Work–Family Conflict, Policies, and the Job–Life Satisfaction Relationship: A Review and Directions for Organizational Behavior–Human Resources Research

Ellen Ernst Kossek and Cynthia Ozeki
Michigan State University

This review examines the relationship among work–family (w-f) conflict, policies, and job and life satisfaction. The meta-analytic results show that regardless of the type of measure used (bidirectional w-f conflict, work to family, family to work), a consistent negative relationship exists among all forms of w-f conflict and job–life satisfaction. This relationship was slightly less strong for family to work conflict. Although confidence intervals overlap, the relationship between job–life satisfaction and w-f conflict may be stronger for women than men. Future research should strive for greater consistency and construct development of measures, examination of how sample composition influences findings, and increased integration of human resources policy and role conflict perspectives, including whether a positive relationship between w-f policies and satisfaction is mediated by w-f conflict.

Managing conflict between work and family role demands is a critical challenge for individuals and organizations, and a topic of growing importance in the organizational behavior (OB) and human resource (HR) fields. In recent decades, there has been considerable (and often discrepant) research on the causes and consequences of conflict between work and family, which refers to conflicting role pressures between job and family that are incompatible so that participation in one role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the other (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). A growing but inconclusive literature is also developing on the requisite HR policies to manage these role tensions.

In particular, quite a few studies show a negative relationship between experiencing work–family (w-f) conflict and two of its most widely studied correlates: job satisfaction and life satisfaction. As people experience more conflict between their roles in both spheres, their level of satisfaction falls. However, the nature and strength of this relationship is widely variable. Findings from these studies range from being almost negligible (job satisfac-

tion; Thompson & Blau, 1993) or very low (life satisfaction; Cooke & Rousseau, 1984) to strong ($-.45$) as Parasuraman, Greenhaus, and Granrose (1992) found for job satisfaction and Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian (1996) reported for life satisfaction. Not only are findings inconsistent on the implications of w-f conflict for important individual outcomes, but reports show that despite widespread proliferation, organizational policies designed to help employees integrate work and family roles do not necessarily reduce individual w-f conflict (Goff, Mount & Jamison, 1990) and are marginally effective at best (Solomon, 1994).

The goals of this study were to address key questions left unanswered by previous research: (a) why findings on the relationship between w-f conflict and satisfaction might widely deviate, and (b) what are the implications of this variation for future research on role conflict and workplace supports designed to foster role integration. We conducted a meta-analysis of all published studies we could find that measured w-f conflict and job and life satisfaction. Meta-analysis enabled us to estimate what the correlation is between w-f conflict and individual job and life satisfaction for the general population that had been studied to date and to identify methodological reasons for the substantial variation in findings. Because many firms are increasingly involved in the management of individual's work and family roles (Towers Perrin, 1994), we discuss the implications of these findings for both role conflict and HR policy research, in order to encourage future increased integration between individual and organizational perspectives.

Specifically, this review shows that researchers obtained different results for two main reasons: differences in the measures used and differences in the samples studied (i.e., gender, marital status). Regarding measurement issues, we show that w-f conflict measures that clearly specify the direction of role conflict (i.e., work to family or family to work) perform better than general measures that mix items assessing both directions (work to family and family to work conflict) in a global scale. Further, we argue that many studies have had relatively homogeneous participants and role demands, which may limit their generalizability. We conclude that analysis of the nature and direction of the relationships between different types of role pressures and affective and behavioral outcomes, and the implications of this for w-f policies, is the realm where synthesis of role conflict and HR policy research offers strong potential for advancing future research. Yet despite clear substantive overlap, we found only a handful of studies that measured the relation between w-f conflict, policies, and job and personal outcomes. In general, studies assessing role conflict did not examine policies, and those investigating policies did not measure w-f conflict.

Past Research on Links Between W-F Integration and Job–Life Satisfaction

One primary emphasis of w-f conflict research has been on construct measurement and refinement, including assessment of the direction and process of role interaction between work and family role pressures, and the relation of w-f conflict to attitudes. Many earlier studies treated w-f conflict as a global, bidirectional construct, but more recent work has suggested that family-to-work conflict and work-to-family conflict effects are related but distinct forms of interrole conflict (O'Driscoll, Ilgen, & Hildreth, 1992). In general, considerably more research has been conducted on work-to-family conflict than family-to-work conflict (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Relevant work entails studies on three competing views on the processes of role interaction between work and family. These include (a) spillover, in which attitudes and behaviors are posited to carry over from one role to another (e.g., Leiter & Durup, 1996); (b) compensation, in which roles are often thought to be interrelated in a counterbalancing manner (e.g., Greenglass & Burke, 1988); and (c) segmentation, in which it is assumed that one can compartmentalize competing role demands (Lambert, 1990). A sizable number of these studies favor the spillover hypothesis with the prevailing assumption that the attitudinal effect of work roles on family roles is generally negative and predominantly use scales focusing on the negative implications of work demands for family. This proclivity exists despite observations by Barling (1990) that this relationship has not always been empirically supported, as spillover can

sometimes be positive (happiness at work could be related to happiness at home).[1] However, on the basis of most existing research, one surmises there will be a negative relationship between w-f conflict and life satisfaction and that high levels of bidirectional conflict might negatively relate to either job or life satisfaction, which Tait, Padgett, and Baldwin (1989) found to be positively correlated (.44).

