



Examining couple agreement about work-family conflict

Michelle Streich

University of Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA

Wendy J. Casper

University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas, USA, and

Amy Nicole Salvaggio

University of Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA

252

Received March 2007

Revised September 2007

Accepted November 2007

Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to explore the nature of couple agreement about work-family conflict, adding to previous research by explicitly testing the extent to which couples agree when rating work interference with family (WIF) and the influence of this agreement on other outcomes.

Design/methodology/approach – In total, 224 dual-earner couples were surveyed to assess their own WIF, as well as what they believed to be their partner's level of WIF. Participants also completed questions regarding their organizational commitment.

Findings – Couples agreed when rating their own and their partners' WIF more than they disagreed. As predicted, couples agreed more when rating the female partner's WIF as compared to the male partner's WIF. Finally, couple agreement about WIF moderated the relationship between female WIF and her continuance organizational commitment such that the relationship between the female partner's WIF and her level of continuance commitment was stronger when agreement about her experienced WIF was low.

Research limitations/implications – This was a convenience sample, and therefore caution should be used when generalizing to a broader population. Second, the research design was cross-sectional, prohibiting causal inferences and conclusions about couple agreement over time.

Practical implications – Organizations should consider the perceptions and attitudes of both employees and their partners, as both have implications for work attitudes. Organizations might benefit from considering ways in which they can involve and engage employees' spouses and partners, and could offer flexible schedules as a way to reduce employee work-to-family conflict and enhance both employee and partner attitudes toward the organization.

Originality/value – This paper contributes to the literature by exploring both self and partner perceptions of work-family conflict and examining couple agreement about this conflict.

Keywords Sociology of work, Family, Role conflict, Attitudes

Paper type Research paper



The number of women in the workforce has grown exponentially from 1970 to 2004, when women went from comprising 43 percent of the workforce to 59 percent (US Census Bureau, 2005). These changes resulted in an increase of dual-earner couples. For example, 58 percent of married couples reported income from both husband and wife in 2003, compared to 44 percent in 1967 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003). Accordingly, research has increasingly examined how workers experience and manage conflict between their work and family roles (Eby *et al.*, 2005).

Work-family conflict (WFC) is defined as “a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985, p. 77). Research suggests WFC is related to organizational commitment (Lyness and Thompson, 1997; Netemeyer *et al.*, 1996), job performance (Frone *et al.*, 1997), and turnover (Greenhaus *et al.*, 1997). WFC also relates to non-work outcomes such as life satisfaction (Kossek and Ozeki, 1998), family involvement (Frone *et al.*, 1992a), and marital satisfaction (Coverman, 1989). Thus, WFC has implications for both organizations and employees.

WFC can occur in two directions: work can interfere with family (WIF) and family can interfere with work (FIW). The present study focuses on WIF for several reasons. Research has shown that WIF, but not FIW, predicts job dissatisfaction and organizational commitment (Casper *et al.*, 2007; Lyness and Thompson, 1997). WIF is also more prevalent than FIW (McElwain *et al.*, 2005; Frone *et al.*, 1992b). Finally, we focus on WIF because it is appropriate for examining couple agreement. A spouse/partner has the opportunity to experience and observe when his or her partner’s work interferes with family, but may not have the opportunity to observe when family interferes with work.

Extant research has tended to examine WFC from the individual level of analysis, failing to consider the perspectives of both members of a couple (Casper *et al.*, 2007). Multiple studies call for research examining the couple as the level of analysis (Hammer *et al.*, 1997; Moen and Yu, 2000; Casper *et al.*, 2007; Eby *et al.*, 2005; Hayden *et al.*, 1998), and a recent review of the work-family literature found that only 5 percent of studies examined the couple level of analysis (Casper *et al.*, 2007). Given an individual’s perception of WFC has been found to relate to his or her partner’s experiences (Hammer *et al.*, 1997, 2003; Matthews *et al.*, 2006), to completely understand an individual’s WFC, partner perceptions are critical.

The present study examines both self and partner perceptions of WIF among dual-earner couples. We explore the extent to which individuals within a couple agree about their WIF and their partner’s WIF, and whether this agreement moderates the relationship between WIF and individual-level organizational commitment. In what follows we delineate a theoretical rationale for examining couple agreement about WIF and its potential moderating influence on the relationship between WIF and individual-level organizational commitment.

Systems theory

Systems theory (e.g. Bronfenbrenner, 1979) argues that individuals exist in an ecological environment comprised of nested systems. The two-person system, or dyad, is considered the “innermost level of the ecological schema” (p. 5). Research on both members of a dyad provides a richer and more dynamic picture of the relationship between dyad members (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Thus, family systems theory can be utilized to conceptualize the couple in the WFC literature (Hammer *et al.*, 2003).

Family systems theory suggests that a person’s attitudes are affected by his or her family members’ attitudes and behaviors (Hammer *et al.*, 2003, 2005). Accordingly, each individual within a couple influences his or her partner’s decisions (Doumas *et al.*, 2003; Gareis *et al.*, 2003). For instance, both husbands and wives report spending more hours at work the day after they reported low marital warmth from their spouse (Doumas *et al.*, 2003).

Failure to consider the interdependence of couples' experiences has implications for organizations, given research finds that employees' partners can and do influence their attitudes and behaviors at work. For example, Eby and Russell (2000) found that spouses' willingness to move was the strongest predictor of employees' willingness to relocate for jobs. Similarly, Rosen and Durand (1995) found that the strongest predictor of US Army officer retention was the spouse's attitude toward re-enlistment. Dornstein and Matalon (1989) found that family attitudes toward Army service were one of the biggest predictors of commitment to the Israeli Army. Several other studies have found that the adjustment of expatriates' spouses plays a critical role in expatriates' adjustment (Caligiuri *et al.*, 1998) and withdrawal from assignments (Shaffer and Harrison, 1998).

Crossover effects

Family systems theory posits that the attitudes and experiences of one family member influence those of another family member. Crossover effects occur when one person's stressors and strains result in elevated levels of stress or strain for his or her partner (Westman and Etzion, 1995). For example, Hammer *et al.* (1997) found that within dual-earner couples, one person's WFC accounted for significant variance in his or her partner's WFC. Hammer *et al.* (2003) found that wives' tardiness to work was related to husbands' level of FIW, and that husbands' absence from work was related to wives' FIW. Crossover effects have also been found with respect to husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband burnout (Westman and Etzion, 1995, 2001).

Matthews *et al.* (2006) studied crossover effects among dual-earner couples. This study explored what they called direct crossover effects in which an individual's experienced work-to-relationship conflict was expected to relate to his or her partner's perceptions of this conflict. Thus, direct crossover effects, as defined by Matthews *et al.* (2006), reflect what we refer to as couple agreement. Findings from this study support the notion that couples agree reasonably well when rating work-to-relationship conflict. In addition, feeling like one's partner's work interfered with the relationship was positively related to relationship tension, which in turn was related to relationship satisfaction and negative health outcomes (Matthews *et al.*, 2006).

