

Work-Family Conflict, Work- and Family-Role Salience, and Women's Well-Being

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ABSTRACT. The author considered both the direct effect and the moderator effect of role salience in the stress-strain relationship. In contrast to previous studies that have examined the effects of salience on well-being within specific social roles, the present study focused on the work-family interface. From a sample of 147 employed English women with children, the present results of the regression analyses showed that both effects are possible, depending on the outcome measures used. The author observed a direct effect of role salience in the prediction of job satisfaction; work salience was positively related to job satisfaction, over and above the main-effect terms of work-interfering-with-family (WIF) conflict and family-interfering-with-work (FIW) conflict. In contrast, the author found a moderator effect of role salience and conflict for symptoms of psychological distress. However, contrary to predictions, the author found that work salience exacerbated the negative impact of WIF conflict, rather than FIW conflict, on well-being. The author discussed these results in relation to the literature on work-family conflict, role salience, and the issue of stress-strain specificity.

Key words: distress, job satisfaction, role salience, women's well-being, work-family conflict

THE PURPOSE OF THE PRESENT STUDY was to examine the relationship between work-family conflict, role salience, and well-being in a sample of employed women. Whereas research into work-family conflict and well-being has been frequent because of the dramatic changes in the demographic composition

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of the workforce, such as the increase of women and dual-earner families in the last three decades, research on role salience has been less frequent. A number of researchers have proposed that the salience or importance of social roles to individuals is predictive of their well-being (e.g., Burke, 1991; Simon, 1992). Disagreeing with this idea of a direct effect of salience, other researchers have argued that role salience may act as a moderator, so that stress on an individual's social role exacerbates the negative effects on his or her well-being when that role is highly salient to him or her (e.g., Krause, 1994; Thoits, 1992). In the present study, I examined the role of salience in the relationship between work-family conflict and well-being.

A Review of the Literature on Work-Family Conflict and Well-Being

Work and family are two central domains in most adults' lives. In recent years, research into the links between these two domains has grown tremendously because of changes in the demographic composition of the workforce (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999; Lambert, 1990; Staines, 1980). Although numerous links have been identified to explain the interdependence between work and family domains (see reviews by Edwards & Rothbard; Greenhaus & Parasuraman; Lambert), researchers have based most of the studies on work-family links on a conflict perspective stemming from the early work of Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964) on organizational stress. These researchers identified interrole conflict as a significant source of work stress. In applying the role conflict perspective of Kahn et al. to this area of work and family, researchers see work-family conflict as a form of interrole conflict in which the demands of work and family roles are mutually incompatible so that meeting the demands in one domain makes it difficult to meet the demands in the other domain (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

The popularity of this conflict perspective stems from the scarcity hypothesis, which assumes that individuals have limited time and energy. Therefore, occupying multiple roles creates interrole conflict and role overload, which in turn—proponents of the hypothesis assume—cause psychological distress and physical exhaustion (Coser, 1974; Marks, 1977).

Researchers in this area have distinguished between two types of work-family conflict: *work-interfering-with-family (WIF) conflict* and *family-interfering-with-work (FIW) conflict*. WIF conflict occurs when work-related activities interfere with home responsibilities (e.g., by a person's bringing work home and trying to complete it at the expense of family time), and FIW conflict arises when family-role responsibilities impede work activities (e.g., by a person's having to cancel an important meeting because a child is suddenly ill). Although strongly correlated with one another, they are conceptually and empirically distinct constructs (Duxbury, Higgins, & Lee, 1994; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992). While the best predictors of WIF conflict are work-domain variables, the

best predictors of FIW conflict are mainly family-domain variables (Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998).

Work-family conflict has been associated with diminished satisfactions and lower levels of psychological well-being (e.g., Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Hughes & Galinsky, 1994; Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). While WIF conflict is more related to work-related outcomes such as job satisfaction and burnout (e.g., Bacharach, Bamberger, & Conley, 1991; Burke, 1988; Gignac, Kelloway, & Gottlieb, 1996), FIW conflict is associated more with measures of psychological distress (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Klitzman, House, Israel, & Mero, 1990). A recent meta-analysis by Kossek and Ozeki (1998) has also shown WIF conflict to have a stronger relationship with job and life satisfactions than does FIW conflict.

