Examining Work-Family Conflict Within a New Zealand Local Government Organization

Jarrod M. Haar, Department of Strategic Management & Leadership, University of Waikato, and Chester S. Spell, Department of Management and Decision Sciences, Washington State University

The current work-family conflict literature is characterized by limitations in focus and methodology, and a failure to link work-family conflict with work-family policies. There is also a distinct lack of conflict examination on New Zealand employees. This study examined work-family conflict in two directions (work to family and family to work), time and strain based conflict sources, and the relationships between conflict and satisfaction and past, present and future use of work-family practices within a local government organization in New Zealand. Findings show support for both time-based and strain-based conflict hypotheses. Global work strain correlated significantly with both work-family and family-work conflict, while working hours correlated significantly with work-family conflict only. Similarly, work-family conflict impacted negatively upon job satisfaction, but not family-work conflict. Satisfaction with organizational support of work and family roles was significantly correlated with both forms of conflict. Lastly, past and future work-family practice use was significantly correlated with family-work conflict, but was not significantly correlated in any aspect with work-family conflict.

INTRODUCTION

Work and family issues are becoming increasingly important for organizations to consider (Tenbrunsel, Brett, Maoz, Stroh, & Reilly, 1995). The rationale for organizational work-family programs focuses upon four major demographic trends. These include the changing participation rates for working women and working mothers (Milliken, Martins, & Morgan, 1998; Osterman, 1995), the rise in dual-career couples (Morgan & Milliken, 1992; Goodstein, 1994), the increase in the number of single-parent families (Morgan & Milliken, 1992), and the increase in the elderly population (Goodstein, 1995; Hendrickson, 2000). At the heart of work-family policies is the necessity for these programs to help employees balance changing work and family roles (Goodstein, 1994; Moore, 1997; Osterman, 1995; Judge, Boudreau, & Bretz Jr., 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).

This study seeks to contribute to the work-family conflict literature by examining the relationship of work-family conflict to time-based and strain-based sources of conflict, as well as the relationship with satisfaction towards organizational support and work. This study also investigates conflict from two directions, work to family and family to work, as well as the association between conflict and work-family practice use. Practice

use is defined as past, present or anticipated (future) use of work-family practices, but does not relate to frequency of use for each practice. Work-family practice use is only a global measure regarding (separately) past, present, future or non-use of the six work-family practices on offer in this study's organization. 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. Also, countries like New Zealand and Australia (Elloy, 2001) are very much under represented in the work-family conflict literature, and researching such countries can only improve the internationalization of the work-family conflict literature. In addition, this research includes employee use of paid parental leave, which at the time of data collection was still unlegislated for in New Zealand. Lastly, while work-family policy adoption has been examined within New Zealand (Callister, 1996), the fundamental impact of work-family conflict upon New Zealand employees has not.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Interrole Conflict

The relationship between employee work lives and non-work pursuits has been scrutinized (Kanter, 1977; Voydanoff, 1980). However, Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) suggest 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. The study of interrole conflict has become established, with Greenhaus and Beutell's interrole description of work-family conflict becoming a widely accepted perspective (Stephens & Sommer, 1996). Interrole conflict between work and non-work has been suggested as a significant source of strain for both men and women (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964; Erdwins, Buffardi, Casper, & O'Brien, 2001). As Kanter (1977) and Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) have noted, continued changes in the nature of work suggests that work-family conflict has intensified, and this is highlighted by the demographic trends noted above. Thus, further research on the relationship between work-family conflict and employee attitudes would be fruitful.

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) proposed separating work and family domains into two spheres: role conflict and interrole conflict. Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal, (1964) define role conflict as the "simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) sets of pressures such that compliance with one would make more difficult compliance with the other" (p. 19). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) define interrole conflict as "a form of role conflict in which the sets of opposing pressures arise from participation in different roles" (p. 77). The role pressures associated with membership in one organization, such as the workplace, are in conflict with pressures stemming from membership in other groups, such as family (Kahn et al., 1964). Thus conflict may arise between a person's role as an employee and their role as a spouse. For example, an employee with a manager who expects them to take work home may conflict with the family's expectations of spending time together.

