JAME

Examining the Relationship Between Work-Related Factors and Work-Family-Related Factors on Work-Family Conflict

Jarrod M. Haar, Aotearoa Business School
Chester S. Spell, Rutgers University
Michael P. O'Driscoll, University of Waikato
Suzette L. Dyer, University of Waikato

Executive Summary

The current work-family conflict literature is characterized by limitations in focus and methodology, particularly with a failure to link work-family conflict with work-family policies. This study compares the influence of work-related factors and work-family related factors on work-family conflict in two directions. A local government organization in New Zealand was the setting. Findings show that work factors account for a significant component of both work-to-family and family-to-work conflict, although this is far greater on work-family conflict. Work-family practice use had little influence on work-family conflict, but was significantly related with family-work conflict. Past use and future use of work-family practices was found to positively associate with family-work conflict. Overall, the findings suggest managers in search of reducing employee conflict should focus directly upon work factors such as workload, rather than seek to use work-family practices as the primary way to reduce conflict.

Work and family issues are becoming increasingly important for organizations (Tenbrunsel, Brett, Maoz, Stroh, & Reilly, 1995). The rationale for organizational work-family programs focuses upon four major demographic trends. These include growing participation rates for working women and working mothers (Milliken, Martins, & Morgan, 1998; Osterman, 1995), the rise in dual-career couples (Goodstein, 1994), the increase in the number of single-parent families (Morgan & Milliken, 1992), and the escalation in the elderly population (Goodstein, 1995; Hendrickson, 2000). At the heart of work-family policies are the necessity for these programs to help employees balance changing work and family roles (Goodstein, 1994; Moore, 1997; Osterman, 1995; Judge, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1994; Hand & Zawacki, 1994). Due to these factors, managing the conflict between work and family responsibilities has been recognized as a critical challenge for organizations (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998).

The present study sought to contribute to the work-family conflict literature by comparing the influence on work-family conflict of work-related factors including job satisfaction, time-based and strain-based sources of conflict, and work-family related practices, including work-family satisfaction and work-family practice use. We consider past, present or anticipated (future) use of work-family practices as categories for use, but do not investigate frequency of use for each practice. This study also investigates conflict from two directions, work-family conflict (WFC) and family-work conflict (FWC), as well as the association between conflict and work-family practice use. The context of the study is notable in that it was set in New Zealand, where work-family programs are a more recent phenomenon than in the United States (Callister, 1996). Also, countries like New Zealand and Australia are very much under represented in the work-family conflict literature (Haar & Spell, 2001).

Work-Family Conflict Literature

The relationship between employee work lives and non-work pursuits has been scrutinized for quite some time (Kanter, 1977; Voydanoff, 1980). However, Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) suggested that one aspect of the work and non-work interface that deserves more research attention is the conflict employees experience between work roles and other roles. Work-family conflict is defined as "a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is, participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) described three major forms of work-family conflict: (a) time-based, (b) strain-based, and (c) behavior based. These authors maintained that work-family conflict increases when the work and family roles are salient or central to the individual's self-concept and when powerful negative sanctions for noncompliance with role demands are inevitable. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) also suggested we need a better understanding of the interactive effects of work and family role pressures. According to Kinnunen and Mauno (1998), "previous research has mainly relied on assessing interference from work to family only" (p.158). Similarly, Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1997) suggested there is a methodological limitation involved with the measurement of work-family conflict with a single direction focus. Other researchers have also suggested that work-family conflict is a bi-directional construct (Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991; O'Driscoll, Ilgen, & Hildreth, 1992; Adams, King, & King, 1996; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996).

Most previous studies have not addressed the multiple relationships between work-family conflict as a bi-directional construct, work-family policy use and employee attitudes (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). This study seeks to examine the relationship between both WFC and FWC and (1) work factors (time, work strain, and job satisfaction), and (2) work-family factors (use of work-family practices, and work-family satisfaction).

Hypotheses

1. Work Factors

Time is a well-known factor that has been associated with conflict, with Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) stating "Multiple roles may compete for a person's time. Time spent on activities within one role generally cannot be devoted to activities within another role" (p. 77). Employees whose work and family roles interfere, cannot satisfy both roles in the same time period. Numerous studies having identified the number of hours worked per week as a strong predictor of time-based conflict (Pleck, Staines, & Lang, 1980; Netemeyer et al., 1996; Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997; Gutek et al., 1991; Judge et al., 1994). Those employees spending larger amounts of time at work will have less time for family roles, consequently creating conflict. Therefore we expect total hours of work per week to be positively related to WFC. Netemeyer et al. (1996) found no relationship between FWC and number of hours worked among three samples of employees but did find a significant relationship between WFC and hours worked. Consequently, we make no prediction about hours worked as a correlate with FWC.

Hypothesis 1: Number of weekly hours worked will be positively related to work-family conflict and will be unrelated to family-work conflict.

