

# The Impact of Character Strengths on Employee Well-Being: The Mediating Effect of Work-Family Relationship

Jing Wang, Yong Wang

**Abstract**—For organizational development, employee well-being is critical and has been influenced deeply by character strengths. Therefore, investigating the relationship between character strengths and employee well-being and its inner mechanism is crucial. In this study, we explored the features of Chinese employees' character strengths, studied the relationship between character strengths and employees' subjective well-being, work well-being and psychological well-being respectively, and examined the mediating effect of work-family relationship (both enrichment and conflict). An online survey was conducted. The results showed that: (1) The top five character strengths of Chinese employees were gratitude, citizenship, kindness, appreciation of beauty and excellence, justice, while the bottom five ones were creativity, authenticity, bravery, spirituality, open-mindedness. (2) Subjective well-being was significantly correlated to courage, humanity, transcendence and justice. Work well-being was significantly correlated to wisdom, courage, humanity, justice and transcendence. Psychological well-being was significantly correlated to all the above five character strengths and temperance. (3) Wisdom and humanity influenced Chinese employees' subjective well-being through work-family enrichment. Justice enhanced psychological well-being via work-family enrichment; meanwhile, it also played a positive role in subjective well-being, work well-being, and psychological well-being by decreasing the family-work conflict. At the end of this paper, some theoretical and practical contributions to organizational management were further discussed.

**Keywords**—Character strengths, work-family conflict, work-family enrichment, employee well-being, work well-being.

## I. INTRODUCTION

IN the field of organizational behavior and human resources management, employee well-being is very important for organizational development [1]. High level of well-being is often related to high level of job involvement and job satisfaction and organizational commitment, yet low level of job burnout and turnover intention [2]-[5]. It also closely correlates with employees' and organizational creativity [6]. Therefore, investigating the factors, which contribute to the employee's well-being, is critical for the employee's and organizational development. The previous studies pay more attention to management or job factors [7]-[12], such as the Job Demands-Resources Model, the Person-Environment Fit Model, job commitment-work pressure-work performance, and

work well-being [3]. These researches mainly care about how outside substantial conditions or environments provided by organizations influence psychological well-being. However, the studies which focus on employee's own character, like character strengths, are much less. Like well-being, character strengths are also an important conception in positive psychology and is considered to play an important role in discovering human's advantages, curing psychological diseases and improving psychological health [13]. Lots of studies based on college students have found that character strengths is closely associated with subjective well-being [14]-[17], psychological health [18], [19] and positive behaviors like adaptation [20] and coping styles [21]. Few researches based on employee groups found that grass-root civil servants' character strengths are related negatively to work pressure and job burnout [22], while positively related to subjective well-being [23]. Compared to disposition which is rather unchangeable, character strengths can be cultivated and it's an important reflection of employee's own self-quality. Studying on which character strengths could influence the employee's well-being and how they work would help us to improve employee's well-being and organizational development from a new perspective.

This study aims to investigate three questions: firstly, the character strengths of Chinese employee are not clear. The concept of character strengths comes from traditional clinical psychology, which intends to correct the negative psychological tradition. Positive psychologists believe that human's superiority is not byproduct by solving or negatively alleviating the problem. Human's advantage can help us to deal with misfortune, alleviate and prevent the psychological problems. And it's the key factor to construct the ability for adaptation [24]. To unify the standard for psychological counseling, Peterson and Seligman suggested the Values in Action Classification of Strengths System, Park and others made the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS) based on this [25]. 24 character strengths are classified into 6 virtues: wisdom and knowledge, courage, justice, humanity, temperance and transcendence. These six virtues are appreciated worldwide. The conception and inventory provide a unified theory framework for our study. Somehow, the reflection of the same virtue might be different in different cultural environments. For example, the first five character strengths of American men are kindness, love and be loved, humor, honesty and gratitude [26], but for English men are judgment, justice, curiosity, love of learning and creativity

Jing Wang is with the Key Laboratory of Behavioral Science, Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100101, China. She is also with University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100049, China.

Yong Wang is with the Key Laboratory of Behavioral Science, Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing 100101, China. (Phone: 86-10-64850860; fax: 86-10-64872070; e-mail: wangy@psych.ac.cn).

[27]. Studies in China found that Chinese college students' most outstanding strengths are love and be loved, honesty, gratitude, appreciation for beauty and excellence, kindness [14]. There is no study to describe Chinese employees' character strengths as a group precisely. As known, China is a collective country, valuing the family and relationships, which is different from western culture. Meanwhile, school and workplace are very different in both culture and environment. So the employees' sequence of character strengths might differ from the college students'. Then, what Chinese employees' character strengths would be like as a group? This is the first question we would hope to answer. It can not only help company/employees to realize the conditions of working groups' character strengths, but also provide evidences for comparing the character strengths from different cultures and groups.

