan, 2017), and when this occurs, employees tend to have higher levels of engagement, “it is clear from the research that employee job satisfaction is essential to employee engagement” (Bin & Shmailan, 2015, p.3).

In a conceptual model by Straub (2012) one of the outcomes of FSSB was work engagement, and this link can too be best understood via COR theory as there has been previous research to suggest that there exists a gain spiral between the two (Matthews et al., 2014). Since FSSB is a social support-based resource and spans across different boundaries/domains in an individual’s life, Matthews et al., (2014), proposes that between FSSB and engagement, in particular work specific engagement, there exists a gains spiral, this in turn influences the individual’s subjective well-being, which could lead to positive spillover in the employee’s family domain. Straub, Beham & Islam (2019, p.1), “it is expected that family supportive supervisor behaviour (FSSB) as an individual job resource can create work-to-family positive spillover (WFPS) effects, largely through supervisors’ ability to stimulate employee engagement”. Studies have shown that FSSB is able to create WFPS mainly through having supervisors’ continuous stimulation of work engagement (Straub, Beham & Islam, 2019). Bakker & Demerouti (2007, 2008), state that employees that are engaged are able to create even more resources, these additional resources can be utilized at work as well as be transferred to their family domains leading to WFPS (Straub, Beham, Islam, 2019). Consequently, we hypothesize:

H2: The relationship between supervisor support (either general support and family supportive supervisor behaviour support) and engagement is mediated by work to family positive spillover.

Method

Participants and Procedure

The participants consisted of police officers in Portugal. Questionnaires were filled in on-line through a link sent by the Professional Association of Police Officers to 500 officers. Data collection took place in January 2020, confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed and there was no incentive (cash or otherwise) for participating in this project.

A sample of a total of 291 participants was obtained. The sample is made up of 271 male employees (93.1%) and 20 female employees (6.9%). A significant percentage of participants are married (79.7%) (232 participants), 47 (16.2%) are single, and 12 (4.1%) are divorced/separated.

Regarding age, 14.8% of participants are between 20 and 30 years old, 38% are between 31 and 40 years old, 33% are between 41 and 50 years old and 14.1% are between 51 and 60 years old.

Most participants (85.9%) (250) have worked for the National Republican Guard for more than 6 years, 11.3% (33) between 2 to 6 years, and 2.7% (8) have worked for less than 2 years.

Measures

General supervisor support (5 items, Karasek, 1989): The GSS variable was measured using the scale by Karasek (1989). 5 items of the scale were used, the items were answered on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree), such as “My direct

command helps me get the job done”. This scale showed an acceptable internal consistency index ($\alpha=.87$).

Support from the work-family specific supervisor (4 items, Hammer et al., 2009): The FSSB variable was measured using the scale Hammer et al. (2009). Only 4 items of the scale were used, the items were answered on a five- point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree) such as “I can count on my direct command to help me resolve scheduling conflicts if necessary”. This scale showed an acceptable internal consistency index ($\alpha=.90$).

Positive work-family spillover (4 items, Grzywacz & Marks, 2000): The variable for WFPS was measure by Grzywacz & Marks (2000) scale. 4+4 items were used, the items were answered on a five- point Likert scale (1 = Never to 5 = Many times) these included, “Having a good day at work makes me better company when I get home”. This scale showed an acceptable internal consistency index ($\alpha=.72$).

Engagement (9 itens, Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006): Engagement as a variable was measured using Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova (2006) scale. As the data was collected in Portuguese due to the sample being Portuguese, the Portuguese translation of this instrument had already been used in previous studies (e.g., Chambel, Lopes & Batista, 2016). This scale included 9 items, the items were answered on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = Never to 5 = Everyday) such as, “I am immersed in my work”. This scale showed an acceptable internal consistency index ($\alpha=.87$).

Control variables. In order to prevent the results from having alternative explanations, the gender of the participants was controlled in the present study (having been coded into a categorical variable for statistical purposes, where; 0 = male, 1 = female). The marital status of the participants was also used as a control variable (where; 1 = single, 2 = married/de facto union, 3 = divorced/separated, 4 = widowed).

Data Analysis

In order to perform the data analysis, two statistical programs were used, namely: IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 26.0) and the SPSS Process tool (Hayes, 2018).

Firstly, using SPSS 27.0, an analysis of the measures of central tendency and dispersion, the internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) and the Pearson's correlation coefficients (r) for all variables under study was carried out. Thus, obtaining the descriptive analysis of the measuring instruments, such as the mean values, standard deviations, and correlations between the variables.

