

# the relation of career adaptability to work–family experience and personal growth initiative among taiwanese working parents

Yu-Chen Wang, Hsiu-Lan Shelley Tien, and Ching-Lin Wu

This study aimed to explore the effect of career adaptability on 598 working parents in Taiwan. The results showed that career adaptability served an important role in moderating and mediating the effects between work–family conflict, work–family strength, and personal growth initiative.

*Keywords:* career adaptability, personal growth initiative, work–family conflict, work–family strength

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Work and family are two important roles dominating the lives of individuals during the career development process. Conflict, balance, and adaptation between family and work are issues that researchers on career development and counseling have started to acknowledge. When faced with coping issues between family and work, many individuals experience a high degree of role conflict, pressure, and feelings of guilt (Livingston & Judge, 2008). In the Eastern social context in Taiwan, maintaining a balance between work and family is a great challenge (Wang, 2014). Career adaptability (CA) is an internal resource that individuals adopt to cope with present and future developmental tasks, career transitions, and work needs (Savickas, 2005), and it may be an important inner strength that working parents need for career adaptation. Many working parents may possess work–family strength (WFS); however, not every working parent experiences personal growth initiative (PGI) and well-being. In this study, we explore whether CA is a moderating factor for Taiwanese working parents facing work–family conflict (WFC) and whether CA is a mediating factor in their work–family experience.

## WORK–FAMILY EXPERIENCE: WFC AND WFS

In counseling studies on work–family experience, WFC and WFS are two dimensions of concern. WFC is an experience that interferes or conflicts with an individual's

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work and family roles (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996). Studies have found that WFC has a severe effect on one's inner self, mental health, and family function (Magee, Stefanic, Caputi, & Iverson, 2012; Netemeyer et al, 1996). In contrast, WFS is a strengthened experience that a work role and a family role bring to each other (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Greenhaus and Powell (2006) suggested that a positive experience in one role could be transferred to another role to improve quality of life. These positive experiences between work and family roles are also a strength for working parents, so we identified such positive experiences as WFS in the current study. Many studies found that WFC experiences have a negative effect on work, family, and individuals, whereas WFS experiences engendered a mutual positive effect on others and helped individuals (Magee et al., 2012; Van Steenbergen, Kluwer, & Karney, 2014). The results of Wang's (2014) qualitative interviews indicated that individuals who experience a high level of WFC will find it harder to be aware of strength experiences between work and family roles. However, there is insufficient relevant quantitative studies on this subject in Taiwan. Therefore, in this study, we explore the relation between WFC and WFS for working parents in Taiwan; we assume that when individuals experience a higher level of WFC, they will experience a lower level of WFS.

## **PGI AND WORK–FAMILY EXPERIENCE**

PGI refers to “active, intentional engagement in the process of personal growth” (Robitschek, 1998, p. 184). In addition to continued self-growth (Ryff, 1989) and improvement, PGI emphasizes that for a person, it is an active change that is made on purpose (Robitschek, et al., 2012). For working parents, PGI is recognition of self-growth and an objective to fulfill in order to achieve self-improvement, self-growth, and proactivity. It represents adjustment and well-being that working parents strive to attain.

Studies have found that WFC affects individuals' mental health and life satisfaction (Magee et al., 2012) and interferes with spouses' interactions and their parenting behaviors (Cooklin et al., 2014). These studies support negative relations among WFC, well-being, mental health, and the quality of interpersonal interactions; however, they have not confirmed the relation between WFC and PGI. Working parents who experience WFC have a difficult time experiencing PGI and establishing a direction and goal for self-adaptation. Hence, we propose that WFC negatively predicts PGI.