We extend Matthews *et al.*'s (2006) study in two ways. First, we examine the degree to which level of agreement regarding work-to-family conflict (WIF) depends on who is being rated in the dyad – the male or female partner. As we describe below, personal experiences, socialization, and gender roles may result in higher agreement for women's WIF than for men's. Second, we expand upon Matthews *et al.*'s (2006) results by studying job attitudes rather than relationship outcomes. Specifically, we investigate the possible role of couple agreement in the relationship between WIF and organizational commitment.

Couple agreement

Because individuals within a couple influence one another (Hammer *et al.*, 2003; Westman and Etzion, 1995, 2001), it is important to consider the extent to which two members of a dyad agree regarding their perceptions. That is, some couples may perceive the level of WFC experienced similarly (e.g. both think the woman has high conflict), whereas other couples may disagree about the level of conflict experienced (e.g. the woman thinks the man has high conflict, but the man thinks he has low conflict). Because individuals within a couple have the information available and the

motivation to accurately perceive each other's attitudes (Matthews *et al.*, 2006; Kenny and Acitelli, 2001), examining couple agreement is warranted.

Researchers have begun to investigate couple agreement about perceptions that pertain to a couple's relationship. For example, Rusbult *et al.* (1998) examined couple agreement by using self and partner ratings of relationship accommodation behaviors. They found that, when rating the husband's accommodation, the wife's and husband's ratings were fairly highly correlated (from 0.35 to 0.74). In contrast, when examining the wife's accommodation, the husband's and wife's ratings were positively correlated but smaller in magnitude (from 0.14 to 0.57). That is, couples agreed more when rating the husband's level than the wife's level of accommodation.

Matthews *et al.* (2006) examined individuals' self ratings of work-to-relationship conflict as it relates to their partner's rating of their conflict. As expected, self ratings of work-to-relationship conflict were positively related to partner ratings of their work-to-relationship conflict for both male and female targets. Following Matthews *et al.* (2006), we hypothesized that self ratings and partner ratings of a target's WIF would be positively and significantly related. In other words, couples were expected to exhibit significant agreement when evaluating a target's WIF.

- H1.* There will be a positive and significant relationship between self ratings and partner ratings (i.e. self-partner agreement) regarding the level of WIF experienced by a member of a dual-earner couple.

Gender differences in agreement

We also explore whether couple agreement is higher when rating the male target's WIF or the female target's WIF. This is important because different levels of agreement about a partner's experiences may influence the degree to which partner perceptions are of interest to organizations. For instance, if there tends to be high agreement between partners about female's work-family experiences, it makes sense for an organization to consider the perspectives and attitudes of the female's partner, given high agreement suggests the female employee's attitudes toward her organization are influenced by her partner. In contrast, if there is low agreement about a male employee's work-family experiences, his partner's perceptions may be of less interest to his organization. That is, if he and his partner perceive his organization and his work-family issues quite differently, his partner's perceptions may have little direct impact on his work attitudes. Because a key goal of this study is to explore partner perceptions and the degree to which it makes sense for organizations to care about partner perceptions, it is useful to know whether partner agreement differs based on employee gender.

Research has found that women generally report more WIF than men, which some suggest is because women deem work as more of an imposition on family than men, given women feel greater family responsibility (McElwain *et al.*, 2005). This is consistent with the fact that women spend approximately twice as much time as men performing household and family duties (Lundberg and Frankenhaeuser, 1999).

Theories regarding gender stereotypes partly explain why women report higher levels of WIF, and predict that male and female partners may perceive each other's WIF differently. Gender stereotypes are both descriptive (i.e. they contain information about what women are like) and proscriptive (i.e. they describe what women *should* be like) (Heilman, 2001). The gender stereotype for women includes care-giving (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Edwards and Hamilton, 2004), a communal orientation,

and nurturance (Heilman and Okimoto, 2007). Women are simply expected to express more interest in (and, in turn, are more focused on) their close personal relationships (Cross and Madson, 1997). This expectation is internalized through the types of activities and interests parents encourage and cultivate in their children (Lytton and Romeny, 1991; Whiting and Edwards, 1988). Thus, a woman's interference from work to family may be more salient for the woman (who has internalized the norm that she, as a woman, *should* be focused on family care-giving), as well as for her male partner (who is also exposed to gender stereotypes and thus has similar expectations for her).

Other aspects of gender stereotypes, in addition to descriptions and proscriptions about nurturance, may predict different levels of agreement regarding male and female partner's WIF. Women tend to be more expressive than men (Kring and Gordon, 1998) and individuals who express complaints to their partners are more likely to have partners that understand their experiences (Sillars *et al.*, 1984). Thus, when women experience WIF they may express it more openly, and increase the likelihood that their partner will understand their conflict. Moreover, men are permitted less "latitude" in their gender roles – it is not deemed socially acceptable for them to express as many cross-sex attributes as compared to women (McCreary, 1994). In other words, heterosexual men may experience more negative consequences for displaying female attributes than women do for displaying male attributes. Accordingly, if men feel work is interfering with their family (for example, if long work hours interfere with care-giving activities), they may not express it, even to their partners, as such expressions and valuing of family in this way may be perceived by men as "feminine." Hence, couples may experience more agreement about the woman's WIF because women are allowed to, and do, communicate about it more. This should lead to higher agreement about the female's level of WIF.

H2. Couple agreement will be higher when rating the female target's WIF than when rating the male target's WIF.

Work-to-family conflict and organizational commitment

It is important to consider whether agreement within couples about WIF relates to other aspects of work or family functioning. Research suggests that couple agreement is related to family outcomes. For example, O'Brien and Peyton (2002) found that couple agreement about child-rearing was related to wives' increased perception of marital intimacy. However, no research we are aware of has examined couple agreement about WIF as an antecedent of work outcomes, despite the fact that such agreement could influence individual perceptions of work and work attitudes. One potentially important attitude is organizational commitment.

Meyer and Allen (1991) propose three components of organizational commitment:

- (1) affective;
- (2) continuance; and
- (3) normative.

Affective commitment refers to employees' genuine felt loyalty toward an organization. Continuance commitment reflects employees' perceptions that the costs of leaving the organization are too high. Normative commitment reflects employees' sense that they *should* remain with an organization, and is highly related to affective

commitment. The current study focuses on WIF as it relates to the two most distinct aspects of organizational commitment, affective and continuance commitment.

WFC is related to both affective and continuance commitment (Casper *et al.*, 2002; Good *et al.*, 1988; Lyness and Thompson, 1997; Meyer *et al.*, 2002). Research has consistently found a moderate negative relationship between general WFC and affective commitment (Allen *et al.*, 2000; Good *et al.*, 1988; Lyness and Thompson, 1997; Siegel *et al.*, 2005). More specifically, although most studies have found a negative relationship between WIF and affective commitment (Good *et al.*, 1988; Lyness and Thompson, 1997; Netemeyer *et al.*, 1996), Casper *et al.* (2002) found that WIF was unrelated to affective commitment among employed mothers. Discrepancies in past findings suggest it may be relevant to explore moderators of these relationships. Our study explores influences from the family system as moderators of this relationship. Family systems theory argues that what one member of a family (or unit) does or thinks influences other members of the family system. When considering work-to-family conflict, it may be the case that when individuals within a couple agree about the conflict experienced, this agreement serves to reinforce each other's attitudes. For instance, the negative relationship between a woman's WIF and her affective commitment may be amplified if her partner agrees and commiserates with the fact that her work is interfering with family. It may be that improved communication or shared understanding among the couple enhances the association between her perceived conflict and job attitudes. Thus, if she is experiencing reduced affective commitment due to high WIF, knowing her partner agrees with her about the high level of WIF experienced may reinforce any negative attitudes that result from WIF. Accordingly, the negative relationship between WIF and affective commitment is expected to be stronger among couples with high agreement about WIF.