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) maintained that a form of work-family conflict involves role-produced strain, where strain in one role affects one's performance in another role. Potential sources of strain-based conflict include the emotional demands of the workplace (Pleck et al., 1980; Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalk, 2000), stress associated with workplace communication (Jackson & Maslach, 1982) and job burnout (Jackson & Maslach, 1982). Strain indicators can include depression, apathy, tension, irritability, fatigue, and anxiety (Greenhaus et al., 2000). According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), "roles are incompatible in the sense that the strain created by one makes it difficult to comply with the demands of another" (p. 80). For example, an employee who suffers from depression or tension will find it difficult to be an attentive partner or loving parent (Greenhaus et al., 2000). Thus, strain-based conflict can contribute to work-family conflict in both directions. Also, individuals facing relatively high levels of strain at work are more likely to feel conflict when family responsibilities interfere with work roles, since they may already feel taxed by the demands of the work itself. Therefore, it is expected that there will be a positive correlation between strain based variables and both work-family and family-work conflict. While strain-based variables originating in the workplace can create work-family conflict, they may also spill over into the home and therefore create family-work conflict. For this study, we are examining strain-based conflict as a single measure (combining emotional, communication and burnout), as another way to examine strain-based sources of conflict.

Hypothesis 2a: Work stress will be positively related to work-family conflict.
Hypothesis 2b: *Work stress will be positively related to family-work conflict.*

Work-family conflict has also been proposed as an antecedent of job satisfaction (Bedeian, Burke, & Moffett, 1988). Kossek and Ozeki (1998) suggested job satisfaction is often negatively related to work-family conflict, and there is much support for this within the literature (Netemeyer et al., 1996; Kopelman, Greenhhaus, & Connolly, 1983). Employees who view their work as making it difficult for them to satisfy their family roles will likely be less satisfied with their job as it is seen as the source of the conflict. Also, the more family roles interfere with work obligations, the more employees may feel less overall satisfaction about the job itself. Since this aspect would mean the source of the conflict is not the job, it is likely that the relationship between job satisfaction and FWC would not be as strong as with WFC. However, prior research suggests the intensity of the relationship between job satisfaction and WFC or FWC can vary markedly (Thompson & Blau, 1993; Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose, 1992). We suggest that job satisfaction will be negatively related to both WFC and FWC.

Hypothesis 3a: Job satisfaction will be negatively related to work-family conflict.
Hypothesis 3a: Job satisfaction will be negatively related to family-work conflict.

2. Work-Family Factors

Some authors have suggested that work-family conflict is related to the perceived importance of work-family practices (Frone & Yardley, 1996; Wiersma, 1990). Frone and

Yardley extended Wiersma's study by examining work-family conflict bi-directionally, and found FWC positively related to the importance of work-family practices while WFC was unrelated. Frone and Yardley (1996) maintained this highlights the importance of distinguishing between the two types of work-family conflict, and suggested this indicates that the major motivation underlying parents' desire for work-family practices is the ability of these practices to reduce FWC and its adverse impact on job-related outcomes.

Frone and Yardley (1996) concluded that the work-family conflict literature generally fails to provide strong, consistent support for the effectiveness of work-family programs (e.g. see Kingston, 1990; Gonyea & Googins, 1992), and suggested studies must seek to document the efficiency of work-family programs, because in the absence of such data the general lack of enthusiasm shown by organizations towards work-family policies may continue (Kingston, 1990). Therefore, this study seeks to examine work-family practice use as an independent variable with conflict. According to Kossek and Ozeki (1998), "research on organizational work-family policy is often disconnected from studies on individuals' experiences with work-family conflict" (p.146). Kossek and Ozeki (1998) cited Judge et al. (1994) as one of the few studies that examined the relationship between both work-family conflict and policies with job satisfaction. That study involved attitudinal measures of policies and support networks. In this study we sought to test the relationship between WFC and FWC and work-family practice use of past and current users and those anticipating use in the future. This approach for categorizing employee use of work-family policies has been used recently in work-family studies (Rothausen et al., 1998). Exploring employee use (behavior), rather than employee attitudes towards work-family practices will provide a clearer understanding of relationships between conflict and work-family practices.

A similar relationship to that being examined here has been posited. Frone and Yardley's (1996) findings support the use of a dual approach to work-family conflict, and suggest that previous studies that have failed to link work-family conflict reduction with work-family practices may be because they used a single measure of work-family conflict, and not a bi-directional approach. They say that Goff, Mount, and Jamison's (1990) failure to associate childcare center use with reduced work-family conflict was possibly due to measuring work-family conflict as a uni-dimensional construct rather than separate WFC and FWC measures. According to Frone and Yardley, had Goff et al. (1990) used separate measures they might have found childcare use reduced FWC but not WFC. This may be because work-family practices tend to target the family rather than the workplace. For example, parental leave, childcare and domestic leave all focus upon enhancing employee balance of their family role, as opposed to the work role. Consequently, we suggest FWC may link more strongly with work-family practice use than WFC, and hence we hypothesize only with family-work conflict. Given the literature's assertion that work-family practices allow employees to better balance their work and family commitments, we propose a negative relationship between past and present use of the work-family practices and family-work conflict. We suggest future use of work-family practices will hold a positive relationship, as anticipated use would be a reaction to heightened family-work conflict.