Effect of Role Importance or Salience

Roles provide individuals with a framework on which to develop a sense of meaning, purpose, and agency (Reitzes & Mutran, 1994). Roles are attached to *statuses*, which Merton (1957) defined as positions in society. An individual occupying a status plays a number of roles associated with it. Accompanying the status is *identity*, the meaning that one attributes to himself or herself by virtue of occupying a particular role in a social structure that he or she subsequently views as descriptive of oneself (Thoits, 1995). Because one has many roles, he or she also has multiple identities. However, these identities are not equally salient to oneself.

Researchers use the concept of identity salience to explain the choices that people make among the repertoire of behavior linked to various social roles (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). *Role salience* or *importance*—also known as *role centrality* (Martire, Stephens, & Townsend, 2000), *role commitment* (Brown, Bifulco, & Harris, 1987), and *personal involvement* (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1995)—is said to provide individuals with meaning, self-worth, and purpose. As such, it should contribute positively to psychological well-being. Some researchers (e.g., Martire, Stephens, & Townsend, 2000; Pleck, 1985) have supported this direct effect of role salience on well-being. Others, however, have not found that situation to be the case (e.g., Thoits, 1992, 1995).

Still other researchers have argued that role salience may act as a moderator, influencing the relationship between role stress and well-being. In this perspective, the negative effects of stress in a social role on well-being are exacerbated when that role is more salient to the individual (Krause, 1994; Martire, Stephens, & Townsend, 2000). This situation is so because when an individual experiences stress in a social role that is highly salient to the individual's self, it will be perceived as threatening and may undermine his or her psychological well-being.

Investigators testing this moderator effect of role salience on the relationship between role stress and well-being have also observed mixed findings. For example, Simon (1992) in testing specific social roles showed that the importance of

being a parent increases the negative effects of parenting stress on depression and anxiety. Luchetta (1995), in contrast, found role salience to buffer the negative effects of family stress on psychological distress. Similar contradictory findings have also been found within the employee and mother roles (e.g., Luchetta; Martire, Stephens, & Townsend, 2000). Overall, the existing literature does not present a coherent picture of the direct or moderator effect of salience.

The Present Study

In the studies by which researchers have examined either the direct effect or the moderator effect of role salience on the relationship between stress and well-being, the focus of the stress has been on specific social roles, such as employee, wife, or mother. Because experiences within work and family domains are permeable and interdependent, it may be more worthwhile to consider the link between these two domains as opposed to considering the domains individually. As seen earlier in the present article, work-family conflict offers one mechanism in which individuals' experiences within work and family roles are linked. Furthermore, Parasuraman and Greenhaus (1997) showed work-family conflict to have adverse consequences, not only on individual well-being, but also on family and societal well-being.

For women relative to men, conflict between work and family roles is higher because women spend more combined time on work and family activities (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Hammer, Allen, & Grigsby, 1997). This situation exists because even in employment, women are still primarily responsible for the home and family. Therefore, in the present study, the emphasis is on women who occupy work and family roles simultaneously (and who, stated earlier, are in a position to experience work-family conflict). And because most women between the ages of 22 years and 55 years have faced considerable problems in juggling childcare and work, I specifically chose women with children rather than those with other family responsibilities like care of the elderly or sick relatives. Furthermore, at this stage in life with family and work, many women do not usually experience issues relating to care of an elder person (or of a disabled or a sick family member) as much as childcare.

Considered together, the literature relating to role salience and to conflict and well-being leads to two alternative hypotheses. The direct-effect role of salience suggests that role salience acts independently to promote well-being irrespective of the level of work-family conflict. Because the sample in the present study consisted of only women, I expected that with their socially defined role as care takers of the family, they would report higher family salience than work salience. Because most people see the work role as the women's extra role, it is acceptable for family demands to intrude into the work role. However, one doesn't allow work to interfere with family activities if one considers herself as a family-oriented person. Therefore, WIF conflict is more likely to be experienced than FIW conflict and will have a bigger impact on women's well-being.