Research on HR policy is less theoretically developed, more descriptive, and "best-practices" oriented, and has often focused on ramifications of w-f policies for work attitudes such as job satisfaction or behaviors such as turnover, which is affected by satisfaction. There has been relatively little interest in how these policies affect perceptions of role conflict, as the focus has been on productivity outcomes such as absenteeism, turnover, or performance (often overlooked by role-conflict researchers). In fact, although w-f policies are ostensibly adopted to ameliorate conflict between work and family roles, with the exception of a handful of studies (e.g., Judge, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1994), surprisingly most policy studies did not even include measures of w-f conflict; rather, they assessed how employee demographics often associated with family responsibilities such as gender and number of children related to use, job satisfaction, and other outcomes. This approach ignores the fact that research consistently indicates that the relationship between family demographic measures (e.g., marital, parental status) and w-f conflict, although significant, does not go above the .5 range and is often much lower. Despite the lack of measurement, a prevailing assumption of the policy literature is that w-f conflict in general, and family-to-work conflict, specifically, negatively affect work outcomes such as job satisfaction. Family demands are assumed to interfere with work, and HR researchers (and employing organizations) have had little interest in how work affects family or life satisfaction.

In summary, when researchers approached the issue with a role-conflict view, it is likely that they focused on measuring work-to-family conflict and expected a negative relationship to job and life satisfaction. When the researchers approached this issue with a policy view, although they may not have necessarily actually measured conflict (but rather demographics as proxies for conflict),

---

[1] Interestingly, research on the attitudinal relationship between job and life satisfaction also uses the spillover framework, but frames relationships oppositely. Having a lot of spillover between job and life satisfaction is assumed to be a "good thing"; those who are satisfied with their jobs also tend to be satisfied with their lives and vice versa (a positive correlation). This is unlike posited links between spillover in w-f roles in which having more spillover is not usually assumed to be a good thing (a negative correlation).

it is likely they emphasized family-to-work conflict, expected a negative correlation to job satisfaction, and probably overlooked life satisfaction.

Regarding study design issues, many studies have been structured to examine very homogeneous and specific groups and work contexts. Samples range from female nurses and male engineers (Bacharach, Bamberger, & Conley, 1991) to male executives (Judge et al., 1994) to Israeli prison guards (Drory & Shamir, 1988) to high-powered dual-career couples (Parasuraman et al., 1992). By restricting the range of a single study to specific gender or job groups or marital situations, the generalizability of these findings viewed separately may be limited. Sampling is also an issue for HR studies, as many are single-firm studies of policies (e.g., flextime) at large employers. Yet most individuals work at small- or medium-sized firms or are self-employed. The range of the type of conflict measured has also been restricted. Studies typically emphasize general affective or strain-based conflict (i.e., being tired, perceiving overload), over other types of conflict such as those that are time (e.g., simultaneous need to be in two places) or activity based (e.g., providing elder or child care, or teen supervision). Our review provides a means to better generalize findings to the population at large.

Method

Literature Search and Inclusion Criteria

We located studies by searching two computer databases, *Psychological Abstracts* (1967 to present) and the *Expanded Academic Index* (1987 to present). Key words used included *work* and *family*, also used in combination with *conflict, policy, job satisfaction*, and *life satisfaction*. We also looked through the reference sections of review articles and recent studies (e.g., Lambert, 1990; Leiter & Durup, 1996; Voydanoff, 1989) to make our search as complete as possible. We omitted studies if they provided only nonquantitative information or dealt with constructs not examined in this research. Our review focuses on studies published in academic journals in order to ensure studies were of good quality (Eysenck, 1978; Guzzo, Jackson, & Katzell, 1987). Where a study clearly involved a sample that was a subset of another study, we used only the larger sample. Two studies drew subsamples from the 1977 Quality of Employment Survey (Rice, Frone, & McFarlin, 1992; Staines, Pottick, & Fudge, 1986), but both were included because the sample selection criteria were different, which was useful for our demographic subset analyses. Where studies separately reported results for subgroups of individuals (e.g., men, women), the reported correlation for each group was weighted by sample size and reported separately in order to examine how results differed for demographic groups. Our search yielded 46 correlations between job satisfaction and w-f conflict, and 26 correlations for life satisfaction. We used Hunter and Schmidt's (1990) techniques for cumulating results within studies, to reduce these to single correlations for 32 sample groups for job satisfaction and

18 for life satisfaction. The authors of the studies used in the meta-analysis, as well as information on the samples and reported results, appear in Tables 1–3. We also found 12 correlations between using a w-f policy and job–life satisfaction, which we excluded from the meta-analysis because conflict was not specifically measured. We use these data to inform our discussion on the HR policy implications of the meta-analysis.[2]

Analysis Strategy

For the meta-analysis, we followed the procedures outlined in Hunter and Schmidt (1990) and Hunter, Schmidt, and Jackson (1982). We first cumulated all obtained correlations for job and life satisfaction (e.g., where reported work-to-family and family-to-work correlations were combined), in order to estimate the relationship between all forms of w-f conflict and life or job satisfaction. Tables 1 (job satisfaction) and 2 (life satisfaction) show the role-conflict studies analyzed. To reflect current thinking on the importance of assessing directionality, we classified each study's measures by the type of scale used: family-to-work conflict, work-to-family conflict, or a bidirectional measure that mixed items assessing the two directions of conflict in a single scale. Where necessary, we reversed a correlation sign to make it consistent with others, because some people scored high levels of conflict as high while others scored them as low. We also analyzed variation across subgroups and in the conflict and the satisfaction measures used.