Hypothesis 4a: Past use of work-family practices will be negatively related to family-work conflict, and will be unrelated to work-family conflict.

Hypothesis 4b: Current use of work-family practices will be negatively related to family-work conflict, and will be unrelated to work-family conflict.
Hypothesis 4c: Future use of work-family practices will be positively related to family-work conflict, and will be unrelated to work-family conflict.

The notion of importance of work-family practices has also been connected to satisfaction towards these programs. For example, Kossek, Colquitt, and Noe (2001) suggested future studies should explore satisfaction with work-family arrangements and work-family conflict. Satisfaction with work-family practices might relate to the perceived effectiveness of work-family programs, and therefore when conflict levels are high, we would expect satisfaction with work-family practices to be low. Using the rationale of Hypothesis 4, we hypothesize only towards FWC.

Hypothesis 5: Satisfaction with work-family practices will be negatively related to family-work conflict, and will be unrelated to work-family conflict.

Method

Data was collected from a New Zealand organization in the local government sector. The organization is a major employer in its rural region and has 445 employees. The organization offers several work-family policies: unpaid parental leave (up to 52 weeks unpaid), paid parental leave (six weeks paid), domestic leave (up to five days of personal sick leave per year for the care of spouse, child or parent), bereavement leave (leave for funeral which includes special cultural requirements), flexible work hours (variability of hours, location and negotiate leave without pay to fulfill family commitments), and a before and after-school room (for children over 10 years, usable before and after school for a maximum of 2 hours/session). In New Zealand, the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987 legislates for up to 52 weeks unpaid leave, and the Holiday Act 1981, allows for five days special leave for use as sick leave, to care for a sick parent, spouse or child, or attend the funeral of a close family member. Therefore, of the work-family practices on offer, unpaid parental leave is a fully government-mandated policy, while domestic leave and bereavement leave are extensions of government policy. Since the organization asked that the survey be conducted by e-mail, the employee sample was restricted to those with access to the organization's intranet, which include the headquarters and seven citywide satellite locations. A total of 206 employees were emailed the survey. The survey was done at two times, with questionnaire one containing the demographic and predictor variables and questionnaire two the dependent variables (work-family conflict and family-work conflict measures). A total of 100 responses to both questionnaires were obtained for a response rate of 48.5 percent.

The average age of the respondents was 41.7 years (SD=9.85), with the majority married (77%), female (69%), and parents (67%). Of the 36 study variables, eight had missing values, and none had more than five cases of missing values (five percent of total cases). Since none of the variables had more than 10 percent of the cases missing, the method of missing value replacement is not critical (Roth, 1994). As such, mean series substitution was used for missing value replacement.

Measures

Work-family conflict was measured using the 14-item Inventory of Work-Family Conflict (Greenhaus et al., 2000), with statements divided equally (7 each) between work and family interference, with anchors 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree. WFC questions included "On the job, I have so much work to do that it takes away from my personal interests" and "My job makes it difficult to be the kind of spouse, partner or parent I'd like to be". FWC questions included "My family takes up time I would like to spend working" and "My family dislikes how often I am preoccupied with my work when I am at home". The work-family conflict scale had a reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of .89, and the family-work conflict scale had a reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of .72.

Total hours worked was measured with a single item, reported in hours per week. Work stress was measured with a three-item measure, with anchors 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree. Questions asked were: "Are you exposed to emotional demands at work?", "Are you exposed to communication problems at work?" and "Does your job leaves you feeling burnt out?". This scale had a reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of .79. Exploratory factor analysis (principal components, varimax rotation) was conducted, and all three items loaded onto a single component with an eigenvalue greater than one (2.127). Job satisfaction was measured using a 7-item scale similar to that used by Lounsbury and Hoopes (1986), coded 1=extremely dissatisfied and 7=extremely satisfied. Questions focused on co-workers, the work itself, pay and fringe benefits, the work site physical surroundings, their immediate supervisor and promotional opportunities. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .83.

Use of work-family practices was measured in terms of number of practices used and is similar to the measure used by Rothausen, Gonzalez, Clarke, and O'Dell (1998) with a five item scale, 1=past use, 2=present use, 3=anticipated use, 4=never used, 5=unaware. From these measures, a work-family scale of past use then was developed, with all past users (those coded 1) added together. A similar scale for current users (those coded 2) and future users (those coded 3) were developed. For example, a respondent who is a past user for all six work-family practices was coded as 6.