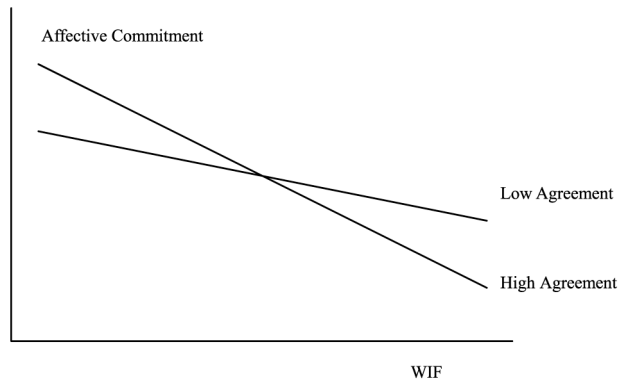
H3. Couple agreement will moderate the relationship between a target's WIF and that target's affective commitment. Specifically, the negative relationship will be stronger when couple agreement is higher than when it is lower (see Figure 1).

Previous research has found that general WFC is positively related to continuance commitment (Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Thompson *et al.*, 1998), such that those with more conflict report a greater sense of being "stuck" in their organization. WIF specifically is also positively related to continuance commitment (Casper *et al.*, 2002; Good *et al.*, 1988; Lyness and Thompson, 1997). Based again on the rationale drawn from family systems theory, high agreement about WIF is expected to reinforce any negative attitudes (i.e. high continuance commitment) that result from WIF. Thus, the relationship between WIF and continuance commitment is expected to be greater when agreement is high.

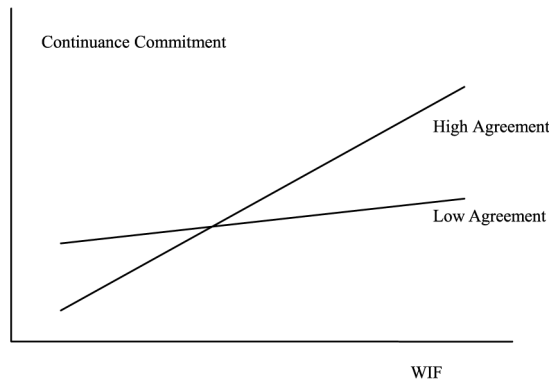
H4. Couple agreement about WIF will moderate the relationship between a target's WIF and that target's continuance commitment. Specifically, the positive relationship will be stronger when couple agreement is higher than when it is lower (see Figure 1).

In sum, the aims of this research are:

- to examine couple agreement when rating their own and each other's WIF;
- to determine if couples agree more when rating the female than the male target's WIF; and



(a)



(b)

Figure 1.
Predicted relationships
between couple
agreement, WIF, and
organizational
commitment

- to determine if couple agreement when rating WIF moderates the relationship between his/her WIF and his/her affective and continuance commitment.

Method

Participants

The sample included 224 heterosexual dual-earner couples who were married, cohabiting, or in a serious relationship and both parents and non-parents. To participate, each partner had to work a minimum of 20 hours per week (cf. Frone *et al.*, 1992b, 1997) and could not be self-employed. The average participant age was 36 years (range = 18-67, SD = 12.3). Of the participants, 51 percent had at least a bachelor's degree. Of the couples, 73 percent were married, 14 percent were in a serious relationship but not cohabitating, 7 percent were cohabitating, and 6 percent were engaged. Of those that reported race, 78 percent were Caucasian, 7 percent were Hispanic, 5 percent were Asian, 5 percent were African American, 2 percent were Native American, and 3 percent reported their race as "Other". On average, participants spent 41 hours a week in paid

employment (range = 20-80 hours, SD = 14.42) and spent 20 hours each week in family activities (range = 0.5-80 hours, SD = 14.01).

Procedure

Two methods were used to recruit couples. First, e-mails were sent to working adults through networking to recruit subjects across the USA. Second, students at a Midwestern university received extra credit for each couple recruited. The combined response rate (percentage of those who agreed to participate where both partners completed the survey) was 71 percent. The survey was administered online. Each couple that agreed to participate was provided with the website address and two code numbers which were used to match the surveys. Participants completed measures about their own attitudes as well as their perceptions of their partner’s attitudes.

Measures

The survey assessed perceptions and attitudes of each member of the couple. To assess perceptions of partner’s attitudes, the items for each variable were adapted by the researchers to reflect “my partner” rather than “I” statements.

Work interfering with family. WIF was assessed with five items from Netemeyer *et al.* (1996). Responses were provided on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Participants rated their own WIF as well as their perceptions of their partners’ WIF. A sample self-rated WIF item is “My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties”. A sample item to rate their partners’ WIF is “Due to work-related duties, my partner has to make changes to his/her plans for family activities”. Coefficient alpha for self-rated WIF was 0.90 and for partner-rated WIF was 0.91.

Organizational commitment. Continuance and affective commitment were assessed using Meyer *et al.*’s (1993) scale. Each component was measured with six items on a five-point Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A sample continuance commitment item is “I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization”. A sample affective commitment item is “This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me”. Coefficient α was 0.82 for affective commitment and 0.70 for continuance commitment.

Results

Table I depicts descriptive statistics and correlations. *H1* was tested with the correlation between self-rated and partner-rated WIF. The correlation was positive and significant ($r = 0.48, p < 0.01$), supporting *H1*. *H1* was also tested by calculating *rwg_j* between self and partner ratings. The *rwg_j* is a measure of perceptual agreement,

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. WIF self rating ^a	2.56	0.96	(0.90)			
2. WIF partner rating ^a	2.39	0.93	0.48**	(0.91)		
3. Affective commitment ^a	3.43	0.83	-16**	-18**	(0.82)	
4. Continuance commitment ^a	3.03	0.72	0.30**	0.17**	-26**	(0.70)

Notes: ^aWork interference with family (WIF), $n = 446$. * $p \leq 0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$

Table I. Correlations, means, standard deviations and reliabilities for study variables

which, conceptually, indicates the degree to which ratings are the same (e.g. both raters put "1") (Bliese, 2000). The average *rug_i* across the sample was 0.79 (the median was 0.95), suggesting reasonable agreement between self and partner ratings of WIF.

H2: gender of target and couple agreement about WIF

H2 posited that couples would agree more when rating the female target's WIF than the male target's WIF. This hypothesis was tested using MANOVA to account for the relationships among self-partner ratings and gender as a set (Edwards, 1995). Male and female ratings of WIF were the dependent variables and rating source (i.e. self versus partner) was the predictor variable. As shown in Table II, the omnibus multivariate test for self and partner ratings indicated that gender of the target was related to the self-partner ratings of WIF (Wilks' $\lambda = 0.98$, $F(2, 447) = 4.33$, $p < 0.01$). Univariate tests indicated a significant effect for self versus partner ratings on male WIF. As can be seen in Table III, the male's average self-rating of WIF was significantly higher than his female partner's rating for him ($M_{\text{male}} = 2.72$ versus $M_{\text{female}} = 2.45$, respectively). In contrast, there was no difference between self-rated and partner-rated WIF for the female target ($M_{\text{self}} = 2.47$; $M_{\text{partner}} = 2.41$). Thus, results support *H2*; there was more agreement in rating WIF for female partners than for male partners.