We calculated the weighted averages for all studies as well as the reported correlations for each group (Table 3). We also calculated an unweighted average for each group of studies to assess whether our results were being strongly influenced by a few studies with large samples, which was generally not the case. The correlations reported in the studies were then corrected individually for sampling error and error of measurement using available alphas. As noted, when two correlations were given for a single group of individuals, we combined them to form a single estimate, which was weighted by sample size. We also calculated a mean corrected correlation to estimate rho for each subgroup (e.g., women, men) and the surrounding confidence intervals. Table 3 shows these results along with the standard deviation, variance, variance due to sampling error, as well as the percentage of variance between the corrected correlation estimates that could not be explained by the artifacts corrected for (sampling and measurement error).

Results

W-F Conflict and Job Satisfaction

Table 3 clearly shows that the relationship between job satisfaction and various w-f conflict measures is strong

---

[2] Although we focus our discussion on studies that examined links between HR policy and life and job satisfaction, we wish to note the existence of a second HR stream that uses pre- and posttreatment measures to explore the effects of introducing a single policy, such as flextime or a child-care center, but we did not review these here because most didn't measure job or life satisfaction.

Table 1
Job Satisfaction Studies

Study	WTF	FTW	Both directions	Sample characteristics	Conflict measure	Satisfaction measure	N
Adams, King, & King (1996)	-.24	-.14		Workers living with one other	Gutek, Searle, & Klepa (1991; 4 + 4)	Hackman & Oldham (1975; 5)	163
Anderson-Kulman & Paludi (1986)			-.27	Working mothers	McCroskey (1980)/Bodin & Mitelman (1983)	McCroskey (1980)/Bodin & Mitelman (1983)	204
Aryee (1992)	-.38			Married professional women in Singapore	Small & Riley (1990; 15)	Hackman & Oldham (1975; 5)	354
Bacharach, Bamberger, & Conley (1991)	-.41			Female nurses	Holahan & Gilbert (1979; 4)	Bacharach & Mitchell (1982; 5)	215
Bacharach, Bamberger, & Conley (1991)	-.19			Male engineers	Holahan & Gilbert (1979; 4)	Bacharach & Mitchell (1982; 5)	430
Bedeian, Burke, & Moffett (1988)	-.29			Married male accountants	Burke, Weir, & DuWors (1980; 8)	MSQ (20)	411
Bedeian, Burke, & Moffett (1988)	-.27			Married female accountants, 48% childless	Burke et al. (1980; 8)	MSQ (20)	321
Burke (1988)	-.40			Police officers, mainly male	Burke et al. (1980; 43)	Quinn & Shepard (1974; 6)	828
Cooke & Rousseau (1984)			-.17	Teachers, 63% female	Own, including open ended (4)	Quinn & Staines (1978; 4)	180
Drory & Shamir (1988)			-.39	Male Israeli prison guards	Own, fairly standard (4)	JDI (72)	266
Garland, Oyabu, & Gipson (1989)	-.18	-.17	-.24	Nursing home employees	Basic interference rating (1 + 1)	Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snock, & Rowenthal (1964; 6)	138
Good, Sisler, & Gentry (1988)			-.47	Retail managers, 68% female	Fournier (1981; 13)	JDI (72)	440
Googins & Burden (1987)			-.31	66% female, 48% parents, 58% married	Bohen & Viveros-Long (1981)	Quinn & Staines (1978; 9)	711
Greenglass, Pantony, & Burke (1988)			-.05	Male teachers-school administrators	Holahan & Gilbert (1979; 12)	Quinn & Shepard (1974; 5)	327
Greenglass, Pantony, & Burke (1988)			-.33	Female teachers-school administrators	Holahan & Gilbert (1979; 12)	Quinn & Shepard (1974; 5)	229
Jones & Butler (1980)			-.34	Male sailors, all married	Basic interference + navy (2)	Own multi-dimensional (11)	181
Judge, Boudreau, & Bretz (1994)	-.10	-.09		Male executives, 98% White, 93% married	Gutek et al. (1991; 4 + 4)	Kunin (1955) faces and others (3)	1,062
Katz & Piotrkowski (1983)			-.36	Employed Black mothers	Bohen & Viveros-Long (1981; 10)	Own, work satisfying (5)	51
Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly (1983)	-.10			Married students working full time	Kopelman et al. (1983; 4)	Hackman & Oldham (1975; 3)	90
Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly (1983)	-.13			Male alumni, married and working full time	Kopelman et al. (1983; 8)	Hackman & Oldham (1975; 3)	174
Nelson, Quick, Hitt, & Moesel (1990)			-.08	Female personnel administrators	Own, fairly standard (3)	Hackman & Oldham (1975; 6)	185
Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian (1996)	-.36	-.30		Teachers-administrators, most married women	Used all to make own (5 + 5)	Staines & Pleck (1984; 5)	182
Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian (1996)	-.21	-.16		Small-business owners, mainly married men	Used all to make own (5 + 5)	Staines & Pleck (1984; 5)	162
Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian (1996)	-.27	-.22		Real estate sales people, most married women	Used all to make own (5 + 5)	Staines & Pleck (1984; 5)	186
O'Driscoll, Ilgen, & Hildreth (1992)	-.04	+.03		Random sample, 66% married	Own on-off-job conflict (7 + 7)	Own, 12 facets (12)	120
Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose (1992)	-.40			Men in dual-career relationships	Kopelman et al. (1983; 4)	Hackman & Oldham (1975; 3)	119
Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose (1992)	-.02			Women in dual-career relationships	Kopelman et al. (1983; 4)	Hackman & Oldham (1975; 3)	119
Rice, Frone, & McFarlin (1992)			-.19	Full-time workers, married or parents	Basic interference rating (1)	Quinn & Staines (1978; 5)	823
Staines, Pottick, & Fudge (1986)			-.18	Married men, 1/3 with working wives	Basic interference rating (1)	Quinn & Staines (1978; 38)	613
Thomas & Ganster (1995)			-.46	Health care workers, most married women	Bohen & Viveros-Long (1981)/ Kopelman et al. (1983; 24)	Kunin (1955) faces (1)	398
Thompson & Blau (1993)	+.04	-.25		Workers, 98% full time, 72% married	Burke et al. (1980; 23)	Quinn & Staines (1978; 5)	234
Wiley (1987)	-.12	-.18		Working students, 61% married, 57% parents	Burke et al. (1980) + own (22)	Hackman & Oldham (1975; 3)	191