According to positive psychology, being aware of one's strength is meaningful to individuals (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). This awareness is important because evoking positive feelings creates more positive feelings, which replace individuals' narrow viewpoints and positively influence other roles and aspects of their lives (Fitzpatrick & Stalikas, 2008). Reinforcing individuals' awareness of strengths and expanding these strengths not only promote inner well-being and a sense of meaning but also improve their quality of life (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). Empirical studies have found that WFS leads to marital satisfaction (Van Steenbergen et al., 2014); has a positive influence on work satisfaction, emotional agreement, parenting, and mental and physical health;

and promotes well-being (Gareis, Barnett, Ertel, & Berkman, 2009; Lim, Song, & Choi, 2012; Magee et al., 2012). These studies have demonstrated that WFS experiences are positively related to psychological well-being and that WFS promotes self-concept and self-development. Therefore, the current study explores whether WFC and WFS predict PGI and, if they do, whether WFC negatively affects PGI and WFS positively affects PGI.

## CA AND WORK–FAMILY EXPERIENCE

CA refers to the internal resources that adult workers use to cope with challenges (Savickas, 2005). When individuals have greater CA, they have better coping abilities and adaptability to respond to work and life challenges, and they are more likely to have better life satisfaction, well-being, and orientation to happiness (Johnston, Luciano, Maggiori, Ruch, & Rossier, 2013; Tien, Wang, Chu, & Huang, 2012). CA is a multidimensional and hierarchical construct that consists of four components: concern, curiosity, control, and confidence (Savickas, 2005). *Concern* relates to individuals' future orientation and helps them integrate their past career experiences. *Control* means that individuals believe that their career is under their influence. *Curiosity* refers to individuals' assessment of their fitness with respect to work. *Confidence* relates to individuals' perceived self-efficacy when confronting challenges and obstacles. These four constructs represent four different strengths that may function differently for individuals as they cope with life challenges.

Individuals who experience a strong level of WFC may lack focus in life and self-efficacy. Garcia, Milkovits, and Bordia (2014) indicated that self-efficacy and outcome expectations, in part, mediate the negative relationship between WFC and preferences. Overall, the correlation between CA and WFC warrants additional exploration, because research on these topics is insufficient. Conversely, individuals who experience a strong level of WFS may also experience better CA. After interviewing Taiwanese working parents, Wang (2014) found that having WFS helped individuals make future career plans, which facilitated efficient time management and career confidence. In Wang's study, individuals who experienced more WFS had greater control and confidence and were better prepared to make career plans. Furthermore, many women viewed their work roles as a source of confidence to face challenges associated with family life, such as the implicitly imbalanced status between spouses (Wang, 2014). WFS may improve a person's CA. Nevertheless, a direct correlation between WFS and CA has not yet been confirmed. Therefore, in this study, we explore whether WFC and WFS significantly predict CA and, if they do, whether WFC negatively affects CA and WFS positively affects CA.

## PGI AND CA

Individuals concerned about career development may pursue CA to actively explore and gain knowledge of a career and self in order to promote self-efficacy and confidence. Santilli, Nota, Ginevra, and Soresi (2014) found that CA and life satisfaction are

positively correlated with each other, and individuals with a higher degree of CA will concentrate more on their career and quality of life. In their study of 493 Taiwanese working adults, Yang, Tien, Wu, and Chu (2015) reported a significantly positive predictive effect of CA on PGI. On the basis of these studies, we expect that a positive correlation exists between CA, well-being, and life satisfaction. Therefore, we explore whether CA positively affects PGI for Taiwanese working adults.

## EFFECTS OF CA ON WORK–FAMILY EXPERIENCE AND PGI

According to Savickas and Porfeli (2012), CA refers to the strength or capacity in self-regulation that individuals adopt to solve career-related challenges. We suggest that CA helps individuals adjust the relation between WFC experiences and PGI, and we argue that individuals with a higher degree of CA have better PGI even when they experience WFC. As mentioned, because individuals with a higher degree of CA concentrate more on their career and life quality (Santilli et al., 2014), they may seek resources and find solutions to improve their internal initiative, as well as have better coping efficacy to resolve, reduce, or adjust conflicts when they face external challenges (Johnston et al., 2013). Therefore, in this study, we explore whether CA has a moderating effect on WFC experiences and PGI for working parents in Taiwan.