Satisfaction with work-family practices was measured using a 2-item measure, with anchors 1=extremely dissatisfied and 7=extremely satisfied. Questions were "Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with the amount of support provided for employee's work and family roles by the organization?", and "Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with work-family initiatives offered by your organization?". These questions are based upon a single item measuring employee satisfaction with a work-family practice (Rothausen et al., 1998). This scale had a reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of .85.

Similarly to other work-family conflict studies (Frone et al., 1997; Thomas & Ganster, 1995), this study controlled for gender (1=female, 0=male), marital status (1=married/de facto, 0=single) and parental status (1=dependents, 0=no dependents).

Analysis

To examine Hypotheses 1 to 5, hierarchical regressions were conducted. To ascertain the contribution of using work-family related factors, over and above the contribution of work-related factors, the predictor groups were entered separately. Control variables (gender, marital status, and parental status) were entered in Step 1. Work-related predictors (hours worked, work stress, and job satisfaction) were entered in Step 2. Step 3 consisted of work-family predictors (past use, present use and future use of work-family practices, and work-family satisfaction). In all, two sets of regression models resulted (WFC and FWC).

Results

Descriptive Statistics for all the study variables are shown in Table 1

Table 1. Correlations and Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Hours Worked	40.3	5.3	--								
2. Work Stress	3.0	1.0	.17	--							
3. Job Satisfaction	4.6	.92	.16	-.34**	--						
4. Past Work-Family Use	1.1	1.1	.09	-.06	.02	--					
5. Present Work-Family Use	.35	.61	-.04	.13	-.11	-.07	--				
6. Future Work-Family Use	.76	1.2	-.04	.17	-.03	-.31**	-.06	--			
7.Satisfaction with Work-Family	4.8	1.0	.14	-.20**	.38**	.21*	-.05	.03	--		
8. Work-Family Conflict	2.6	.91	.23*	.61**	-.39**	-.01	.14	.10	-.33**	--	
9. Family-Work Conflict	2.0	.61	.11	.38**	-.24*	.11	.15	.11	-.30**	.70**	--

N=100, *p<.05, **p<.01

Table 1 shows that WFC correlated significantly with FWC (r=.70, p< .01). Hours worked correlated significantly with WFC (r=.23, p< .05), and work strain correlated significantly with both WFC (r=.61, p< .01), and FWC (r=.38, p< .01). Work-family satisfaction correlated significantly with both WFC (r=-.33, p< .01), and FWC (r=-.30, p< .01), and job satisfaction correlated significantly with both WFC (r=-.39, p< .01), and FWC (r=-.24, p< .01). However, none of the work-family practice use variables correlated significantly with either WFC or FWC. The correlations suggest that work factors might be the most useful predictors of work-family and family-work conflict, while satisfaction with work-family practices also be a useful predictor. The overall mean scores for WFC (2.6) and FWC (2.0) are below the mid-point (score 3), indicating a below average level of conflict for employees within this organization.

Results of the regressions of the hypotheses for work to family conflict and family to work conflict are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Regression Analysis for Conflict

Predictor Variables	Criterion Variables	
	Work to Family Conflict	Family to Work Conflict
Step 1:Control Variables		
Gender	.006	-.162
Marital Status	-.034	.042
Parental Status	-.139	-.172
R^2 Change	.025	.065
F Change	.805	2.225
Step 2:Work-Related Factors		
Total Hours Worked	.217*	.051
Work Stress	.481***	.265*
Job Satisfaction	-.208*	-.106
R^2 Change	.440***	.170***
F Change	25.487***	6.876***
Step 3:*Work-Family Related Factors*		
Past Work-Family Users	.061	.200*
Present Work-Family Users	.025	.077
Future Work-Family Users	.075	.200*
Satisfaction with Work-Family	-.206*	-.281**
R^2 Change	.034	.089*
F Change	1.490	2.928*
Total R^2	.498	.324
Adjusted R^2	.442	.248
F Statistic [10, 89]	8.839***	4.261***

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001. Standardized regression coefficients, all significance tests were two-tailed. All coefficients are reported after block 4 was entered.

Work Factors

There was a significant association with total hours worked and WFC (p < .05) supporting hypothesis 1. Total hours worked did not have a statistically significant relationship with FWC, which supports our prediction of no relationship. Work stress was significantly correlated with both WFC (p< .001) and FWC (p< .05), indicating that as strain factors increase (job burnout, emotional demands and communication problems), so too does work-family and

family-work conflict. These findings support hypotheses 2. There was also a significant correlation between job satisfaction and WFC (p< .05), but not FWC, providing support for hypotheses 3a but not 3b. This relationship was in the proposed negative direction.