In the alternative view, role salience acts to moderate the relationship between work-family conflict and well-being, so that the negative effect of work-family conflict on well-being is stronger when a given role is highly salient to the individual's self-identity. More specifically, to those for whom the family is psychologically salient, any work matters intruding into this domain will have negative implications on their well-being. In other words, family salience would exacerbate the negative impact of WIF conflict on well-being. And, in a similar manner, work salience would exacerbate the negative effect of FIW conflict on well-being.

Therefore, the aim of the present study was to test these two propositions, whether role salience combined additively or interactively with work-family conflict (WIF conflict and FIW conflict, respectively) to predict well-being (measured by job satisfaction and symptoms of psychological distress).

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 147 employed women whom I solicited from Parents at Oxford and the Oxford City Council. The majority of employees were from the University of Oxford. A short description of the study was e-mailed to Parents at Oxford, and out of 400 parents on the mailing list, 152 indicated their interest in the study (yielding a response rate of 38.0%). I sent questionnaires to these women and received 127 completed questionnaires (yielding a response rate of 83.6% of those willing to participate). In addition, after I had received permission, I sent 50 questionnaires to the Oxford City Council. I received 20 completed questionnaires, bringing the total sample to 147 women.

Whereas 56.5% of the women were employed part-time (working less than 36.5 hours a week), the rest were in full-time employment (working more than 36.5 hours a week). The sample had an average work load of 32.2 hours per week ($SD = 9.2$ hours). The age range of the sample was 24–55 years with an average age of 39.2 years ($SD = 6.1$ years). The sample was well above average in education, with 72.1% of the women having a college or university degree. However, only 36.7% were employed in professional occupations.

The majority of the women was married (83.0%), and the rest were separated, divorced, or widowed (14.3%) or never married (2.7%). All, however, had children at home. The number of children ranged from 1 to 4, with the majority of women having either one child (38.8%) or two children (52.4%).

Measures

Work-family conflict. I assessed work-family conflict by the 22-item Work-Family Conflict Scale developed by Kelloway, Gottlieb, and Barham (1999). The scale distinguishes between WIF conflict and FIW conflict and between strain-based

conflict and time-based conflict, resulting in four subscales (for time-based WIF, strain-based WIF, time-based FIW, and strain-based FIW conflicts). The items use a 4-point Likert response scale (from 1 = *never* to 4 = *almost always*), with higher scores indicating higher conflict.

I carried out a factor-analysis on the scale to check for differences in the underlying factor structure. I considered this step necessary because of differences that may exist between the present sample and that reported by Kelloway, Gottlieb, and Barham (1999). The analysis was only able to distinguish between the WIF conflict and FIW conflict, not between the strain-based and time-based conflicts. This situation may be due to the wording of the items, which may not be clear to the respondents. At the same time, because the relationship between items measuring time-based and strain-based conflict can be reciprocal, distinguishing between them may not be straightforward (for example, compare a time-based WIF item that reads "Job responsibilities make it difficult for me to get family chores/errands done" to a strain-based WIF item "I think about work when I am at home"). Therefore, the present study only made a distinction between WIF conflict and FIW conflict. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the 11-item WIF and FIW scales were .84 and .81, respectively.

Work and family role salience. I developed for the study two separate 6-item scales to measure work and family salience. Participants rated each item along a 5-point Likert response scale (from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating higher salience. Sample items included "The most important things that happen in life involved work (or family)," "Work (or family) should be considered central to life," "In my view, an individual's personal life goals should be work-oriented (or family-oriented)," "Life is worth living only when people get absorbed in work (or family)." In the present study, Cronbach's alphas for work and family salience were .76 and .79, respectively.

Well-being. I used the 5-item Job Satisfaction Scale of Hackman and Oldham (1975) and 12-item General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12; Goldberg, 1978) to assess well-being.

While the Job Satisfaction Scale measures the degree to which respondents are satisfied and happy with their job, the GHQ-12 assesses the extent to which respondents experience a list of somatic and affective symptoms over the past 6 weeks. Both measures use Likert scale scoring (a 7-point scale from 1 = *disagree strongly* to 7 = *agree strongly* for job satisfaction and a 4-point scale for GHQ-12 with higher scores indicating higher levels of distress).

Researchers have validated both measures and have shown them to have good psychometric properties (Banks, 1983; Banks et al., 1980; Wall, Clegg, & Jackson, 1978). Cronbach's alphas for the present sample were .79 for job satisfaction and .84 for GHQ-12.