We specifically aim to explore how strength experiences are transformed into PGI and whether CA is an internal process that influences the relation between WFS experiences and PGI. Rego and Cunha (2009) found that individuals with perceptions of both work–family conciliation and opportunities for learning and personal development were predicted to have high affective well-being. Duffy (2010) suggested that perceptions of control, in part, mediated the degree of positive attitude toward undergraduate students’ future careers. Hirschi, Herrmann, and Keller (2015) observed that concern and control significantly mediated adaptivity indicators, career planning, and career-related decisions. All of these studies show that CA is an important inner mediator. We are concerned with the effect of CA and the degree to which it transforms WFS experiences and improves quality of life. On the basis of previous studies (Magee et al., 2012; Wang, 2014), we predict that WFS can enhance CA and PGI, and we also predict a relationship between CA and PGI (Santilli et al., 2014). Moreover, on the basis of Hirschi et al.’s (2015) study, we examine whether CA is a mediator in the relation between WFS experiences and PGI.

The objectives of the current study are to explore the relations among WFC, WFS, PGI, and CA; to explore the moderating effect of CA on WFC and PGI; and to explore whether CA is the mediator of the relation between WFS and PGI. We propose the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 1:* WFC experiences are negatively correlated with WFS experiences.

*Hypothesis 2:* WFC and WFS experiences significantly affect PGI.

*Hypothesis 3:* WFC and WFS experiences significantly affect CA.

*Hypothesis 4:* CA significantly affects PGI.

*Hypothesis 5:* CA has a moderating effect on WFC experiences and PGI.

*Hypothesis 6:* CA mediates the relationship between WFS experiences and PGI.

## METHOD

### Participants

Our sample consists of 598 adult workers who worked more than 40 hours per week and who had children under the age of 18. The participants were 225 men (37.6%) and 373 women (62.4%) between the ages of 20 and 58 years ( $M = 13.75$ ,  $SD = 6.23$ ). Their work experience varied from 6 months to 39 years ( $M = 13.75$ ,  $SD = 6.68$ ). Participants were allocated according to Holland's (1985) six personality types. Most of the participants were the Social type ( $n = 225$ , 37.6%), followed by the Conventional type ( $n = 160$ , 26.8%), the Enterprising type ( $n = 67$ , 11.2%), the Realistic type ( $n = 48$ , 8.0%), the Investigative type ( $n = 45$ , 7.5%), and the Artistic type ( $n = 22$ , 3.7%); 31 (5.1%) participants' types were unidentified. Of the sample, 494 (83.2%) participants had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 104 (16.8%) had a high school diploma. In addition, 223 (37.3%) participants had one child, 302 (50.5%) had two children, and 73 (12.2%) had three or more children.

### Instruments

**WFC.** The WFC Scale (Wang, 2011) measures the degree of conflict between work role and family role experienced by adult workers. The 23-item scale is rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). An example item includes "Because of my family, I missed possible development or promotion opportunities at work." In Wang's (2011) study, the internal consistency for 561 working parents in Taiwan ranged between .91 and .93, and the internal consistency of the entire scale was .94. A confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the standardized factor loadings of each construct of the scale were between .40 and .93; the variables explained 58.71% of the total variance.

**WFS.** The WFS Scale (Wang, Wu, & Li, 2014) is used to determine the strengths of working parents. The 25-item scale is rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). An example item includes "Work life helps me switch role-playing and helps me temporarily escape concerns related to my family life." The internal consistency for 561 adults ranged between .92 and .93, and the internal consistency of the entire scale was .95. The current study used the total scores for the two dimensions in the WFS Scale (WFS and family-work strength) as the scores for WFS. A confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the standardized factor loadings of each construct of the scale were between .40 and .86.

**CA.** The Career Adaptabilities Scale-Taiwan Form was developed by Tien et al. (2012) to assess the CA of Taiwanese adults. The 25-item scale is rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*) and comprises four constructs (concern, curiosity, control, and confidence). An example item includes "I'm concerned about my future career." Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each subscale for 493 Taiwanese adults ranged between .89 and .91, and the internal consistency of the entire scale was .96. A confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the standardized factor loadings of each construct were between .61 and .93, and

the coefficient between the observed variables and the latent variables was within the acceptable range, supporting the construct validity (Tien et al., 2012).