Work-Family Factors

We also tested FWC in relation to past, present and future use of work-family practices. Respondents who indicated greater past use of work-family practices held a significant and positive relationship with FWC (p< .05). However, given this relationship was positive and not negative as proposed, there is no support for hypothesis 4a. There was no significant relationship between present use of work-family practices and family-work conflict, providing no support for hypothesis 4b. There was support for hypothesis 4c, as future use of work-family practices did correlate significantly and positively with FWC (p< .05). Finally, hypothesis 5 was supported, with satisfaction with work-family practices significantly associating with FWC (p< .01), indicating a negative relationship exists between satisfaction with work-family practices and family-work conflict. Interestingly, satisfaction with work-family practices was also significantly related to WFC (p< .05), indicating this variable has bi-directional properties.

Overall Model

Overall, both regression models were significant, with work-family conflict F [10, 89] = 8.839 (p< .001), and family-work conflict F [10, 89] = 4.261 (p< .001). The total R^2 for WFC was .498 (adjusted R^2 = .442) indicating almost half the work-family conflict variance is explained by the model. While the total R^2 for FWC was less at .324 (adjusted R^2 = .248), this still indicates the model explains a sizeable proportion of the family-work conflict variance. From the R^2 Change figures, we see work-related factors accounted for 44% (p< .001) of the total variance for WFC, while work-family related factors accounted for only 3.4% (non significant). Thus, work-related factors explain a far greater amount of work-family conflict than work-family related factors. However, for family-work conflict there is less difference, although work-related factors still dominate. From the R^2 Change figures, we see work-related factors accounted for 17% (p< .001) of the total variance for FWC, while work-family related factors accounted for 8.9% (p< .05). Therefore, while family-work conflict is more evenly accounted for by both work-related and work-family related factors, work-related factors are still almost double that of work-family related factors.

Discussion

This study sought to investigate the influence of work-related factors and work-family related factor upon WFC and FWC. Overall, it was shown that work-factors explain the major influence on WFC and that work-family related factors, particularly use of work-family practices, had little influence. However, when comparing the influence on family-work conflict, we found that work- and work-family related factors are more closely related, although work-related factors accounts for almost double the influence of work-family factors. In addition,

while the work-related factors and work-family related factors are significantly related to family-work conflict, they are overall still relatively small, with a combined R square of 26%. Compared to work-family conflict, where work-related factors are in excess of 40%, this shows that when managers seek to deal with employee conflict, it is predominantly the work-related factors they should address.

The work-related factors comprised of hours worked, emotional demands and communication problems at work, feelings of burn out, and satisfaction with co-workers, the work itself, physical surroundings, and promotional opportunities. Work factors explain the largest proportion for both work-family and family-work conflict; hence targeting these factors might improve the overall conflict levels employees experience. The findings indicate that the ability of work-family practices to reduce employee conflict may be weaker than previously asserted. Consequently, managers might focus more on workloads, and other organizational issues, and not seek to adopt work-family practices as a potential solution to conflicting demands between the workplace and home. The findings indicate the workplace may hold the greatest influence on conflict that originates either from the workplace *or* the home, and therefore policies that seek to control the workplace might be more advantageous for conflict control.

As expected, there was a positive relationship between total hours worked and WFC. Employees spending greater amounts of time at work are more likely to experience conflict as family time is taken away by the work role. While the average working week was only 40.3 hours among respondents, this organization had recently increased working hours from 37.5 hours to a 40 hour week, and may highlight the conflict of increased work hours. While not hypothesized, the findings indicate that number of work hours worked does not link to family roles conflicting with work (FWC), and is in agreement with other studies (Judge et al., 1994). This suggests that hours worked, as a source of conflict, might not be related to both types of conflict. One reason for this may be that given the current work demands of organizations, families are now more forgiving of the time burden associated with working longer hours. Work stress was related to both work and family roles, indicating that the strain associated with the workplace has a bi-directional relationship, unlike working hours. Stress associated with the workplace can intrude into both the office and the home and may highlight that conflict absorbed through the workplace is then taken home by the employee and will interfere with both roles.

The prediction that conflict would be negatively linked with job satisfaction was also supported, and follows other studies (Netemeyer et al., 1996). However, our findings supported only a WFC link with job satisfaction. This finding can be interpreted in two ways. Employees experiencing WFC may feel overwhelmed from the workplace and therefore experience feelings of reduced job satisfaction, or alternatively, employees feeling low job satisfaction may feel their job is intruding into their personal life, and therefore register greater WFC. The finding indicates that for this sample, job satisfaction links solely with WFC and does not associate with FWC. This finding is similar to Adams et al. (1996), which also used separate measures of work-family conflict and family-work conflict. Overall, the work-related factors held significant relationships with conflict, and this shown through the substantial R^2 Change scores discussed above.