Control variables. I controlled for the number of children, the number of work hours, the occupational group (coded 1 for women in professional occupations and 2 for those in nonprofessional occupations), and the negative affectivity. I used this method because previous research has indicated that these factors may confound the relationship between the study variables. For example, long working hours and more children at home have been associated with increased work and family demands, leading to higher levels of work-family conflict and consequently to reduced well-being (e.g., Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998; Perrewe, Hochwarter, & Kiewitz, 1999). In addition, the occupational group may have influenced well-being by making it easier for those in the professional group to buy certain services (better childcare or house help) and thereby reduce conflict and distress (e.g., Wallace, 1999) as compared to those in nonprofessional groups (the assumption being that those in professional occupations earn more than their nonprofessional counterparts). Because the present sample was made up of women in a wide variety of occupations, it was important that I took this factor into account.

In work-related self-report studies (see Kasl, 1989), researchers must take *negative affectivity (NA)*, a trait that emphasizes negative aspects of the self and environment, into account. It is a strong predictor of affective distress (see review by Watson & Clark, 1984), and is also related to perceptions of the work environment (Parkes, 1990) and of social support (Sarason, Levine, Basham, & Sarason, 1983). Because NA can influence the stress-strain relationships in several ways (Noor, 1997), I deemed control for NA necessary in the present study.

I assessed NA by Eysenck's 12-item Neuroticism Scale (Eysenck, Eysenck, & Barrett, 1985), which researchers widely use as a measure of the NA construct (Watson & Clark, 1984). As measured by Cronbach's alpha, the internal consistency for the sample was .82.

Statistical Treatment

The main statistical technique that I used was a hierarchical moderated regression analysis. The variables were entered in the following four steps: controls (number of children, number of work hours, occupational group, marital status, and NA), work-family conflict (WIF conflict and FIW conflict), salience (of work and family), and the cross-product terms between salience and conflict (Work-Role Salience \times WIF Conflict, Work-Role Salience \times FIW Conflict, Family-Role Salience \times WIF Conflict, Family-Role Salience \times FIW Conflict). I carried out separate regression analyses for each of the two outcome measures.

I controlled for a number of demographic variables because past studies have found them to be related to well-being. For example, the number of children at home has been shown to be associated with both overload and conflict in employed mothers (e.g., Lundberg, Mardberg, & Frankenhaeuser, 1994), which in turn may increase their level of depression (Gove & Geerken, 1977). Long

work hours are related to high work-family conflict (e.g., Galinsky, Kim, & Bond, 2001) as well as other health outcomes (see Hochschild, 1997). In addition, researchers have shown both married men and women to be happier and more satisfied than those who are not married, whether they are divorced or widowed or have never married (Stack & Eshleman, 1998). And, because women with better jobs may have more resources at their disposal to manage work and family responsibilities, they will experience better health than those with lesser resources. Thus, in the present study, these demographic variables together with NA served as controls.

Results

Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations of Variables

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of measures that I used in the regression analysis. As can be seen, the magnitude of the intercorrelations between the variables ranged from low to moderate. As expected, both WIF conflict and FIW conflict were positively correlated with one another. Work salience and family salience, however, were not related. In addition, although both WIF conflict and FIW conflict were related to well-being, only work salience was related to distress.

Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Well-Being

In the regression analyses, the control variables of number of children, occupational group, and number of work hours contributed less than .003 to the overall R^2 value, and so I dropped them from the analyses. Thus, only marital status and negative affectivity were used as controls in the final regression analyses, which Table 2 presents.

Prediction of distress. Step 1 of Table 2 (left-hand side) shows both marital status and NA to be significant predictors of distress; women who were not married—having been divorced or widowed or never having married—and those with high NA scores reported higher distress than married women and those with lower NA scores. At Step 2, only FIW conflict was significantly related to distress. The role-salience measures, which I entered next, were nonsignificant. However, the interaction terms, which I entered as block in Step 4, were significant (R^2 change = .063, $p < .05$), notably because of the interaction between work salience and WIF conflict. The final model was significant, $F(10, 136) = 6.13$, $p < .0001$, and it accounted for 32.5% of the variance in distress scores.