Finally, the hypothesis test was performed using the SPSS Process tool (Hayes, 2017), a computational tool of SPSS (27.0). Using Model 4, the mediation effect proposed by the theoretical model of the present study was tested. Thus, the size, direction and statistical significance of the mediating effect of WFPS in the relationship between GSS and engagement, and the mediating effect of WFPS on the relationship between FSSB and engagement.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Table 1 – Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and Correlations (r) between Variables

	Mean	SD	r					
			1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Sex	–	–						
2. Marital Status	1.90	.43	.14*					
3. Engag	4.30	1.40	-.02	-.01				
4. WFPS	2.80	.75	.08	-.06	.36**			
5. FSSB	2.60	1.10	.01	.01	.44**	.26**		
6. GSS	2.71	1.00	.03	.04	.44**	.24**	.90**	

Note: Engag = Engagement; WFPS = Work-family positive spillover; FSSB = Family supportive supervisor behaviour; GSS = General supervisor support; * $p < 0.05$ (2-tailed); ** $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed)

Table 1 shows the mean, standard deviation (SD) and correlations (r) between the variables under study. The employees seem to have a below average sense of work-family positive spillover ($M = 2.80$; $SD = .75$), where on a scale of 1 to 5, 2 corresponds to “Rarely”, 3 corresponds to “Sometimes”. Regarding employee’s sense of FSSB, the results seem to indicate that their perception of support is subpar ($M = 2.70$; $SD = .96$), where on a scale of 1 to 5, 2 corresponds to “Disagree”, 3 corresponds to “Neither agree nor disagree”. With respect to GSS, the results indicate that employees seem to have a low sense of GSS ($M = 2,60$; $SD = 1.07$), where on a scale of 1 to 5, 2 corresponds to “Totally disagree”, 3 corresponds to “Disagree”. Finally, in relation to engagements, the employee’s perception is that there is a moderate sense of engagement ($M = 4.30$; $SD = 1.41$), where on a scale of 1 to 7, 4 corresponds to “Sometimes a month”, 5 corresponds to “Once a week”.

By analyzing Table 1, it is possible to verify that there are some significant relationships among the variables under study. As expected, there is a highly significant and moderately positive relationship between WFPS and Engagement ($r = .36$, $p < .001$); as well as a highly significant and moderately positive relationship between WFPS and GSS ($r = .24$, $p < .001$); and also, a highly significant and moderately positive relationship between WFPS and FSSB ($r = .26$, $p < .001$). It can also be inferred that, there is a highly significant and moderately positive relationship between Engagement and GSS ($r = .44$, $p < .001$); and a highly significant and moderately positive relationship between Engagement and FSSB ($r = .44$, $p < .001$). In table 1, it is also observed that there is a highly significant and strong positive relationship between GSS and FSSB ($r = .90$, $p < .001$).

Hypothesis Testing

In order to proceed to the hypothesis test, model 4 in SPSS Process was used, which tests a simple mediation model. This model was run twice, first to understand the mediating

role of WFPS in the relationship between GSS and engagement; and then to understand the mediating role of WFPS in the relationship between FSSB and engagement. The first time the model was run presents an $R^2 = .27$, demonstrating that 27% of the variance of the data reports to these predictors, that is, WFPS is explained in 27% by our model. The second time the model was run presents an $R^2 = .29$, demonstrating that 29% of the variance of the data reports to these predictors, that is, WFPS is explained in 29% by our model. Each time the model was run, the covariates, sex and marital status, had a p -value that showed that these were not significant in predicting the effects of supervisor support on WFPS. This demonstrates that in this case these variables did not need to be controlled.

Table 2 – Mediation and Effects Analysis between Variables

	WFPS			
	β	SE	t	p
GSS	.19	.04	4.25	< .00
FSSB	.19	.04	4.70	< .00

Note: WFPS = Work-family positive spillover; GSS = General supervisor support; FSSB = Family supportive supervisor behaviour

For the first of the two hypotheses (H1), table 2 shows that, both GSS and FSSB have a positive and significant relation to WFPS ($\beta = .19$, $p < .00$) just as expected in the first hypothesis. However, contrary to the first hypothesis (H1), FSSB, does not have more of an impact on WFPS than GSS, as there is not a big distinction in the type of support from supervisors. Thus, H1, is not supported.

Table 3 – Mediation and Effects Analysis between variables

	ENGAG			
	β	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
GSS	.54	.07	7.20	< .00
FSSB	.47	.07	7.00	< .00
WFPS * GSS	.50	.10	5.24	< .00
WFPS * FSSB	.49	.10	5.05	< .00

Note: ENGAG = Engagement; GSS = General supervisor support; FSSB = Family supportive supervisor behaviour; WFPS = Work-family positive spillover

With regards to the second hypotheses (H2), table 3 show that, in relation to the outcome variable engagement, the relation between GSS and engagement has the value ($\beta = .54, p < .00$), meaning that GSS contributes significantly and positively to engagement, just as stated in the second hypothesis (H2). Also, for the outcome variable engagement, the relation between FSSB and engagement has the value ($\beta = .47, p < .00$), also demonstrating that FSSB contributes significantly and positively to engagement, just as stated in the second hypothesis (H2). The effect of WFPS on engagement in relation to GSS is demonstrated to be significant ($\beta = .50, p < .00$), and the effect of WFPS on engagement in relation to FSSB reveals that it is also significant ($\beta = .49, p < .00$).