Note. WTF = work-to-family conflict; FTW = family-to-work conflict; MSQ = Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire; JDI = job design instrument. Figures in parentheses indicate number of items used. For conflict measures, the number of work-to-family conflict items is given first, followed by family-to-work items where researchers included both.

Table 2

Life Satisfaction Studies

Study	WTF	FTW	Both directions	Sample characteristics	Conflict measure	Satisfaction measure	N
Adams, King, & King (1996)	−.25	−.16		Workers living with one other	Gutek, Searle, & Klepa (1991; 4 + 4)	Quinn & Shepard (1974; 7)	163
Ayree (1992)	−.18			Married professional women in Singapore	Small & Riley (1990; 15)	Quinn & Shepard (1974; 2)	354
Bedeian, Burke, & Moffett (1988)	−.46			Married male accountants	Burke, Weir, & DuWors (1980; 8)	Quinn & Shepard (1974; 10)	411
Bedeian, Burke, & Moffett (1988)	−.42			Married female accounts, 48% childless	Burke et al. (1980; 8)	Quinn & Shepard (1974; 10)	321
Cooke & Rousseau (1984)			−.11	Teachers, 63% female	Own, including open items (4)	Quinn & Staines (1978; 2)	180
Duxbury & Higgins (1991)			−.41	Males in dual-career couples	Bohen & Viveros-Long (1981)/ Pleck, Staines, & Lang (1980; 19)	Quinn & Staines (1978; 8)	131
Duxbury & Higgins (1991)			−.35	Females in dual-career couples	Bohen & Viveros-Long (1981)/ Pleck et al. (1980; 19)	Quinn & Staines (1978; 8)	109
Googins & Burden (1987)			−.40	66% female, 48% parents, 58% married	Bohen & Viveros-Long (1981)	Quinn & Staines (1978; 3)	711
Higgins & Duxbury (1992)			−.28	Males with spouses at home	Bohen & Viveros-Long (1981)/ Pleck et al. (1980; 19)	Quinn & Staines (1978; 10)	137
Judge, Boudreau, & Bretz (1994)	−.18	−.12		Male executives, 98% White, 93% married	Gutek et al. (1991; 4 + 4)	Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin (1985; 5)	1,062
Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly (1983)	−.29			Married students working full time	Kopelman et al. (1983; 4)	Quinn & Staines (1978; 2)	90
Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly (1983)	−.32			Male alumni, married and working full time	Kopelman et al. (1983; 8)	Quinn & Staines (1978; 2)	174
Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian (1996)	−.33	−.44		Teachers–administrators, most married women	Used all to make own (5 + 5)	Quinn & Staines (1978; 15)	182
Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian (1996)	−.41	−.32		Small-business owners, mainly married men	Used all to make own (5 + 5)	Quinn & Staines (1978; 15)	162
Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian (1996)	−.53	−.35		Real estate sales people, most married women	Used all to make own (5 + 5)	Quinn & Staines (1978; 15)	186
Rice, Frone, & McFarlin (1992)			−.20	Full-time workers, married or parents	Basic interference (1)	Quinn & Staines (1978; 10)	823
Staines, Pottick, & Fudge (1986)			−.17	Married men, 1/3 with working wives	Basic interference (1)	Quinn & Staines (1978; 10)	613
Wiley (1987)	−.26	−.23		Working students, 63% married, 57% parents	Burke et al. (1980)/own (22 total)	Gurin, Veroff, & Feld (1974; 3)	191

Note. WTF = work-to-family conflict; FTW = family-to-work conflict. Figures in parentheses indicate number of items used. For conflict measures, the number of work-to-family conflict items is given first, followed by family-to-work items where researchers included both.

