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**THE EFFECT OF WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT ON THE
PHYSICAL HEALTH OF PORTUGUESE JUDICIAL
PROFESSIONALS:**

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PSYCHOPATHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS

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O efeito do conflito trabalho-família na saúde física de profissionais judiciais portugueses: O papel mediador de sintomas psicopatológicos

Introdução: O presente estudo analisou o efeito do conflito trabalho-família no domínio físico da qualidade de vida de magistrados e funcionários judiciais portugueses, avaliando o efeito mediador de sintomas psicopatológicos.

Método: Uma amostra de 1,206 profissionais judiciais ($n = 467$ magistrados e $n = 739$ funcionários judiciais) responderam a um protocolo *online* que, além de recolher dados sociodemográficos e profissionais, avaliou o conflito trabalho-família (WFCS), a qualidade de vida (WHOQoL-BREF) e sintomas psicopatológicos (BSI). Recorreu-se à *path analysis* para construção de um modelo de mediação simples. **Resultados:** O conflito trabalho-família revelou ter um significativo efeito negativo no domínio físico da qualidade de vida. Os sintomas psicopatológicos medeiam parcialmente esta relação.

Conclusões: O conflito trabalho-família e os sintomas psicopatológicos experienciados pelas duas categoriais profissionais afetam negativamente a qualidade de vida a nível físico. Este estudo contribui para colmatar uma lacuna nesta área de investigação, sublinhando a importância da criação de iniciativas que promovam diretamente a conciliação trabalho-família e, indiretamente, a qualidade de vida destes profissionais, tal como a qualidade da justiça em Portugal.

Palavras-chave: conflito trabalho-família; qualidade de vida – domínio físico; magistrados; funcionários judiciais; sintomas psicopatológicos.

The effect of work-family conflict on the physical health of Portuguese judicial professionals: The mediating role of psychopathological symptoms

Introduction: The present study analyzed the effect of work-family conflict on the Physical Health domain of quality of life of Portuguese magistrates and court staff, studying the mediating effect of psychopathological symptoms.

Method: A sample of 1,206 judicial professionals ($n=467$ magistrates e $n=739$ court staff) answered an online survey that, in addition to collecting sociodemographic and professional data, assessed work-family conflict (WFCS), quality of life (WHOQoL-BREF), and psychopathological symptoms (BSI). Path analysis was used to build a simple mediation model.

Results: Work-family conflict has a significant negative effect on the Physical Health domain of quality of life. Psychopathological symptoms partially mediate this relationship. **Conclusions:** Work-family conflict and psychopathological symptoms experienced by both professional categories show negative effects on physical health. This study fills a gap on the subject, underlying the importance of creating initiatives that promote work-family conciliation and, indirectly, quality of life of these professionals, and the quality of justice in Portugal.

Key words: work-family conflict; quality of life – physical health domain; magistrates; court staff; psychopathological symptoms.

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List of abbreviations

ASJP Associação Sindical dos Juízes Portugueses

CSM Conselho Superior da Magistratura

CSMP Conselho Superior do Ministério Público

CSTAF Conselho Superior dos Tribunais Administrativos

DGAJ Direção-Geral da Administração da Justiça

SFJ Sindicato dos Funcionários Judiciais

SMMP Sindicato dos Magistrados do Ministério Público

SOJ Sindicato dos Oficiais de Justiça

WFC/FWC Work-Family Conflict/Family-Work Conflict

WHOQoL World Health Organization Quality of Life

Introduction

Although the interaction between work and family has long been studied, few studies relate this issue, specifically, the work-family conflict to quality of life. The studies become even scarcer when the professionals under study are judicial professionals, such as magistrates and court staff (Casaleiro et al., 2019; Dias et al., 2020). The literature has shown that high levels of work-family conflict can negatively impact individuals' satisfaction with health, energy, and ability to perform day-to-day activities. Thus, work-family conflict can lead to a more negative perception of quality of life (Md-Sidin et al., 2010; Rice et al., 1992; A. C. R. Silva, 2014). Judicial professionals work under demanding conditions, on a quantitative level, with high workloads (Dias et al., 2020; A. C. Ferreira et al., 2014), and on a qualitative level, being an emotionally demanding job (Anleu & Mack, 2005; Lipp & Tanganelli, 2002; E. Rossouw & Rothmann, 2020). The stressful professional conditions under which judicial professionals work affect all spheres of their lives, namely the family one (A. C. Ferreira et al., 2014; P. H. S. Ferreira, 2011; Guimarães et al., 2017). For example, in a study with Portuguese magistrates, 81.1% agreed that their work limits their personal life (A. C. Ferreira et al., 2014).

This study is relevant since it fills a gap in the national literature, mainly because it includes court staff. These professionals have been an "invisible" professional category in the studies conducted, something that may reflect the social invisibility of the work they perform (Dias et al., 2020) and lead to the lack of recognition reported (Merlo et al., 2012). Understanding the variables that impact work-family conflict and quality of life is relevant because it allows the creation of policies and strategies that enable a more peaceful work-family conciliation and the promotion of a better quality of life (Fiksenbaum, 2014; Lee & Kang, 2019; Matias et al., 2010). These initiatives are of particular importance because if these professionals do not feel well, either physically or mentally, they will have their performance impaired, as well as other domains of their lives (A. C. Ferreira et al., 2014; A. C. R. Silva, 2014). The functioning of the judicial system, which depends on these professionals, represents the quality of justice in Portugal and, therefore, the Portuguese democracy, indispensable to ensure citizens' rights (Dias & Gomes, 2018).

This research aims to understand the effect that work-family conflict has on the Physical Health domain of quality of life of Portuguese magistrates and court staff, considering psychopathological symptoms as a mediator. Based on the existing literature, work-family conflict is expected to impact the Physical Health domain of quality of life negatively, and psychopathological symptoms are expected to mediate this relationship. With this study, it is hoped to pave the way to a deeper study of work and family interaction in these professionals who face great demands. In addition, it intends to highlight the impact that the conflict between these two essential areas of human life may have on the quality of life.

I - Conceptual framework

1.1. The Portuguese judicial system and judicial professionals

A brief description of the Portuguese judicial system, and the role and respective functions of Portuguese magistrates (judges and public prosecutors) and court staff are presented below.

In Portugal, there are two different sets of courts with specific jurisdictions: judicial courts and administrative courts. The judicial courts deal with ordinary criminal and civil matters and the administrative ones with administrative and tax matters (Dias & Gomes, 2018). Besides these two principal sets of courts, there is also the Constitutional Court (*Tribunal Constitucional*), the Court of Auditors (*Tribunal de Contas*), courts of arbitration (*Tribunais Arbitrais*), and justices of the peace (*Julgados de Paz*) (European E-Justice Portal, 2020).

The judicial courts are classified according to a specific hierarchy that includes courts of first and second instances and the Supreme Court of Justice. The latter is the highest entity in the hierarchy, having jurisdiction all over the Portuguese territory (Santos & Gomes, 2005). There are five second instance courts, also known as appeal courts (*Tribunais da Relação*). First instance courts are district courts, even though they can have a wider territorial jurisdiction. There is a total of 23 first instance courts. The administrative courts follow a hierarchy that comprises courts of first and second instances and the Supreme Administrative Court. The latter has jurisdiction all over the

country and is divided into two sections: administrative section and fiscal section. There are two second instance courts, one in Lisbon and one in Porto (Dias & Gomes, 2018). There are 17 first instance administrative courts.

