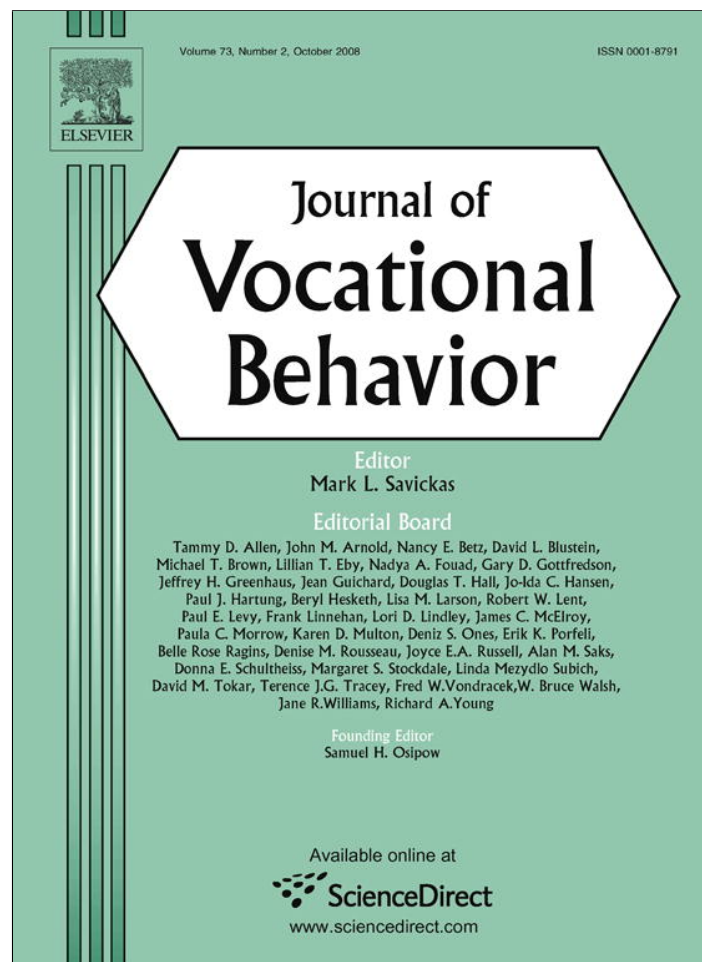


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## Family transmission of work affectivity and experiences to children

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## ABSTRACT

Theory and research suggest that children develop orientations toward work appreciably influenced by their family members' own expressed work experiences and emotions. Cross-sectional data from 100 children (53 girls, 47 boys; mean age = 11.1 years) and structural equation modeling were used to assess measures of work affectivity and experiences and to test hypotheses suggesting that family work experiences and emotions influence the orientations children develop toward work and how they in turn influence children's work and school motivation. Results indicated that the family setting influences children's perceptions of and future orientation toward the world of work through adults' expression of positive work experiences, negative work affect, and negative work experiences. Furthermore, children's work and school motivations appear to be principally influenced by indicators of favorable work affect and experiences. Implications and suggestions for future research are offered that cast the family as an important core setting for children's vocational development.

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## 1. Introduction

Vocational development constitutes a life-long process beginning in childhood and occurring within the family context (Hartung, Porfeli, & Vondacek, 2005; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994; Watson & McMahan, 2005). Children learn and gain awareness about work directly through their own experiences and vicariously by observing the work experiences of others, principally parents and other adult family members (Bryant, Zvonkovic, & Reynolds, 2006; Lent et al., 1994; Levine & Hoffner, 2006). Despite the significant role accorded the family in shaping child career expectations, few studies have examined how children learn about and develop an orientation to work within the family context (Bryant et al., 2006; Whiston & Keller, 2004) and this study is an attempt to do so. We began with the proposition that children develop orientations toward work through their parents' work experiences (Bryant et al., 2006; Kohn & Schooler, 1983) and hypothesized emotions as part of the process and outcomes associated with children's career development.

## 1.1. Socialization to work through work affectivity and experiences

Emotions and emotional competence play key roles in child behavior (Eisenberg & Fabes 1998) and the development of social competence (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998). Emotional competence denotes the ability to comprehend emotional content and is thought to be promoted primarily by parents through emotion-related socialization behaviors

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(ERSBs; Eisenberg et al.). ERSBs play an important role in children's emotional arousal, emotional competence, and self-concept development (Eisenberg et al.) and influence children's ability to recognize adults' emotions (Dunn, Brown, & Beardsall, 1991).