Secondly, this study also attempts to explore the relationship between character strengths and the three dimensions of employee well-being. As positive psychology appeared, the conception of well-being has been under debate. There comes out the subjective well-being based on hedonism [28], the psychological well-being based on eudemonia [29], and the work well-being specifically focused on workplace [3]. They are different yet related closely. Page and Vella-Brodrick suggested a comprehensive model of employee well-being, including all these three kinds of well-being [30]. Zheng and others, by using both interview and questionnaire, also suggested that employee well-being had these three dimensions and made the employee well-being inventory for general [31]. Investigating the differences among these three well-beings will be helpful to understand the employee well-being deeply. Few previous studies investigated the relationship between subjective well-being and character strengths [23]-[32]. Dianmu Hou et al. suggested that a few character strengths, like caution, leadership, thinking ability, were not related with subjective well-being [23]. Martinez-Marti et al studied the Germen living in Sweden and found that some character strengths were more important for subjective well-being in different life stages [32]. For instance, in 27-36 aged group honesty and subjective well-being were correlated closely; in 37-46 aged group, hope, zest, and humor were more essential for subjective well-being; yet in 47-57 aged group, gratitude and love of learning became more important. In previous employee researches, psychological capital received much more attention than character strengths. Psychological capital is the positive psychological status, including self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience [33]. In collectivist cultural background, relationship psychological capital is added, including modesty, kindness, and gratitude [34]. Comparing the context of character strengths and psychological capital, we could see that character strengths are more comprehensive than psychological capital. We could also infer that character strengths might improve employee well-being. What are the relationships among 6 virtues and 3 perspectives of employee well-being? Answering this question will help firstly clarify the conception, construction and the related influential factors of employee well-being; and secondly might guide organizations

to improve employees' the needed strengths in practical.

In today's China, people are encountering great pressure which has deeply impacted the work-family relationship and employee well-being. So this study aims to investigate the relationship between character strengths and employee well-being, and then further discusses what would a mediating role the work-family relationship will play in the relationship between character strengths and employee well-being. Previous studies have found that work-family relationship (enrichment/conflict) is closely related to employee well-being's related factors, such as job/life satisfaction, depression, subjective well-being. Grant-Vallone and Donaldson found that work-family conflict was a longitudinal predictor of employee well-being, and it predicted employee well-being over and above social desirability bias [35]. Tong and Zhou's study revealed that both work-family conflict and family-work conflict had a significant negative correlation with life satisfaction in employees [36]. Li and Gao found that, for the middle-professional managers, work-family conflict had a negative effect for job satisfaction, and perceived supervisory support had a moderating effect on work-family conflict and job satisfaction [37]. The study of Li et al. indicated that job demands had a significantly negative influence on happiness, and work-family interference fully mediated this relationship; job resources positively influenced on individual's perceived happiness, and work-family facilitation partially mediated the relationship between job resources and happiness [2]. The work-family conflict seems to greatly influence employee well-being. A study found that the effect of high psychological capital on job satisfaction is mediated by work-family enrichment. Since character strengths and psychological capital have partial overlapping, we suppose that the effect of character strengths on employee well-being is mediated by work-family relationship. Moreover, Guo, Wang and Liu found that young people's marital satisfaction is closely related to their character strengths [38]. Marriage is an important part of family, so character strengths may also have a positive effect on family, and influence employee well-being through work-family relationship. In fact, there are two directions of work-family relationship: work interferes with family and family interferes with work. There are also two types of work-family relationship: conflict and enrichment. The work-family conflict is the role pressures from the work and family domains, which are mutually incompatible in some respect. There are three major forms of work-family conflict: time-based conflict, stress-based conflict, behavior-based conflict [39]. On the contrary, the work-family enrichment is defined as a positive transformation between the work and family domains, and it can contribute to the growth in another domain, such as the positive emotion generation or knowledge and skills learned from a role can be used by other roles. In addition, undertaking various roles can broaden the knowledge and increase potential social support [40]. Previous studies concern more about work-interfering-with-family direction than family-interfering-with-work direction, and investigate more about work-family conflict than work-family enrichment [41].

Up to now, it is not clear that which character strengths

influence the employee well-being through which direction of work-family relationship. Therefore, this study is trying to answer the question and investigates what role work-family enrichment and conflict plays in the effect of character strengths on different dimensions of employee well-being (work well-being, subjective well-being and psychological well-being). We also attempt to analyze different directions and forms of work-family relationship to find out routes in which character strengths influence different well-being. The research hypotheses are as follows: 1) Character strengths will promote well-being improvement via promoting work-family enrichment, which means that work-family enrichment is a mediator. 2) Character strengths can buffer some work-family conflicts, consequently improving well-being. The work-family conflict is also a mediator. 3) Character strengths virtue matches more with the Eudaimonic psychological well-being than Hedonic subjective well-being. So we infer that Character strengths have the most impact on psychological well-being.

## II. METHOD

### A. Participants

A simple random sample of 361 questionnaires was administered, and 295 were valid among the responded (142 males and 153 females). The sample was largely from Beijing (41.7% of Beijing, 58.3% of other cities).

### B. Measurement

Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS). Character strengths was measured by VIA-IS, a 240-item scale (10 items for each character strength) with 6 dimensions/virtues. The scale was developed by [25]. (1) Wisdom and Knowledge (creativity, curiosity, judgment, love of learning, perspective); (2) Courage (bravery, industry, honesty, zest); (3) Justice (citizenship, fairness, leadership); (4) Humanity (love, kindness, social intelligence); (5) Temperance (forgiveness, modesty, caution, self-control); and (6) Transcendence (appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humor, spirituality). Participants rated each item by a 5-point scale (1=very much unlike me to 5=very much like me, e.g., "Just imagine the situation: you have a chance to do something new or innovative, how much have you demonstrated creativity and uniqueness in these situations"  $\alpha=0.88$ ).