Judges, public prosecutors, and court staff are three professional categories that play essential and relevant roles in the Portuguese judicial system. In 2020, from all judicial professionals, there were a total of 2,012 (17.97%) judges, 1,419 (12.67%) public prosecutors, and 7,547 (67.41%) court staff. In the three mentioned professions, there are more women than men. 61.83% of judges, 64.83% of public prosecutors, and 66.41% of court staff are women (Estatísticas da Justiça, 2020).

Judges belong to a sovereign body, the courts, and are responsible for administering justice in the name of citizens. They must be impartial and independent, that is why they can not have other public or private duties, except unpaid teaching or scientific research. Considering that there are two different sets of courts, there are (1) judicial court judges and (2) administrative and tax court judges. With the new public management and judicial reforms (2014), besides being responsible for managing justice through hearings, trials, and dispute resolutions, judges have also been entrusted with administrative tasks in the courts. These changes and additional tasks may bring conflict and ambiguity of role to judges' (Guimarães et al., 2017).

Public prosecutors, known as *Magistrados do Ministério Público*, belong to the Public Prosecution Service. Their career has five levels, in a hierarchical order: Prosecutor-General (*Procurador-Geral da República*), Vice-Prosecutor-General (*Vice-Procurador-Geral da República*), Deputy Prosecutor-General (*Procurador-Geral Adjunto*), District Prosecutor (*Procurador da República*) and Deputy District Prosecutor (*Procurador da República Adjunto*) (European E-Justice Portal, 2016). Public prosecutors perform a wide range of heterogeneous and polymorphic activities. They are responsible for representing the State, defending the interests specified by the law, applying criminal policy defined by the sovereign bodies of the State, instituting penal action guided by the legality principle, and defending democratic legality according to the law and the Portuguese Constitution (Dias, 2013). At the exercise of their functions, public prosecutors play an

important role in the access to justice because they are, in various cases, the first contact citizens have with the judicial system. Furthermore, they deal frequently and directly with the public, being responsible to officially represent workers and their families' social rights, providing information and legal advice, referring citizens to other entities in the realm of conflict resolution, and promoting legal aid (Dias, 2013).

Court staff¹ is a category of professionals that work in court secretariats or public prosecution services. Their functions are contemplated in a specific statute, the Statute of Justice Officials (*Estatuto dos Funcionários de Justiça*). Court staff can be divided into four different groups: (1) court clerks (*Oficiais de Justiça*), (2) IT technicians (*Técnicos de Informática*), (3) technical assistants (*Assistentes Técnicos*) and (4) operational assistants (*Assistentes Operacionais*) (Direção-Geral da Administração da Justiça, n.d.).

In 2020, 94% of all court staff were court clerks (7,097 in a total of 7,547) (Estatísticas da Justiça, 2020). According to Dias and colleagues (2020), court clerks are a feminized, aged and with an increasingly higher education level profession. Court clerks perform an essential role in judicial processes, being responsible for the more administrative functions (e.g., receiving and archiving documents, making minutes, notifying, and contacting individuals) and assisting judges and public prosecutors on their functions. Furthermore, if the professionals work in a public prosecution service, they are also responsible for taking the statements of the victim, the accused, or the witness in the process (Dias et al., 2020). In addition to the general duties of a civil servant, court clerks must fulfill a permanence duty. This means they can only be absent outside of the regular schedule of secretariat service if their absence does not disrupt any act of service (Decreto Lei nº343/99 de 26 de Agosto, 1999).

¹ Court staff and court clerks are two designations used in the present study, and they refer to different professionals. Court clerks are a subcategory of court staff. Court staff also includes IT technicians, technical assistants, and operational assistants.

1.2. Work-Family conflict

There are different roles to undertake and perform throughout an individual's life, but the ones played in the family and work spheres are the most prominent (Md-Sidin et al., 2010; Montgomery et al., 2003; M. Silva, 2007). At the end of the last century, several changes occurred in the organization of Portuguese families. The traditional family model where only the man worked stopped being the norm and became the exception (Wall et al., 2013). The rising prevalence of dual-earner families and single-parent families turns the study of work and family dynamics especially relevant and necessary (McElwain et al., 2005; Vieira et al., 2014), since some aspects of the professional life may become incompatible with family needs and demands (Duarte, 2015). Individuals end up developing strategies to conciliate the professional and the family roles. Some of them are efficient, but others are not and may result in conflict (Matias et al., 2010).

According to the comprehensive model of work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), conflict is one of the interface elements between work and other life domains, such as the family one. The construct work-family conflict² is bidirectional, and it comprises two directions: (1) work-to-family conflict and (2) family-to-work conflict. So, it must be understood in a bidirectional way. The two forms of conflict are empirically distinct constructs (S. Pereira & Ribeiro, 2014). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) describe, besides its bidirectionality, three different types of work-family conflict: (1) time-based conflict, (2) strain-based conflict, and (3) behavior-based conflict.

Time-based conflict (1) is experienced when multiple roles compete over the available time, which means the time invested in the performance of one role will necessarily limit the remaining time available to invest in other roles (S. Pereira & Ribeiro, 2014). In what concerns the work domain, this form of conflict is related to the number of working hours, inflexible work schedules, and shiftwork. In the family sphere, the time demands are related

² Although the term work-family conflict was used along the text, this must be understood in a bidirectional way.

to spouse employment, having young children, and large families (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

In situations where the strain from one role disturbs the performance in another one, a strain-based conflict (2) is present. Work demands can produce irritability, fatigue, exhaustion, and apathy. The strain at work may arise due to role conflict, role ambiguity, or boundary-spanning activities. In the family domain, the tension may be caused by family conflict and low spouse support (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). A strain-based conflict can be indirectly caused by time-based conflict due to long commuting and the characteristics of the work schedule (M. Silva, 2007)

The behavior-based conflict (3) happens when a specific behavior pattern required to perform one role is incompatible with the behavioral expectations in another role. For instance, it is expected from an individual in a professional context to assume an objective and emotionally stable behavior. However, in a family situation, the same person should have a warm, emotional, and open posture (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Thus, individuals should adjust their behavior depending on the context they are inserted. Otherwise, they will experience a behavior-based conflict (S. Pereira & Ribeiro, 2014).

1.2.1. Work-Family conflict on judicial professionals

The heavy workload and long hours dedicated to work (Gil-Monte et al., 2016; E. Rossouw & Rothmann, 2020) may lead judicial professionals to experience work-family conflict.

Magistrates' professional life impacts their personal and family life, as shown in A. C. Ferreira and colleagues' (2014) research, where 81.1% of the magistrates agreed that their job limits their personal lives. Judges' careers can affect their family projects and often leads to personal sacrifices (Lipp & Tanganelli, 2002). In P. H. S. Ferreira's (2011) study, judges mentioned they postponed having children in the early years of their career because they were assigned to work far away from their homes. Other participants admitted having missed out on important parts of their children's childhood. Besides being far from their spouses and children, some of them were also distant from

their parents, unable to support them. According to more recent research (Guimarães et al., 2017), the Portuguese judges also stated their job includes working in different parts of the country, which means constant commuting and being far from family and friends.

Judges' workload ends up being influenced by the insufficient number of court staff members and their lack of motivation since most of them are doing the equivalent work of two or three professionals (Guimarães et al., 2017). The increasing workload is not only felt by judges, but also by public prosecutors and court staff in part due to this lack of human resources. This has adverse effects on these professionals' personal and family life and in the responsiveness of courts or other justice entities (A. C. Ferreira et al., 2014). Excessive work requires judges a very intense work rhythm which results in long hours dedicated to the professional sphere (Santos & Gomes, 2005). Contributing to this is the number of judicial processes, which is not divided fairly nor equitably by the judges available, not existing a limit number of processes for each judge (Guimarães et al., 2017).