Work represents an emotional environment (Payne & Cooper, 2001). Workers can feel powerful emotions yet the work context may inhibit them from expressing negative emotions (Kidd, 1998, 2004) leading to a form of distress known as emotional labor (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Diefendorff, Croyle, & Gosserand, 2005; James, 1989; Morris & Feldman, 1996). One way to mitigate emotional labor is to express negative emotions and experiences at home. Doing so may, however, result in family members bearing the strain of workers' emotional labor in the form of work spillover (Crouter & Bumpus, 2001) and lead children to develop either more realistic or, possibly, overly pessimistic views of workers' work emotions (Goldstein & Oldham, 1979; Levine & Hoffner, 2006).

Generalized emotional expression, or *trait affectivity*, comprises two independent dimensions: positive affectivity (PA) and negative affectivity (NA) (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). PA is a generalized form of positive emotion reflecting enthusiasm, activity, and extraversion (Watson & Clark, 1997). NA is a general form of negative emotion indicated by distress and displeasure and associated with anxiety, depression, and neuroticism (Clark & Watson, 1991; Silvia & Warburton, 2006). Personality research and theory suggest that adults (Bagozzi, 1993; Cropanzano, James, & Konovsky, 1993; Kercher, 1992; Thompson, 2007; Watson et al., 1988; Wright & Staw, 1999) and children (Laurent et al., 1999) develop trait affectivity leading them to respond to situations with typically more PA or more NA.

Combining literatures bearing on vocational and emotional socialization and development leads to the inference that parents' intentional and unintentional expression of their work experiences and work affectivity may constitute work ERSBs. Adults expression of positive and negative work affectivity and experiences in the home, whether or not it is intentionally directed toward children, may socialize children to develop similar orientations toward work via vicarious learning (Lazarus, 1991). Typically, children have favorable attitudes about adult work and they know a fair amount about their parents' work lives (Galinsky, 1999). Some research suggests, however, that as children age from the elementary to middle school years, their attitudes toward work grow more negative (Goldstein & Oldham, 1979). This possibility prompts examining if and how adults actively and/or passively transmit work information to children and if these messages influence children's desire to learn about and engage in adult work (Goldstein & Oldham, 1979).

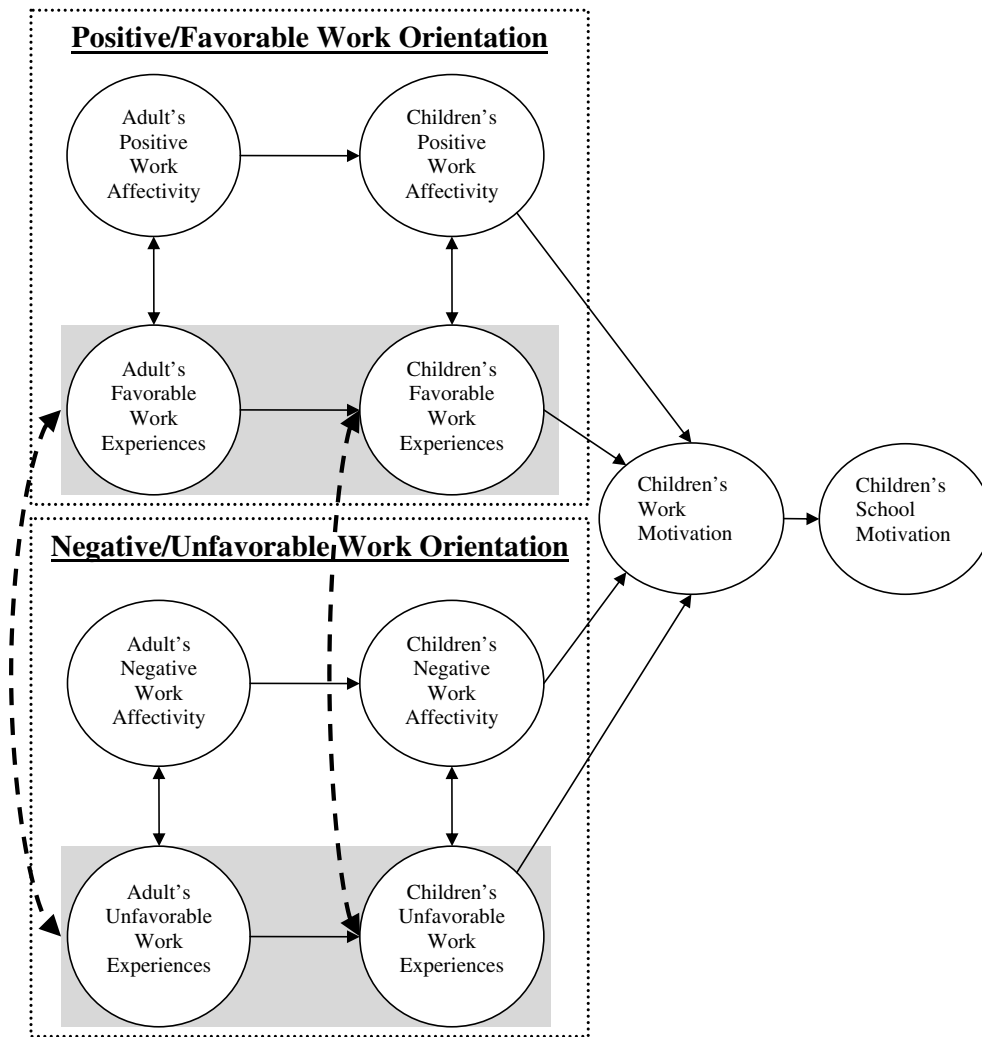
We advance a model suggesting that children establish an orientation to work through work ERSBs, which comprise adult family members' work affectivity and experiences expressed in the presence of children. We assessed children's perceptions of adults' positive and negative work affectivity and experiences in a way that accounted for positive and negative dimensions consistent with child PA–NA scales (Laurent et al., 1999) and work emotions in adult samples (Lazarus & Cohen-Charash, 2001). Consistent with the PA–NA model, we predicted work PA and NA to be uncorrelated. Assuming that the family is an agent in socializing children to work, we predicted ( $H_1$ ) children's perceptions of family members' work affect to be correlated with children's anticipated work affectivity, but respecting the PA–NA model, such associations were not predicted across the positive and negative dimension as seen in Fig. 1.