Work-Family Conflict

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 also maintain 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. For example a male employee who has become a new father may want to focus his time and energy upon this new father role (salient family role), while his manager stresses work deadlines (salient work role) and threatens termination if the project fails (strong negative sanction). The result would be the employee suffering intensified work-family conflict.

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) suggested examining role pressures from both work and family domains, maintaining this was a fundamentally under researched area where we need a better understanding of the interactive effects of work and family role pressures. More recently, Kinnunen and Mauno (1998) noted "previous research has mainly relied on assessing interference from work to family only" (p.158). Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1997) concur, suggesting there is a methodological limitation involved with the measurement of work-family conflict with a single direction focus. Researchers have responded to this issue, suggesting that work-family conflict is a bi-directional construct (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991; O'Driscoll, Ilgen, & Hildreth, 1992; Williams & Alliger, 1994; Stephens & Sommer, 1996; Adams, King, & King, 1996; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996).

This paper also considers conflict bi-directionally and uses the term work to family conflict (WFC) to refer to work interfering with family life, and family to work conflict (FWC) to refer to family life interfering with work. Most previous studies have not addressed the relationship of work-family conflict as a bi-directional construct towards work-family policy use (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998) and employee attitudes. This study will examine time and strain-based sources of conflict, as well as the relationships between WFC and FWC and satisfaction with organizational support, job satisfaction, and work-family practice use.

HYPOTHESES

Relative Magnitude of WFC and FWC

Many studies have consistently found WFC to be greater in magnitude than FWC (Gutek, Repetti, & Silver, 1988; Gutek et al., 1991; Judge et al., 1994). Netemeyer et al. (1996) suggests that as most workers report family is more important than work, they would expect work-family conflict to be greater, certis paribus, than family-work conflict. Netemeyer et al. (1996) examined relative magnitude with three separate samples (teachers and administrators, small business owners, and real estate salespersons), and found that WFC was greater than FWC in all three groups. Similarly, we expect WFC to be greater than FWC. Some studies have also compared conflict scores between genders. For example Gutek et al. (1991) found women reported significantly more WFC than men, but found no difference with regard to FWC, and suggests working within the opposite sex's domain will have a greater psychological impact on conflict perceptions. Under this assumption, we expect women to report significantly higher WFC than men, and men to report significantly higher FWC than women.

Hypothesis 1: The reported level of work-family conflict will be greater than family-work conflict.
Hypothesis 2a: Women will report higher levels of work-family conflict than men.
Hypothesis 2a: Men will report higher levels of family-work conflict than women.

Time-Based Conflict

Time is a major aspect that has been associated with conflict. Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) state, "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" (pg 77). Consequently, an employee whose work role interferes with their family role cannot satisfy both roles in the same time period. Time-based conflict is consistent with excessive work time and schedule conflict (Pleck, Staines, & Lang, 1980), as well as role overload (Kahn et al., 1964). Time-based conflict can take two forms. First, time demands associated with one role's membership may make it physically impossible to comply with expectations arising from another (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). For example an employee might stay late at work to finish a project, thus making it physically impossible to spend time with his family. Second, time demands may also produce a preoccupation with one role even if an individual is physically attempting to meet another role's demands (Bartolome & Evans, 1979), for example the same employee comes home to spend time with his family, all the while thinking about the project that needs to be completed at work.

Despite numerous studies having identified the number of hours worked per week as a strong predictor of time-based conflict (Burke, Weir, & Duwors, 1980; Keith & Schafer, 1980; Pleck et al., 1980; Netemeyer et al., 1996; Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998; Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997; Gutek et al., 1991; Judge et al, 1994), there is little knowledge of this in the New Zealand context. 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. Likewise, it might be expected that the more hours employees work, the more likely they may find family issues such as care for children, older relatives, or other responsibilities interfere with work. However, the effect of the family to work conflict may not be as great as WFC since individuals are already at the workplace. 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. As such, we suggest also that hours worked will also not correlate with FWC.

Hypothesis 3: The greater the hours worked per week, the higher the level of work-family conflict.