- **Work-family enrichment.** It was measured by a 14-item scale with 4 dimensions [42]. Participants rated each item using a 5-point scale (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree, e.g., "My work helps me to listen and know different view, which helps me to behave better when stay with family";  $\alpha=0.94$ ).
- **Work-family conflict.** It was measured by an 18-item scale with 6 dimensions. Gan revised it, making it a good construct validity as well as a great reliability [43]. Participants rated each item by a 5-point scale (1=completely disagree, 5= completely agree, e.g., "I had to miss family activities because of busy work";  $\alpha=0.90$ ).
- **Employee well-being.** The Employee Well-being

Questionnaire was derived from Zheng et al, which contained 18 items measuring work well-being, psychological well-being and subject well-being [44]. The scale has been proved with adequate reliability and validity qualities. Participants rated each item by a 7-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree, e.g., "I feel contented with my life";  $\alpha=0.93$ ).

### C. Data Analysis

All of data analyses are completed by SPSS17.0 and AMOS17.0.

## III. RESULTS AND ANALYSES

### A. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation analyses

Descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) of character strengths, two dimensions of work-family enrichment, employee well-being and six dimensions of work-family conflict and the partial correlation matrix of these above test scores by controlling demographic variables (job position and personal and family income per month) are shown in Table I.

For the six virtues, repeated measures analysis of variance found in this sample group of Chinese workers there were significant differences in scores [ $F(5,1470) = 29.936, p = .000$ ], post-test showed that wisdom = courage = temperance < humanity < transcendence < justice. This shows that the Chinese employee personal strengths lied in the character of justice (i.e., citizenship, fairness, and leadership), transcendence (that is, the strengths of self-actualization) and humanity (interpersonal level strengths). But the virtues of wisdom, courage and temperance were not prominent. From 24 character strengths rankings, five highest ranked ones were gratitude ( $M = 4.37$ ), citizenship ( $M = 4.23$ ), kindness ( $M = 4.02$ ), appreciation of beauty and excellence ( $M = 4.02$ ), fairness ( $M = 3.98$ ), while the five ones ranking of the most rearward were creativity ( $M = 3.32$ ), honesty ( $M = 3.41$ ), bravery ( $M = 3.50$ ), spirituality ( $M = 3.51$ ), judgment ( $M = 3.56$ ).

The main results of correlation analysis had four points: First, the subjective well-being was significantly associated with courage, kindness, and transcendence, justice but had no relationship with wisdom and temperance; Work well-being was remarkably related with wisdom, courage, kindness, justice and transcendence but still unrelated with temperance; Psychological well-being was significantly correlated to all the six virtues. Second, all the character strengths were positive significantly related to both work-family enrichment and family-work enrichment. And work-family enrichment and family-work enrichment were positively related to the three dimensions of well-being. This correlation result provided a premise for the mediating role analysis of work-family enrichment between character strengths and employee well-being [45]. Third, work-family conflict was barely correlated to work-family enrichment; only the stress-based work-family conflict was significantly negatively correlated to work-family enrichment. Fourth, wisdom was significantly

positively correlated to time-based work-family conflict. Justice and stress-based family-work conflict was significantly negatively correlated, and the latter was also significantly

negatively correlated to the three dimensions of employee well-being. This result provided a prerequisite for the mediation role of stress-based family-work conflict [45].

TABLE I  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND PARTIAL CORRELATION MATRIX OF SIX VIRTUES, EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING, WORK-FAMILY ENRICHMENT AND WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT

	M±SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1 Wisdom	3.56(0.68)	1															
2 Courage	3.59(0.63)	.470**	1														
3 Humanity	3.71(0.64)	.303**	.492**	1													
4 Justice	3.92(0.65)	.352**	.502**	.485**	1												
5 Temperance	3.61(0.63)	.280**	.433**	.438**	.488**	1											
6 Transcendence	3.86(0.62)	.376**	.433**	.511**	.572**	.536**	1										
7 WFE	3.74(0.72)	.301**	.257**	.239**	.189**	.120*	.223**	1									
8 FWE	4.02(0.67)	.209**	.285**	.331**	.342**	.214**	.259**	.625**	1								
9 SWB	4.40(1.16)	.110	.216**	.223**	.133*	.035	.137*	.358**	.266**	1							
10 WWB	4.41(1.30)	.334**	.295**	.180**	.186**	.052	.113*	.484**	.294**	.597**	1						
11 PWB	5.20(0.94)	.319**	.364**	.416**	.425**	.286**	.383**	.464**	.464**	.512**	.573**	1					
12 tWFC	3.15(1.06)	.157**	.065	-.018	.084	.071	-.004	.008	.020	-.142	.006	-.046	1				
13 sWFC	2.74(0.98)	.061	.061	-.064	.023	.071	.007	-.140*	-.057	-.296**	-.132*	.123*	.459**	1			
14 bWFC	2.75(0.94)	.047	.045	-.056	-.086	-.023	-.034	.015	.004	-.258**	-.120*	-.149*	.459**	.511**	1		
15 tFWC	2.31(0.93)	.117	.012	-.017	-.081	.022	.011	-.079	-.108	-.183*	-.095	-.162*	.360**	.441**	.436**	1	
16 sFWC	2.34(0.99)	.027	-.017	-.008	-.110*	.049	-.001	-.168*	-.186**	-.246**	-.212**	-.251**	.361**	.474**	.486**	.620**	1
17 bFWC	2.75(0.97)	.002	-.016	-.052	-.117	-.078	-.097	-.011	-.005	-.254**	-.134*	-.132**	.358**	.427**	.790**	.448**	.424**

Note: WFE (work-family enrichment), FWE (family-work enrichment), SWB (subjective well-being), WWB (work well-being), PWB (psychological well-being), tWFC (time work-family conflict), sWFC (stress work-family conflict), bWFC (behavior work-family conflict), tFWC (time family-work conflict), sFWC (stress family-work conflict), bFWC (behavior family-work conflict). \* p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