Tsai and Chan (2010) studied burnout and occupational stress on judges and public prosecutors from Taiwan. Their results showed that 60% of the respondents worked more than 10 hours per day and 55.6% worked more than five days a week, making it harder for these professionals to differentiate personal life from work. In a research with judges from the United Kingdom, 47% reported feeling that the amount of out-of-work hours was impacting them (Thomas, 2021). In Portugal, judges assumed to work around 50 hours per week (Santos & Gomes, 2005).

Judges' work can be defined as an emotional labor since it involves being in direct contact with the public and requires them to manage and maintain emotions that allow them to be impartial (Anleu & Mack, 2005). In addition, they are faced with very complex and demanding daily decisions that impact other people's lives (E. Rossouw & Rothmann, 2020). Direct contact with complex and harsh situations in the work domain requires emotional management from magistrates in order to avoid negative consequences in their private life, since these may impact their interpersonal relationships (Anleu & Mack, 2005; A. C. Ferreira et al., 2014; E. A. Rossouw & Rothmann, 2020; E. Rossouw & Rothmann, 2020). Court clerks also have to deal with

challenging emotional situations that require an emotional balance (P. V. A. Pereira & Assunção, 2007).

Work also affects the family life of Portuguese court clerks, mainly due to the permanence duty that keeps these professionals at work for long hours without paying them for those overtime hours (Dias et al., 2020). In this sense, Spanish court staff also reported high psychosocial risks, such as work overload, interpersonal conflict, high levels of time pressure, low participation in company decisions, job insecurity and, role ambiguity (Gil-Monte et al., 2016).

In summary, judicial professionals work under stressful conditions, with different demands, impacting the family domain. However, few studies explore the relationship between this conflict and quality of life, and even less in judicial professionals. Studying how these professionals perceive their quality of life is of particular importance. The way they feel physically and mentally impacts their professional performance (A. C. Ferreira et al., 2014; A. C. R. Silva, 2014) and, consequently, the functioning of the judicial system (Dias & Gomes, 2018).

1.3. Quality of life of judicial professionals

Studies that focus on the quality of life of judicial professionals are scarce. Instead, studies only focus on these professionals' well-being at work, specifically on judges (E. A. Rossouw & Rothmann, 2020; E. Rossouw & Rothmann, 2020). Nonetheless, this line of research helps to better understand the impact that work and its specificities have on judicial professionals and various domains of their lives that may impair their perception of quality of life.

The World Health Organization Quality of Life Group (WHOQoL Group) presented a definition of quality of life that captures the subjective and multidimensional nature of this construct, including positive (e.g, role functioning and contentment) and negative (e.g, fatigue, negative feelings) facets (WHOQoL Group, 1995). Thus, quality of life can be defined as a “person’s perception of his/her position in life within the context of the culture and value system in which he/she lives and in relation to his/her goals,

expectations, standards, and concerns” (WHOQoL Group, 1994, p. 28). The WHOQoL Group has created different instruments to assess quality of life incorporating various aspects of an individual’s life. The first one, the WHOQoL-100 (WHOQoL Group, 1994, 1995), has 100 items regarding six dimensions: (1) Physical Health, (2) Psychological, (3) Social Relationships, (4) Level of Independence, (5) Environment and (6) Personal Beliefs/Spirituality/Religion. Later, it was also created a brief instrument to assess quality of life called WHOQoL-BREF (WHOQoL Group, 1998), which provides a brief assessment of this construct according to four domains: (1) Physical Health, (2) Psychological, (3) Social Relationships, and (4) Environment.

1.3.1. Quality of life of magistrates

P. H. S. Ferreira (2011) conducted a study with Portuguese judges to investigate the main sources of stress among these professionals and their impact on quality of life. From all the stressors identified, the ones that have a bigger influence on judges’ quality of life include (1) excessive workload, which leads to extreme fatigue and, in some cases, to exhaustion, preventing judges from performing even the smallest of tasks; (2) the difficulty to conciliate work and family leading to a feeling of neglect and personal sacrifice, and (3) political power influences their quality of life in terms of the motivation and productivity, since politics do not show interest in hearing judges and, therefore, take measures that result in setbacks rather than progress for Justice. Nowadays, judges must also perform more administrative tasks non-related to their actual functions. This may cause a feeling of abrasion and disappointment and negatively influence their quality of life. The author also identified workplace conditions (e.g., building conditions, supplies, and equipment available) to be obstacles to productivity and quality of life (P. H. S. Ferreira, 2011).

In Lipp and Tanganelli's (2002) study with Brazilian judges, the respondents also identified excessive workload and interference with the family sphere as the main stressors. The majority of the respondents reported quality of life problems regarding their health. 71% of the judges reported constant physical fatigue, 60% suffered from muscular tension, and 52% felt

excessive irritability. These professionals were also concerned about their remuneration since they thought it did not reflect the demands and responsibilities they face daily at work (Lipp & Tanganelli, 2002).

It is important to note that even though they face intense demands, some judges present high levels of well-being, being flourishing, meaning they feel and function well (E. A. Rossouw & Rothmann, 2020; E. Rossouw & Rothmann, 2020). Despite the work demands, job characteristics enhance judges' well-being, such as job autonomy and flexibility, a good working environment, and supportive work interactions (E. A. Rossouw & Rothmann, 2020). Work autonomy facilitates the execution of family responsibilities, contributing to juggling work-family matters (Lambert, 1990; Premeaux et al., 2007). Also, the way judges perceive their work role impacts how they feel about it (E. A. Rossouw & Rothmann, 2020). Those who present a strong calling orientation towards their work tend to feel like they are serving the public, as well as their country and making a difference in society. Also, the feeling of personal fulfillment due to the social impact and pride associated with their job is a factor that positively impacts overall quality of life and in the commitment of judges to their jobs (P. H. S. Ferreira, 2011).

1.3.2. Quality of life of court staff

Court staff, specifically court clerks, perform their work under conditions that impact their health and well-being (Dalanhol et al., 2017; Dias et al., 2020). These professionals report tiredness and lack of motivation, and present an increasing number of sick leave days (Dias et al., 2020). Brazilian court clerks reported a considerable amount of health problems, high levels of depression and mentioned having a monotonous and solitary life (Dalanhol et al., 2017). In another study (Pizzinato et al., 2014), Brazilian court staff mentioned a deterioration of their quality of life, due to work factors. The respondents also mentioned a feeling of abrasion, loneliness, and lack of support on the job, often feeling publicly disregarded (Merlo et al., 2012; Pizzinato et al., 2014). They were experiencing occupational stress, much due to work overload and long hours of work, as well as personal stress, resulting in physical and psychological problems that often make them not attend to work (Pizzinato et al., 2014). These professionals also present mental health

problems, such as depression and anxiety, resulting in a need for medication (Merlo et al., 2012). Spanish court clerks also reported health problems related to the work domain and its conditions (Gil-Monte et al., 2016). Work-overload was the more frequently reported psychosocial risk since they do not perceive to have enough time to finish the amount of work they are assigned to (Gil-Monte et al., 2016).

In Portugal, the excessive case and work overload, paired with a stagnated judicial system, generates high levels of professional stress with consequences not only on individuals, but also on the judicial system performance (A. C. Ferreira et al., 2014). Thus, it is relevant to study these professional categories to better understand and promote their quality of life.

1.4. The impact of work-family conflict on quality of life

As referred, the work-family conflict impacts different areas of an individual's life. Not only it affects the individual that experiences it, but also his/her relationships and significant others. Someone experiencing high levels of work-family conflict will feel less satisfied with their health, energy, and ability to perform daily activities, leading to a more negative perception of their quality of life (A. C. R. Silva, 2014).