Consistent with the PA–NA model, work experiences were conceived as two classes yielding four variables: favorable and unfavorable adult family members' experiences and favorable and unfavorable children's anticipated work experiences. Given the lack of research in this area, the existence of relationships between the favorable and unfavorable work experience classes remains an open question that we explored in this study. The dashed arrows in Fig. 1 indicate the possibility that favorable and unfavorable work experience and expectations would be associated with one another.

## 1.2. Linking work affectivity and experiences

Children presumably view the work experiences and work-related emotions adults share with them as possible work experiences and emotions they could experience when they enter the workforce. This general hypothesis was tested with several specific and interrelated hypotheses. Pairing adults' work emotions with work experiences is a form of work ERSBs likely to increase children's arousal (Eisenberg et al., 1998). This heightened arousal may lead children to be more attentive to adults' work lives and to pair particular adult work experiences with commensurate emotions (e.g., positive affectivity to favorable experiences). Therefore, we predicted that ( $H_2$ ) children's perceptions of adult family members' work experiences and work affectivity would be positively correlated within and possibly inversely correlated across the positive and negative dimensions.

We also predicted that children's anticipated work experiences and emotions would be the product of vicarious conditioning and work ERSBs. Children observe adults' expressed work experiences and emotions and establish commensurate conceptions of their future work lives. Children observing experience-emotion pairings (e.g., "My mother is always mistreated at work; therefore she is always sad at work") are predicted to be vicariously conditioned to such pairings (e.g., "I will always be sad at work because work is a place where I will be mistreated.") We therefore predicted ( $H_3$ ) positive associations between adults and children's experiences and their emotions within the positive and negative dimensions. Consistent with PA–NA theory and research, we predicted no significant correlation across children's positive and negative work affectivity. Given no existing evidence, however, we tested the relationship between positive and negative experiences in an exploratory fashion.



**Fig. 1.** The intergenerational transmission of work affectivity and experiences and their impact on children's work and school motivation. *Note:* All relationships are predicted to be positive except the dashed arrows. The dashed arrow and gray boxes reflect possible negative relationships between favorable and unfavorable adult and children work experience variables.