*PGI.* The PGI Scale (Tien, 2006) was adapted for Taiwanese adults from Robitschek (1998). The nine-item scale is rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). An example item includes “In my life, I know how to make changes to the point that I want to make a change.” The reliability coefficient based on 725 Taiwanese adults was .90; the factor loadings of the items in the Taiwan-adapted PGI Scale were between .66 and .78, indicating good construct validity (Tien, 2006).

## Procedure and Data Analysis

This study used convenience sampling to recruit participants from varied sources. We invited participants from psychology and counseling postgraduate programs, human resource departments of companies, parenting websites, and our contacts. The participants were informed about the content and purpose of the study and the 15- to 20-minute time span of the survey. We gave participants a pen as a thank-you gift. Ninety-eight percent of received questionnaires were valid. This high response rate may be due to the study topic. Because the topic was closely related to the participants’ daily life, their motivation to complete the questionnaires might have been high.

We conducted a simple regression analysis to examine how WFS predicts CA, how CA predicts PGI, and how WFS predicts PGI. We also conducted a regression analysis (Baron & Kenny, 1986) to examine the main effect of WFC on PGI and the moderating effect of each construct of CA on the relation between WFC and PGI. Finally, we used the bootstrapping method (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) to explore the multiple mediator models of the four constructs of CA on WFS and PGI.

## RESULTS

Table 1 shows the intercorrelations and descriptive statistics of WFS, WFC, the four constructs of CA (concern, control, curiosity, and confidence), and PGI. A negative correlation was found between WFS and WFC ( $r = -.28, p < .01$ ), which supports Hypothesis 1.

### WFS and WFC as Predictors for PGI

The standardized regression coefficients of WFS and WFC were predictors of CA and PGI, and CA was a predictor of PGI after controlling for the gender and age of participants. The analyses indicated that WFS positively predicted PGI ( $r^2 = .21, \beta = .46, t(596) = 12.78, p < .01$ ), but WFC negatively predicted PGI ( $r^2 = .05, \beta = -.23, t(596) = -5.85, p < .01$ ). This finding demonstrates that WFS promoted PGI but WFC did not, which supports Hypothesis 2.

**TABLE 1**

**Summary of Intercorrelations, Means, and Standard Deviations for Work–Family Strength (WFS), Work–Family Conflict (WFC), the Four Constructs of Career Adaptability, and Personal Growth Initiative (PGI)**

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. WFS	—						
2. WFC	-.28**	—					
3. Concern	.61**	-.18**	—				
4. Control	.58**	-.27**	.78**	—			
5. Curiosity	.52**	-.13**	.76**	.80**	—		
6. Confidence	.50**	-.18**	.72**	.76**	.78**	—	
7. PGI	.47**	-.23**	.65**	.72**	.67**	.69**	—
<i>M</i>	4.47	3.20	4.64	4.63	4.57	4.60	4.21
<i>SD</i>	0.65	0.83	0.72	0.69	0.67	0.68	0.70

Note. *N* = 598. Control variables are gender and age. Concern, control, curiosity, and confidence are the four constructs of career adaptability.

\*\**p* < .01.

**WFS and WFC as Predictors for CA**

WFS positively predicted the four constructs of CA ( $r^2$ s > .26,  $\beta$ s > .51),  $t$ s(596) > 14.16,  $p$ s < .01, and was the strongest predictor of concern ( $r^2 = .38$ ,  $\beta = .62$ ),  $t$ (596) = 19.02,  $p$  < .01, and then of control ( $r^2 = .33$ ,  $\beta = .58$ ),  $t$ (596) = 17.17,  $p$  < .01. On the other hand, WFC negatively affected the four constructs of CA ( $r^2$ s > .01,  $\beta$ s < -.11),  $t$ s(596) < -2.68,  $p$ s < .01, and was the strongest predictor of control ( $r^2 = .07$ ,  $\beta = -.26$ ),  $t$ (596) = -6.53,  $p$  < .01. These findings indicate that both WFS and WFC promoted or decreased performance in CA of individuals, which supports Hypothesis 3.