Work-family conflict has a significant and negative relationship with the overall quality of life (Md-Sidin et al., 2010; Rice et al., 1992; A. C. R. Silva, 2014). Zabihi et al. (2018) also found a negative and significant relationship between quality of life and work-family conflict in employed women in an Iranian province. The authors concluded that promoting the quality of life of these women would diminish the conflict between the professional and family domains and vice versa. Their study showed that a better perception of quality of life would lead to more motivated workers, who will develop and use different strategies to decrease work-family conflict. This study shows the mutual impact between quality of life and work-family conflict.

Work-family conflict is a critical factor that contributes to psychological distress (Obidoa et al., 2011). Zhang and colleagues (2020) found evidence that work-family conflict directly affects anxiety symptoms,

and this relationship is also partially mediated by emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, suppose it is a chronic conflict, meaning a continuous depletion of resources from a role to another. In that case, it may lead to developing physiological and psychological problems, such as mental health problems (Zhang et al., 2020). It was also found that social support from the individuals' professional and personal networks has a buffering effect, moderating the relation between work-family conflict on anxiety symptoms (Zhang et al., 2020). However, Md-Sidin et al. (2010) found that social support does not actually reduce work-family conflict or its impact on quality of life but increases the latter.

Jaegers et al. (2020) found a moderating effect of work-family conflict on the relationship between depressive symptoms and burnout, meaning that this relationship is stronger when a higher level of conflict is present. Also, conflict, especially work-to-family conflict, is strongly and positively correlated with depression (Obidoa et al., 2011). Work-family conflict contributes to job stress and burnout, and these variables contribute to higher levels of depression (Lee & Kang, 2019). Related to this, depression was the second most referred long-term symptom by judges (Jaffe et al., 2003).

Greenhaus et al. (2003) explored the effect that work-family balance has on quality of life, considering the mediating effect of work-family conflict in this relationship. Work-family balance is "the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in - and equally satisfied with - his or her work role and family role" (Greenhaus et al., 2003, p. 4). A balanced individual approaches the different roles of his/her life with the same level of attention, time, and involvement. On the one hand, quality of life was higher for those who were more engaged or satisfied in the family context than in the work context (Greenhaus et al., 2003). On the other hand, quality of life was lower when individuals' engagement and satisfaction were superior in the work sphere. These individuals that dedicated more time, involvement, and satisfaction towards their professional role presented the highest levels of work-family conflict and stress, and therefore a lower quality of life (Greenhaus et al., 2003).

As previously mentioned, judicial professionals have a demanding job, with idiosyncrasies that make it particularly challenging and exhausting (Anleu & Mack, 2005; Gil-Monte et al., 2016; E. Rossouw & Rothmann, 2020). This may not only generate work-family conflict but also negatively impact their quality of life (P. H. S. Ferreira, 2011). There are few studies focused on Portuguese judicial professionals, especially on court staff. Also, studies that analyze the impact that work-family conflict has on quality of life are still scarce. So, this study aims to fill a gap in the literature by exploring that relationship in magistrates and court staff. It is important to understand how magistrates and court staff perceive and experience their professional and family life, and how to ensure and promote their quality of life. This is relevant from an individual point of view, but also at a societal level since the proper functioning of the judicial system depends on these professionals and, consequently, on their well-being.

II – Objectives

Considering two categories of judicial professionals (magistrates – judges and public prosecutors – and court staff), the main objective of the present study is to analyze the effect that work-family conflict has on the Physical Health domain of quality of life, exploring the eventual mediating role of psychopathological symptoms. With this goal in mind and considering the existing literature, we hypothesize:

H1: Work-family conflict has a negative effect on the Physical Health domain of quality of life for magistrates and court staff.

H2: Psychopathological symptoms mediate the relation between work-family conflict and the Physical Health domain of quality of life.

H3: The effect of work-family conflict on the Physical Health domain of quality of life is different between magistrates and court staff.

As specific goals, we want to compare magistrates and court staff regarding their experience and perception of work-family conflict and physical health. Based on these objectives, we formulate the following hypotheses:

H4: Work-family conflict is higher for magistrates than for court staff.

H5: Magistrates present a better quality of life in terms of the Physical Health domain compared to court staff.

We will also compare how men and women perceive work-family conflict and quality of life in terms of the physical health. That said, we hypothesize:

H6: Women exhibit higher work-family conflict than men.

H7: Men present higher levels of quality of life in terms of the Physical Health domain than women.

III – Methodology

This section describes the participants' sociodemographic characteristics, the research and sample collection procedures, the measures used on the online survey and the statistical analysis procedures adopted to respond to the principal and specific objectives.

3.1. Sample characterization

The sample of the present study is composed of 1,206 participants. In terms of professional category, 739 (61.3%) are court staff and 467 (38.7%) magistrates (274 (22.7%) judges and 193 (16.0%) public prosecutors). The majority of respondents are female (60.9%) (cf., Table 1). Participants' age range between 20 and 69 years old ($M = 49.01$, $SD = 9.11$). Overall, magistrates are younger ($M = 46.92$, $SD = 8.64$) when compared to court staff ($M = 50.35$, $SD = 9.15$). Regarding academic qualifications (cf., Table 1), most magistrates (77.1%) have a license degree, approximately a fifth of the sample (22.1%) obtained a master's degree, and only a few (0.9%) got a doctorate. Almost half of the court staff (49.1%) have a high school education, 30.0% have a degree, and 14.9% have a bachelor's degree. Only a small percentage (<5%) of court staff presents an education level inferior to high school. Regarding household, the majority of the individuals live with their nuclear family or in stepfamilies (62%) or live by themselves (17%) (cf., Table 1).

Table 1
Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Total sample		Magistrates		Court Staff	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Age (years)						
20-29	39	3.4	8	1.8	31	4.4
30-39	142	12.2	87	19.1	55	7.8
40-49	400	34.4	207	45.5	193	27.3
50-59	428	36.8	107	23.5	321	45.3
60-69	154	13.2	46	10.1	108	15.3
Total	1,163	100	455	100	708	100
Sex						
Female	734	60.9	311	66.6	423	57.2
Male	472	39.1	156	33.4	316	42.8
Total	1,206	100	467	100	739	100
Academic qualifications						
2 nd cycle of basic education	2	0.2	-	-	2	0.3
3 rd cycle of basic education	17	1.4	-	-	17	2.3
High school	359	30.1	-	-	359	49.1
Bachelor's degree	109	9.1	-	-	109	14.9
License degree	575	48.2	356	77.1	219	30.0
Master's degree	127	10.7	102	22.1	25	3.4
Doctorate	4	0.3	4	0.9	-	-
Total	1,193	100	462	100	731	100
Type of household						
Single	173	14.7	56	12.3	117	16.2
Couple without children	142	12.1	58	12.7	84	11.7
Nuclear family or stepfamilies	729	62.0	284	62.4	445	61.7
Monoparental	110	9.4	50	11.0	60	8.3
Other	22	1.9	7	1.5	15	2.1
Total	1,176	100	445	100	721	100

Note. The dash indicates no cases in the condition the cell represents.