143

Table 3
Results of the Meta-Analysis

Variable	k	n	r	r_c	SD r_c	V r_c	Ve r_c	% variance unexplained	95% CI r_c
					Job satisfaction				
All conflict correlations	32	10,107	−.27	−.31	.06	.018544	.015023	19.0	−.36 < p < −.27
Work-to-family	19	5,499	−.23	−.27	.15	.022890	.004165	81.8	−.34 < p < −.20
Family-to-work	9	2,438	−.14	−.18	.06	.008401	.004930	41.3	−.24 < p < −.12
Bidirectional conflict	14	4,746	−.27	−.31	.13	.020175	.004208	79.1	−.38 < p < −.24
Men	10	4,414	−.23	−.29	.13	.020267	.002918	85.6	−.38 < p < −.20
Women	11	2,444	−.32	−.35	.11	.018622	.006647	64.3	−.44 < p < −.27
Married respondents	9	2,382	−.25	−.29	.09	.012479	.004186	66.5	−.36 < p < −.21
Dual-career couples	3	592	−.31	−.37	.17	.035601	.005867	83.5	−.58 < p < −.15
					Life satisfaction				
All conflict correlations	18	6,010	−.30	−.36	.15	.026194	.003546	86.5	−.42 < p < −.28
Work-to-family	11	3,296	−.31	−.35	.14	.022237	.003686	83.4	−.40 < p < −.26
Family-to-work	6	1,946	−.20	−.25	.11	.017050	.003891	77.2	−.36 < p < −.15
Bidirectional conflict	7	2,704	−.26	−.29	.11	.013133	.002776	78.9	−.38 < p < −.21
Men	6	2,528	−.26	−.32	.12	.017676	.002958	83.3	−.43 < p < −.21
Women	5	1,162	−.32	−.42	.21	.048131	.004497	90.6	−.58 < p < −.24
Married respondents	9	2,340	−.30	−.33	.12	.018418	.003505	81.0	−.41 < p < −.24
Dual-career couples	3	594	−.26	−.33	.06	.009158	.005972	34.8	−.43 < p < −.22

Note. k = number of sample groups for which correlations were included; r = weighted mean of the correlations; r_c is the weighted mean of the correlations individually corrected for sampling and measurement error. Unexplained variance is the amount that is not explained by the artifacts corrected for. *All conflict correlations* refers to the estimate obtained after cumulating all identified correlations between conflict and satisfaction.

and negative across all samples: People with high levels of conflict tend to be less satisfied with their jobs. The total estimate of conflict is a correlation of −.31 with a tight 95% confidence interval of −.36 < p < −.27. The artifacts corrected for accounted for 81% of the variance between the reported correlations for the cumulated measures of conflict. The correlation was strongest for general or bidirectional measures (−.31), followed by work-to-family conflict (−.27) and then family-to-work conflict (−.18). A possible reason for bidirectional measures having the highest correlation, despite recent criticism in the literature for mixing work-to-family and family-to-work items into one scale is that general measures may best capture the overall intensity of how high conflict (regardless of role direction) relates to job satisfaction. Another explanation is the restriction in range, because of unusual samples of studies that measured only general conflict (see Table 1), such as the correlation of −.36 for employed Black mothers in Katz and Piotrkowski's (1983) study or −.34 for male sailors in Jones and Butler's (1980) study. In contrast, two studies involving random samples did report much smaller positive relationships in the .03–.04 range (O'Driscoll et al., 1992; Thompson & Blau, 1993).

To investigate the effects of differences in samples, we showed in our separate analyses on subgroups that marital status has surprisingly little influence on results. Although the correlation for men (−.29) appears slightly weaker than for women (−.35), there is considerable overlap in

confidence intervals, so these results must be viewed with caution. The negative relationship between the cumulated measures of w-f conflict is strongest for people in dual-career families (−.37). This correlation has been significantly influenced by the results of a single study reporting an extremely low correlation, which led to an extremely wide confidence interval (−.58 < p < −.22). If this study is removed from the analysis, the corrected mean correlation rises to −.46. Although this suggests that the relationship may be stronger for individuals in dual-career relationships, these findings must be viewed cautiously, because they are based on the results of only three sample groups.

To investigate whether the measures used account for variation, we can see from Table 1 that there was moderate variation in the job satisfaction measures used, which may be partly responsible for the differences. The biggest differences were found, however, in the w-f conflict measures used.

Variation in W-F Conflict Measures

One of the first and simplest measures of w-f conflict used in our sample was Quinn and Staines's (1979) one-item general measure, which asks, "How much do your job and family interfere with each other—a lot, somewhat, or not at all?" It is clear that basic one- and two-item measures performed less well than more thorough ones as the correlation between the number of items in

the scale and the size of the relationship found for combined work-to-family and bidirectional conflict measures, and job satisfaction was .44 and .47 for life satisfaction.

Although we found a wide variety of scales in use, the most commonly used scale to assess work interference with family life (work-to-family conflict) was Kopelman, Greenhaus, and Connolly's (1983) four-item scale. A sample item is "After work, I come home too tired to do some of the things I'd like to do." A number of our studies used Gutek, Searle, and Klepa's (1991) modification of this scale, which is based on parallel items to measure family interference with work (family-to-work conflict). A sample item is "I'm often too tired at work because of the things I have to do at home." Studies also assessed family-to-work conflict using varying numbers of items (from 8 to 43) from Burke, Weir, and DuWor's (1980) 50-item scale assessing 10 areas of work interference developed to assess the relationship to spouse's well-being.

It is interesting to note that whereas there was considerable overlap between the confidence intervals for studies on job satisfaction using general and work-to-family measures, there was very little overlap for those using family-to-work measures. One explanation for the overlap is that many bidirectional scales are heavily weighted with work-to-family items. Another reason is as Table 1 shows, the researchers who conducted the family-to-work research used only one of two measures, so the standard deviation and level of unexplained variance between the results is smaller for studies on family-to-work conflict.