H3 and H4: couple agreement as a moderator

H3 posited that couple agreement about the target's WIF would moderate the relationship between the target's self-rated WIF and affective commitment. To test this hypothesis, couple agreement about the target's WIF was operationalized by the difference between the self- and partner-rated WIF. Moderated regression was used with the target's self-rated affective commitment as the dependent variable, the target's self-rated WIF entered into Block 1, couple agreement (i.e. the difference between self-rated and partner-rated WIF) about the target's WIF in Block 2, and the interaction of self-rated WIF and the difference score in Block 3. Support was not found for *H3*; agreement did not

		Self-partner comparisons			
		df		F	
Overall Wilks' λ	0.98	2,449		4.33*	
Canonical correlation	0.14				
		Self		Partner	
	df	F		df	F
Gender	1	8.66*		1	0.52
Error	448			448	
Total	449			449	

Table II.
Multivariate analysis of variance for self and partner ratings of WIF

Note: * $p < 0.05$

Table III.
Means for self and partner ratings of WIF by target gender

	Mean self rating	Mean partner rating
Male partner	2.72	2.45
Female partner	2.47	2.40

moderate the relationship between self-rated WIF and affective commitment for females ($R^2 = 0.00, p > 0.05$; see Table IV) or males ($R^2 = 0.00, p > 0.05$; see Table V). However, self-rated WIF was negatively related to self-rated affective commitment for both females ($R^2 = 0.02, p < 0.05, \beta = -0.15, p < 0.05$) and males ($R^2 = 0.02, p < 0.05, \beta = -0.15, p < 0.05$). In other words, higher WIF was associated with lower affective commitment for both male and female members of the couple.

H4 specified that the relationship between the target's WIF and continuance commitment would be stronger and more positive when couple agreement was higher. *H4* was tested using moderated regression, with the target's self-rated continuance commitment as the dependent variable, and the entry of variables the same as those used to examine *H3*. Self-rated WIF was positively related to self-rated continuance commitment for both females and ($R^2 = 0.10, p < 0.05, \beta = 0.31, p < 0.05$; see Table VI) males ($R^2 = 0.08, p < 0.05, \beta = 0.22, p < 0.05$; see Table VII). That is, for both females and males those experiencing higher WIF reported greater continuance commitment. This relationship was not moderated by couple agreement for males, in opposition to *H4*. In contrast, for females, the relationship between self-rated WIF and continuance commitment was moderated by couple agreement about female WIF, with the interaction accounting for an increment of 2 percent in the variance in continuance commitment (see Table VIII). Aiken and West's (1991) procedures were used to graph and interpret the interaction. Figure 2 reveals that the relationship between the female self-rated WIF and her continuance commitment was weaker for couples with high agreement ($\beta = 0.14, p < 0.05$) and stronger for couples with low agreement ($\beta = 0.31,$

Variable	B	SEB	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1 WIF self-rated	-0.13	0.06	-0.15*	0.02*	0.02*
Step 2 Couple agreement about the female partner's WIF	0.10	0.07	0.12	0.03	0.01
Step 3 Interaction of WIF self and agreement	0.06	0.05	0.21	0.04	0.00

Notes: WIF self-rated is the female WIF self-report rating. Couple agreement is the female difference score. * $p \leq 0.05$; $n = 218$

Table IV. Moderated regression analysis for couple agreement about the female partner's WIF as a moderator of the relationship between self-rated female WIF and her affective commitment

Variable	B	SEB	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1 WIF self-rated	-0.14	0.06	-0.15*	0.02*	0.02*
Step 2 Couple agreement about the male partner's WIF	-0.02	0.07	-0.02	0.02	0.00
Step 3 Interaction of WIF self and agreement	-0.05	0.06	-0.18	0.03	0.00

Notes: WIF self-rated is the male WIF self-reported rating. Couple agreement is the male difference score. * $p \leq 0.05$; $n = 218$

Table V. Moderated regression analysis of couple agreement about the male partner's WIF as a moderator of the relationship between the male partner's WIF and his affective commitment

$p < 0.05$). That is, although females who experience WIF have greater continuance commitment, this relationship is ameliorated when couple agreement about female WIF is high. Thus, the nature of the interaction was opposite of what was hypothesized.

A *post hoc* analysis was conducted to examine the nature of the low agreement relationship (i.e. when the difference between self-rated and partner-rated WIF was high). We were interested in understanding circumstances in which females rated their WIF higher than their male partners rated it and situations in which male partners rated their wife's/partner's WIF higher than she rated it. Thus, the female difference score was dummy-coded. Scores where the female's ratings of her WIF were higher than her partners were coded as 0, whereas scores where her partner's rating of her

Table VI.
Moderated regression analysis for couple agreement about the female partner's WIF as a moderator of the relationship between self-rated female WIF and her continuance commitment

Variable	B	SEB	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1 WIF self-rated	0.23	0.05	0.31**	0.10**	0.10**
Step 2 Couple agreement about the female partner's WIF	0.03	0.06	0.04	0.10	0.00
Step 3 Interaction of WIF self-rated and agreement	-0.09	0.04	-0.36**	0.12*	0.02*

Notes: WIF self-rated is the female WIF self-reported rating. Couple agreement is the female difference score. * $p \leq -0.05$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; $n = 218$

Table VII.
Moderated regression analysis for couple agreement about the male partner's WIF as a moderator of the relationship between male self-rated WIF and his continuance commitment

Variable	B	SEB	β	R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1 WIF self-rated	0.22	0.05	0.28**	0.08**	0.08**
Step 2 Couple agreement about the male partner's WIF	-0.03	0.06	-0.03	0.08	0.00
Step 3 Interaction of WIF self and agreement	0.05	0.05	0.22	0.08	0.01

Notes: WIF self-rated is the male WIF self-reported rating. Couple agreement is the male difference score. ** $p \leq 0.01$; $n = 218$

Table VIII.
Post hoc comparisons of direction of disagreement and WIF

Variable	B	SEB	β	R^2	ΔR^2
WIF self	0.14	0.06	0.20*	0.08	0.08
Dummy-coded agreement (1 = self rating is lower than partner)	-0.40	0.26	-0.28	0.08	0.00
Interaction of WIF self and agreement	0.21	0.11	0.32	0.10	0.02
Simple slopes	B	SE	t	p	
WIF where self is higher than partner	0.14	0.06	2.30	0.02	
WIF where self is lower than partner	0.35	0.09	4.07	0.00	

Note: Dependent variable = female continuance commitment

WIF were higher than her ratings were coded as 1. The relationship was tested with moderated regression using the dummy coded variable (male rating higher versus female rating higher), WIF, and their interaction as predictors with continuance commitment as the dependent variable. Results (see Table VIII) indicate that the interaction was significant ($\Delta R^2 = 0.02, p < 0.05$). When a female rated her own WIF low relative to her partner, the relationship between WIF and continuance commitment was stronger ($\beta = 0.35, t = 4.07, p < 0.05$), whereas when a female rated her WIF higher relative to her partner the relationship between WIF and continuance commitment, while still significant, was lower in magnitude ($\beta = 0.14, t = 2.30, p < 0.05$). This interaction is depicted in Figure 3.