3.2. Research and sample collection procedures

The present investigation integrates a project called QUALIS (*Quality of Justice in Portugal! Impact of working conditions in the performance of judicial professions*) (Ref. POCI-01-0145-FEDER-029039) of the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra (CES-UC) funded by FEDER, through the COMPETE 2020 - Competitiveness and Internationalization Operational Programme (POCI) and by national funds through FCT (Foundation for Science and Technology). The main goal of the research project is to study the evolution of the Portuguese work conditions amongst judicial professionals, assessing how it impacts professional performance and the quality of justice. This project started on the 1st of June 2018 and will end on the 31st of March 2022, coordinated by João Paulo Dias and co-coordinated by Conceição Gomes.

Data was collected using a questionnaire constructed online on the LimeSurvey platform, after getting authorizations from the authors of the selected instruments and disseminated through e-mail to judicial professionals collecting responses from those who voluntarily took the initiative to access it, in a convenience sampling procedure. Before the dissemination of the online questionnaire, the research team met with the international and national consultants, which included two judicial professional consultants, a public prosecutor and a judge. After this, it was conducted a participating pilot-test composed of six judicial professionals, two from each of the three professional categories considered (public prosecutors, judges, and court staff) of both sexes. The respondents not only filled out the survey, but an interview was also conducted regarding their reaction to the question formulation, wording, and structure. The necessary authorizations were also obtained from the Superior Council of the Judiciary (CSM), the Public Prosecutor's Office (CSMP), the Superior Council of Administrative Courts (CSTAF), and the Directorate-General of the Justice Administration (DGAJ).

The dissemination of the research protocol link followed three main paths: (1) the official channels of the partner entities that manage courts' human resources, namely CSM, CSMP, CSTAF, and DGAJ, (2) the contact networks of the professional unions (Portuguese Judges' Trade Union (ASJP), Public Prosecutors' Union (SMMP), Court Staff's Union (SFJ), and Union of

Courts Clerks (SOJ)) and (3) the contact networks of the Second Instance Courts and the Management Councils of the District Courts.

Each entity was reached through an indicated point of contact by email with a presentation of the project and questionnaire, as well as the access link for dissemination. The survey was available from October 1st to November 15th, 2020. Throughout this period, according to the evolution of the response rates for each professional category, there was a reinforcement and revision of the strategies of dissemination.

The present study started to be developed after the construction of the online questionnaire, just before it was disseminated. Note that the author of this study just integrated the research team in the following stages of the research, such as the analysis of the data from the developed online questionnaire.

3.3. Measures

The research protocol covered several themes as it was designed for the larger project. Therefore, the following will be examined: working conditions, changes in the judiciary, work-family conflict, quality of life, and psychopathological symptoms. In addition, there were a number of demographic questions.

3.3.1. Sociodemographic questionnaire

To examine the sociodemographic characteristics of the sample, the research team built a questionnaire with a set of questions regarding sex, year and place of birth, household type, academic qualifications, and professional category (judge, public prosecutor, or court staff).

3.3.2. Work-Family Conflict Scale (WFCS; Carlson et al., 2000; Portuguese version of Vieira et al., 2014)

To assess work-family conflict was used the WFCS. This 18-item scale covers the bidirectional (work-to-family conflict and family-to-work

conflict) and multidimensional (time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based conflict) nature of the work-family conflict. Thus, WFCS captures six dimensions of conflict, each one measured by three items. The items were presented in a 5-point Likert type scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Higher scores indicate a higher level of conflict experienced.

The Portuguese validation study of the WFCS (Vieira et al., 2014) showed good internal consistency for both directions of time-based and strain-based conflict ($.80 \leq \alpha \leq .86$). Family-to-work conflict based on behavior showed a higher internal consistency ($\alpha = .90$). Work-to-family conflict based on behavior presented a lower level of internal consistency ($\alpha = .77$), but still acceptable. In the present study, all six dimensions of conflict revealed very good to excellent internal consistency scores ($.83 \leq \alpha \leq .95$) (Kline, 2011)³.

3.3.3. World Health Organization Quality of Life Instrument - Abbreviated version (WHOQoL-BREF; WHOQoL Group, 1998; Portuguese version of Vaz-Serra et al., 2006)

To evaluate the quality of life construct it was used the WHOQoL-BREF. This 26-item instrument is the abbreviated version of the WHOQoL-100 (WHOQoL Group, 1994). It is organized into four domains: (1) Physical Health, (2) Psychological, (3) Social Relationships, and (4) Environment. Each domain comprises different facets evaluated through one item. Two items are not integrated in any of the four domains regarding general quality of life and general perception of health.

The items are presented in 5-point Likert-type scales, considering intensity, capacity, frequency, and evaluation. Higher results mean a better perception of quality of life. The results must be interpreted by domain since there is not a global score.

The online survey of the present study only included the Physical Health and Environment domains. The Physical Health domain comprises seven items and, therefore, seven facets (pain and discomfort, medical substance dependence, energy and fatigue, mobility, sleep and rest, daily

³ According to Kline (2011), internal consistency scores are unacceptable when $< .50$, adequate around $.70$, very good around $.80$, and excellent around $.90$.

activities, and work capacity). The Environment domain includes eight items/facets (physical safety and security, physical environment, financial resources, opportunities for acquiring new information, leisure activity, home environment, access to health and social care, transport) (WHOQoL Group, 1998).

Regarding internal consistency, the Portuguese validation of WHOQoL-BREF (Vaz-Serra et al., 2006) presented very good reliability levels for both Physical Health ($\alpha = .87$) and Environment ($\alpha = .78$) domains. In this study were also obtained very good to excellent (Kline, 2011) levels of internal consistency for Physical Health ($\alpha = .83$) and Environment ($\alpha = .79$) domains.

3.3.4. Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI; Derogatis & Spencer, 1982; Portuguese version of Canavarro, 2007)

The BSI was used to evaluate psychopathological symptoms. This instrument can be administered to nonpatients, psychiatric outpatients, and inpatients adults. It includes 53 items and nine different dimensions (Somatization, Obsession-Compulsion, Interpersonal Sensitivity, Depression, Anxiety, Hostility, Phobic Anxiety, Paranoid Ideation, and Psychoticism). It also provides three global indexes for a summary assessment of emotional disorder (Global Severity Index, Positive Symptoms Distress Index, and Positive Symptom Total).

In the present study were only included four of the nine dimensions: Anxiety (6 items), Somatization (7 items), Obsession-Compulsion (6 items), and Depression (6 items). The included 25 items were presented on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from *never* to *many times*.

In the Portuguese validation study of this inventory (Canavarro, 2007) the Somatization ($\alpha = .80$), Anxiety ($\alpha = .77$), Obsession-Compulsion ($\alpha = .77$) and Depression ($\alpha = .73$) dimensions showed adequate internal consistency. The present study obtained very good to excellent internal consistency scores for all four dimensions mentioned previously ($.87 \leq \alpha \leq .90$) (Kline, 2011).

3.4. Statistical analysis

The database was cleaned and prepared by eliminating duplicates and residual respondents. Participants with more than 10% non-response on each scale were eliminated, and the missings below this value were imputed through the expectation-maximization technique (Hair et al., 2009; Schafer & Graham, 2002; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). We proceed to the codification of a few variables and created scores for the instruments' dimensions and global scores, considering the existing inverted items. For the path analysis and model construction, we run a complete case analysis, only considering participants with information for the whole variables in the mediation model.

Using the IBM SPSS Statistics software, 25th version, we analyzed the descriptive statistics. The univariate and multivariate normality of the variables was assessed by the asymmetry (*sk*) and kurtosis (*ku*) coefficients, and preliminary analysis showed that none of the considered variables presented asymmetry ($sk < 3$) and kurtosis ($ku < 10$) coefficients that indicated severe violations of normal distribution (Marôco, 2010). We calculated the internal consistency of the used scales. To better understand the relationship between all variables, we performed Pearson's correlations. In order to compare different groups of respondents, student's t-tests were performed.