Prediction of job satisfaction. As the right-hand side of Table 2 shows, at Step 1, both marital status and negative affectivity were nonsignificant. Both forms of

TABLE 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations of Measures ($N = 147$)

Measure	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. No. of children	1.71	.64										
2. Occupational group	1.63	.48	-.17*									
3. No. of work hours	32.21	9.16	-.08	-.09								
4. Marital status	1.17	.38	-.05	.12	.09							
5. Negative affect	5.46	3.77	.01	.07	.01	.11						
6. WIF conflict	23.67	5.67	-.01	-.06	.37**	.10	.29**					
7. FIW conflict	22.87	5.26	.10	-.18*	-.06	.09	.23**	.38**				
8. Work salience	14.57	5.37	.10	-.16*	.27**	.02	-.09	.14	.19*			
9. Family salience	23.03	4.00	.05	.09	-.07	-.05	.06	-.15	-.04	-.08		
10. Job satisfaction	18.34	3.84	.00	-.04	-.02	-.13	-.07	-.29**	-.30**	.10	.01	
11. Distress	11.38	4.83	-.06	.05	-.02	.23**	.28**	.29**	.39**	.15	-.02	-.29**

Note. FIW conflict = family-interfering-with-work conflict; WIF conflict = work-interfering-with-family conflict. Occupational group was coded 1 for women in professional jobs and 2 for women in nonprofessional jobs. Marital status was coded 1 for married participants and 2 for single, separated, divorced, or widowed participants.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

TABLE 2. Hierarchical Regression Analysis in Relation to Well-Being (N = 147)

Measure	Outcome = distress			Outcome = job satisfaction			
	R ² increment	F	p	R ² increment	F	p	β
Step 1	.124**			.020			
Marital status		6.59	.01		2.04	ns	-.09
Negative affectivity		10.51	.00		< 1	ns	.09
Step 2	.121**			.123**			
WIF		2.38	ns		5.85	.02	-.24
FIW		12.31	.00		6.31	.01	-.27*
Step 3	.017			.030*			
Work salience		3.09	ns		4.74	.03	.18*
Family salience		< 1	ns		< 1	ns	-.03
Step 4	.063*						
Work Salience × WIF		7.05	.01				.24*
Work Salience × FIW		< 1	ns				.04
Family Salience × FIW		3.23	ns				-.15
Family Salience × WIF		< 1	ns				.07
Cumulative R ²	.325			.173			

Note. FIW = family interfering with work; WIF = work interfering with family. Betas are the standardized regression coefficients from the final stage of the regression analysis.
 *p < .05. **p < .01.

conflict, which I had entered next, were significantly and negatively related to job satisfaction; higher conflict was associated with lower satisfaction scores. At Step 3, only work salience was significantly related to satisfaction. None of the interaction terms following this step were significant. At this stage, the model was significant, $F(6, 140) = 4.86, p < .0001$, and accounted for 17.3% of the total explained variance in satisfaction scores.

Evaluation of the Work Salience \times WIF Conflict interaction in the prediction of distress. I used the unstandardized regression coefficients to create the equation for predicting distress. This equation was evaluated to determine the form of the interaction between work salience and WIF conflict, using the method described by Cohen and Cohen (1983). I derived equations for predicting distress from WIF conflict for two levels of work salience, at 1 standard deviation above the mean and at 1 standard deviation below the mean.

Figure 1 shows the form of this interaction. As Figure 1 shows, higher levels of WIF conflict were associated with more distress symptoms only for those women who reported high work salience.