### 1.3. Work and school motivation

Vicarious learning and conditioning translates into career outcome expectations and work motivation (Schaub & Tokar, 2005), but the impact of affect and outcome expectations has not been extended to the grade school years. If children are vicariously conditioned to work, then this conditioning is predicted to influence their motivation to work. We predicted that (H<sub>4</sub>) favorable work emotions and experiences would fuel work motivation and unfavorable emotions would reduce work motivation. Given that the experience and emotion variables pertain to work, we predicted that (H<sub>5</sub>) they would primarily influence work motivation, which in turn will influence school motivation in a mediated fashion as seen Fig. 1. On the contrary, children of this age may see little connection between school and work and therefore not exhibit the predicted associations. We also predicted that (H<sub>6</sub>) children's orientation to work would mediate the relationship between adults' orientation to work and work motivation. Given the lack of research in this area, we contrasted this mediator model against a model permitting direct effects from all of the experience and emotion variables to both forms of motivation.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

Participants included 100 randomly selected 4th-, 5th-, and 6th-grade students from a suburban school district outside of a major southeastern city in the United States. As of 2000, the median household income of this district was about \$46,000 relative to the national median of about \$42,000. Mean age of the participants was 11.1 years (*SD* = 1.1) and 53% of the sample was female. Most participants indicated their race as Caucasian (66%), some indicated their ethnicity as Hispanic (9%) and

did not indicate a race, and the remaining participants indicated their race as African American (7%), American Indian (2%), Chinese (2%), and Other or multiracial (2%), or did not indicate their race or ethnicity (9%). Consistent with the 2000 US census, students were asked whether or not they were Hispanic and a subsequent item asked about their race. Given that at this age some students may believe their race to be Hispanic, this may have contributed to the pattern of responding for the Hispanic children and some of the missing data in the race item.

2.2. Measures

Scales used were intentionally separated from one another within a larger battery to reduce the possibility that answers on one scale would influence answers on another scale. All items for the measures used in the present study appear in Table 1.

2.2.1. Work affectivity

Eleven emotions were selected on the basis of theory and research to identify the core human emotions (e.g., Ekman & Friesen, 1971, 1975), emotions experienced at work (e.g., Lazarus & Cohen-Charash, 2001), and emotions employed in a positive and negative affectivity scale (PANAS) for children (Laurent et al., 1999). Consistent with the PANAS literature (Bagozzi, 1993; Kercher, 1992; Laurent et al., 1999; Thompson, 2007; Watson et al., 1988), affectivity items were divided into positive and negative dimensions. Participants used a scale from 1 = never to 4 = always to indicate how often their “adult family members” typically experienced eleven different emotions at work. “Adult family members” was favored over “parents” given that the composition of the modern family may or may not include parents and the researchers did not want to exclude or alienate participants whose families exhibited an alternate composition. Later, participants used the same Likert-type scale to indicate how often they expected to experience the same set of emotions when they become adult workers.

2.2.2. Work experiences

Consistent with the PA–NA dimensions, we divided work experience items into favorable and unfavorable dimensions. Four items were used to assess favorable work experiences and three items reflected unfavorable work experiences. Participants used a Likert scale from 1 = never to 4 = always to indicate how often their “adult family members” typically experi-

**Table 1**  
Psychometric indicators of the measures: standardized loadings and reliability estimates<sup>a</sup>

Step	Construct	Item	Loadings		Reliability			
			Child	Adult	Child	Adult		
1	Positive work affectivity	Happy	.52	.66	.78	.83		
		Love	.79	.65				
		Proud	.85	.85				
		Fun	.66	.77				
	Negative work affectivity	Afraid	.57	.54				
		Hate	.55	.53				
		Ashamed	.64	.56				
		Sad	.61	.63				
		Angry	.74	.67				
		Disgusted	.59	.71				
	Favorable experiences	Succeed at work	.74	.61			.72	.67
		Coworkers friendly	.32	.61				
		Work is easy	.62	.56				
		Boss is fair	.55	.61				
Unfavorable experiences	Lose job	.69	.54	.63	.63			
	Work interferes with family	.45	.37					
	Difficult to obtain a job	.72	.81					
2	School motivation	Like school work	.71			.82		
		Feel sad if you do not go to school	.69					
		Work as hard as you can in school	.53					
		Like extra school work	.63					
		Feel excited to go to school	.78					
		Have fun doing school work	.57					
	Work motivation	Will like work	.74					
		Feel sad if you do not go to work	.32					
		Will work as hard as you can at work	.49					
		Will like extra work	.54					
		Will feel excited to go to work	.87					
		Will have fun working	.81					

<sup>a</sup> Note. Only one statistic is reported for those measures that exclusively pertain to children.

enced the seven work experiences. Later, participants were asked to report how frequently they expected have the same set of work experiences when they become adult workers.

### 2.2.3. Motivation to engage in school and adult work

School motivation was assessed with eight items about how frequently children desire and actually satisfy school tasks. A parallel set of eight items asked participants to predict how frequently they will desire and satisfy work tasks. The two sets of items were cast as manifestations of work and school motivation. Participants responded to the items with a Likert scale from 1 = never to 4 = always.