For the mediation analysis was used PROCESS (Hayes, 2018), a macro tool for SPSS Statistical software. The bootstrap resampling method was applied to assess the mediation ability of psychopathological symptoms. Unstandardized indirect effects were computed for each of 5,000 bootstrapped samples, and the 95% confidence interval was computed.

IV - Results

4.1. Association between work-family conflict, physical health, and psychopathological symptoms

Before the construction of the mediation model, the associations between the variables at study were assessed using the Pearson's correlation coefficient. As shown in the table 2, work-family conflict presents a strong and negative correlation ($r(1204) = -.56, p < .001$) with the Physical Health domain of quality of life. The Physical Health domain correlates in a moderate

and negative way with all sources of work-family conflict ($-.25 \leq r(1204) \leq -.44$, $p < .001$). In terms of conflict direction, this domain of quality of life is strong and negatively correlated with work-to-family conflict ($r(1204) = -.57$, $p < .001$) but is correlated with family-to-work conflict ($r(1204) = -.35$, $p < .001$) only in a moderate way (Marôco, 2018)⁴.

Psychopathological symptoms are strongly and positively correlated with work-family conflict ($r(1204) = .50$, $p < .001$). Also, they present moderate and positive correlations with work-to-family conflict ($r(1204) = .49$, $p < .001$) and family-to-work conflict ($r(1204) = .34$, $p < .001$). The Physical Health domain of quality of life revealed a negative and strong correlation with psychopathological symptoms ($r = -.64$) (Marôco, 2018).

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations and Pearson's Correlations of the Variables in Study

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Work-Family conflict (total)	51.25	11.95				
2. WFC	3.29	0.86	.87*			
3. FWC	2.41	0.73	.81*	.41*		
4. Physical Health domain	14.31	2.86	-.56*	-.57*	-.35*	
5. Psychopathological symptoms	1.89	0.72	.50*	.49*	.34*	-.64*

Note. WFC = work-to-family conflict direction; FWC = family-to-work conflict direction

* $p < .01$ level (two-tailed)

4.2. Mediation model

Work-family conflict, physical health and psychopathological symptoms are moderately to strongly correlated. Therefore, we built a single mediation model to understand the effect of work-family conflict on the Physical Health domain of quality of life of Portuguese magistrates and court

⁴ According to Marôco (2018), correlations are weak when $|r| < .25$; moderate when $.25 \leq |r| < .50$; strong when $.50 \leq |r| < .75$ and very strong when $|r| \geq .75$.

staff, considering psychopathological symptoms as a mediating variable (cf., Figure 1).

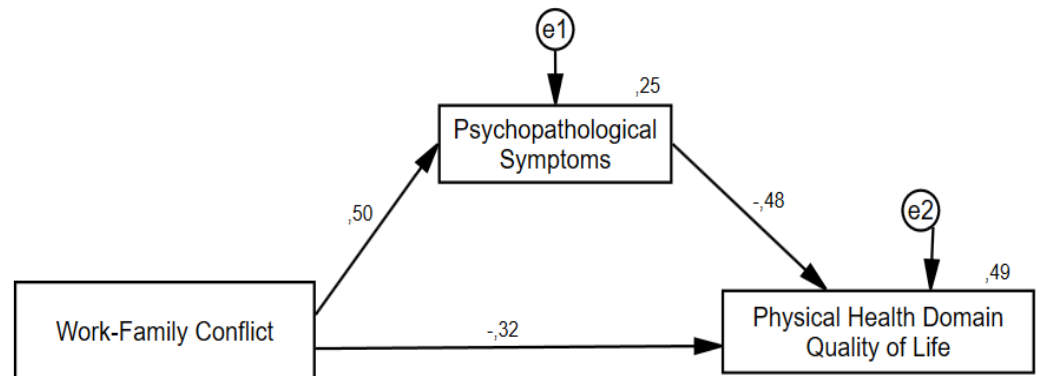


Figure 1

Mediation Model with the Standardized Estimates of the Regression Coefficients

The mediation model explains 49% of the variability in the perception of the Physical Health domain of quality of life (cf., Figure 1).

All three paths considered in our model are significant (cf., Table 3). The path between work-family conflict and psychopathological symptoms is the only positive one. Work-family conflict and psychopathological symptoms show negative effects on physical health.

Table 3

Estimates of the Mediation Model

Factors	Estimate	<i>t-value</i>	95% CI		β
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
WFC → PH	-0.078	-13.566**	-0.089	-0.066	-.324
WFC → PS	0.030	20.095**	0.027	0.033	.501
PS → PH	-1.894	-19.923**	-2.080	-1.707	-.476

Note. WFC → PH = work-family conflict effect on Physical Health domain; WFC → PS = work-family conflict effect on psychopathological symptoms; PS → PH = psychopathological symptoms effect on Physical Health domain; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit.

** $p < .001$

Work-family conflict presents a total negative standardized effect of -.56 on the Physical Health domain of quality of life, with a negative direct

effect of -.32 and an indirect negative effect, mediated by psychopathological symptoms, of -.24. Using the Bootstrap resampling method, it is possible to conclude that all analyzed effects are significant (cf., Table 4). Psychopathological symptoms show a significant mediating effect.

Table 4

Total, Direct and Indirect Effects of Work-Family Conflict on Physical Health

Effect	Unstandardized effect	95% CI		Standardized effect
		LL	UL	
Total effect	-0.135*	-0.146	-0.124	-.563*
Direct effect	-0.078*	-0.089	-0.066	-.324*
Indirect effect	-0.057*	-0.066	-0.049	-.239*

* $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

Table 5

Estimates of the Mediation Models for Magistrates and Court Staff

Factors	Magistrates		Court Staff	
	Estimate	β	Estimate	β
WFC → PH	-0.10**	-.42	-0.07**	-.30
WFC → PS	0.03**	.59	0.03**	-.50
PS → PH	-1.50**	-.36	-1.98**	.51

Note. WFC → PH = work-family conflict effect on Physical Health domain; WFC → PS = work-family conflict effect on psychopathological symptoms; PS → PH = psychopathological symptoms effect on Physical Health domain. ** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

We tested the same mediation model for magistrates and court staff individually. The explained variability in the perception of the Physical Health domain is the same for both professional categories and the overall sample (49%). All paths are statistically significant for magistrates and court staff and psychopathological symptoms remain a partially mediating variable. Table 5 presents unstandardized and standardized estimates for the mediation models of magistrates and court staff.

4.3. Comparisons of work-family conflict and physical health between magistrates and court staff

In terms of comparisons of the two professional categories, magistrates present higher levels of work-family conflict ($M = 54.42$, $SD = 11.77$) compared to court staff ($M = 49.24$, $SD = 11.62$). According to the student's t-test, these differences between professionals are statistically significant ($t(1204) = 7.50$, $p < .001$). Regarding the Physical Health domain of quality of life, there are no significant differences between the two professional categories (cf., Table 6).

Table 6

Work-Family Conflict and Physical Health Mean Differences Between Magistrates and Court Staff

Logistic Parameter	Magistrates		Court Staff		$t(1204)$	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Work-family conflict	54.42	11.77	49.24	11.62	7.50	<.001
Physical Health domain	14.45	2.84	14.21	2.87	1.40	.163

4.4. Comparisons of work-family conflict and physical health between men and women

Concerning physical health, men ($M = 14.63$, $SD = 2.95$) present a statistically significant higher score ($t(1204) = 3.13$, $p < .001$) compared to women ($M = 14.10$, $SD = 2.78$). In terms of work-family conflict, no significant differences were found (cf., Table 7).