### B. Mediating Effect Analyses of Work-Family Enrichment

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to identify the impact character strengths on the three dimensions of employee well-being to see which is the most influential and which dimension of work-family enrichment take the mediation role (see Table II). First, the subjective well-being as the dependent variable; at the first step, put demographic variables (job position, monthly income, monthly household income) into the first layer of regression equation; then the six virtues were put into the second layer; at the third step, all mediation variables (i.e. work-family enrichment and family-work enrichment) were put into the third layer. As can be seen from Table II, the greatest impact of courage and kindness on SWB were found, and when work-family enrichment entered there is a significant contribution, also the two virtues' B coefficients decreased, which means WFE played an intermediary role. Then, we took work well-being and psychological well-being as the dependent variable respectively, and repeated the above three steps mediating effect analysis. The result showed that wisdom and courage had the greatest impact on work well-being, and WFE played and mediating role. Whereas wisdom, humanity and justice showed the greatest impact on psychological well-being, and both WFE and FWE act as the mediators. Since regression analysis could only analyze the three dependent variables separately, the structure equation model (SEM) analysis was taken later for further exploration.

### C. Mediating Effect Analysis of Work-Family Conflict

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was also used to check the mediation effect of sFWC on the relationship of

justice and employee well-being. First, taking SWB as dependent variable, the demographic variables were put into the first layer of the regression equation, then the independent variables into the second layer, and finally the sFWC into the third layer. Repeat the same steps when taking work well-being and psychological well-being as the dependent variable respectively and the results were shown in Table III. No matter taking which dimension of employee well-being as dependent variable, sFWC was found to take the mediating role in the relationship of justice and well-being.



TABLE II  
HIERARCHICAL REGRESSIONS EXPLAINING MEDIATING EFFECT OF WORK-FAMILY ENRICHMENT

Variables		Subject well-being			Work well-being			Psychological well-being		
		step1	step1	step3	step1	step2	step3	step1	step2	step3
Temperance variable	monthly family income	.199**	.191**	.225***	.042	.000	.049	.003	-.007	.023
	Junior manager & general staff	.056	.053	.020	.101	.047	-.019	.133*	.083	.045
	Middle-level manager & general staff	.125	.068	.004	.160*	.067	.078	.236***	.122*	.061
	Senior manager & general staff	.173*	.052	-.019	.222**	.170**	.049	.216**	.179**	.103*
Independent variable	Wisdom		-.003	-.069		.261***	.170**		.115	.056
	Courage		.161*	.131		.192**	.156*		.084	.048
	Humanity		.179*	.138*		.071	.028		.195**	.135*
	Justice		.071	.001		.068	.078		.187**	.157*
	Temperance		-.137	-.114		-.128	-.097		-.018	.003
	Transcendence		.040	.016		-.066	-.099		.100	.080
Mediating variable	Work-family enrichment			.311***			.449***			.252***
	Family-Work enrichment			.023			-.051			.154*
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		.051	.102	.184	.048	.180	.321	.059	.291	.398

Note: N=295, the standard B coefficient is presented in table, \* p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

TABLE III  
HIERARCHICAL REGRESSIONS EXPLAINING MEDIATING EFFECT OF WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT

Variables		Subjective well-being			Work well-being			Psychological well-being		
		step1	step1	step3	step1	step2	step3	step1	step2	step3
Control variable	monthly family income	.199**	.191**	.155*	.042	.000	-.031	.003	-.007	-.043
	Junior manager & general staff	.056	.053	.061	.101	.047	.054	.133*	.083	.091
	Middle-level manager & general staff	.125	.068	.074	.160*	.067	.073	.236***	.122*	.128*
	Senior manager & general staff	.173*	.052	.081	.222**	.170**	.195**	.216**	.179**	.208**
Independent variable	Wisdom		-.003	.009		.261***	.272***		.115	.128*
	Courage		.161*	.159*		.192**	.191**		.084	.082
	Humanity		.179*	.189**		.071	.080		.195**	.205**
	Justice		.071	-.045		.068	.024		.187**	.137*
	Temperance		-.137	-.111		-.128	-.106		-.018	.008
	Transcendence		.040	.047		-.066	-.059		.100	.108
Mediating variable	sFWC			-.237***			-.208***			-.236***
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		.051	.102	.155	.048	.180	.219	.059	.291	.344

Note: N=295, the standard B coefficient is presented in table, \* p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001.