### 2.3. Procedure

After obtaining informed consent from the child and one of their guardians, data were collected via a web-based survey in the children's school computer lab. The survey required computer skills consistent with 3rd graders' computer-based competencies (International Society for Technology in Education., 2000) and this method is consistent with the growing literature suggesting that web-based surveys are an appropriate format for data collection (Buchanan & Smith, 1999; Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004; Johnson, 2005).

## 3. Results

Cronbach's alpha was computed for each subscale and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test the structure and validity of the instruments. Thereafter, we examined the theoretical model with structural equation models (SEM) using LISREL 8.72. Preliminary CFA suggested that two of the items within each motivation scale and one of the emotion items did not fit the model well and were removed. After removing these items, the factor loadings (see Table 1) and fit indices (see Table 2) from the CFA indicated that the measurement models for adult and child emotion and experience (Step 1) and child work and school motivation (Step 2) were both acceptable using Hu and Bentler's (1999) joint criteria (i.e., SRMR  $\leq$  .09 and RMSEA  $\leq$  .06). As seen in Table 3, children reported that their family members evidenced more positive than negative experiences and emotions and the children expected the same pattern in their future work lives.

Overlaying the correlations between the constructs as seen in Table 3 onto the theoretical model suggested that the model may fit the data. We examined correlations between positive and negative work affectivity, which, as expected, proved weak ( $r < -.23$ ). Correlations between positive experiences and NA variables and vice versa were in the weak to moderate range. In addition, all positive work experience and PA variables were positively correlated with each other ( $H_1$ ,  $H_2$ ,  $H_3$ , and  $H_4$ , are supported) and positively correlated with work motivation and school motivation. Consistently, all negative work affectivity and experience variables exhibited generally moderate correlations with one another ( $H_1$ ,  $H_2$ ,  $H_3$ , and  $H_4$ , are supported). Contrary to expectations, of the negative work experience and affectivity variables only the child negative experience variable was positively correlated with work motivation and school motivation. This finding precluded the possibility that children's anticipated negative work experiences and affectivity mediated the relationship between adults' negative work experiences and affectivity ( $H_5$  and  $H_6$ , are not supported for the negative dimension), but still allowed for a test of an indirect flow of influence. These preliminary findings supported a test of the complete theoretical model with the understanding that mediated relationships were not possible for the negative affectivity and experience variables.

**Table 2**

Fit indices for the measurement and structural models

Step	$\chi^2$	df	NFI	NNFI	CFI	IFI	GFI	AGFI	SRMR	RMSEA	LL	UL
1	623.1	489	.74	.87	.89	.89	.74	.69	.083	.051	.038	.062
2	62.9	50	.92	.98	.98	.98	.91	.86	.062	.049	.000	.083
3	1316.9	962	.69	.84	.85	.85	.65	.61	.110	.059	.051	.066
4.1	124.7	94	.89	.95	.96	.96	.87	.82	.075	.055	.024	.080
4.2	179.3	129	.82	.91	.92	.92	.84	.79	.076	.060	.037	.081
5.1	419.3	328	.85	.94	.95	.95	.78	.73	.083	.051	.035	.065
5.2	532.7	387	.74	.87	.88	.88	.75	.70	.093	.059	.046	.071
6.1	424.1	332	.85	.94	.95	.95	.78	.73	.085	.051	.035	.065
6.2	535.9	391	.74	.87	.88	.88	.75	.70	.097	.059	.046	.071
7.1	424.9	334	.85	.94	.95	.95	.78	.73	.085	.050	.034	.064
7.2	178.99	127	.82	.90	.92	.92	.84	.79	.076	.062	.039	.082

Note. Step 1: adult and child affectivity and experience measurement model; Step 2: motivation measurement model; Step 3: complete hypothesized structural model; Step 4.1: adult and child positive affectivity and experience structural model; Step 4.2: adult and child negative affectivity and experience structural model; Step 5.1: adult and child positive affectivity, experience, and motivation saturated structural model; Step 5.2: adult and child negative affectivity, experience, and motivation saturated structural model; Step 6 adult and child positive affectivity, experience, and motivation partially mediated structural model; Step 7.1: adult and child positive affectivity, experience, and motivation final fully mediated structural model; Step 7.2: adult and child negative affectivity and experience final structural model. NFI, normed fit index; NNFI, non-normed fit index; CFI, comparative fit index; IFI, incremental fit index; GFI, goodness of fit index; AGFI, adjusted goodness of fit index; SRMR, standardized root mean square residual; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; LL, refers to the lower limit; and UL, refers to the upper limit of the 90% confidence interval of RMSEA.