**CA as a Predictor of PGI**

The four constructs of CA positively predicted PGI ( $r^2$ s > .44,  $\beta$ s > .66),  $t$ s(596) > 21.35,  $p$ s < .01. The strongest predictor of PGI was control ( $r^2 = .51$ ,  $\beta = .71$ ),  $t$ (596) = 24.70,  $p$  < .01, and the second strongest predictor was confidence ( $r^2 = .47$ ,  $\beta = .68$ ),  $t$ (596) = 22.75,  $p$  < .01. These findings indicate that CA positively promoted PGI, which supports Hypothesis 4.

**Moderating Effect of CA on WFC**

We used the four constructs of CA as moderators and found that their individual interaction terms with WFC in the regression models were statistically significant ( $F$ s > 152.23,  $p$  < .01; see Table 2). The explanatory power in predicting PGI was between 43% and 51%. Regarding the main effects in each regression model, WFC was a negative predictor in the four regression models. The results showed that



TABLE 2

Summary of Regression Analysis Results on Work–Family Conflict (WFC), the Four Constructs of Career Adaptability, and Personal Growth Initiative

MM	Concern			Control			Curiosity			Confidence		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
1. WFC	-.22**	-.11**	-.10**	-.22**	-.03	-.03	-.22**	-.14**	-.13**	-.22**	-.10**	-.10**
2. MOD	—	.63**	.62**	—	.70**	.70**	—	.64**	.64**	—	.67**	.67**
3. IT	—	—	-.09**	—	—	-.03	—	—	-.08**	—	—	-.04
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.05	.43	.43	.05	.51	.51	.05	.45	.46	.05	.48	.48
$\Delta R^2$	.05**	.38**	.01**	.05**	.46**	.00	.05**	.41**	.01**	.05**	.43**	.00
<i>F</i>	29.07	221.28	152.23	29.07	309.01	206.25	29.07	247.34	168.99	29.07	271.48	181.66

Note. *N* = 598. Criterion variable is personal growth initiative. Concern, control, curiosity, and confidence are the four constructs of career adaptability. MM = moderator model; MOD = moderator; IT = interaction term.

\*\**p* < .01.

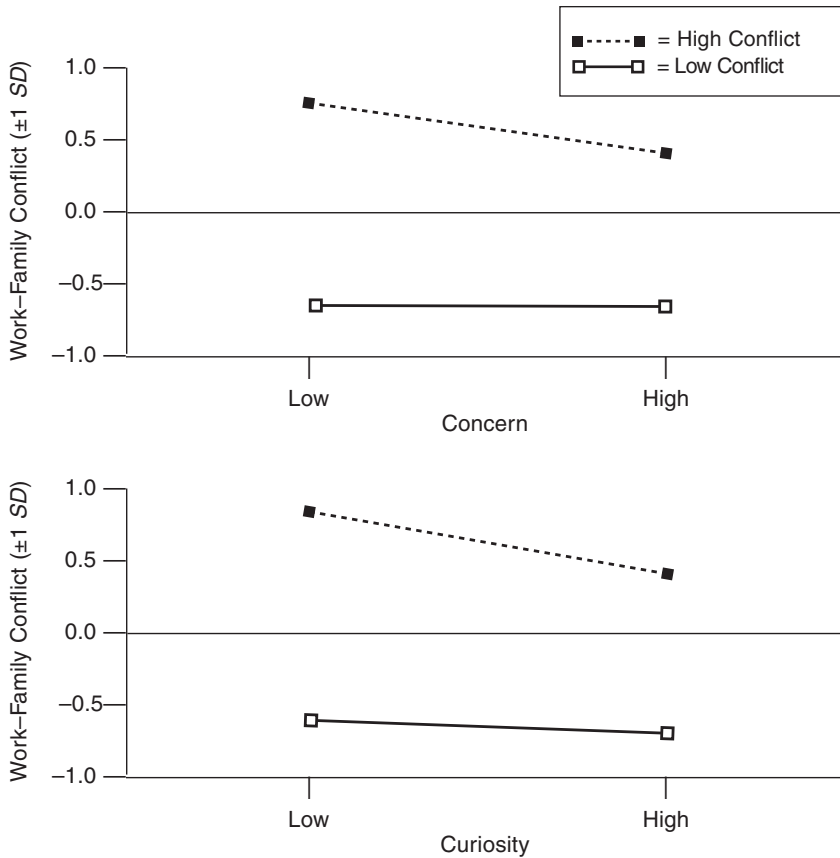
participants who experienced a higher degree of WFC had lower PGI. Moreover, concern, control, curiosity, and confidence were statistically significant predictors of PGI ( $\beta$ s > .63, *t*s > 20.92, *p* < .01). Regarding the interaction effect in each regression model, the results showed that concern ( $\beta = -.09$ ), *t*(594) = -2.92, *p* < .01, and curiosity ( $\beta = -.08$ ), *t*(594) = -2.68, *p* < .01, moderated the relation between WFC and PGI ( $\Delta R^2 > .01$ , *p* < .01), but control ( $\beta = -.03$ ), *t*(594) = -0.93, *p* = .36, and confidence ( $\beta = -.04$ ), *t*(594) = -1.24, *p* = .22, did not.