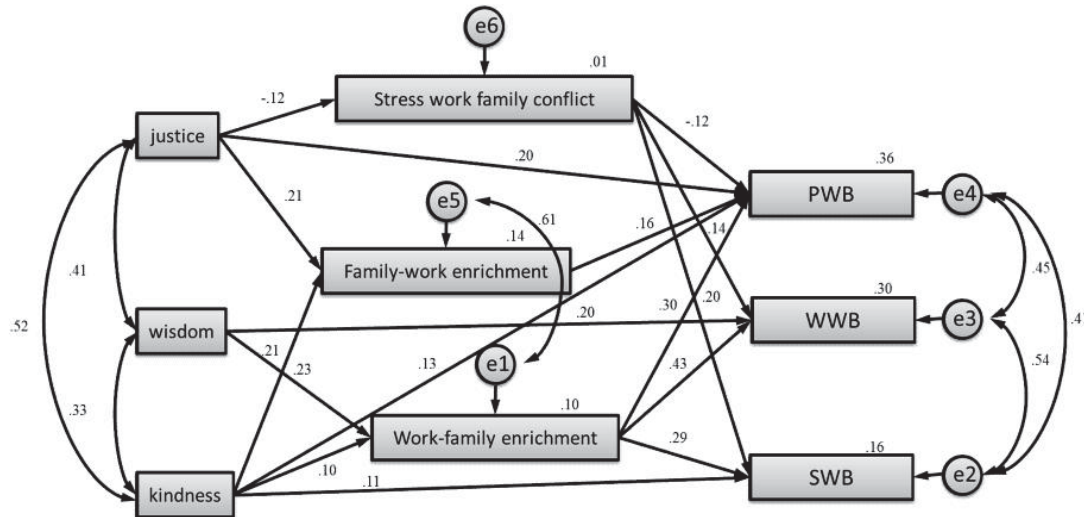


Fig. 1 SEM of mediating role of work-family relationships

D. Structural Equation Model Analyses

In order to systematically portrayed the paths of how the work-family relationships affected the relationships of virtue and different dimensions of employee well-being, we selected four independent variables (wisdom, courage, kindness and justice), three mediating variables (WFE, FWE, sFWC), and

three dependent variables (SWB, WWB, PWB) for entering AMOS 17.0 path model analysis based on the abovementioned regression analysis: first, construct the model by regression analysis results; Second, delete insignificant paths, culminating in the path model shown in Fig. 1. The fitting parameters were GFI = 0.986, AGFI = 0.953,  $\chi^2 / df = 1.457$ , RMSEA = 0.039,

model fits well. As can be seen from Fig. 1, it was found that justice, wisdom and kindness had the greatest impact on employee well-being. In the interactions with working-family relationship, it was found that: justice had significant positive impact on PWB and WFE partially mediated the process and justice had significant positive impact on three dimensions of employee well-being with sFWC completely mediating the process; similarly, wisdom had impact on WWB with WFE partially mediating the process, and it had impacts on SWB and PWB with WFE completely mediating the process; kindness

#### IV. DISCUSSION

In the presented study we took 295 employees (mostly work in Beijing) as research subjects, by adapting comprehensive indexes of employee well-being (work well-being, subjective well-being and psychological well-being), we answered three fundamental questions. Taking this group of sample as an example, the results show that: (1) The top five character strengths of Chinese employees are gratitude, citizenship, kindness, appreciation of beauty and excellence, and justice, while character strengths of creativity, authenticity, bravery, spirituality, open-mindedness come in last five. (2) Subjective well-being is significantly related to courage, humanity, transcendence and justice. Work well-being is significantly associated with wisdom, courage, humanity, justice and transcendence. Psychological well-being exhibits a notable correlation with all the six virtues. (3) Character strengths influence employee' well-being: wisdom and humanity have impact on Chinese employees' subjective well-being and work well-being through work-family enrichment, justice can both affect psychological well-being via work-family enrichment and can also improve subjective well-being, work well-being, and psychological well-being by way of decreasing the stress-based family-work conflict.

##### *A. The Differences in Character Strengths between Employees from China and Western Countries*

The research on employees' character strengths helps both employees and industries to enhance understanding on that and to conduct meaningful introspections and improvements. Meanwhile, it offers a ground to compare cultural differences of character strengths. Previous measurements on character strengths mainly focus on student population [14]-[17]. Considering the employees as a working population who shape the social form and create the material wealth, the study on character strengths of this population owns important implications both academically and practically. In this study, the results show that the top five character strengths of Chinese employees are gratitude, citizenship, kindness, appreciation of beauty and excellence, and justice, while the last five are creativity, authenticity, bravery, spirituality, open-mindedness. Firstly, it shows cultural difference. English list open-mindedness and creativity as their main strengths while Americans take authenticity as theirs [27]. In contrast, Chinese employees show their short slab in those aspects. This may arise from the fact that those character strengths are closely related to individual personalities and Chinese employees are

had impact on PWB with both WFE and FEW partially mediating the process, and it had impact on SWB with WFE partially mediating the process, whereas had impact on WWB with WFE completely mediating the process.

In summary, we can see different dimensions of employee well-being were affected by different virtues, there were differences among the mediating roles of work-family relationship in the process; and on the impacts on three dimensions of employee well-being, we could see that virtues had the greatest impact on psychological well-being. less willingly to show their individual personalities because the social cognition and cultural tradition discourage doing that. Meanwhile, Chinese employees show significant strengths in responsibilities and interpersonal relationship, which is consistent with the collectivist culture and moral system. Secondly, the character strengths of Chinese employees reflect the difference in age and the environment. In the student population, studies revealed the five character strengths of them are love or to be loved, authenticity, gratitude, appreciation of beauty and excellence, kindness [14]. Love or to be loved highlights the student population but is absent in the top five character strengths of employees. This may be caused by that students are still in the early adult period according to Erikson's Eight Stages of Development theory with the main conflict of this period falls in intimacy versus loneliness. This strength fades away in the older employee population. In addition, a notable phenomenon worth deep reflection on is that while authenticity is an important advantage in the student population, it falls to the end in the employee population. Individual authenticity is an important index that influences individual's mental health [46]. Moreover, Organizations could be able to stay competitive and keep improving products, processes and services based on the genuine advises offered by their employees [47]. It could even relate to the national strategy of "convert from 'made in China' to 'created in China'".