Strain-Based Conflict

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) maintain 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; Netemeyer et al., 1996). Strain indicators can include depression, apathy, tension, irritability, fatigue, and anxiety (Greenhaus et

al., 2000; Brief, Schuler, & Van Sell, 1981; Ivancevich & Mattleson, 1980). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) state that the "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, employees who suffer 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. Thus it is expected that there will be a positive correlation between strain based variables and both work-family and family-work conflict. Therefore while strain-based variables originating in the workplace can impact on work-family conflict, they may also spill over into the home and therefore impact on family-work conflict. For this study, we are examining strain-based conflict in a single global measure (incorporating emotional, communication and burnout), as another way to examine strain-based sources of conflict on WFC and FWC.

Hypothesis 4a: The greater the global work strain, the higher the level of work-family conflict.
Hypothesis 4b: The greater the global work strain, the higher the level of family-work conflict.

Satisfaction With Work-Family Practices

Studies have suggested that work-family conflict is positively related to the perceived importance of work-family practices (Frone & Yardley, 1996; Wiersma, 1990). Frone and Yardley's 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) maintain this highlights the importance of distinguishing between the two types of work-family conflict, and suggest 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.

From this finding, Frone and Yardley (1996) assert that employed parents rate work-family practices as being important for the same reason employers are willing to offer them – that work-family practices help employees manage family-related demands, thereby reducing the prevalence of FWC and its adverse impact on organizational outcomes (Friedman, 1990; Kraut, 1990; Friedman & Galinsky, 1992; Gonyea & Googins, 1992; Thompson, Thomas & Maier, 1992). The notion of importance of work-family practices has also been connected to satisfaction towards these programs. For example Kossek, Colquitt, & Noe (2001) suggesting future studies should measure satisfaction with work-family arrangements as a consequence of work-family conflict. We have chosen to examine employee satisfaction with organizational support of work-family roles, and expect this measure to have a negative relationship with both WFC and FWC.

Hypothesis 5a: The greater the satisfaction with organizational support of work-family roles, the lower the level of work-family conflict.
Hypothesis 5b: The greater the satisfaction with organizational support of work-family roles, the lower the level of family-work conflict.

Job Satisfaction

Work-family conflict has also been offered as an antecedent of job satisfaction (Bedeian, Burke & Moffett, 1988). Studies examining a work-family conflict and job satisfaction link have been mixed (Boles & Babin, 1996; Good, Page & Young, 1996; Good, Sisler & Gentry, 1988; Bedeian et al., 1988; Bacharach, Bamberger & Conely, 1991), with Boles, Johnston and Hair Jr. (1997) suggesting the type of position being studied may influence the work related effects of work-family conflict.

Kossek and Ozeki (1998) suggest job satisfaction is often negatively related to work-family conflict, and there is much support for this within the literature (Netemeyer et al., 1996; Frone et al., 1992; Duxbury & Higgins, 1991; 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 impact on job satisfaction towards FWC would not be as strong as the WFC and job satisfaction relationship. 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), with Kossek and Ozeki (1998) stating, "the nature and strength of this relationship is widely variable" (p.139). We suggest that job satisfaction will be negatively related to both WFC and FWC.

Hypothesis 6a: The greater the job satisfaction, the lower the level of work-family conflict.
Hypothesis 6b: The greater the job satisfaction, the lower the level of family-work conflict.

Work-Family Practices

Frone and Yardley (1996) conclude that the literature generally fails to provide strong, consistent support for the effectiveness of work-family programs (for examples see Kingston, 1990; Gonyea & Googins, 1992), and suggest 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 unabated (Kingston, 1990). Therefore, this study seeks to examine work-family practice use as an independent variable with conflict. Kossek and Ozeki (1998) state "research on organizational work-family policy is often disconnected from studies on individuals' experiences with work-family conflict" (p.146). Kossek and Ozeki (1998) cite 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 utilization of past, present and future users of workplace practices designed to help employees balance work and family roles. These practices can include provisions for childcare, parental leave, and flexible work hours. Importantly, it must be noted that the authors are not trying to determine causation between conflict and work-family practice use, only to suggest a relationship between conflict and work-family practice use exists. Problems with causation occur because someone experiencing high WFC or FWC may have been a past user of work-family practices but may not currently be using these programs. Alternatively, an individual with low WFC or FWC might have utilized these practices in the past, and used these programs to help better manage their work and family commitments. A similar relationship to that being examined here has been offered. Frone & Yardley's (1996) findings support the utilization 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 global measure of work-family conflict, and not a bi-directional approach. They offer Goff, Mount, & Jamison, 1990 failure to associate childcare center use with reduced work-family conflict as possibly due to measuring work-family conflict globally, rather than separate for both WFC and FWC. Frone and Yardley (1996) propose that had Goff et al. (1990) used separate measures, they may have found childcare utilization reduced FWC but not WFC. This focus upon FWC and not WFC maybe 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 their work role. Consequently, we suggest FWC may link stronger with work-family practice use than WFC, and hence we hypothesize only with family-work conflict.