In the matter of the mediating effect of GSS on WFPS and engagement, the results (indirect = 0.10, SE 0.03, 95% CI [0.04, 0.17]) demonstrate that there is a significant mediation effect. The mediating effect of FSSB on WFPS and engagement, the results (indirect = 0.09, SE 0.03, 95% CI [0.04, 0.16]) do therefore, demonstrate that there is a significant mediation effect. Thus, it can be said that WFPS has a mediating effect on supervisor support (either general or work-family specific support) and engagement, this therefore, leading to H2 being supported. Since zero does not fall between the lower and upper bound of the 95% confidence interval, we can infer that the result of the total effect of FSSB on engagement is = 0.56, whereas the result of the total effect of GSS on engagement is = 0.63 also due to zero not falling

between the lower and upper bound of the 95% confidence interval. The fact that there is a significant relation between supervisor support (either general or work-family specific) and engagement without the mediation of WFPS, tells us that these results demonstrate this to be a partial mediation.

Discussion

This study was carried out using a sample of 291 participants from the Portuguese National Republican Guard (GNR), where two forms of supervisor support was utilized, namely, general supervisor support (GSS), which provides guidance and support for effectiveness at work and family-supportive supervisors (FSSB), which is focused not only on an employee's effectiveness at work but also the well-being of their employee's family lives. The objective of this study was to analyse which of these two forms of support were more positively related to WFPS, as well as to analyse the relationships between these two forms of supervisor support and engagement, and the mediating role of WFPS in this relationship.

As expected, results suggest that supervisor support (either general or family specific support) is positively related with engagement. However, contrary to the expected results in H1, FSSB does not have more of an impact on WFPS than GSS, as these two forms of support seem to be equally as important and equally as related to WFPS. In relation to the mediating role of WFPS between supervisor support and engagement, the results supported this hypothesis, as it was observed that when there is either form of supervisor support (general or work-family specific) WFPS occurs, which ultimately leads to more engagement. Since the relation between supervisor support (either general or work-family specific) and engagement is significant without the role of WFPS, this leads us to conclude that this model is a partial mediation. In other words, supervisor support does not need the role of WFPS to have a

significant effect on engagement, but with the mediation of WFPS there is also a significant effect of supervisor support on engagement.

Firstly, as expected, there is a positive and significant relationship between supervisor support and WFPS, this is in line with previous studies on the topic (e.g., García-Cabrera, Lucia-Casademunt, Cuéllar-Molina & Padilla-Angulo, 2018; Neves, 2012; Escarda, Agudo Arroyo, & Pérez Redondo, 2020; Cameron & Ettington, 1988). As these authors state, behaviours related to family support from supervisors can lead to positive spillover in the home domain, these supervisors pass-on reinforcing behaviours and values to their subordinates which leads to positive spillover occurring at home. Neves (2012) reiterates that supportive supervisors are key in an organization, this because they possess the ability to help their subordinates clear up any ambiguities that they feel when dealing with their duties and help increase employee well-being (Blanco-Donoso et al., 2019; Marcinkus, Whelan-Berry, & Gordon, 2007). General support from a supervisor is highly beneficial to employees, as supportive supervisors help employees understand corporate policies that allows them to balance their work and family schedules and obligations (Julien, Somerville & Culp, 2011). According to Odle-Dusseau et al. (2016), GSS is distinct from family-specific support, as the critical role of FSSB allows for employees to better manage their duties, both at work as well as the obligations they have at home; it is not surprising that family-specific support has a positive effect on employees. Both forms of support are related to one another, being that family-specific support has been shown to be more strongly related to work-family outcomes (Odle-Dusseau et al., 2016), therefore, FSSB would be more salient in an employee's life, because there would be a greater work-family balance. Based on the literature, defending that FSSB was more strongly related than GSS to WFPS made sense, however, this current study proved this to be untrue. The results of this study demonstrated that there was not a salient distinction between the two types of support regarding WFPS. A possible justification for this

could be the actual population being studied. This population, namely, the police force, is a highly hierarchical institution with various ranking categories, Durão (2011), describes police establishments as ‘institutions with fixed boundaries’. Chambel et al. (2015) refers to the armed service work context as being highly structured with standardized procedures, and where the fundamental role of the superiors/supervisors is pertinent, regardless of the type of support provided, to the subordinates understanding of the rules and procedures that this hierarchical organization maintains.