##### *B. Influence of Different Character Strengths on 3 Dimensions of Employee Well-Being*

This study for the first time probed the relationship between three dimensions of employee well-being and character strengths. The results indicate that the three different well-beings that arise from different philosophy origins shows their dispositions respectively: Subjective well-being is significantly related to courage, humanity, transcendence and justice; work well-being is significantly associated with wisdom, courage, humanity, justice and transcendence; while psychological well-being exhibits a notable correlation with all the six virtues. It's worthy to be pointed out that temperance is not significantly correlated with subjective well-being or work well-being but associated significantly with psychological well-being. As a new point of view in positive psychology, psychological well-being emphasizes personal growth and development. And we can easily tell that temperance is a beneficial virtue for personal development. Several studies have shown that people who better bears the delayed satisfaction is more prone to success in the future [48].

Character strengths contribute most to psychological well-being (explains 36% of total variance), followed by work well-being (30%), and last, subjective well-being (16%). This indicates that to cultivate employees' character strength, industries should pay more attention to discovery, growth and development of employees' potency. It may thus be meaningful for the industries' development in the long run to enhance employee well-being.

#### *C. The Mediating Effect of Work-Family Relationship between Character Strengths and Employee Well-Being*

Different orientations and forms of work-family relationship have been studied systematically in the research. The mediating role of work-family relationship between character strengths (justice, wisdom and humanity) and employee' well-being can provide instructions for later intervention. The virtue of justice concludes citizens' sense of responsibility, the fair and equal way of doing things and the leadership ability of maintaining harmony. It influences psychological well-being mainly through work-family enrichment. As for the reason, maybe for working people, especially the middle age workers who are the sandwich generation with multifarious things. Those who has the character strength of justice can better handle family affairs and maintain harmony. Therefore, the positive state of family can have positive effect on their work. As the saying goes "Harmony brings wealth" when the employee can balance well between family and work, his well-being must be higher. What's more, justice is the only one to affect three kinds of well-being through decreasing work-family conflict. It's likely because that justice is the fittest for solving problems and conflict effectively. Humanity is also important for subjective well-being and work well-being, and it can play the driving role through the two-directions of work and family. Since whether in work or family, the advantage of interpersonal skills is very necessary, such as to own and cherish the intimacy relationship with others, be kind to others and be a considerate person. It can be regarded as a kind of emotional intelligence, which can help people improve job performance [49] and it also reflects the safe attachment relationship, and with this the harmony of life can be more easily achieved. In the environment of collectivist cultures of China, the cultivation of humanity strength is no doubt pretty important and necessary for employee to improve their well-being. In addition, wisdom did not show the direct relationship to joy while it played an important role in employees' well-being, especially for work well-being and psychological well-being. Generally, wise people prefer to study, have high creativity and comprehensive judgment ability. With these abilities, people with wisdom can work more efficiently. Thus by means of the positive overflow of work to life, wisdom can improve well-being effectively. Therefore, the purpose of enterprise training should not only target on enriching employees' skills, but also improve employees' wisdom, which includes the ability of thinking, the passion of learning and acute insights. In this way, the well-being and the working ability of employees can both be improved. This will achieve the win-win situation.

Previous studies have found that character strengths can

improve workers' coping ability, relieve work stress, and improve job satisfaction [50], and positive attitude and coping strategies can predict well-being positively [31]. The current study about the mediating role of work-family enrichment/ conflict between the relationship between character strengths and employee well-being further enriches and expands these existing research results.

#### *D. Practical Enlightenment*

First, it needs the industries and organizations in China to notice that authenticity becomes one of the weakest character strengths in Chinese employees and they should retrospect the reason behind it. Since previous studies showed that trust in organization is quite important for employees' voice behavior [51], [52], the organization should establish a trusting environment to encourage employee to speak out their true ideas. In this way, it can help employees to sustain or raise their authenticity strength. Second, well-being is not just joy. Psychological well-being is a more constructive index. It is related to all six virtues significantly, and emphasizes personal development and growth, so organization and employee themselves should care more about the improvement of psychological well-being. Third, for organizations, they should pay more attention to cultivate employee's justice, humanity and wisdom strengths to improve their problem solving ability in stress-based family-work conflict and increase their work-family enrichment, and finally improve the overall employ well-being.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Our study shows that character strengths have a quite significant influence on employee well-being via the mediating role of work-family relationship. Future studies in organizational behavior can pay more attention to the character strengths study because character strength which is a concept from clinical psychology can be cultivated. Applying the techniques in clinical psychology of raising character strengths to organizational management practice can be a very meaningful try. After all, human resource is the source of industry development.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research was supported in part by an NSFC grant of "Multi-hierarchical Research of Team Creativity Based on Motivated Information Processing Theory" (No. 71271203); also supported in part by the Innovation Project of "the Construction and Determinants of National Happiness Index" of the Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences (No. Y1CX193007)

#### REFERENCES

- [1] G. Spreitzer and C. Porath, "Creating sustainable performance," *Harvard Business Review*, vol. 90, pp. 92-99, 2012.
- [2] A.-M. Li, X.-T. Wang, G.-X. Xiong, B. Li, and W.-Q. Ling, "A Dual-Pathway Model of Work Influencing on Happiness: A Perspective of Job Demands-Resources Model (in Chinese)," *Acta Psychologica Sinica*, vol. 47, pp. 624-636, May. 2015.
- [3] Q. Zou, B. Zuo, and T.-T. Dai, "Happiness at Work: Definition,