Discussion

This study expands our knowledge of work-to-family conflict by examining the role of both self and partner perceptions of WIF. Specifically, we examined couple agreement

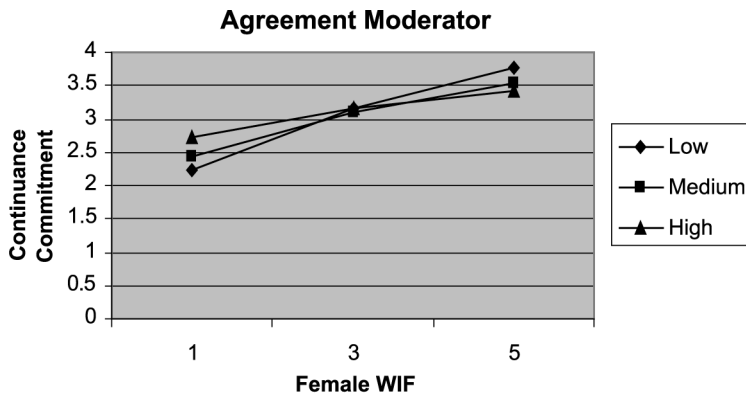


Figure 2. Couple agreement about female WIF as a moderator of the relationship between female's self-reported WIF and her continuance commitment

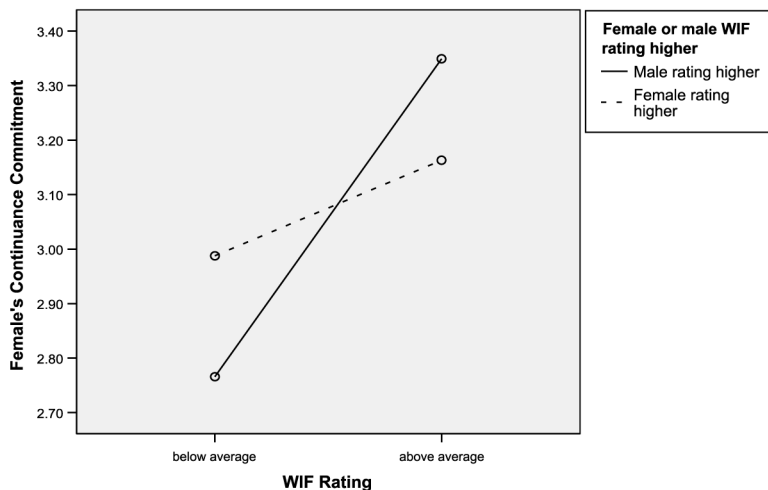


Figure 3. Low agreement moderator: male and female rating of female's WIF

when rating WIF. The current study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, we found that couples exhibit substantial agreement when rating the WIF experienced by both male and female partners. Second, we found that couple agreement was higher when rating the female target's WIF than when rating the male target's WIF. Finally, couple agreement about the female target's WIF moderated the relationship between her self-rated WIF and her continuance commitment, such that this relationship was weaker when couple agreement was high.

Couple agreement about WIF

Across two distinct operationalizations of couple agreement (i.e. correlations and rwg_j), our findings reveal agreement about the level of WIF each individual experiences. These findings are consistent with Matthews *et al.* (2006), who found substantial agreement between members of a couple regarding the degree to which work-to-relationship conflict was experienced. The degree to which one member of a couple could articulate his or her partner's level of WIF suggests that couples that participated in this study may communicate about work-family concerns. Given that employees' partners appear to be aware of the impact that work can have on family, it is also likely that individuals possess attitudes toward not only their own organizations, but their partners' employers as well.

Although agreement about WIF in rating both male and female targets was reasonably high, couples reported more similar ratings of the female target's WIF than the male target's WIF. This finding was consistent with our hypothesis. Because women are more communicative than men (Edwards and Hamilton, 2004), they may be more likely to share their WIF with their partners, better enabling their male partners to understand the level of conflict they experience. It may also be the case that because women are responsible for more family tasks (Fu and Shaffer, 2001), when work interferes with family, it is more evident to their male partner. In contrast, if men are responsible for fewer family tasks, or there is disagreement among the two members of the couple regarding the degree to which the male partner should be responsible for duties at home, less agreement about his WIF would be expected. We suspect that sex-role socialization around the roles men and women have in the family system may underlie the greater agreement about the female partner's WIF. Future research might seek to understand whether the greater couple agreement regarding the female target's WIF is due to her greater tendency to communicate, her greater responsibility for family, both these phenomena, or some other factor entirely.

WIF, organizational commitment, and couple agreement as a moderator

Consistent with prior research, higher WIF was associated with lower levels of affective commitment among both women and men. This is consistent with previous research findings of a negative relationship between WFC and affective commitment (Allen *et al.*, 2000; Siegel *et al.*, 2005). Thus, when work interferes with family employees feel less emotionally attached to their organizations. Self-reported WIF and continuance commitment were also positively related as in previous studies (Casper *et al.*, 2002; Lyness and Thompson, 1997; Good *et al.*, 1988). Since affective commitment is positively correlated with job performance, continuance commitment is negatively correlated with performance (Meyer *et al.*, 1989, 2002), and WIF is associated with lower affective commitment and higher continuance commitment, organizational

efforts to support employees' family responsibilities may weaken the effects of WIF and, through influencing distinct types of commitment, improve employee performance.

A unique contribution of the current study was the examination of couple agreement about the level of WIF as a moderator in an attempt to discern whether such agreement about this important experience (i.e. WIF) might reinforce the effects of WIF on work attitudes. This variable was explored as a moderator of four relationships:

- (1) the WIF-affective commitment relationship for women;
- (2) the WIF-affective commitment relationship for men;
- (3) the WIF-continuance commitment relationship for women; and
- (4) the WIF-continuance commitment relationship for men.

Of these, the only significant moderating effect was for the relationship between female self-rated WIF and her continuance commitment. Interestingly, although couple agreement about the female target's WIF did indeed moderate this relationship, the relationship between female WIF and her continuance commitment was stronger for low agreement couples and weaker for couples with high agreement, counter to the hypothesis.

Thus, when a woman perceived her level of WIF to be similar to what her partner believed it to be, the relationship between her WIF and her continuance commitment was weaker. This finding may reflect a buffering effect such that, higher couple agreement regarding the female's WIF occurs among women who have a greater sense of social support from their partners. Couples would be expected to agree more when the female partner shares her stresses and her male partner listens effectively and hears what she says. These same circumstances are also likely to facilitate a sense of partner support given attentive listening, validation, and expressiveness are indicators social support (cf. Julien *et al.*, 2003). Thus, when couples communicate effectively about the woman's work-family conflict, this is likely to facilitate both high agreement regarding the level of her WIF and the woman's sense that her partner supports her. However, given that we did not measure perceived partner support directly, future research is needed to determine if agreement about the level of WIF experienced is indeed associated with increased perceived support as we propose.