This study as well as other studies have demonstrated that there is a relationship between supervisor support and positive spillover, Straub, Beham & Islam (2019) affirm that, continuous stimulation of work engagement by supervisors, lead to there being WFPS. However, this study also demonstrates a clear relationship between positive spillover and engagement. Employees have been found to exhibit increased levels of engagement when there was the presence of positive spillover from the work domain to the family domain (Culbertson, Mills & Fullagar, 2012; Schaufeli et al., 2008). This relationship can also be explained by the COR model via the gains spiral, due to the fact that the more resources an individual has, the more engaged in their work he/she becomes, which ultimately leads to these resources accumulating and the individual utilizing them in their personal lives (family domain), and vice versa, where the resources that they gain in their family domain spillover into their work domains leading to more engagement (Matthew et al., 2014; Eldor, 2016).

Eldor (2016), stated that when an employee is engaged in their work, they utilize the resources and knowledge at hand in their personal lives, therefore contributing to WFPS. As to the mediating effects, the results of this study demonstrated that beyond the mediating effect that WFPS had on supervisor support and engagement, engagement also had a positive and significant effect on supervisor support sans the mediating effect of WFPS. Therefore, this allows for the conclusion that this study had a partial mediation.

As expected, supervisor support (both general and family-specific) contributed positively and significantly to engagement, this is in accordance with various studies (Straub, Beham & Islam, 2019; Nahrgang, Morgeson, & Hofmann, 2011; Matthew et al., 2014; Carvalho & Chambel, 2018). As stated earlier on in this paper, based on Bakker & Geurts's (2004) dual-process model of work-home interference, there is an accordance with the findings of this study as job resources (i.e., supervisor support) were shown to be strongly related to engagement and therefore, consequently to WFPS (Straub, Beham & Islam, 2019). The effect of WFPS on engagement was also shown to be positive and significant, again just as expected. Another model that was mentioned above that can explain this phenomenon is Hobfoll's (1989) COR theory, in which resources that are gained by the employee lead to even greater resources (*gains spiral*), and this according to (Eldor, Harpaz & Westman, 2020), supplies that employee with a plethora of resources which they can then invest into other domains of their lives.

Limitations

Although this study generally supports the hypotheses put forward, there are some limitations inherent to the dissertation presented that should be mentioned. Firstly, the data that was collected for this study was at a single moment and had a cross-sectional structure, which does not allow for the observation and establishment of causal relationships over a long period of time such as in a study of a longitudinal nature. Thus, we are only allowed to study whether the relationships between the variables are positive or negative. Therefore, it would be important to conduct future longitudinal studies to be able to assess causality of the relationships under study.

Another limitation relates to the fact that the data was collected through self-assessment questionnaires, which could be seen as individuals responding to what is considered socially

accepted, revealing the phenomenon of social desirability, thus possibly contributing to biased results.

We can also point out the fact that the data collected was from a specific institution, located in Portugal, which does not allow for national or international generalizations since the participants of this study refer to individuals from a specific institution as well as from a specific culture. Therefore, this study should be applied once again to other institutions as well as to other countries for possible generalizations of the results.

Since this study points out the importance of supervisor support, for future studies it would be interesting to understand the impact that other forms of support have on the individuals, such as that of co-workers. It would also be interesting to see whether these same results hold true for other sectors (military, firefighters, health care workers etc.).

Practical Implications

Despite the limitations mentioned above, this study has relevant practical implications. Firstly, the fact that there is a direct and positive relationship between supervisor support and WFPS, indicates that there is a possibility of beneficial effects that can arise from this relationship. That said, it is imperative that supervisors develop positive behaviours in relation to family, as research has found that there is a positive link between WFPS and well-being (Hammer et al., 2007). To this end, the organization can invest in team-building sessions between employees and the supervisors, as this can strengthen their relationship and thus leads to, according to Hammer et al. (2007), mental and psychological well-being, which as the research has proven, can lead to WFPS.

Secondly, supervisors should also focus more on support in general as this has proven to be a good predictor of a positive work-family balance as well as a good predictor of

engagement as is the case in this study. According to Tremblay, Genin & di Loreto (2011), it has been shown that, surprisingly, the police force is quite open to work-life balance, and that this is not due to the organization itself but the supervisors. Therefore, it's important that this type of support from supervisors in the police force become more commonly acceptable. One thing that supervisors should do is encourage the employees to take breaks when needed, not only short breaks during the working day but also career breaks, if necessary (Kaur & Jain, 2015), to preserve an employee's well-being. This could lead to the employee becoming more engaged in their work as they know that if needed their supervisor will support them in these decisions.

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