Hypothesis 7a: Greater past use of work-family practices will link with family-work conflict.
Hypothesis 7b: Greater current use of work-family practices will link with family-work conflict.
Hypothesis 7a: Greater future use of work-family practices will link with family-work 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, with 445 employees. The organization operates 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.

A total of 206 employees were given the surveys, with data collection executed at two times to reduce the potential for common method variance. A total of 100 responses to both survey one and two were obtained for a response rate of 48.5 percent. The average age of these respondents was 41.7 years (SD=9.85), with the majority married (77%) and female (69%), which is demographically similar to the population. Of the 35 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 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", "After work, I come home too tired to do some of the things I'd like to do", 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", "At times, my personal problems make me irritable at work", and "My family dislikes how often I am preoccupied with my work when I am at home". This new work-family conflict measure is a modification of an earlier scale (Kopelman et al., 1983). 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 .71.

Total hours worked was measured with a single item, reported in hours per week. Global work strain was measured with a three-item measure, with anchors 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree. Questions asked were: "You are exposed to emotional demands at work?", "You are exposed to communication problems at work?" and "Your job leaves you feeling burnt out?". These three items correlated significantly to each other (all p< .01), and the scale had a reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of .79.

Satisfaction with organizational support of work-family roles was measured "Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with the amount of support provided for employee's work and family roles by the organisation?" and coded 1=extremely dissatisfied and 7=extremely satisfied, and is based on a similar single item measuring employee satisfaction with a work-family practice (Rothausen, Gonzalez, Clarke & O'Dell, 1998).

Job satisfaction was measured using a 7-item scale similar to that used by Lounsbury and Hoopes (1986), and 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.

The organization offers six work-family practices: unpaid parental leave, paid parental leave, domestic leave, bereavement leave, flexible working hours and a before and after-school room. Use of work-family practices was measured in terms of number of practices used and is similar to the measure used by Rothausen et al. (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.

Similarly to other work-family conflict studies (Frone et al., 1997; Thomas & Ganster, 1995), this study used salary and gender as control variables. In addition, we controlled for marital status. Salary was measured with one item with eight categories coded 1=under $15,000 per

annum, 8=over $75,000 per annum, with the six categories in between spread in $10,000 lots. Gender was measured 1=female, 0=male, and marital status was measured 1=married/defacto, 0=single.

Analysis

Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using mean analysis, while hypotheses 3 to 7 were tested via hierarchical regression analysis. Control variables (gender, salary and marital status) were entered as one block. The second block consisted of the independent variables (total hours worked, global work strain, satisfaction with work-family support, job satisfaction, work-family practice past users, work-family practice present users, work-family practice future users). Two regression equations were done with WFC being the dependent variable in one equation and FWC the dependent in the other equation.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics for all the study variables are shown in Table 1
_____
Insert Table 1 about here
_____

Hypothesis 1 was tested, which predicted relative levels of work to family and family to work conflict. Similar to other studies, this hypothesis was supported with WFC (Mean=2.6) being greater than FWC (Mean=2.0). A t-test (t=8.10, p < .001) indicated this was a statistically significant difference. An interesting aspect of this result is the low mean scores for both WFC and FWC, suggesting that respondents within this organization on average, experience minor forms of conflict at both the workplace and home, with the home producing significantly less conflict than the workplace. However, these findings are typical of other work-family conflict studies (using a 5-point scale) where WFC has been found to be larger than FWC scores (Gutek et al., 1991; Judge et al., 1994), although these studies typically have higher WFC mean scores and lower FWC mean scores. We suggest that due to the commonality of such findings, there will be a negligible impact on study results.