The notion that these findings are based on a social support phenomenon is consistent with research that suggests that spouse support can reduce work-family conflict and ameliorate any negative effects of such conflict (Beutell and Greenhaus, 1982; Carlson and Perrewé, 1999; Holohan and Gilbert, 1979). These findings also parallel models that depict social support as a moderator of the stressor-strain relationship (Ganster *et al.*, 1986; Greenhaus and Parasuraman, 1986; Ray and Miller, 1994) and findings that support can reduce the deleterious effects of WFC on organizational commitment (Casper *et al.*, 2002; Boumans and Landeweerd, 1992).

Post hoc analyses of the moderated relationship indicated that when couples disagreed about the level of WIF the female partner experienced, and the male perceived her WIF to be higher, the female partner experienced a greater sense of being trapped in her organization (i.e. continuance commitment). In contrast, when the disagreement entailed the female perceiving her WIF as higher than her male partner perceived it, the relationship between WIF and continuance commitment, although still

positive, was much weaker in magnitude. One plausible explanation for this finding is attribution theory, which asserts that individuals make sense of situations they experience, and develop causal explanations based on characteristics of the person (internal attributions) or the environment (external attributions) (Kelley, 1973). Continuance commitment reflects an attribution about “why I stay” in an organization. In other words, a woman who has high continuance commitment attributes her continued tenure to necessity rather than desire. Since women are socialized to place great value on family (Cooper *et al.*, 1994), when her partner perceives her as allowing work to interfere with family she may get pressure from him to attend more to family and less to work. Under such circumstances, women who have been socialized to put their family above their work may need to attribute their reason for remaining with the organization to necessity (e.g. financial reasons, lack of alternatives) rather than desire in order to ameliorate their guilt. This is consistent with Casper *et al.*'s (2002) proposition that working mothers that experienced WIF and yet remained with their organizations may attribute their continued employment to need (continuance commitment) to ameliorate any guilt associated with WIF.

Practical implications and strengths

In addition to contributing to theory, this study has a number of practical implications that should be considered by organizational decision makers who are determining how to deal with employees' work-family concerns. First, our results suggest that organizations that require employees to work long hours should realize that WIF has negative consequences to the organization. Specifically, WIF contributes to decreased affective commitment and increased continuance commitment. Given employees who remain with their organizations because they want to have higher performance and those that remain because they believe they have to have lower performance (Meyer *et al.*, 2002), employees with high WIF are likely to have poorer job performance compared to those with less conflict.

At a general level, our findings also suggest that employees do not operate in isolation, but that partnered employees function within the context of a dyadic unit. Our findings indicate that employees' partners are fairly aware of the degree to which their work interferes with family. Thus, the negative attitudes that exist toward an organization as a result of WIF are likely to exist not only among employees but also their partners. Given findings that spouse attitudes play a critical role in employee decisions about their continuing employment (Eby and Russell, 2000; Rosen and Durand, 1995), partners' attitudes toward the organization clearly have important consequences. In fact, our findings indicate that when female employees and their male partners agree that WIF is problematic, this agreement reinforces her negative attitudes toward the organization. Such findings suggest it is important for organizations to consider not only how their actions are perceived by employees, but also by employees' partners, and this appears to be more true when considering the male partner of female employees. Accordingly, organizations might take opportunities that are available to them to engage employees' spouses and partners in a positive way. For example, organizations can incorporate employees' partners into formal employee assistance programs, or include them in organization-wide social activities such as employee picnics or office holiday parties. An organization that is noted for its success at engaging spouses is the military. For example, the US Army

has implemented Family Support Groups which provide social and emotional support, as well as information, for soldiers and their families (Shumm *et al.*, 2000).

The partner perceptions that appeared to have the greatest potential for a deleterious effect on employee attitudes were male partners' perceptions that their wife's/female partner's WIF was higher than she believed it was. Thus, efforts to enhance employee attitudes through reducing partner perceptions of WIF may be most successful when targeted at male partners of female employees. These findings are consistent with the notion that sex-role stereotypes still govern how men and women manage their work and family roles (Cleveland *et al.*, 2000). That is, female employees may face more difficulty from their husbands due to work demands than male employees face from their wives. Accordingly, organizations that are committed to the career development and promotion of women should be aware that organizational supports to ameliorate WIF may be important to help women handle the pressures and expectations they face at both work and home. Such supports may take the form of individual manager support or organizational policies and practices.

In terms of implications for manager behavior, findings suggest that managers should be attentive when employees discuss concerns surrounding their partner and family. For instance, if an employee shares concerns with a supervisor that her husband is uncomfortable with her excessive business travel or irregular or long hours, managers should consider these legitimate concerns which could lead to negative work attitudes if not resolved. Accordingly, managers who are attentive to such employees' family concerns and resolve them whenever possible may benefit by facilitating affective rather than continuance commitment among their employees.

With respect to organizational policies and practices, results suggest there may be value to organizations in providing alternative work arrangements such as flexible work schedules and telecommuting options. Alternative schedules could decrease the perception that work is interfering with family for employees as well as their partners, thereby decreasing backlash against the organization, i.e. less affective and more continuance commitment.

The current study has a number of strengths that enhance its ability to contribute to the literature. First, answering calls to examine both members of a couple in studying work-family phenomena (Casper *et al.*, 2007), we obtained self ratings and partner ratings of WIF. This enabled us to explore couple agreement regarding each member's experience of WIF, which has received limited attention in past studies. We also sampled a diverse group of working adults, including both married couples as well as couples in partnerships, which did not reflect legal marriages. Since more couples today are cohabiting without marrying (Rhoades *et al.*, 2006), it is important to expand our conception of "couple" in order to reflect the partnerships that exist in today's world. Thus, this study helps advance research by exploring work-family conflict within the context of diverse dyadic relationships using measures with good reliability and validity evidence.

Limitations and directions for future research

As with all research, there are limitations of the present study that should be noted. Because convenience sampling was used, the sample may not represent couples in the population and caution is urged in generalizing. Future studies should solicit organizations that allow data to be collected from employees and their significant

others. Our study also focused exclusively on heterosexual couples, so conclusions about work-family conflict among same-sex couples are not possible. Furthermore, because couple agreement may change over time (Yogev and Brett, 1985), future longitudinal research is warranted. Future research should also explore couple agreement about other important issues such as work-family values and job attitudes.

It is also important to note that this study examined work-family conflict from a single direction – work interfering with family. This was appropriate given “other” ratings were given by a romantic partner who experienced and observed their partners’ WIF. However, research clearly suggests that family can also interfere with work (FIW) and future research should consider the importance of the degree of agreement between self and other perceptions of FIW. Such studies using supervisor/subordinate dyads would be very relevant, as disagreements regarding FIW might have important implications for supervisor-subordinate relationships.