Table 7

Work-Family Conflict and Physical Health Mean Differences Between Men and Women

Logistic Parameter	Men		Women		t	DF	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
Work-family conflict (total)	51.12	12.64	51.33	11.48	-0.29	934.37	.772
WFC	3.24	0.87	3.32	0.85	-1.63	1204	.103
FWC	2.44	0.76	2.38	0.70	1.38	1204	.167
Physical Health	14.63	2.95	14.10	2.78	3.13	1204	.002

Note. WFC = work-to-family conflict direction; FWC = family-to-work conflict direction; Work-family conflict (total) logistic parameter is assuming unequal variance.

V - Discussion

The results of the present study allow us to conclude that work-family conflict has a significant negative effect on physical health. This means that judicial professionals experiencing a higher level of work-family conflict may have a more negative perception of their quality of life in terms of physical health. This domain of quality of life evaluates pain and discomfort, medical substance dependence, energy and fatigue, mobility, sleep and rest, daily activities, and work capacity (WHOQoL Group, 1998). The results found are in line with our first hypothesis and also corroborate other studies that indicate that work-family conflict negatively impacts an individual's quality of life (e.g., Fiksenbaum, 2014; Md-Sidin et al., 2010; Rice et al., 1992; A. C. R. Silva, 2014; Zabihi et al., 2018). Individuals experiencing high levels of conflict between work and family may feel less satisfied with different aspects of their life, such as their energy, health (Ruiz Martínez et al., 2018), and relationship quality (Duarte, 2015). All of which may lead to a poorer perception of quality of life (A. C. R. Silva, 2014). Most studies measure the quality of life through a global score allowing an overall interpretation. In the present study, we only analyzed the Physical Health domain. However, Ruiz Martínez and colleagues (2018) concluded that from all four domains of quality of life, the Physical Health domain is the one that impacts the overall perception the most.

Still, regarding the effect of work-family conflict on the physical health of judicial professionals, psychopathological symptoms showed to be a partial mediator of this relation. So, when judicial professionals experience work-family conflict and, simultaneously, psychopathological symptoms, their physical health will be further impaired. Despite the shortage of literature that considers these three variables simultaneously, our findings are in line with the conclusions of Lee and Kang (2019) that work-family conflict is a predictor of job stress and burnout, which may lead to higher levels of depression. Also, Zhang and colleagues (2020) found a direct effect of work-family conflict on anxiety symptoms, and Obidoa and colleagues (2011) concluded that experiencing work-family conflict contributes to psychological distress. Ruiz Martínez and colleagues (2018) also highlighted the negative effect that psychopathological symptoms have on the perception of quality of life, contributing, for example, to health and well-being deterioration. On this

note, Greenhaus and colleagues' (2003) investigation showed that experiencing stress and conflict between work and family domains may lead to lower quality of life. This makes sense since mental health problems, indicated by the presence of psychopathological symptoms, affect individuals' biopsychosocial development (Ruiz Martínez et al., 2018). Our results are corroborated with previous investigations that focus on other professionals, such as nurses and jail correctional officers, but also by Jaffe and colleagues' (2003) study where judges reported depression as the second most referred long-term symptom due to the direct contact with victims' trauma. This previous research contributes to frame the mediating role of psychological symptoms found on the effect of work-family conflict on the physical health of judicial professionals, corroborating our second hypothesis.

As reported in previous studies (e.g., A. C. Ferreira et al., 2014; P. H. S. Ferreira, 2011; Gil-Monte et al., 2016; Guimarães et al., 2017; Lipp & Tanganelli, 2002), magistrates and court staff have very demanding jobs that impact their family life. These professionals also work in a judicial system described as stagnated and lacking human resources (A. C. Ferreira et al., 2014). Our results show that both professional categories experience a level of work-family conflict that negatively impacts how they perceive their physical health.

Magistrates and court staff play different roles on the judicial system and have specific responsibilities and functions due to the nature of their jobs (Dias, 2013; Dias et al., 2020; Direção-Geral da Administração da Justiça, n.d.; European E-Justice Portal, 2016). This also means they face distinct demands and challenges, even though some might be common, such as excessive workload and dealing with intense and emotional situations (Anleu & Mack, 2005; Gil-Monte et al., 2016; Guimarães et al., 2017; P. V. A. Pereira & Assunção, 2007). With this in mind and to test our third hypothesis (H3), we applied the same mediation model to both professional categories. Although the model explained the same variability (49%) of the perception of the Physical Health domain of quality of life, each path presented slightly different coefficients, particularly the relation between psychopathological symptoms and physical health. For court staff, psychopathological symptoms explain a higher degree of change in physical health in contrast to magistrates ($\beta_{\text{Magistrates}} = -.36$; $\beta_{\text{Court Staff}} = -.51$). This result is interesting considering the

Portuguese context. Court staff presents an increasing number of sick leave days (Dias et al., 2020). This may be related to the occupational stress they experience, mainly due to excessive workload and long hours at work leading to physical and psychological problems (Pizzinato et al., 2014). Studies with court staff in Brazil have shown that this professional category reports high levels of depression (Dalanhol et al., 2017; Merlo et al., 2012) and anxiety, needing to resort to medication (Merlo et al., 2012). The nature of the work they perform is also very different, with court staff having more administrative functions (Dias et al., 2020) and having to work in courts in conditions that most times are not ideal (Casaleiro et al., 2021; Gil-Monte et al., 2016). Besides work characteristics, court staff is an aged professional category has noted by Dias and colleagues (2020). Our results are in line with their conclusion since the average age of court staff ($M = 50.35$) is higher than the one of magistrates ($M = 46.92$). Considering this, it is understandable that the psychopathological symptoms have a more intense impact on the Physical Health domain for court staff since they seem more vulnerable to developing those symptoms than magistrates.

In terms of differences between the two professional categories, magistrates showed a significantly higher level of work-family conflict on the global score and in both directions (work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict) when compared to court staff. These results corroborate our fourth hypothesis (H4). The existing literature finds a mutual interference between work and family spheres on both magistrates (A. C. Ferreira et al., 2014; P. H. S. Ferreira, 2011; Lipp & Tanganelli, 2002) and court staff (Dias et al., 2020; Gil-Monte et al., 2016). Although, the Portuguese magistrates in our sample are the more impacted by work-family conflict. Various studies highlight how magistrates limit their personal life due to work demands (A. C. Ferreira et al., 2014), having to sacrifice family time (Lipp & Tanganelli, 2002), and postpone having children (P. H. S. Ferreira, 2011). Magistrates may experience a higher conflict because, due to their work characteristics, the boundaries between work and family domains are less defined since they have more schedule flexibility, autonomy and more easily take work home (A. C. Ferreira et al., 2014). Contrary to what Lambert (1990) and Premeaux and colleagues (2007) concluded, the autonomy of a magistrate's work may not facilitate the execution of family responsibilities and the ability to juggle

work-family matters, at least not enough to buffer and prevent the experience of conflict for Portuguese magistrates. Thus, it can be harder for magistrates to differentiate personal time from work time, in contrast to court staff. Studies with magistrates show that they work more than 10 hours per day (Tsai & Chan, 2010) and around 50 hours per week (Santos & Gomes, 2005).

Contrary to our fifth hypothesis (H5), magistrates and court staff did not perceive their physical health significantly differently. There are differences between these professional categories, regarding their jobs' characteristics, such as work autonomy and flexibility (E. Rossouw & Rothmann, 2020), and also regarding social valorization. However, they do not seem to be enough for magistrates and court staff to perceive their quality of life in terms of physical health differently.