We set the mean above and below one standard deviation of WFC separately with concern and curiosity as data points, and we used the raw scores to obtain four scores to produce the interaction effect graphs shown in Figure 1. The simple slopes analysis showed that the relation between WFC and PGI was strongest at high levels of concern (1 *SD* above the mean;  $\beta = -.18$ , *p* < .001). There was no relation at low levels of concern (1 *SD* below the mean;  $\beta = -.02$ , *p* = .73). Figure 1 also indicates that WFC and PGI were strongest at high levels of curiosity (1 *SD* above the mean;  $\beta = -.21$ , *p* < .001). There was no relation at low levels of curiosity (1 *SD* below the mean;  $\beta = -.06$ , *p* = .19). These findings indicate that each moderator was a positive predictor of PGI, which partially supports Hypothesis 5.

**Analysis of the Mediation of CA of the Relation Between WFS and PGI**

Regarding the mediation effects of CA (see Figure 2), after we controlled for participants’ gender and age, the direct effect of WFS on PGI was .47 (*p* < .01). After being mediated by CA, the direct effect coefficients decreased to .02 (*p* > .05), and the difference using the mediating variable was .45. After the estimation using the bootstrapping method (see Table 3), the total-effect coefficient (.44) significantly differed from zero (95% confidence interval excluding zero), which indicates a mediation effect of CA on PGI. When participants had high CA, WFS had no





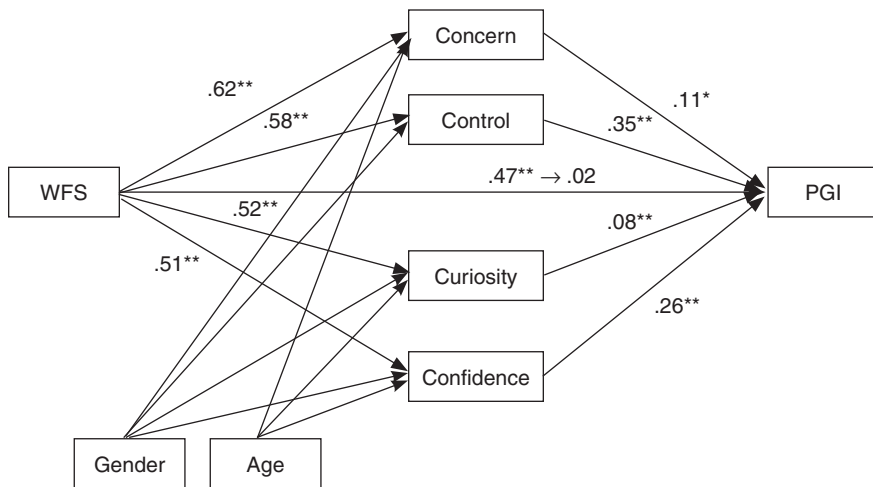
**FIGURE 1**

**Interaction Effects of Work-Family Conflict and the Concern and Curiosity Constructs of Career Adaptability on Personal Growth Initiative**

*Note.* Concern is the moderator in the top half of the figure, and curiosity is the moderator in the bottom half.

influence on their PGI. WFS had an effect on PGI through the effects of CA. This finding supports Hypothesis 6.