**Table 3**  
Descriptive statistics and relationships among major constructs

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Adult positive experience	3.05	.57	—	-.22*	.51**	-.27**	.44**	.09	.27**	-.05	.33**	.25**
2. Adult negative experience	1.78	.60		—	.02	.49**	-.11	.39**	.10	.39**	.06	.04
3. Adult positive affectivity	3.03	.75			—	-.23*	.15	.08	.45**	.03	.17	.26**
4. Adult negative affectivity	1.58	.46				—	.03	.19*	-.04	.48**	-.04	-.05
5. Child positive experience	3.17	.56					—	.06	.45**	-.16	.61**	.35**
6. Child negative experience	1.75	.66						—	-.13	.36**	.20*	.24*
7. Child positive affectivity	3.33	.65							—	-.19	.52**	.26**
8. Child negative affectivity	1.62	.47								—	-.12	.19
9. Child work motivation	2.88	.59									—	.49**
10. Child school motivation	2.35	.67										—

\*  $p < .05$ .

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

We next used SEM to test the complete structural model depicted in Fig. 1. The fit indices as seen in Table 2, Step 3 did not conform to established fit criteria. The lack of fit may be due more to limitations in sample size than limitations in the theoretical model, because the number of estimated pathways in this model exceeded the sample size. The estimated pathways (not depicted in a figure) suggested that the relationships between the positive experience and affectivity variables and between these variables and work and school motivation were stronger than were the same pathways for the negative variables. Given this observation, we conducted several exploratory follow-up tests to discern whether or not the fit of the model varied across the positive and negative dimensions.

Consistent with an approach espoused by Holmbeck (1997), a series of steps was undertaken to determine if (a) children's work affectivity and anticipated experiences and (b) children's work motivation behaved as true mediators as depicted in Fig. 1. In the first step, the structural models for adult and child PA–NA and experience absent the motivation variables were tested, respectively, as seen in Table 2, Steps 4.1 & 4.2. Both structural models fit well with the data. Second, we added the motivation measurement model to the models in Steps 4.1 and 4.2 to yield saturated structural models as seen in Table 2, Steps 5.1 & 5.2. These models were similar to that presented in Fig. 1, but estimated separately for the positive and negative work orientation variables and these models also included direct pathways from all of the experience and affectivity variables to both of the motivation variables. The fit indices were acceptable for the positive model (Step 5.1) but not for the negative model (Step 5.2). In the third step, and consistent with the theoretical model, the direct pathways from the adult variables to the motivation variables were fixed to zero, thus yielding Steps 6.1 and 6.2 in Table 2. Once again, the negative model did not fit the data but the positive model did fit. As a result, only the positive model was retained to test the presumed mediator model including the motivation variables. Finally, the structural model was re-estimated with the direct paths from the positive affectivity and experience to school motivation fixed to zero yielding the fully mediated hypothesized model of the positive orientation variables as seen in Table 2, Step 7 and the top portion of Fig. 2. This structural model of the positive work orientation variables fit the data well. Also, a model of the negative work orientation items was computed without the addition of the motivation variables seen in Table 2, Step 7.2 and Fig. 2 so that pathways across the positive and negative work orientation models could be compared. This model of the negative work orientation variables fit the data well.

Comparing the three variants of the positive model in Steps 5.1, 6.1, and 7 suggested that the fully saturated model of the positive work orientation variables (Step 5.1) exhibited the best fit, but the difference in fit relative to the fully mediated model (Step 7) was nominal ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 5.6$ ,  $df = 6$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Given that the mediator model is nested within the saturated model and therefore more parsimonious, we identified Step 7.1 ( $H_5$  and  $H_6$ , are supported) for the positive model and Step 7.2 for the negative model (see Fig. 2) given that these models were most consistent with the theoretical model and also fit the data reasonably well.

The failure of the full theoretical model prompted further exploration to discern what aspects of the model may be more or less consistent with the data. The bivariate correlations seen in Table 1 between the adult variables and the work motivation variable translate to be almost zero in the positive work orientation saturated model (Steps 5.1 and 5.2 in Table 2). This suggests that the child positive work affectivity and experience variables mediate the relationship between the two. This pattern is not observed with the school motivation variable suggesting that the adult work variables influence school motivation independent of the child work variables. Moreover, relative to the bivariate correlations, the betas do not consistently decrease, in some cases increase, and in other cases shift from being a predicted positive bivariate correlation to being a negative beta. Although the negative model did not conform to the established fit criteria, many of the same unanticipated findings were observed in this model. These comparisons suggested that the hypothesized mediator model employing all of the positive work-related variables and work motivation was generally consistent with the data. Moreover, the magnitude of the association between the work and school motivation variables was strong. On the contrary, relationships between the school motivation and positive work affectivity and experience variables are not well accounted for by the theoretical model.