A key aspect of this paper was examining the relationships of work-family practice use (including past, present and future) and work-family conflict. This was in response to calls

suggesting the relationship between work-family practice use and work-family conflict was poorly understood (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). The findings indicate past use of work-family practices is associated with family-work conflict, but current use is not. One possible explanation for this finding is that those currently using work-family practices may have alleviated their elevated family-work conflict, and therefore do not significantly correlate with higher FWC. The association between higher FWC and anticipated use of work-family practices might be explained as employees with family problems intruding upon the workplace could be considering or evaluating their options, and this may explain the relationship with future use and a lack of significant correlation with current use. Anticipated users might also be those with imminent changes ahead, such as childbirth or adoption, who are therefore seeking work-family practices as a way of dealing with the additional burdens of family commitments to come.

The link between FWC and a work-family practice supports the notion that work-family practices target the family rather than workplace issues. Although not hypothesized, WFC was not found to link with use of any work-family practices, which supports Frone and Yardley's (1996) assertions. To test Frone and Yardley's proposition that a uni-directional measure of conflict might distort, and in fact, remove a significant relationship with work-family practice use, the authors combined the two conflict measures (WFC and FWC) into a single conflict measure and re-ran the regressions. The results showed no significant correlation between work-family practices use and conflict, indicating as Frone and Yardley suggested, that a combined measure of conflict might fail to highlight the relationship between conflict and practice utilization. The original findings also support the suggestions that WFC might not associate with work-family practice use because of the dominating family focus of work-family practices. This finding suggests that studies seeking to examine work-family practice use and work-family conflict should use a bi-directional measure of conflict, less the relationships with work-family practice use become indistinct.

Satisfaction with work-family practices was significantly related to both WFC and FWC. The negative relationship indicates that employees perceive a relationship between organizational support of their work and family roles and overall satisfaction with work-family practices, with conflict from home and work. Therefore, when their conflict is viewed as low, they feel greater support. Of course, causation cannot be determined here, and it may be that employees express greater satisfaction with support simply because they are not experiencing greater WFC or FWC conflict. Interestingly, this suggests that satisfaction with work-family practices does relate to the perceived effectiveness of work-family programs, although this relationship is with both WFC and FWC, while actual practice use associated only with FWC. Further studies that explore this relationship are needed.

In conclusion, the present study sought to compare work-related factors and work-family related factors as separate block of predictors, in an attempt to gauge the influence of these factors upon WFC and FWC. It has been shown that work-related factors dominate the influence on work-family conflict, and work-family related factors have little influence. However, when exploring family-work conflict, these two factors are more equally distributed. Nevertheless, given the dominant size of influence by work-related factors, these are shown to be areas of focus that managers and human resource departments should seek to address in reducing work-family conflict. Importantly, the role of work-family practices may be far less significant in

reducing conflict than previously considered. Further studies that test the generalizability of this aspect would provide greater direction for practicing managers regarding efforts towards balancing employees' work and family commitments, as it may be that simply adding work-family practices is a futile and costly waste of organizational resources.

Limitations

There are some limitations inherent in the sample and methodology that suggest caution when interpreting these results. Among these would be the low number of respondents, the single organization sample, and the use of self-reported data. Thus, even though the survey was done at two times, common method variance could still be a concern. We did Harman's One Factor Test as a basic check for common method variance. The resulting factor analysis resulted in 11 components, with the first two accounting for 23.0% and 10.6% of the variance respectively. The remaining components accounted for between 6.5% and 3.1% of the variance. Given that a single dominant factor did not emerge, this test indicated no evidence of common method variance (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986).

Another limitation concerns the sample size. In New Zealand 98.9% of organizations have less than 50 employees (New Zealand Statistics, 1998), and thus there are very few large organizations available for research. Despite this, the present study was done in a small sized workplace (by international standards), which is in many ways distinct from much previous research. Kossek and Ozeki (1998) faulted previous work-family conflict studies as examining "very homogeneous and specific groups and work contexts" (p.141). Perhaps a more serious limitation is that use of work family practices was measured by simply counting number of practices used. Due to limitations in the data set, information on the number of times employees use individual practices, and how long they used them, was unavailable for this study. The assumption here was that if employees use multiple practices, with each practice designed to address a different aspect of work and family balance, then the associated conflict would covary. Clearly other research could examine the different aspects of use such as frequency, duration and perceived usefulness of the practices.

It should also be noted that this study does not, and was not intended to, uncover all potential long-term outcomes for employees. The assumption that work-family practices have a positive effect on family relationships is not universally accepted. Some researchers contend that organizations separate employee work and family roles by decreasing employee commitment, emotions and authority to the family for the benefit of the organization (Kanter-Moss, 1989). If work-family practices are targeted at family problems, specifically family-work conflict, then these finding provide support for the notion that there is a relationship between work-family practice use and family-work conflict, and not with work based conflict.