- Measurement Levels and Causal Models (in Chinese)," *Advances in Psychological Science*, vol. 23, pp. 669-678, Apr. 2015.
- [4] J. P. Meyer and E. R. Maltin, "Employee commitment and well-being: A critical review, theoretical framework and research agenda," *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, vol. 77, pp. 323-337, 2010.
- [5] W. B. Schaufeli, T. W. Taris, and W. Van Rhenen, "Workaholism, burnout, and work engagement: three of a kind or three different kinds of employee well-being?," *Applied Psychology*, vol. 57, pp. 173-203, 2008.
- [6] S. Kang, H. Um, and M. S. Kim, "The influence of employee well-being on organizational innovativeness and performance," *Journal of the Korea Academia-Industrial cooperation Society*, vol. 16, pp. 4576-4585, 2015.
- [7] Y. Brunetto, K. Shacklock, S. Teo, and R. Farr-Wharton, "The impact of management on the engagement and well-being of high emotional labour employees," *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, vol. 25, pp. 2345-2363, 2014.
- [8] N. Gillet, J. Forest, C. Benabou, and K. Bentein, "The effects of organizational factors, psychological need satisfaction and thwarting, and affective commitment on workers' well-being and turnover intentions," *Le travail humain*, vol. 78, pp. 119-140, 2015.
- [9] Decramer, M. Audenaert, T. Van Waeyenberg, T. Claeys, C. Claes, S. Vandeveld, *et al.*, "Does performance management affect nurses' well-being?," *Evaluation and program planning*, vol. 49, pp. 98-105, 2015.
- [10] M. Tadic, A. B. Bakker, and W. G. Oerlemans, "Challenge versus hindrance job demands and well-being: A diary study on the moderating role of job resources," *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, vol. 88, pp. 702-725, 2015.
- [11] R. Fariborz and S. S. Mohammad, "Authentic leadership and employee well-being: The mediating role of attachment insecurity," *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 132, pp. 363-377, 2015.
- [12] J. H. Cheung, R. R. Sinclair, J. Shi, and M. Wang, "Do Job Demands of Chinese Manufacturing Employees Predict Positive or Negative Outcomes? A Test of Competing Hypotheses," *Stress and Health*, vol. 31, pp. 432-442, 2015.
- [13] L.-J. Yang, "Character Strengths Assessment and Application to Clinical Psychology (in Chinese)," Doc, East China Normal University, 2011.
- [14] Y. Zhou and X.-P. Liu, "Character Strengths of College Students: The Relationship between Character Strengths and Subjective Well-Being (in Chinese)," *Psychological Development and Education*, vol. 5, 2011.
- [15] X.-L. Yu and P. Wang, "The research on character strengths and well-being in psychology majors: Comparing with students in other majors (in Chinese)," *Journal of Shandong University of Technology (Social Sciences)*, vol. 29, pp. 101-106, May. 2013.
- [16] X. Chen, "The relationship between juniro high school students' self-confidence and character strengths and subjective well-beings: Confident intermediary effect analysis (in Chinese)," MA, Southwest University, 2013.
- [17] W.-J. Duan and H. Niu, "The Relationship between Character Strengths and Well-Being in Primary and Secondary School Students in Chongqing (in Chinese)," *Journal of Leshan Normal University*, vol. 28, pp. 115-119, Feb. 2013.
- [18] T.-T. Duan, W.-J. Zhang, Y.-H. Li, T.-Y. Tang, and X.-Q. Duan, "Influence of Parenting Style and Character Strength on Psychology Harmony (in Chinese)," *Psychological Exploration*, vol. 32, pp. 183-187, 2012.
- [19] J. Cao, "The Relationships of Future Self-Continuity, Character Strengths and Health Behavior in Collegue Students (in Chinese)," MA, Southwest University, 2015.
- [20] C. Wang, "The research on the relationship of of teacher-student relationship, character strengths and college students' adjustment (in Chinese)," MA, Shaanxi University, 2014.
- [21] J. Lin and W. Tu, "Relationship among Copying Styles, Perceived Social Support and Positive Psychological Quality of College Students (in Chinese)," *China Journal of Health Psychology*, vol. 23, pp. 225-228, 2015.
- [22] Q. Sun, "The relationship of job pressure, character strengths and job burnout in grass-roots civil servants (in Chinese)," MA, Southwest University, 2015.
- [23] D.-M. Hou, H.-W. Li, and J. Lv, "Relationship between Subjective Well-being and Character Strengths with Sense of Belonging of Employees (in Chinese)," *Occup an Health*, vol. 27, pp. 125-128, Jan. 2011.
- [24] L. G. Aspinwall and U. M. Staudinger, *A psychology of human strengths: Fundamental questions and future directions for a positive psychology*: American Psychological Association, 2002.
- [25] C. Peterson and M. E. Seligman, *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- [26] S. Shimai, K. Otake, N. Park, C. Peterson, and M. E. Seligman, "Convergence of character strengths in American and Japanese young adults," *Journal of Happiness Studies*, vol. 7, pp. 311-322, 2006.
- [27] P. A. Linley, J. Maltby, A. M. Wood, S. Joseph, S. Harrington, C. Peterson, *et al.*, "Character strengths in the United Kingdom: The VIA inventory of strengths," *Personality and individual differences*, vol. 43, pp. 341-351, 2007.