We conducted further analysis on the mean scores of WFC and FWC regarding gender, to determine whether there were significant differences between WFC and FWC amongst the sexes. The results indicate no difference between female WFC (Mean=2.5) and male WFC (Mean=2.8), t-test (t=1.45, not significant), and this provides no support for hypothesis 2a. However, there was a significant statistical difference regarding FWC, with male FWC (Mean=2.3) greater than female FWC (Mean=1.9), t-test (t=2.6, p< .05), which supports hypothesis 2b. These results indicate no significant difference between the sex's regarding WFC, but the FWC finding does provide support for Gutek et al.'s (1991) assertion that the opposite sex's domain will have a greater psychological impact on conflict, at least for male employees in this organization.

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

Insert Table 2 about here
_____

There was a significant correlation (p < .05) with total hours worked and WFC supporting hypothesis 3. Total hours worked did not have a statistically significant relationship with FWC, which suggests a single direction towards conflict with this variable. Global work strain was significantly correlated to both WFC (p< .001) and FWC (p< .05), indicating that as strain factors increase (specifically job burnout, emotional demands and communication problems), so too does work-family and family-work conflict. These findings support hypotheses 4a and 4b.

Hypotheses 5a and 5b, regarding satisfaction with organizational support of work and family roles were both supported (p< .01), indicating a negative relationship exists between support satisfaction and conflict, with one increasing as the other decreases. There was also a significant correlation between job satisfaction and WFC (p< .05), but not FWC, providing support for hypotheses 6a but not 6b. As with support satisfaction, a negative relationship exists between job satisfaction and WFC, with one increasing as the other decreases. We also tested FWC in relation to past, present and future use of work-family practices. Respondents who indicate higher FWC are linked to past use of work-family practices (p< .05), supporting hypothesis 7a. Current use of work-family practices was not linked to FWC and fails to support hypothesis 7b, however, anticipated (future) use of work-family practices was significantly correlated (p< .1) with FWC, supporting hypothesis 7c.

The F change statistic after entering the block of independent variables (time and strain-based variables, satisfaction with support, job satisfaction and use of practices) was significant (p <.001) for both the WFC and FWC equations, indicating the incremental R square from addition of the attitudinal variables and conflict sources was significant. The full regression equation with WFC as the dependent variable had an adjusted R square of 44.5, compared to the FWC variable with an adjusted R square of 23.5.

DISCUSSION

This study sought to investigate sources of work-family conflict within the New Zealand context. We examined the relationship between time and strain-based conflict, satisfaction with organizational support, job satisfaction, and past, present and future use of work-family practices with work-family conflict. Similar to many work-family conflict studies, we found that WFC was greater than FWC, which is in agreement with other studies (Gutek et al., 1988; Gutek et al., 1991; Judge et al., 1994). While Netemeyer et al. (1996) assert that most workers report family as more important than work, and thus we'd expect to find WFC greater than FWC, another explanation may be that for some employees, the workplace holds greater opportunities to impact upon their lives negatively, creating intensive conflict. While direct comparisons of this result with other studies is difficult due to the nature of the different measures of work-family conflict used, it does suggest that within this New Zealand local government organization, family supercedes the workplace in importance, just as in other US studies. The expected gender difference with males registering significantly greater FWC than female respondents, does provide some support for Gutek et al.'s (1991) assertion that males will register greater FWC due to this being an unexpected and non-traditional role for males. Importantly though, this result may be influenced by the small sample size (males made up only 31% of respondents), which may have seen male respondents with significant interest in work-family practices responding to the surveys, hence distorting the results. Due to these factors we caution this interpretation until larger New Zealand

studies can similarly examine this aspect.

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 feel conflict as family time is taken away by the work role. While the average working week is only 40.3 hours among respondents; this local government organization had within the past few months, increased working hours from 37.5 hours to a 40 hour week, and may highlight the conflict such an increase has created. While not hypothesized, the findings indicate that number of work hours worked does not link to family roles conflicting with work (FWC), and is supportive of other studies (Judge et al., 1994). This suggests that hours worked, as a conflict source, may not be bi-directional. 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. Global work strain impacted upon both work and family roles, indicating that the strain associated with the workplace has a bi-directional impact, unlike working hours. That is, stress associated with the workplace can negatively impact upon both the workplace and the home. This may highlight that conflict absorbed through work is then taken home by the employee and therefore intrudes upon both roles. Given the significant correlations in both directions, this appears to be a major source of conflict upon employees in this local government organization.