Conclusions

The current study highlights the importance of evaluating couple agreement with respect to employee and partner levels of WIF. Findings suggest that individuals within a couple tend to perceive the level of WIF each partner experiences more similarly than differently. Couple agreement about the female partner’s WIF buffers the impact of her self-rated WIF on her attitudes toward her organization. Clearly, partnered employees do not operate in a vacuum and we should not underestimate the degree to which employees’ partners influence the employer-employee relationship. This is especially true when considering a female employee and her male partner. Thus, when employers consider not only employee perceptions, but also the perspective of employees’ partners, they may develop higher quality social exchange relationships.

References

- Aiken, L.S. and West, S.G. (1991), *Multiple Regression: Testing and Interpreting Interactions*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Allen, T., Herst, D., Bruck, C. and Sutton, M. (2000), “Consequences associated with work-to-family conflict: a review and agenda for future research”, *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol. 5, pp. 278-308.
- Beutell, N.J. and Greenhaus, J.H. (1982), “Interrole conflict among married women: the influence of husband and wife characteristics on conflict and coping behavior”, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 21, pp. 99-110.
- Bliese, P.D. (2000), “Within-group agreement, non-independence, and reliability: implications for data aggregation and analysis”, in Klein, K.J. and Kozlowski, S.W.J. (Eds), *Multilevel Theory, Research, and Methods in Organizations: Foundations, Extensions, and New Directions*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.
- Boumans, N.P. and Landeweerd, J.A. (1992), “The role of social support and coping behaviour in nursing work: main or buffering effect?”, *Work and Stress*, Vol. 6, pp. 191-202.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979), *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (2003), *Women in the Work Force: A Databook*, p. 10, available at: www.bls.gov (accessed January 10, 2007).

-
- Caligiuri, P.M., Hyland, M.M., Joshi, A. and Bross, A.S. (1998), "Testing a theoretical model for examining the relationship between family adjustment and expatriates' work adjustment", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 83, pp. 598-614.
- Carlson, D.S. and Perrewé, P.L. (1999), "The role of social support in the stressor-strain relationship: an examination of work-family conflict", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 25, pp. 513-40.
- Casper, W.J., Martin, J.A., Buffardi, L.C. and Erdwins, C.J. (2002), "Work-family conflict, perceived organizational support, and organizational commitment among employed mothers", *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol. 7, pp. 99-108.
- Casper, W.J., Eby, L.T., Bordeaux, C., Lockwood, A. and Lambert, D. (2007), "A review of research methods in IO/OB work-family research", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 92, pp. 28-43.
- Cleveland, J.N., Stockdale, M. and Murphy, K.R. (2000), *Women and Men in Organizations: Sex and Gender Issues at Work*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ.
- Cooper, S.E., Arkkelin, D.L. and Tiebert, M.J. (1994), "Work-relationship values and gender roles differences in relationship to career-marriage aspirations", *Journal of Counseling and Development*, Vol. 73, pp. 63-78.
- Coverman, S. (1989), "Role overload, role conflict, and stress: addressing consequences of multiple role demands", *Social Forces*, Vol. 67, pp. 965-82.
- Cross, S.E. and Madson, L. (1997), "Models of the self: self-construals and gender", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 122, pp. 5-37.
- Dornstein, M. and Matalon, Y. (1989), "A comprehensive analysis of the predictors of organizational commitment: a study of voluntary army personnel in Israel", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 34, pp. 192-203.
- Doumas, D.M., Margolin, G. and John, R.S. (2003), "The relationship between daily marital interaction, work, and health-promoting behaviors in dual-earner couples", *Journal of Family Issues*, Vol. 24, pp. 3-20.
- Eagly, A.H. and Johannesen-Schmidt, M.C. (2001), "The leadership styles of women and men", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 57, pp. 781-97.
- Eby, L.T. and Russell, J.E. (2000), "Predictors of employee willingness to relocate for the firm", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 57, pp. 42-61.
- Eby, L.T., Casper, W.J., Lockwood, A., Bordeaux, C. and Brinley, A. (2005), "Work and family research in IO/OB: content analysis and review of the literature (1980-2002)", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 66, pp. 124-97.
- Edwards, J.R. (1995), "Alternatives to difference scores as dependent variables in the study of congruence in organizational research", *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 64, pp. 307-24.
- Edwards, R. and Hamilton, M.A. (2004), "You need to understand my gender role: an empirical test of Tannen's model of gender and communication", *Sex Roles*, Vol. 50, pp. 491-504.
- Frone, M., Russell, M. and Cooper, M.L. (1992a), "Antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict: testing a model of the work-family interface", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 77, pp. 65-78.
- Frone, M.R., Russell, M. and Cooper, M.L. (1992b), "Prevalence of work-family conflict: are work and family boundaries asymmetrically permeable?", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 13, pp. 723-9.
- Frone, M.R., Yardley, J.K. and Markel, K.S. (1997), "Developing and testing an integrative model of the work-family interface", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 50, pp. 145-67.

- Fu, C.K. and Shaffer, M.A. (2001), "The tug of work and family: direct and indirect domain-specific determinants of work-family conflict", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 30, pp. 502-22.
- Ganster, D.C., Fusilier, M.R. and Mayes, B.T. (1986), "Role of social support in the experience of stress at work", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 71, pp. 102-10.
- Gareis, K.C., Barnett, R.C. and Brennan, R.T. (2003), "Individual and crossover effects of work schedule fit: a within-couple analysis", *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 65, pp. 1041-54.
- Good, L.K., Sisler, G.F. and Gentry, J.W. (1988), "Antecedents of turnover intentions among retail management personnel", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 64, pp. 295-314.
- Greenhaus, J. and Parasuraman, S. (1986), "A work-nonwork interactive perspective of stress and its consequences", in Ivancevich, J.M. and Ganster, D.C. (Eds), *Job Stress: From Theory to Suggestion*, Haworth Press, New York, NY.
- Greenhaus, J.H. and Beutell, N.J. (1985), "Sources of conflict between work and family roles", *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 10, pp. 76-88.
- Greenhaus, J.H., Collins, K.M., Singh, R. and Parasuraman, S. (1997), "Work and family influences on departure from public accounting", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 50, pp. 249-70.
- Hammer, L.B., Allen, E. and Grigsby, T.D. (1997), "Work-family conflict in dual-earner couples: within individual and crossover effects of work and family", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 185, p. 203.
- Hammer, L.B., Bauer, T.N. and Grandey, A.A. (2003), "Work-family conflict and work-related withdrawal behaviors", *Journal of Business and Psychology*, Vol. 17, pp. 419-36.
- Hammer, L.B., Neal, M.B., Newsom, J.T., Brockwood, K.J. and Colton, C.L. (2005), "A longitudinal study of the effects of dual-earner couples' of family-friendly workplace supports on work and family outcomes", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 90, pp. 799-810.
- Hayden, L.C., Schiller, M., Dickstein, S., Seifer, R., Sameroff, A.J., Miller, I., Keitner, G. and Rasmussen, S. (1998), "Levels of family assessment: I. Family, marital, and parent-child interaction", *Journal of Family Psychology*, Vol. 12, pp. 7-22.
- Heilman, M.E. (2001), "Description and prescription: how gender stereotypes prevent women's ascent up the organizational ladder", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 57, pp. 657-74.
- Heilman, M.E. and Okimoto, T.G. (2007), "Why are women penalized for success at male tasks? The implied communality deficit", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 92, pp. 81-92.
- Holohan, C.K. and Gilbert, L.A. (1979), "Conflict between major life roles: women and men in dual career couples", *Human Relations*, Vol. 326, pp. 451-67.
- Julien, D., Chartrand, E., Simard, M.C., Bouthillier, D. and Begin, J. (2003), "Conflict, social support, and relationship quality: an observational study of heterosexual, gay male, and lesbian couples' communication", *Journal of Family Psychology*, Vol. 17, pp. 419-28.
- Kelley, H.H. (1973), "The processes of causal attribution", *American Psychologist*, Vol. 28, pp. 107-28.
- Kenny, D.A. and Acitelli, L.K. (2001), "Accuracy and bias in the perception of the partner in a close relationship", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 80, pp. 439-48.
- Kossek, E.E. and Ozeki, C. (1998), "Work-family conflict, policies, and the job-life satisfaction relationship: a review and directions for future organizational behavior-human resources research", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 83, pp. 139-49.
- Kring, A.M. and Gordon, A.H. (1998), "Sex differences in emotion: expression, experience, and physiology", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 74, pp. 686-703.