Despite the limitations, this study does examine conflict sources, satisfaction with the job and with work-family practices, and considers the role of work-family practice use. The findings that work-family practices have an under-whelming connection on the overall variance for WFC and a significant, but minimal connection to FWC, and that work factors are the predominant factor, suggests that managers must acknowledge and work towards addressing these work-

related factors rather than using work-family practices as a 'magic bullet' for addressing the balance of work and family roles. Further studies that identify work-family practices that link with conflict, especially with a negative relationship, might further the promotion of work-family practices as a useful way for addressing work and family commitments.

References

Adams, G. A., King, L. A., & King, D. W. (1996). Relationships of job and family involvement, family social support, and work-family conflict with job and life satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81(4), 411-420.

Bedeian, A. G., Burke, B. G., & Moffett, R. G. (1988). Outcomes of Work-Family Conflict Among Married Male and Female Professionals. *Academy of Management Journal, 14*, 475-491.

Callister, P. (1996). 'Work-family' workplaces: Why do we need them and who potentially benefits? *New Zealand Sociology*, 11(2), 183-222.

Erdwins, C. J., Buffardi, L. C., Casper, W. J., & O'Brien, A. S. (2001). The relationship of women's role strain to social support, role satisfaction, and self-efficacy. *Family Relations, 50*(3), 230-238.

Frone, M. R., Russell, M., & Cooper, M. L. (1997). Relation of work-family conflict to health outcomes: A four-year longitudinal study of employed parents. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 70, 325-335.

Frone, M. R., Yardley, J. K., & Markel, K. S. (1997). Developing and testing an integrative model of the work-family interface. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 50, 145-167.

Frone, M. R., & Yardley, J. K. (1996). Workplace family-supportive programmes: Predictors of employed parents' importance ratings. *Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology, 69*(4), 351-366.

Goff, S. J., Mount, M. K., & Jamison, R. L. (1990). Employer supported child care, work/family conflict, and absenteeism: A field study. *Personnel Psychology, 43*, 793-809.

Gonyea, J. G., & Googins, B. K. (1992). Linking the worlds of work and family: Beyond the productivity gap. *Human resource management, 31*(3), 209-226.

Goodstein, J. (1995). Employer involvement in eldercare: An organizational adaptation perspective. *Academy of Management Journal,* Vol. 38(No. 6), 1657-1671.

Goodstein, J. D. (1994). Institutional pressures and strategic responsiveness: employer involvement in work-family issues. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37(2), 350-382.

Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of Management Review*, 10(1), 76-88.

Greenhaus, J. H., Callanan, G. A., & Godshalk, V. M. (2000). *Career Management.* (3rd ed.). Orlando, FL: The Dryden Press.

Gutek, B. A., Searle, S., & Klepa, L. (1991). Rational versus gender role explanations for work-family conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76, 560-568.

Haar, J. & Spell, C. S. (2001). Examining Work-Family Conflict Within A New Zealand Local Government Organization. *The New Zealand Journal Of Human Resources Management*, Electronic Version, October, 1-21, (viewed October 2001), http://www.hrinz.org.nz/info/academic_journal/articles

Hand, S., & Zawacki, R. A. (1994). Work-family benefits: More than a frill. *HRMagazine*, 39(10), 79-84.

Hendrickson, R. (2000). What does the future hold for health care, elder care, and long-term care coverage for workers and their families? *Perspectives on Work*, 4(2), 16-17.

Jackson, S. E., & Maslach, C. (1982). After-effects of job-related stress: Families as victims. *Journal of Occupational Behavior*, 3, 63-77.

Judge, T. A., Boudreau, J. W., & Bretz Jr., R. D. (1994). Job and life attitudes of male executives. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79(5), 767-782.

Kanter, R. M. (1977). *Work and family in the United States: A critical review and agenda for research and policy.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Kanter-Moss, R. (1989) *When Giants Learn to Dance: Mastering the Challenges of Strategy, Management and Careers.* Unwin: London.

Kahn, R. L., Wolfe, D. M., Quinn, R., Snoek, J. D., & Rosenthal, R. A. (1964). *Organizational Stress.* New York: Wiley.

Kingston, P. W. (1990). Illusions and ignorance about the family-responsive workplace. *Journal of Family Issues*, 11, 438-454.

Kinnunen, U. & Mauno, S. (1998). Antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict among employed women and men in Finland. *Human Relations*, 51(2), 157-177.

Kopelman, R. E., Greenhhaus, J. H., & Connolly, T. F. (1983). A model of work, family and interrole conflict: a construct validation study. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 32(2), 198-215.

Kossek, E. E., Colquitt, J. A., & Noe, R. A. (2001). Caregiving decisions, well-being, and performance: The effects of place and provider as a function of dependent type and work-family climates. *Academy of Management Journal, 44*(1), 29-44.