The suggestion of measuring employee satisfaction with work-family arrangements (Kossek et al., 2001) is well founded in this organization study, with this measure correlating significantly with both WFC and FWC. That employee satisfaction with organizational support for work-family roles shares a negative relationship with conflict, may indicate that employees do see a relationship between organizational support of their work and family responsibilities and conflict, and 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. The prediction that conflict would be negatively linked with job satisfaction was supported, and follows other studies (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Kossek and Ozeki (1998) assert that the nature and strength of the relationship between conflict and job satisfaction can be variable, and our findings support this with only WFC linking with job satisfaction. These findings 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 findings suggest for this New Zealand local government organization, employee job satisfaction is linked solely with WFC and does not tie with FWC. This finding is similar to Adams, King, & King (1996), which also used separate measures of work-family conflict and family-work conflict, and found job satisfaction inversely correlated with WFC but not FWC.

A unique aspect of this paper was in examining the relationships between past, present and future use of work-family programs with 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's, 1998). The findings indicate past and future use of work-family practices is associated with family-work conflict, but current use is not. One suggestion 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. Again it must be stressed that causality cannot be determined here, and this finding could be alternatively interpreted as those with higher FWC are still in the considering stage, that is, evaluating their options, and

therefore are not current users. Past users of work-family practices correlate significantly with future users (p< .01, see table 1), and this may indicate that previous users of work-family practices have enjoyed certain advantages regarding reducing family-work conflict and therefore maybe quicker to propose future use when they are again facing amplified conflict at home impacting upon the workplace. These findings encourage further examinations of family-work conflict and work-family practice utilization, and additional research may provide greater understanding of this phenomena. The link between FWC and greater use of work-family practices (past, present and future), supports the notion that practices such as parental leave, domestic leave, and flexible work are designed exclusively to make family life easier, and therefore make work easier through first addressing family role conflicts. Although not hypothesized, WFC does not link with past, present or future use of work-family practices, which supports Frone and Yardley's (1996) assertions of a directional link between conflict and work-family practice use. To test their proposition further, the authors combined the two conflict measures (WFC and FWC) into a single conflict measure and re-ran the regressions. The findings regarding work-family practice use were all not supported, indicating as Frone and Yardley (1996) have suggested, that a combined measure of conflict may fail to highlight the relationship between conflict and practice utilization. The original findings also support the suggestions that WFC will not associate with work-family practice utilization because of the dominating family focus of work-family practices. Again, further examination of this aspect may provide greater support for Frone & Yardley's (1996) directional link between work-family practice use and FWC only.

An important aspect of this research was the examination of conflict within a New Zealand local government organization. New Zealand is highly under represented in the work-family literature, particularly within the conflict context. The authors suggest the findings, within the limitation of this single local government organization, indicate that New Zealand employees do share similar attitudes to those of their American counterparts, who typically feature in work-family research, and this result differs from Elloy (2001), who found little commonality in his Australian comparisons with sources of conflict. Overall, the findings indicate that New Zealand local government employees operate under conflict situations similarly to international employees, particularly US employees, and this provides support that work-family conflict is an international phenomenon facing employees and their organizations. Kossek and Ozeki (1998) maintain the management of conflict between work and family responsibilities has become a critical challenge for organizations, and this study indicates New Zealand employees do operate under such conflict, and consequently, New Zealand organizations and their managers, at least within the local government context, should seek to address this conflict. The findings provide additional support for more research into work-family conflict in New Zealand, especially with regard to examining past, present and future use of work-family practices and the links to WFC and FWC.

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. Therefore, the authors suggest the findings here offer only an insight into work-family conflict that can be strengthen through additional research. Also, inherent in New Zealand organizational research, where 98.9% of organizations have less than 50 employees (New Zealand Statistics, 1998), is the limited availability of large organizations for research, and this aspect has impacted upon this study. Therefore the authors acknowledge the sample size is limited, but suggest

it should be viewed as an accepted limitation of New Zealand organizational research.