Recent work by Netemeyer et al. (1996) to develop focused measures assessing the two directions of conflict shows a lot of promise, because they clearly tried to build on what had been learned in the past. These scales had good alphas and were derived from a variety of samples. Ayree's (1992) refinement of scales assessing the relation between specific nonwork roles (e.g., job–parent and job–spouse) and life satisfaction is also notable as discussed below.

W–F Conflict and Life Satisfaction

The relationship between the cumulated w–f conflict measures and life satisfaction is strong (−.36), although it had a wider confidence interval ($-.42 < p < -.28$) than we found for job satisfaction. Once again we found differences in the strength of the relationship depending on the nature of the sample, as studies reported results ranging from −.11 for a mixed-gender group of teachers (Cooke & Rousseau, 1984) to −.46 for married male accountants (Bedeian, Burke, & Moffett, 1988), so we examined subgroup differences. Although there is overlap in confidence intervals, our analysis appears to indicate that the relationship between life satisfaction and the cumulated w–f conflict measures may be stronger for women

(−.42) than men (−.32). Unlike the case with job satisfaction, dual-career couples do not appear to significantly differ from other married couples in the strength of their relationship between w–f conflict and life satisfaction. However, because we used only three studies, and the results are influenced by one study's report of an extremely low correlation, which led to a very wide confidence interval ($-.43 < p < -.22$), and muted the results, no firm conclusions can be drawn.

Turning to measurement differences as the source of variation, we once again find support for focusing the direction and nature of the w–f conflict measure. Because virtually all of our studies used the same life satisfaction measures developed by Quinn and Staines (1979), it is unlikely the deviation is due to variation in the satisfaction scale. The rho estimate for family-to-work conflict (−.25) was weaker than the estimate for general bidirectional conflict (−.29) or work-to-family conflict (−.35). These findings may be partially due to the fact that only a third of our studies even measured family-to-work conflict.

Ayree (1992) offers another clue as to why the results may vary so widely. In studying career women in Singapore, he looked not just at general w–f conflict but specifically at work–spouse, work–parent, and work–housework conflict, correlating these variables with life satisfaction. Although a negative relationship was found for the first two, the correlation for work–housework conflict was positive. Although conflict between work and parenting and spouse roles made the respondents less satisfied, having something that interfered with housework actually improved their satisfaction with life. Although these differences could possibly be due to cross-cultural differences inherent in the sample, Ayree's results suggest that w–f conflict involves more than one activity-based construct. Combining items assessing many nonwork roles may change the relationships found with specific outcomes. One's reaction to an item assessing conflict with managing child caregiving roles is likely to be different from one assessing "difficulty getting things done around the house," or with "spousal relations," yet most studies do not thoroughly explore how different role-conflict items markedly change the nature of the construct being studied.

Discussion

This review shows that there is a negative relationship between all types of w–f conflict and job and life satisfaction. For both job and life satisfaction, directionality appears to make a difference: family-to-work conflict appears to be less strongly related than bidirectional or work-to-family conflict. Slight gender differences were found in the strength of the relationship between job–life satisfaction, with the relationship appearing to be stronger

for women. However, because of the wide variation in reported results, the confidence intervals surrounding our estimates are extremely wide and overlapping, making it difficult to offer definitive conclusions. More research is needed to investigate the important reoccurring argument that if women with family demands become dissatisfied with their jobs, it may not only relate to w-f conflict but could also involve other under-investigated factors (e.g., job demands, which we were unable to examine because few studies measured this). If the slightly stronger relationship between life satisfaction and conflict for women than men holds up in future research, the variation has implications for many key outcomes such as extrarole behavior, depression, family functioning, and substance abuse.

Research Needed to Determine if Relationships Between W-F Policies and Satisfaction Are Mediated by W-F Conflict

Our review also showed that most research has overlooked joint assessment of w-f conflict, satisfaction, and employer w-f supports. Research on organizational w-f policy is often disconnected from studies on individuals' experiences with w-f conflict. Given this omission, we propose that future research examine whether the relationship between w-f policies and satisfaction is mediated by w-f conflict. Assuming one controls for variation due to job design, job demands, and hierarchical level, there are many w-f policy variables that could affect the levels of work-to-family and family-to-work conflict, as well as several other important job and off-job outcomes, and future efforts should consider this. Our meta-analysis clearly shows that the two directions of conflict are related to job—life satisfaction. Our search of the HR literature suggested there is a consistent relationship between access to or use of w-f policies (particularly those perceived as supporting flexibility in role integration) and job satisfaction. Whether this relationship also holds for or is influenced by life satisfaction is unknown, because most HR researchers did not measure life satisfaction. In one of the few studies that correlated both w-f conflict and policies with both forms of satisfaction, Judge et al. (1994) found a weak negative correlation between job satisfaction and both work-to-family (−.10) and family-to-work (−.09) conflict and a slightly stronger negative relation to life satisfaction of −.18 for work-to-family and −.12 for family-to-work conflict. The correlation between the extensiveness of w-f policies was stronger: .28 for job and .20 for life satisfaction. Although the all-male executive sample may limit generalizability, clearly more research is needed that follows this holistic tact of including w-f measures assessing both HR and role considerations.