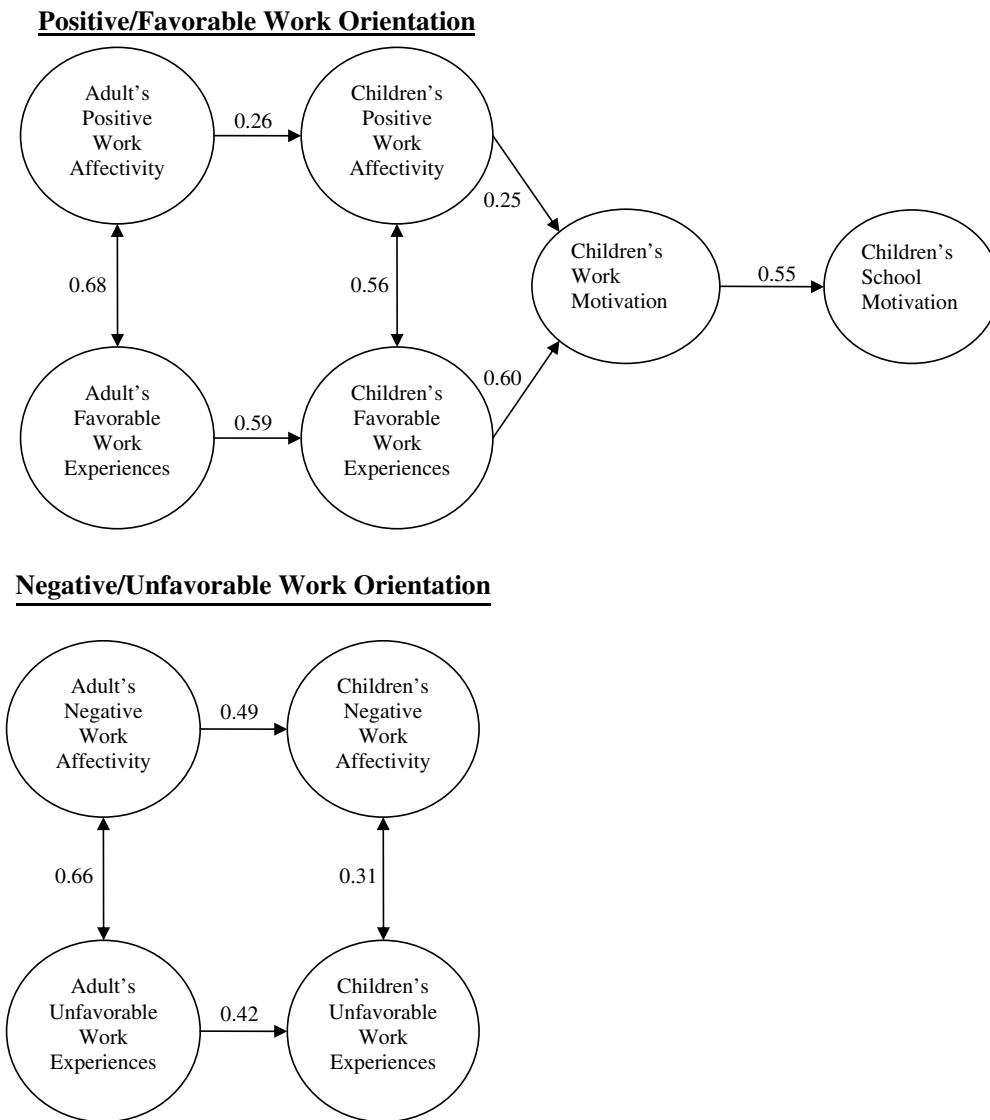


Fig. 2. The mediated impact of positive work affectivity and experiences on motivation.

The results also suggested that the failure of the overall theoretical model to account for the data may be mostly attributed to the link between the negative dimension of work and the motivation variables. While the negative work orientation model demonstrated stronger interrelationships than the positive work orientation model, the link between the negative model and the motivation variables were weaker than they were for the positive model. On balance, the standardized betas in the negative model were generally weaker than they were in the positive model, but most were in the moderate range.