The use of a single item measure for examining satisfaction with organization support of work-family roles is also a limitation of this study; however, a similar single item measure has been used in other work-family research (Rothausen et al., 1998), and this provides some justification for this single item measure. The time delay between data collection (survey 1 and 2) may also be interpreted as being less than optimal, as the time delay was under two weeks. Similar research in the future may seek to expand the time between surveys to a longer period. Lastly, the industry setting of a local government organization limits the generalizability of the findings.

Despite these points, the present study was done in a small workplace that is in many ways distinct from much previous research. Kossek and Ozeki (1998) fault previous work-family conflict studies as examining "very homogeneous and specific groups and work contexts" (p.141). Kossek and Ozeki also suggest previous studies have been restricted by concentrating on single conflict areas (time or strain based), targeting gender or job groups or by focusing upon a single work-family practice. In addition, many international studies are based on very large corporations that simply do not exist within New Zealand, and therefore this sized organization may be more generalisable to this country. Also smaller sample sizes than used here have been managed in work-family conflict research (Ahmad, 1996). Therefore, we suggest the sample size here is adequate given the overall small size of organizations within New Zealand and although the findings are from a local government organization, this does provide some variety within the work-family conflict literature.

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 time and strain based conflict sources, two satisfaction measures, and considers the role of multiple work-family practices at different times. Findings suggest past and future users of work-family practices link with family-work conflict, and that work-related strain, and satisfaction with organizational support are the variables that associate with both work-family conflict and family-work conflict. This studies focus on work-family practice use provides an additional avenue for work-family researchers to focus upon, and only further studies can indicate whether the relationships found here are generalizable. Examining the relationship between family-work conflict and the impact upon past, present and future use of work-family practices is an opportunity for additional research, with potential benefits for employers and employees. The authors also suggest that examining organizations with greater numbers of work-family practices than examined here may also improve our understanding of the impact of family-work conflict upon work-family practice use.

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.

Ahmad, A. (1996). Work-family conflict among married professional women in Malaysia. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 136(5), 663-665.

Bacharach, S. B., Bamberger, P., & Conely, S. (1991). Work-Home Conflict among Nurses and Engineers: Mediating the Impact of Stress on Burnout and Satisfaction at Work. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 12*, 39-63.

Bartolome, F., & Evans, P. A. L. (1979). Professional lives versus private lives - Shifting patterns of managerial commitment. *Organizational Dynamics, 7*(4), 3-29.

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.

Boles, J. S., Johnston, M. W., & Hair Jr., J. F. (1997). Role stress, work-family conflict and emotional exhaustion: Inter-relationships and effects on some work-related consequences. *The Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, 17*(1), 17-28.

Boles, J. S., & Babin, B. J. (1996). On the Front Lines: Stress, Conflict and the Customer Service Provider. *Journal of Business Research, 37*(1), 41-50.

Brief, A. P., Schuler, R. S., & Van Sell, M. (1981). *Managing job stress*. Boston: Little, Brown
.
Burke, R. J., Weir, T., & Duwors, R. E. (1980). Work demands on administrators and spouse well-being. *Human Relations*, 33, 253-278.

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

Duxbury, L. E., & Higgins, C. A. (1991). Gender differences in work-family conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76, 60-74.

Elloy, D. F. (2001). A predictive study of stress among Australian dual-career couples. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 141*(1), 122-123.

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.

Friedman, D. E., & Galinsky, E. (1992). Work and family issues: A legitimate business concern. In S. Zedeck (Ed.), *Work, Families, and Organizations* . San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Friedman, D. E. (1990). Work and family: The new strategic plan. *Human Resource Planning, 13*, 78-89.

Frone, M. R., Russell, M., & Cooper, M. L. (1992). Prevalence of work-family conflict: Are work and family boundaries asymmetrically permeable? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 13, 723-729.

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.

Good, L. K., Page, J., T. J., & Young, C. E. (1996). Assessing Hierarchical Differences in Job-Related Attitudes and Turnover Among Retail Managers. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 24*(Spring), 148-156.

Good, L. K., Sisler, G. F., & Gentry, J. W. (1988). Antecedents of Turnover Intentions Among Retail Management Personnel. *Journal of Retailing, 64*, 296-314.