We explored the effect of WFS on PGI after mediation by using the four constructs of CA. After we controlled for the gender and age of participants, the CA constructs of concern, control, and confidence showed a significant mediation effect (95% confidence interval excluding zero). We performed a paired comparison between the direct effect coefficients of the four constructs and found that control had a stronger mediation effect on the relation between WFS and PGI compared with the other constructs, and it was the primary impact factor among the four constructs.



**FIGURE 2**

**Analysis of Mediation Effect of the Four Constructs of Career Adaptability on the Relationship Between Work–Family Strength (WFS) and Personal Growth Initiative (PGI)**

*Note.* Concern, control, curiosity, and confidence are the four constructs of career adaptability. The values represent standardized regression coefficients. The arrows indicate the change of direct effect of WFS on PGI before and after the mediation.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

**DISCUSSION**

This study explored the relationships between work–family experience, CA, and PGI. The results indicate that WFC is negatively correlated with WFS, work–family experience significantly predicts PGI and CA, and CA has significant mediation and moderating effects on work–family experience.

Our study found that Taiwanese working parents who experience a high level of WFC have difficulty experiencing WFS, and vice versa. This result is similar to the studies of Magee et al. (2012), Van Steenbergen et al. (2014), and Wang (2014). Many studies have reported that the organization of multiple roles (Tipping, 1997) or more effective management of resources (Tien & Wang, 2015) are some of the methods to resolve WFC. We confirmed the relationship between WFC and WFS. For practical application, we suggest assisting working parents to develop strength and durability, which would enable them to better face and coexist with conflict. They must not only prevent or buffer WFC but also generate additional strength, through strength experiences, to improve their overall quality of life.

This study also found that WFC negatively affects PGI and that CA and WFS positively affect PGI and CA, which is similar to the results of Cooklin et al. (2014), Magee et al. (2012), and Garcia et al. (2014). Furthermore, the current study contributes to the field in two important ways. First, it indicates that work, family, and individual roles are mutually interactive and that the quality of work–family experience greatly

**TABLE 3**

**Results of Bootstrapping on the Multiple Mediation Models of the Four Constructs of Career Adaptability With Work–Family Strength and Personal Growth Initiative**

Variable	B Coefficient			
	Data	Bootstrap	SE	CI
Overall effect	.44	.44	.03	[.38, .52]
Concern	.07	.07	.04	[.00, .14]
Control	.20	.20	.04	[.13, .28]
Curiosity	.04	.04	.03	[−.03, .10]
Confidence	.13	.13	.03	[.08, .20]
Concern × Control	−.13	−.13	.06	[−.26, −.01]
Concern × Curiosity	.03	.03	.05	[−.07, .13]
Concern × Confidence	−.06	−.06	.05	[−.17, .04]
Control × Curiosity	.16	.16	.06	[.05, .28]
Control × Confidence	.07	.07	.05	[−.03, .17]
Curiosity × Confidence	−.09	−.09	.05	[−.21, .00]

*Note.* Bootstrap resample  $N = 5,000$ . Concern, control, curiosity, and confidence are the four constructs of career adaptability. CI = confidence interval.

influences PGI. Second, a higher level of WFC has a greater negative effect on the PGI and CA of working parents, and the improvement of WFS helps to produce stronger PGI and CA. These findings are valuable for application in a practical work setting. However, 60% of our participants were women, and gender context may affect work–family experience in Taiwan. In general, Taiwanese women are responsible for parenting and household chores but men are not. Tien (2006) found that, among Taiwanese working parents, women experience a higher degree of WFC compared with men, whereas men experience more flexibility, positive coping, and balance compared with women. This phenomenon indicates a less friendly employment environment and workplace adaptation for women in Taiwan. Our study found that promoting strengths of career women will help foster their career adaptation, which tends to be neglected in the current working environment.