Organizations may be implicitly trying to reduce conflict (either symbolically or actually) through policy adoption as a way to improve job satisfaction, but until studies measure satisfaction, conflict, and policies (not just formal adoption and use but also the degree to which policies actually influence work-to-family and family-to-work conflict), this remains an open issue. If the gap between well-intentioned policies and their impact on individual's w-f conflict levels is ever to be bridged, research is needed that integrates role conflict and policy perspectives. Role-conflict scholars need to give greater attention to policies and work outcomes other than satisfaction, and policy scholars need to measure w-f conflict and life satisfaction, which may indirectly influence the work outcomes they traditionally study.

Importance of Using Similar Measures Across Heterogeneous Populations and Firms

Our review suggests that samples do matter: Much of the w-f research is conducted with homogeneous populations and settings. Studies must begin to use large heterogeneous populations, both in terms of individual and organizational diversity. There is increasing variation in employees' access to formal and informal organizational supports for w-f role integration, as well as their quality, yet few studies are able to show how this variation may influence satisfaction and w-f conflict relationships. Similarly, although minority, multiracial, and single-parent households are dramatically increasing in the labor market, the representation of these groups in general studies of satisfaction and conflict has been extremely limited.

Until more work is done with large random samples, for example, we will be unable to know whether our findings, which suggest w-f conflict may be more strongly related to job satisfaction for dual-career couples than for other married individuals, hold true. The suggestion that dual-career couples may view job satisfaction and conflict differently than other subgroups may give insight into why Hochschild's recent book (1997) *The Time Bind* was viewed by some as controversial. Her argument that professionals consciously or unconsciously fail to take advantage of family-friendly policies and work longer hours may indeed be true for dual-career couples but less so for other subgroups. Although there are other likely constructs, job involvement certainly may be a key variable that could explain why the strength of satisfaction relationships may be greater for some subgroups over others (Judge & Watanabe, 1993).

Importance of Measuring Direction and Nature of Role Conflict and Policy Links

Our review also suggests that future research should strive for greater consistency and construct development

in terms of measures and avoid looking at w-f integration issues as a unidimensional construct. We found different strengths in the relationship between job–life satisfaction and conflict depending on the measure's direction, with family-to-work conflict having the weakest relationship. Such findings are contrary to recent reports in the business press as typified by the *Fortune* (Morris, 1997) cover story: "Is Your Family Wrecking Your Career?" In fact, our study shows the opposite: Work interference with family life is likely to hurt workers' job satisfaction to a greater extent than family-to-work conflict.

Measures also need to distinguish more clearly between conflict in attitudes and activities and jointly measure role influences from both domains. For example, a book published by Bohen and Viveros-Long (1981) found that although flextime did reduce time-based conflicts, it did not necessarily reduce affective conflict related to perceptions of role stress. Another study by Goff, Mount, and Jamison (1990) found that an on-site child-care center did not necessarily reduce conflict (e.g., role strain). Regarding family influences, one's marital situation and spouses' attitudes may influence both how one feels about managing role conflict and one's ability to even use available policies supporting flexibility to manage roles. Thus, the relationship between satisfaction and conflict may be different depending on whether one is measuring conflict in attitudes or conflict in the ability to manage dual roles (i.e., perform conflicting activity demands). Even when supports are available, some individuals may still feel role strain. (Having the ability to more easily blend roles is different from feeling bad about the enactment of a particular role.) Just as Judge and Watanabe (1993) argued that for job and life satisfaction, different models such as spillover (a positive relation), compensation (a negative relation), or segmentation (no relation) may characterize different subgroups, the same may hold for the relationship between satisfaction, policies, and conflict. Conflict researchers should try to move away from viewing spillover as being "good or bad" or searching for one best model typifying role conflict. Depending on individual differences (e.g., personal disposition, gender, family structure) and the type of family role, for some people, the ability to blend roles using flextime (fostering greater spillover) as opposed to keeping them separate (segmentation) may have a positive influence on satisfaction (Kossek, Noe, & DeMarr, 1997). Others may prefer to keep them separate to minimize the opportunity for activity spillover, which negatively influences satisfaction. Finally, we wish to reiterate the importance of developing more focused measures to assess the type of family role (e.g., parent, elder care giver) of interest and type of conflict (e.g., strain-conflict or activity-based conflict, such as time). Such finer grained analysis is instrumental to better understanding how work and family roles are related to

each other, to job satisfaction, and to life satisfaction, and how they are influenced by specific policies.

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,* 411–420.

Anderson-Kulman, R., & Paludi, M. A. (1986). Working mothers and the family context: Predicting positive coping. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 28,* 241–253.

Ayree, S. (1992). Antecedents and outcomes of work–family conflict among married professional women: Evidence from Singapore. *Human Relations, 45,* 813–837.

Bacharach, S. B., Bamberger, P., & Conley, S. (1991). Work–home conflict among nurses and engineers: Mediating the impact of role stress on burnout and satisfaction at work. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 12,* 39–53.

Bacharach, S., & Mitchell, S. (1982). *The quality of working life of professional, technical, and scientific employees of New York State.* Report to the Joint Labor-Management Committee on Professional Development and QWL, NYSSILR, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

Barling, J. (1990). *Employment, stress and family functioning.* Chichester, England: Wiley.

Bedeian, A. G., Burke, B. G., & Moffett, R. G. (1988). Outcomes of work–family conflict among married male and female professionals. *Journal of Management, 14,* 475–491.

Bodin, J., & Mitelman, B. (1983). *Mothers Who Work.* New York: Ballantine Books.

