

Working hard doesn't make up for an unhappy home life

RESEARCHERS investigated the idea that employees who are dissatisfied in their personal lives seek "compensatory rewards" through work – but found this is hardly ever successful.

In a detailed survey with more than 10,000 people across 30 European countries, the study found there is an overall link between job and life satisfaction – especially for the main earners in households.

However, this would not extend to anyone attempting to use work to compensate for unhappiness in their personal life.

Professor Yannis Georgellis, from Kingston University business school, London, said: "The life and work domains are definitely correlated. Happiness at home affects your job and vice versa.

"Although there is a clear 'spillover' effect from one area of life to the other, there is no evidence that people who are very unhappy at home will feel 'compensated' by work in any way."

The results in western European countries with a similar gross domestic product (GDP) per capita such as France, Germany and Austria showed a weaker correlation between job and life satisfaction.

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In contrast, there was a much stronger link between happiness in the office and at home in Eastern European lower, more traditional countries with lower GDP per capita like Croatia, Hungary and Romania.

Georgellis continued: "The majority of people in countries with more traditional values report that work is extremely important in their lives.

"This is not always the case for individuals in more modern, less traditional countries who view work only as a small part of their daily life and identity."

However, he acknowledged there were important factors which influenced how strongly job and life satisfaction were correlated that needed to be accounted for, adding: "The study finds that being happy at work becomes less important to women's overall well-being when they have pre-school children, for example, possibly because this changes working mothers' priorities.

"This alters when children become teenagers and the link between job and overall life satisfaction is strengthened at this time as mothers often return to work."

The link between job and life happiness was also much stronger among single people of both sexes than those who were married.

The study is published in the British Journal of Management.

— Telegraph