**4. Discussion**

The present findings suggest that children's perceived and expected work experiences and emotions are structured around fairly independent positive and negative dimensions. The descriptive statistics suggest that adult family members present more favorable images of the world of work than would be predicted by the previous literature (Goldstein and Oldham, 1979; Levine & Hoffner, 2006). Future research could explore whether older middle school children exhibit a shift toward a more pessimistic view observed elsewhere (Goldstein & Oldham, 1979).

Results from the SEM analyses are consistent with the literatures devoted to the socialization of emotion (Dunn et al., 1991; Eisenberg et al., 1998; Lazarus, 1991; von Salisch, 2001), structure of emotion (Watson et al., 1988), and SCCT (Lent et al., 1994). Children appear to be partly socialized to work through their perceptions of adult family members' work experiences and emotions. They also appear to be tuning in to two distinct work channels that contain independent experiential and emotional content. This information partially sources from adult family members and differentially influences children's work and school motivation.



The intergenerational transmission of *positive* work experiences appears to be stronger and to have a greater impact on work motivation relative to negative work experiences and positive and *negative* work affectivity. Children who detect a more favorable work orientation in their adult family members tend to have more favorable expectations about their future work and in turn tend to be more motivated to engage in the world of work. Comparing the magnitude of the pathways of the final mediator model suggests that perceived and expected positive work experiences have a greater independent effect on children's work motivation than do their perceived and expected work emotions, but both are associated with motivation. The negative work experience and affectivity variables appear to operate in a similar manner, but the structural model did not fit the data. Unlike the positive orientation model, associations between motivation and the negative affectivity and experience variables are generally weaker. These differences between the positive and negative work orientation models hint at a possible protective mechanism whereby favorable perceptions and expectations are directly translated into a motivational language while unfavorable perceptions and expectations are generally blocked.

The strength of the links between negative work experiences and affectivity suggests that negative work affectivity is more directly transferred from adults to children than is positive work affectivity. These findings suggest that emotional labor in the workforce may be contributing to adults expressing genuine negative work affect coupled with negative work experiences at home that translate into children's work expectations. Using the concept of emotional labor (Kidd, 1998, 2004) and the process of surface acting whereby employees present false favorable emotions while suppressing unfavorable emotions in the workplace (Hochschild, 1979), perhaps adults consciously compensate for or try to buffer their negative expressions by intentionally sharing favorable workplace experiences with children in their family. This conscious effort may lead to the expression of superficial and unconvincing positive affect (i.e., "putting on a happy face"), which could lead to the intergenerational transmission of genuine positive experiences but only a weak transmission of positive work affect. Future research could examine this possibility. Children in families who genuinely experience positive work affectivity and express it at home may exhibit a stronger intergenerational correlation for positive affectivity than those children whose families engage in surface acting of positive work affect.

#### 4.1. Limitations and future research directions

The confirmatory factor analyses suggested that the instruments used in this study are promising, but the reliabilities could be improved. Future research should aim to refine and possibly add items to improve the reliability of the instruments and specifically the favorable and unfavorable work experience measures.

Although a causal sequence is implied and predicted suggesting that work experiences and affectivity flow from adult family members to children, clearly it is entirely plausible that the causal propositions could be bi-directional or even reversed (Perry Jenkins, Repetti, & Crouter, 2000). For example, the link between adults' family experiences and their work experiences appears to be bi-directional (Crouter & Bumpus, 2001) and children appear to influence parents' work lives (Perry Jenkins et al., 2000). Given the cross-sectional data examined in this study, the causal direction of the specified paths cannot be definitively tested. Future research could employ longitudinal data to test for recursive models examining child development and adult socialization practices as a function of contingencies within the family and work contexts.

The theoretical model includes a large number of hypothesized structural relationships and measurement loadings relative to the small sample size. The magnitude of the associations in the structural model and the strength of the factor loadings in the measurement models are promising and warrant further attention. The lack of fit in the overall theoretical model (see Fig. 1) and in the negative model including the motivation variables given bivariate associations that are generally moderate in strength suggests that the small sample size employed in this study may be a more limiting factor than the theoretical model. Comparisons across the positive and negative work orientations should be treated tentatively given that the overall theoretical model did not conform to established fit criteria and the number of tested relationships in this study exceeded the sample size. Future research should include a larger sample size to increase statistical power and improve the generalizability of the findings.

This study informs our understanding of the role of the family setting in socializing children to the world of work. Children appear to compose a general picture of work within the family context that is defined in terms of affect and experiences and is structured into positive and negative dimensions. Future research should aim to further examine this process over time by incorporating an ecological and dynamic model of socialization that accounts for the mutual exchange between children and adults within and across family, work, and school contexts (Bryant et al., 2006).

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