Kossek, E. E., & Ozeki, C. (1998). Work-family conflict, policies, and the job-life satisfaction relationship: A review and directions for organizational behavior-human resources research. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83(2), 139-149.

Lounsbury, J. W., & Hoopes, L. L. (1986). A vacation from work: Changes in work and nonwork outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71(3), 395-401.

Milliken, F. J., Martins, L. L., & Morgan, H. (1998). Explaining organizational responsiveness to work-family issues: The role of human resource executives as issue interpreters. *Academy of Management Journal*, 41(5), 580-592.

Moore, T. (1997). Work and family - a balancing act. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 34(2), 119-125.

Morgan, H., & Milliken, F. J. (1992). Keys to action: Understanding differences in organizations responsiveness to work-and-family issues. *Human Resource Management*, 31(3), 227-248.

Netemeyer, R. G., Boles, J. S., & McMurrian, R. (1996). Development and validation of work-family conflict and family-work conflict scales. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81(4), 400-410.

New Zealand Statistics. (1998). *New Zealand Business Activity*, February 1998

O'Driscoll, M. P., Ilgen, D. R., & Hildreth, K. (1992). Time devoted to job and off-job activities, interrole conflict and affective experiences. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 77, 272-279.

Osterman, P. (1995). Work/family programmes and the employment relationship. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 40(4), 681-700.

Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose. (1992). Role stressors, social support, and well-being among two career-couples. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13, 339-356.

Pleck, J. H., Staines, G. L., & Lang, L. (1980). Conflicts between work and family life. *Monthly Labor Review*, 103(3), 29-32.

Podsakoff, P. M. & Organ, D. W. (1986). Self-reports in organizational research: Problems and prospects. *Journal of Management*, 12(4), 531-544

Roth, P.L. (1994). Missing data: A conceptual review for applied psychologists. *Personnel Psychology*, 47, 537-560.

Rothausen, T. J., Gonzalez, J. A., Clarke, N. E., & O'Dell, L. L. (1998). Work-family backlash-fact or fiction? The case of organizations' on-site child care centres. *Personnel Psychology*, 51, 685-706.

Tenbrunsel, A. E., Brett, J. M., Maoz, E., Stroh, L. K., & Reilly, A. H. (1995). Dynamic and static work-family relationships. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 63(3), 233-246.

Thomas, L., & Ganster, D. (1995). Impact of family-supportive work variables on work-family conflict and strain: A control perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80(1), 6-15.

Thompson, C. A., & Blau, G. (1993). Moving beyond traditional predictors of job involvement: Exploring the impact of work-family conflict and overload. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 8, 635-646

Voydanoff, P. (1980). *The implications of work-family relationships for productivity*. Scarsdale, New York: Work in America Institute.

Wiersma, U. J. (1990). Gender differences in job attribute preferences: Work-home conflict and job level as mediating variables. *Journal of Occupational Psychology, 63*, 231-243.

About the Authors

Dr. Jarrod Haar lectures at one of New Zealand's largest tertiary institutions, Te Wananga o Aotearoa. He has taught within the Management School at the University of Waikato, New Zealand, where he received his PhD in HRM/OB. He has also guest lectured at Washington State University and Rutgers University in the United States. His research interests include work-family conflict, backlash, and fairness, and the impact of work-family practices upon employee attitudes and behaviours. Other research interests include employee downsizing and stress. He has published in the *New Zealand Journal of Human Resource Management*, and the *New Zealand Journal of Industrial Relations*.

Chester Spell is an Assistant Professor of Management at Rutgers University. He has also been on the faculty at the University of Waikato in New Zealand and Washington State University. He received his PhD in Management from the Georgia Institute of Technology. He is interested the processes by which managers come to adopt and accept management practices and how some of these practices eventually become popular. Other research interests include the interface between work and family roles, and employee substance abuse prevention programs. He has published in the *Journal of Management, Journal of Organizational Behavior*, and *Human Relations*.

114

Michael O'Driscoll is a Professor in the Psychology Department at the University of Waikato. He received his PhD from Flinders University, Australia. His research interests focus on work attitudes, motivation and behaviour, employee job stress and well-being, and the interface between job experiences and life off the job (especially family commitments and responsibilities). He has been widely published, including the *Journal of Applied Psychology, Academy of Management Journal, Journal of Organizational Behavior, Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, Human Resource Management* and *Applied Psychology: International Review.*

Dr. Suzette Dyer received her PhD in Management from the University of Waikato, New Zealand, where she works in the Department of Strategic Management & Leadership. Her research interests include woman in management, careers, globalization, work-family conflict and workplace flexibility. She has published in the *Journal of Management Education, International Journal of Manpower, and Australian e-Journal for the Advancement of Mental Health.*