- [28] E. Deiner, E. Suh, R. E. Lucas, and H. L. Smith, "Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress," *Psychological Bulletin*, vol. 125, pp. 276-302, 1999.
- [29] L. Zhang and B. Zuo, "Eudaimonic Well-being: A Review on Psychological Well-being (in Chinese)," *Advances in Psychological Science*, vol. 15, pp. 134-139, Mar. 2007.
- [30] K. M. Page and D. A. Vella-Brodick, "The 'what', 'why' and 'how' of employee well-being: a new model," *Social Indicators Research*, vol. 90, pp. 441-458, 2009.
- [31] X. Zheng, W. Zhu, H. Zhao, and C. Zhang, "Employee well-being in organizations: Theoretical model, scale development, and cross-cultural validation," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, vol. 36, pp. 621-644, 2015.
- [32] M. L. Martinez-Marti and W. Ruch, "Character strengths and well-being across the life span: data from a representative sample of German-speaking adults living in Switzerland," *Frontiers in psychology*, vol. 5, p. 1253, 2014.
- [33] F. Luthans, B. J. Avolio, F. O. Walumbwa, and W. Li, "The psychological capital of Chinese workers: Exploring the relationship with performance," *Management and Organization Review*, vol. 1, pp. 249-271, 2005.
- [34] J.-L. Ke, J.-M. Sun, and Y.-R. Li, "Psychological Capital: Chinese Indigenous Scale's Development and Its Validity Comparison with the Western Scale (in Chinese)," *Acta Psychologica Sinica*, vol. 41, pp. 875-888, Sep. 2009.
- [35] E. J. Grant-Vallone and S. I. Donaldson, "Consequences of work-family conflict on employee well-being over time," *Work & stress*, vol. 15, pp. 214-226, 2001.
- [36] L.-J. Tong and C.-Y. Zhou, "The Influence of work-family conflict on job satisfaction and life satisfaction of employees: Big five personality as a moderator (in Chinese)," *Psychological Science*, vol. 32, pp. 604-606, 2009.
- [37] X.-Y. Li and J. Gao, "An Empirical Study Based on Middle Professional Manager: The Relations among Work-Family Conflict, Perceived Supervisory Support and Job Satisfaction (in Chinese)," *Science of Science and Management of S. & T*, vol. 32, pp. 163-170, Feb. 2011.
- [38] J. Guo, Y. Wang, and X.-Y. Liu, "Relation between marital satisfaction and character strengths in young people (in Chinese)," *Chinese Mental Health Journal*, vol. 29, pp. 383-388, 2015.
- [39] J. H. Greenhaus and N. J. Beutell, "Sources of conflict between work and family roles," *Academy of management review*, vol. 10, pp. 76-88, 1985.
- [40] H.-Y. Tang, H.-Y. Ma, and B. Wang, "A New Perspective in the Domain of Work-family Interface: <BR>the Study of Work-family Facilitation (in Chinese)," *Advances in Psychological Science*, vol. 15, pp. 852-858, Sep. 2007.
- [41] Y.-P. Luo, H.-Y. Fan, and J.-F. Zhang, "The Work-Family Conflict: Its Antecedents, Consequences and Intervention Strategies (in Chinese)," *Advances in Psychological Science*, vol. 15, pp. 930-937, Jan. 2007.
- [42] H.-Y. Tang, H.-Y. Ma, and B. Wang, "Development of Work-family Enrichment Questionnaire and Research on Its Validity and Reliability (in Chinese)," *Chinese Mental Health Journal*, vol. 17, pp. 430-433, 2009.
- [43] Y.-F. Gan, "The Research on the Relationships of Employees' Work-Family Conflict, Mental Health and Career Satisfaction (in Chinese)," MA, Soochow University, 2007.
- [44] C. Zheng, K. Kashi, D. Fan, J. Molineux, and M. S. Ee, "Impact of individual coping strategies and organisational work-life balance programmes on Australian employee well-being," *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, vol. 27, pp. 501-526, 2015.
- [45] Z.-L. Wen, L. Chang, K.-T. Hau, and H.-Y. Liu, "Testing and Application of the Mediating Effects (in Chinese)," *Acta Psychologica Sinica*, vol. 36, pp. 614-620, 2004.
- [46] Q.-Y. Liu, J.-F. Zhang, and J. Chen, "A Brief Introduction of Authenticity Research in Psychology (in Chinese)," *Advances in Psychological Science*, vol. 17, pp. 1302-1308, Nov. 2009.
- [47] J.-Y. Duan, "The Research of Employee Voice in Chinese Context: Construct, Formation Mechanism and Effect (in Chinese)," *Advances in Psychological Science*, vol. 19, p. 006, Nov. 2011.



- [48] W. Mischel, N. Cantor, and S. Feldman, *Principles of self-regulation: The nature of willpower and self-control: Handbook of basic principles*. New York: Guilford Press, 1996.
- [49] M. Hou, Q. Jiang, X. Chen, M.-Y. Zhu, X.-F. Yan, and L. Xiang, "Teacher's Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance: The Mediating Roles of Work-family enrichment and Active Behaviors (in Chinese)," *Psychological Development and Education*, vol. 2, pp. 162-168, 2014.
- [50] C. Harzer and W. Ruch, "The relationships of character strengths with coping, work-related stress, and job satisfaction," *Frontiers in psychology*, vol. 6, 2015.
- [51] J.-Y. Duan and X.-M. Tian, "A Study of the Impact of Trust Within Organization on Employee Voice Behavior (in Chinese)," *Journal of Psychological Science*, vol. 34, pp. 1458-1462, 2011.
- [52] R. Wei and H. Yuan-Yuan, "The Review of the Influence of Trust in Organization on Voice Behavior (in Chinese)," *Enterprise Vitality*, vol. 12, pp. 91-96, 2011.