When analyzing differences between men and women regarding the experience of work-family conflict, it is crucial to consider that the impact of gender is not consensual (Pinto, 2012). Considering that Portugal has both modern and traditional views of family composition and gender roles (Duarte, 2015), we have hypothesized (H6) that women would experience higher levels of work-family conflict. However, no significant differences were found, indicating that being a man or a woman does not significantly change the experience of work-family conflict. The absence of significant differences may indicate that women and men experience similar and homogenous demands, as pointed out by A. C. R. Silva's (2014) study, where sex also had no impact on the experience of work-family conflict. This result is indicative, at least for judicial professionals' context, of the progressive fading tendency of gender differences in what concerns the interaction of work and family (Pinto, 2012).

In terms of quality of life, men presented a significantly higher quality of life in the Physical Health domain when compared to women, supporting our seventh hypothesis (H7). Our results are consistent with Lipp and Tanganelli's (2002) and Ruiz Martínez and colleagues' (2018) studies where men present a better perspective of their quality of life in contrast to women. Ruiz Martínez et al. (2018) concluded that women tend to report more frequently a lower daily activity performance, emotional and interpersonal

problems, and a mild dissatisfaction concerning their surrounding environment.

Regarding practical implications, this study opens the door to a reflection on the possible usefulness of formal workplace programs or initiatives to help employees to balance and conciliate work and family, as well as to buffer the negative impact of conflict (Fiksenbaum, 2014; Lee & Kang, 2019; Matias et al., 2010). Such programs may include more flexible work schedules, compressed workweek, telecommuting, and other solutions (Fiksenbaum, 2014; Matias et al., 2010). Implementing and promoting a family-supportive environment not also contributes to reducing work-family conflict but also reduces its effect on well-being. Individuals reported more life satisfaction and felt more energy to invest in work and themselves (Fiksenbaum, 2014). In a study with Portuguese dual-earner couples (Matias et al., 2010), it was found that a supportive workplace promotes a positive performance in the family sphere, which is a resource in work-family conciliation. However, the implementation of these family life-friendly initiatives is not easy. It needs to be well thought and managed by employers and employees because there is some stigma associated with these kinds of policies that may make professionals hesitant to resorting to them (Fiksenbaum, 2014).

5.1. Limitations and suggestions for future studies

No investigation is free of limitations, and ours is no exception. One limitation of our study is that the response to the online questionnaire proved to be difficult. From the total sample ($N = 2,645$), a considerable number of participants had to be excluded ($n = 1,439$), according to a set of exclusion criteria, namely duplicates and blank questionnaires, and subjects that answered to less than 10% to, at least, one of the three scales assessing the variables included in the mediation model. In addition, some participants only answered to sociodemographic items and items related to physical and organizational work conditions, avoiding answering the ones regarding work and family conciliation and quality of life, health, and well-being. This may have happened due to concerns about anonymity and confidentiality

(Casaleiro et al., 2021), a tendency for isolation from magistrates, a different culture of participation, or a lack of time and availability due to excessive workload (A. C. Ferreira et al., 2014). Other possible explanations are the length of the instruments used, as well as the perception of some items as possibly intrusive. It is also important to note that the form of dissemination was not fully controlled by the researchers, which may also have contributed to the existing missings.

Another limitation of this study is the impossibility to calculate a global score for quality of life using only two domains of the quality of life construct, namely the Environment and the Physical Health ones. Only using one domain can be perceived as a limitation because the domains used individually have a limited capacity to explain the quality of life (R. J. Pereira et al., 2006). However, changes in one domain are sufficient to alter the overall perception of quality of life (R. J. Pereira et al., 2006) and from all four domains that WHOQoL-BREF comprises (WHOQoL Group, 1998), the Physical Health is the one that has the most impact on the overall quality of life (Ruiz Martínez et al., 2018). Thus, for future investigations, all domains of quality of life should be included to have a global perception of these professionals' quality of life and assess whether the physical health domain is sufficient to affect the overall perception of quality of life.

The data was collected during the pandemic crisis (COVID-19). Therefore, another limitation is that this was not taken into consideration when analyzing the results obtained. The pandemic led to confinement which is likely to have affected the way work, and family spheres interact. For future studies, it will be interesting to understand what impact the pandemic had on these professionals and how they managed their work and family life, as well as how this management affected their quality of life.

Our study follows an already lengthy period of studies focused on work-family conflict (Vieira et al., 2014), considering the negative impact and burden that may arise from work and family intersection. However, the interaction of these two domains can also be a source of growth, positively impacting individuals, such as improving health outcomes (Rung et al., 2021). More recent research has focused on the positive synergies and spillover that may result from the work and family interface (Vieira et al., 2014). Work-family enrichment can be defined as “the extent to which experiences in one

role improves the quality of life in the other role” (J. H. Greenhaus & Powell, 2006, p. 72). Thus, in future research, it would be relevant to understand the positive spillover that judicial professionals may experience because this type of spillover is not opposite to work-family conflict (Rung et al., 2021). Despite the conflict that magistrates and court staff experience, they may also feel enriched.

For future investigation, it would be interesting to study the two types of magistrates separately because they have different functions, even though more similar when compared to the court staff. On the one hand, judges are responsible for managing justice through hearings, trials, and dispute resolutions (Guimarães et al., 2017). On the other hand, public prosecutors perform a variety of heterogeneous activities and are in constant and direct contact with the public (Dias, 2013). However, in this study, judges and public prosecutors were grouped to facilitate the comparison with court staff since the latter is a much larger percentage of judicial professionals.

VI – Conclusions

Work and family domains are very relevant for most individuals. However, these two domains impact each other (S. Pereira & Ribeiro, 2014). The present study contributes to understanding better the impact of work-family conflict on the Physical Health domain of quality of life of Portuguese judicial professionals (magistrates – judges and public prosecutors – and court staff).

The obtained results allow us to conclude that work-family conflict has a significant negative effect on the physical health of judicial professionals. Psychopathological symptoms mediate this relation. The model constructed explains the same amount of variability (49%) for both professional categories, but psychopathological symptoms have a more prominent negative effect on court staff’s physical health. Also, magistrates report higher work-family conflict than court staff. No differences were found in terms of physical health across professional categories. Men present a better perception of their physical health comparing to women. In terms of work-family conflict, no differences were found between men and women.

Our results are consistent with the existing literature that underlies the negative impact of work-family conflict on quality of life (Md-Sidin et al., 2010; Rice et al., 1992; Zabihi et al., 2018). In addition, previous research also shows the negative relation between work-family conflict and psychopathological symptoms (Lee & Kang, 2019; Obidoa et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2020) and the impact of those symptoms on quality of life (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Ruiz Martínez et al., 2018).

This study contributes to more in-depth knowledge about the effect of work-family conflict on the physical health of Portuguese judicial professionals, analyzing the impact of psychopathological symptoms. Few studies focus on these professionals, especially on court staff, the “invisible” judicial professionals (Dias et al., 2020). A better understanding of the characteristics of their work and the impact these have on various dimensions of these professionals’ lives is relevant since it impacts the functioning of the judicial system and the quality of justice (Dias & Gomes, 2018). Therefore, studies, such as the present one, focusing on the challenges and perceptions of judicial professionals regarding different areas may be of great importance for future judicial reforms, promoting a deeper understanding of Portuguese justice professionals’ internal dynamics and experiences. Furthermore, these studies may be constructive to promote the quality of justice in Portugal and bring justice closer to citizens, contrary to what happened with the judicial reform of 2014 (Dias & Gomes, 2018).

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