-
- Lundberg, U. and Frankenhaeuser, M. (1999), "Stress and workload of men and women in high-ranking positions", *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol. 4, pp. 142-51.
- Lyness, K.S. and Thompson, D.E. (1997), "Above the glass ceiling? A comparison of matched samples of female and male executives", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 82, pp. 359-75.
- Lytton, H. and Romeny, D.M. (1991), "Parents' differential socialization of boys and girls: a meta-analysis", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 109, pp. 267-96.
- McCreary, D.R. (1994), "The male role and avoiding femininity", *Sex Roles*, Vol. 31, pp. 517-31.
- McElwain, A.K., Korabik, K. and Rosin, H.M. (2005), "An examination of gender differences in work-family conflict", *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*, Vol. 37, pp. 283-98.
- Matthews, R.A., Del Priore, R.E., Acitelli, L.K. and Barnes-Farrell, J.L. (2006), "Work-to-relationship conflict: crossover effects of dual-earner couples", *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol. 11, pp. 228-40.
- Meyer, J.P. and Allen, N.J. (1991), "A three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment", *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 1, pp. 61-98.
- Meyer, J.P., Allen, N.J. and Smith, C.A. (1993), "Commitment to organizations and occupations: extension and test of a three-component conceptualization", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 78, pp. 538-51.
- Meyer, J.P., Stanley, D.J., Herscovitch, L. and Topolnytsky, L. (2002), "Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization: a meta-analysis of antecedents, correlates, and consequences", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 61, pp. 20-52.
- Meyer, J.P., Paunonen, S.V., Gellatly, I.R., Goffin, R.D. and Jackson, D.N. (1989), "Organizational commitment and job performance: it's the nature of the commitment that counts", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 74, pp. 52-156.
- Moen, P. and Yu, Y. (2000), "Effective work/life strategies: working couples, work conditions, gender, and life quality", *Social Problems*, Vol. 47, pp. 291-326.
- Netemeyer, R.G., Boles, J.S. and McMurrian, R. (1996), "Development and validation of work-family conflicts and work-family conflict scales", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 81, pp. 400-10.
- O'Brien, M. and Peyton, V. (2002), "Parenting attitudes and marital intimacy: a longitudinal analysis", *Journal of Family Psychology*, Vol. 16, pp. 118-27.
- Ray, E.B. and Miller, K.I. (1994), "Social support, home/work stress and burnout: who can help?", *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, Vol. 30, pp. 357-73.
- Rhoades, G.K., Stanley, S.M. and Markman, H.J. (2006), "Pre-engagement cohabitation and gender asymmetry in marital commitment", *Journal of Family Psychology*, Vol. 20, pp. 553-60.
- Rosen, L.N. and Durand, D.B. (1995), "The family factor and retention among married soldiers deployed in Operation Desert Storm", *Military Psychology*, Vol. 7, pp. 221-34.
- Rusbult, C.E., Bissonnette, V.L., Arriaga, X.B. and Cox, C.L. (1998), "Accommodation processes during the early years of marriage", in Bradbury, T.N. (Ed.), *The Developmental Course of Marital Dysfunction*, Cambridge University Press, New York, NY.
- Shaffer, M.A. and Harrison, D.A. (1998), "Expatriates' psychological withdrawal from international assignments: work, nonwork, and family influences", *Personnel Psychology*, Vol. 51, pp. 87-118.
- Siegel, P.A., Post, C., Brockner, J., Fishman, A.Y. and Garden, C. (2005), "The moderating influence of procedural fairness on the relationship between work-life conflict and organizational commitment", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 90, pp. 13-24.

-
- Shumm, W.R., Bell, D.B., Milan, L.M. and Segal, M.W. (2000), *The Family Support Group (FSG) Leaders' Handbook*, Tech Report 2000-02, US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, Alexandria, VA.
- Sillars, A.L., Pike, G.R., Jones, T.S. and Murphy, M.A. (1984), "Communication and understanding in marriage", *Human Communication Research*, Vol. 10, pp. 317-50.
- Thompson, C.A., Beauvais, L.L. and Lyness, K.S. (1998), "When work-family benefits are not enough: the influence of work-family culture on benefit utilization, organizational attachment, and work-family conflict", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 54, pp. 392-415.
- US Census Bureau (2005), *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2005*, 125th ed., US Census Bureau, Washington, DC.
- Westman, M. and Etzion, D. (1995), "Crossover of stress, strain and resources from one spouse to another", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 16, pp. 169-81.
- Westman, M. and Etzion, D. (2001), "Job insecurity and crossover of burnout in married couples", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 22, pp. 467-81.
- Whiting, B.B. and Edwards, C.P. (1988), *Children of Different Worlds: The Formation of Social Behavior*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Yogev, S. and Brett, J. (1985), "Patterns of work and family involvement among single- and dual-earner couples", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 70, pp. 754-68.

About the authors

Michelle Streich is employed by Edward Jones as a Performance Development Specialist, where she conducts training and leadership development programs. She received her PhD in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from the University of Tulsa. She has worked in areas such as recruitment, selection, training, and organizational development. Her primary research areas are work-family issues, workplace romance, and gender-related studies. Michelle Streich is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: michelle-streich@hotmail.com

Wendy J. Casper is an Assistant Professor of Management at the University of Texas at Arlington. She received her PhD in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from George Mason University. She worked for a number of years as a human resource practitioner and has consulted to numerous organizations in both the public and private sector regarding human resource management and work-family issues. She has published 25 academic and professional papers on work-family issues and human resource practices and presented over 50 papers at professional conferences. Her work has appeared in numerous outlets, including *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *Human Resource Management*, *Human Performance*, and *Applied Psychology: An International Review*. Her research has also been discussed by numerous media sources, including *The Washington Post* and MSNBC.

Amy Nicole Salvaggio is an Assistant Professor at the University of Tulsa. She received her PhD in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from the University of Maryland. She has consulted for organizations in areas related to customer service and organizational climate. Her diverse areas of research include gender bias within organizations, workplace romance, organizational climate, and work-family conflict. She has published her research in journals such as the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, and *International Journal of Aviation Psychology*.