Furthermore, results showed that for working parents who experience WFC, CA is a key influence in promoting well-being and self-growth and constitutes an important internal protective factor. With regard to PGI, the participants with considerable or high CA experienced a lower level of WFC, whereas those with poor CA experienced a higher level of WFC with a lower degree of PGI. These results indicate that the four constructs of CA may have moderating effects on the relationship between WFC and PGI, with concern and curiosity being the most important factors. Johnston et al. (2013) found that control has a mediation effect on job stress, whereas we found that concern and curiosity have moderating effects on WFC. If working parents pay more attention to their career and start to acknowledge the content and influence of WFC with regard to their own situation, their curiosity may motivate them to explore and understand relevant information regarding their jobs. This observation is also a key point toward improving PGI.

Furthermore, CA completely mediated the correlation between WFS and PGI, indicating that WFS has a positive effect on PGI through individuals' CA. Control as

a construct has the most significant mediating effects. However, although control is a typical concept for Western culture and its emphasis on individualism, our study was based in Taiwan, with an Eastern culture. Therefore, promoting control may differ in Eastern and Western cultures. Career counselors in Taiwan are encouraged to assist individuals to learn how to promote their sense of agency and maintain or develop PGI within the context of a caring relationship with a spouse.

## **Clinical and Future Research Implications**

The results of this study contribute to career counseling practice by providing several guidelines for improving the well-being of working parents. First, to assist working parents find a balance between work and family, counselors should give equal attention to expanding parents' strength experiences and releasing their WFC. The former is a feasible and valuable strategy to promote overall quality of life. Second, integrating work–family experiences and linking these experiences to CA skills are beneficial to PGI. When applying these strategies in practice, counselors should take the following steps. First, encourage clients to care for themselves. Second, encourage clients to create and be aware of their strengths both at work and in the family. Counselors can invite clients to narrate meaningful incidents in their work–family experience and look for strengths to emphasize. Counselors should assist clients in discovering the empowering nature of their work role in their family, as a strategy to help them improve their psychological well-being. This is especially significant for career women. Third, encourage clients to think about and improve their self-control and enhance their self-confidence. Empowering clients is the beginning of initiating this sense of agency. Career counselors should help clients, especially women in Eastern cultures, understand that focusing on their career does not mean undermining the importance of their family. Counselors also should encourage clients to integrate their work, family, and personal needs.

In this study, we confirmed the relationship between WFC and WFS. However, future studies could evaluate these two variables using a theoretical model and structural equation modeling to verify and validate their relationship. Moreover, CA intervention strategies should be developed, and their effectiveness in helping clients cope with conflict and promote strength experiences should be assessed. Finally, our study was based on the Chinese culture in Taiwan; therefore, comparisons should be performed with different cultural contexts and regions to understand differences in work–family experiences, coping resources, and well-being in different cultures.

## **Limitations**

We used self-reported questionnaires in the study, and most of our participants were volunteers; thus, there may be errors in the survey. More than 60% of the participants were women, which may influence the generalizability of the results. Furthermore, this study adopted a cross-sectional survey, which does not allow for causal inferences.



## CONCLUSION

The results of this study confirm the correlation between WFC and WFS and reveal that CA has important mediating and moderation effects between work–family experience and PGI, thus demonstrating that CA is one of the most important predictive factors for working parents. For working parents, individual and role experiences are indivisible, and the quality of work–family roles is the main source of well-being. This study shows that strengthening parents by expanding their strength experiences is one strategy for dealing with WFC. In addition, improving CA is not only a strategy to adjust WFC but also an important route for creating strength experiences. Future practice and research should work on developing intervention strategies, validating their effectiveness, and exploring the possible influence of culture.

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