Bohen, H., & Viveros-Long, A. (1981). *Balancing jobs and family life: Do flexible schedules really help?* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Burke, R. J. (1988). Some antecedents and consequences of work–family conflict. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality, 3,* 287–302.

Burke, R. J., Weir, T., & DuWors, R. E. (1980). Work demands on administrators and spouse well-being. *Human Relations, 33,* 253–278.

Cooke, R. A., & Rousseau, D. M. (1984). Stress and strain from family roles and work–role expectations. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 69,* 252–260.

Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 49,* 71–75.

Drory, A., & Shamir, B. (1988). Effects of organizational and life variables on job satisfaction and burnout. *Group & Organization Studies, 13,* 441–455.

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

Eysenck, H. J. (1978). An exercise in mega-silliness. *American Psychologist, 33,* 517–518.

Fournier, D. G. (1981). *PROFILES—Personal reflections on family life and employment stressors.* Unpublished manuscript, Oklahoma State University.

Garland, T. N., Oyabu, N., & Gipson, G. (1989). Job satisfaction among nurse assistants employed in nursing homes: An

analysis of selected job characteristics. *Journal of Aging Studies, 3,* 369–383.

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

Good, L. K., Sisler, G., & Gentry, J. W. (1988). Antecedents of turnover intentions among retail management personnel. *Journal of Retailing, 64,* 295–314.

Googins, B., & Burden, D. (1987). Vulnerability of working parents: Balancing work and home roles. *Social Work, 32,* 295–299.

Greenglass, E. R., & Burke, R. J. (1988). Work and family precursors of burnout in teachers: Sex differences. *Sex Roles, 18,* 215–229.

Greenglass, E. R., Pantony, K. L., & Burke, R. J. (1988). A gender-role perspective on role conflict, work stress and social support. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality, 3,* 317–328.

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

Gurin, G., Veroff, J., & Feld, S. (1974). *Americans view their mental health.* New York: Basic Books.

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

Guzzo, R. A., Jackson, S. E., & Katzell, R. A. (1987). Meta-analysis analysis. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 9,* 407–442.

Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1975). Development of the Job Diagnostic Survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 60,* 159–170.

Higgins, C. A., & Duxbury, L. E. (1992). Work–family conflict: A comparison of dual-career and traditional-career men. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 13,* 389–411.

Hochschild, A. (1997). *The time bind: When work becomes home and home becomes work.* New York: Metropolitan Books.

Holahan, C., & Gilbert, L. (1979). Interrole conflict for working women: Careers versus jobs. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 64,* 86–90.

Hunter, J. E., & Schmidt, F. L. (1990). *Methods of meta-analysis: Correcting error and bias in research findings.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Hunter, J. E., Schmidt, F. L., & Jackson, G. B. (1982). *Meta-analysis: Cumulating research findings across studies.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Jones, A. P., & Butler, M. C. (1980). A role transition approach to the stresses of organizationally induced family role disruption. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 42,* 367–376.

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

Judge, T. A., & Watanabe, S. (1993). Another look at the job satisfaction–life satisfaction relationship. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 78,* 939–948.

Kahn, R., Wolfe, D., Quinn, R., Snoek, J. D., & Rowenthal, R. (1964). *Organizational stress: Studies in role conflict and ambiguity.* New York: Wiley.

Katz, M. H., & Piotrkowski, C. S. (1983). Correlates of family role strain among employed Black women. *Family Relations, 32,* 331–339.

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

Kossek, E., Noe, R., & DeMarr, B. (1997). *Personality: An antecedent of work–family conflict.* Paper presented at the 12th Annual Conference of the Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, St. Louis, MO.

Kunin, T. (1955). The construction of a new type of attitude measure. *Personnel Psychology, 68,* 334–337.

Lambert, S. J. (1990). Processes linking work and family: A critical review and research agenda. *Human Relations, 43,* 239–257.

Leiter, M. P., & Durup, M. J. (1996). Work, home and in-between: A longitudinal study of spillover. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 32,* 29–47.

McCroskey, J. (1980). *Working mothers and child care: The context of child care satisfaction for working women with preschool children.* University of California, Los Angeles. (University Microfilms No. 8023338)

Morris, B. (1997, March 17). Is your family wrecking your career? *Fortune, 135,* 70–90.

Nelson, D. L., Quick, J. C., Hitt, M. A., & Moesel, D. (1990). Politics, lack of career progress and work/home conflict: Stress and strain for working women. *Sex Roles, 23,* 169–183.

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,* 400–409.

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.

Parasuraman, S., Greenhaus, J. H., & Granrose, C. S. (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, March). Conflicts between work and family life. *Monthly Labor Review, 103,* 29–31.

Quinn, R. P., & Shepard, L. J. (1974). *The 1972–73 Quality of Employment Survey: Descriptive Statistics, With Comparison Data from the 1969–70 Survey of Working Conditions.* Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research.

Quinn, R. P., & Staines, G. L. (1978). *The 1977 Quality of Employment Survey.* Ann Arbor, MI: Survey Research Center.

Quinn, R., & Staines, G. L. (1979). *Quality of Employment Survey: 1973–1977.* Symposium conducted at the meeting of the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, Ann Arbor, MI.

Rice, R. W., Frone, M. R., & McFarlin, D. B. (1992). Work–nonwork conflict and the perceived quality of life. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 13,* 155–168.

Small, S., & Riley, D. (1990). Toward a multidimensional as-