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., Repetti, R., & Silver, D. (1988). Nonwork roles and stress at work. In C. Cooper & R. Payne (Eds.), *Causes, coping, and consequences of stress at work* (pp. 147-174). New York: Wiley.

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

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.

Ivancevich, J. M., & Mattleson, M. T. (1980). *Stress and Work*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.

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.

Keith, P. M., & Schafer, R. B. (1980). Role strain and depression in two job families. *Family Relations*, 29, 483-488.

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.

Kraut, A. J. (1990). Some lessons on organisational research concerning work and family issues. *Human resource planning, 13*(2), 109-118.

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.

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.

Stephens, G. K., & Sommer, S. M. (1996). The measurement of work to family conflict. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 56(3), 475-486.

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., Thomas, C. C., & Maier, M. (1992). Work-family conflict: Reassessing corporate policies and initiatives. In U. Sekaran & F. T. L. Leong (Eds.), *Womanpower: Managing in Times of Demographic Turbulence* . Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

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.

Williams, K., & Alliger, G. M. (1994). Role stressors, mood spillover, and perceptions of work-family conflict in employed parents. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37(4), 837-868.

TABLE 1. <u>CORRELATIONS AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE STUDY VARIABLES</u>

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Gender	.69	.46	--											
2. Salary	4.1	1.5	-.58**	--										
3. Marital Status	.23	.43	.21*	-.14	--									
4. Hours Worked	40.3	5.3	-.37**	.47**	-.02	--								
5. Global Work Strain	8.9	3.1	-.13	.15	.10	.17	--							
6. Satisfaction with Support	4.8	1.1	-.01	.14	.004	.14	-.19	--						
7. Job Satisfaction	4.6	.92	-.19	.28**	-.10	.16	-.34**	.39**	--					
8. Work-Family Past Users	1.1	1.1	-.21*	.23*	-.08	.09	-.06	.19	.02	--				
9. Work-Family Present Users	.35	.61	-.08	.02	-.12	-.04	.13	-.03	-.11	-.07	--			
10. Work-Family Future Users	.76	1.2	.16	-.06	-.01	-.04	.17	.05	-.03	-.31**	-.06	--		
11. Work-Family Conflict	2.6	.91	-.15	.15	-.03	.23*	.61**	-.35**	-.39**	-.001	.14	.10	--	
12. Family-Work Conflict	2.0	.61	-.25*	.15	-.06	.11	.38**	-.31**	-.24**	.112	.15	.11	.70**	--

N=100. All significance tests are two-tailed. *p<.05, **p<.01

TABLE 2.   REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR CONFLICT

Dependent Variables	Work to Family Conflict	Family to Work Conflict
Control Variables:		
Gender	.003	-.194+
Salary	.061	.014
Marital Status	-.071	-.010
R^2 for Controls (Block 1)	.027	.063
F change statistic	.905	2.167+
Independent Variables:		
Total Hours Worked	.195*	.036
Global Work Strain	.443***	.229*
Satisfaction with Work-Family Support	-.240**	-.289**
Job Satisfaction	-.197*	-.078
Work-Family Practice Past Users	.063	.202*
Work-Family Practice Present Users	.060	.120
Work-Family Practice Future Users	.069	.191+
R^2 for Block 2	.501	.312
F change statistic	8.949***	4.044***
Total R^2	.528	.375

+p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
Standardized regression coefficients, all significance tests were two-tailed.
All coefficients are reported after block 2 was entered.

About the Authors

Jarrod Haar is a PhD student at the University of Waikato. His research is on work-family conflict, the impact of work-family practices upon employee attitudes and behaviours, the perceived fairness of work-family policies and their users, and work-family backlash. He is currently involved in examining the impact of work-family practices upon employees within government organisations, and is interested in assessing the state of work-family practice adoption at the organisational level in New Zealand. Email: jarrod@nwp.org.nz

Chester Spell, PhD, is an assistant professor of management at Washington State University. Research interests include the interface between employee work and family roles, and how organisations become involved in managing non-work related roles and problems. More specific research has involved the diffusion of human resource management practices, especially employee substance abuse prevention programs and behavioural health policies. His work has appeared in publications such as the *Journal of Management*, *The Journal of Organizational Behaviour, and Human Relations*. Email: spell@tricity.wsu.edu