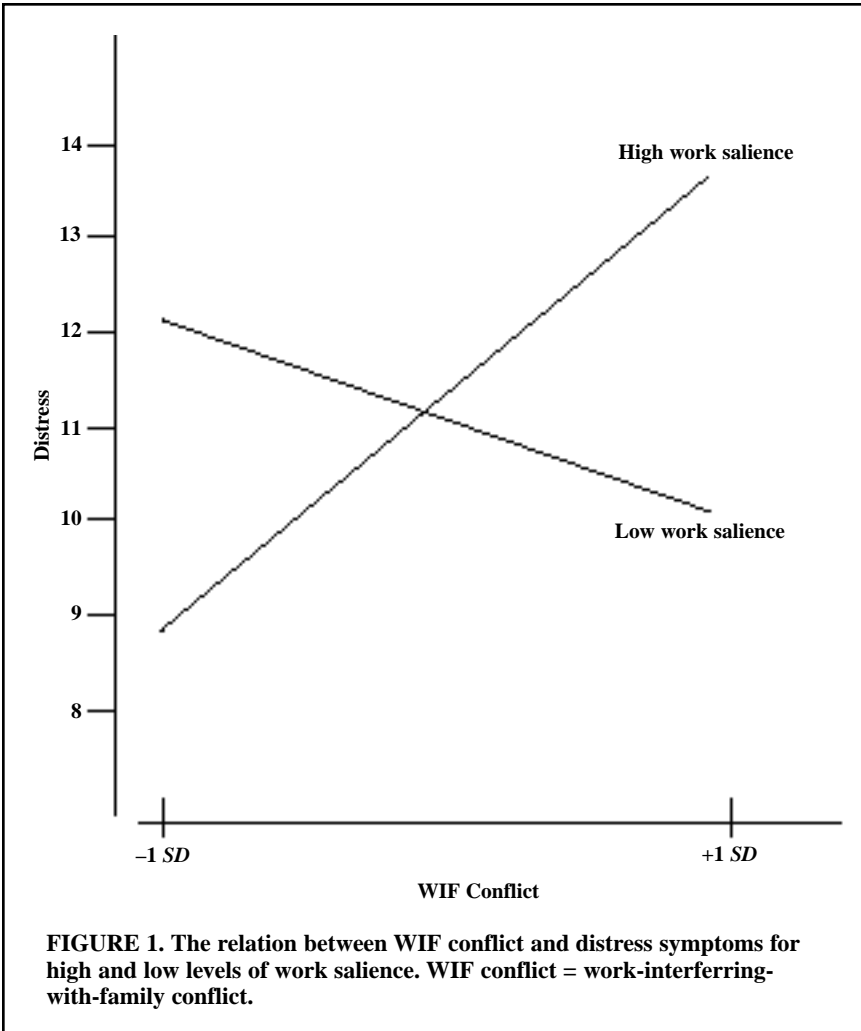
Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to integrate findings from the work-family conflict and role-salience literature into a more comprehensive model that would further enhance understanding of the relationship between work and family. The present study contributed to the literature on stress, salience, and well-being in three important ways: (a) both direct and moderator effects of salience were possible depending on the outcome measures that were used; (b) these effects were observed using work-family conflict as the stressor, rather than the usual stressful experience or event within specific social roles; and (c) these effects were detected after controlling for NA.

The Relationship Between Work-Family Conflict and Well-Being

After I controlled for NA, the results were contrary to my earlier prediction that WIF conflict would have a bigger impact on women's well-being than FIW conflict. Although previous researchers have also found women to report more WIF conflict than FIW conflict (e.g., Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991; Kinunnen, & Mauno, 1998), in the present study I show that in terms of their impacts on well-being, FIW conflict is more significant than WIF conflict.

Investigators can see this finding as indicating a dilemma that employed women face. On the one hand, they would like to be good mothers (not allowing work to interfere with their family activities). On the other hand, they would like to be good workers (not allowing family demands to interfere with work commitments). Between the two conflicts, it seems that FIW conflict,



rather than WIF conflict, is more related to their well-being. As Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1992) explained, FIW conflict, as “a threat to constructing or maintaining a desired job-related self-image that has direct implications for an individual’s overall sense of well-being” (p. 74), is more significant to these women than “the threat of not being the caretakers of the family.” This may be the case because the rewards from work are directly utilized for the well-being of the family. Although one may see the work role as a woman’s “extra” role, in reality it is still psychologically important to her self-image as a good employee.

The Role of Salience

I formulated two alternative propositions a priori to test for the role of salience in the relationship between work-family conflict and well-being. Findings for the job satisfaction measure were consistent with a direct or additive effect of salience. In contrast, for the distress outcome measure, findings were consistent with a moderator or interactive effect of salience.

The finding of the positive direct effect of work salience on job satisfaction in the present study highlights that women are also becoming more involved in and committed to their work. Previous researchers have shown that although men and women may allocate their time to work and family roles according to normative expectations (e.g., Major, 1993; Thompson & Walker, 1989), both view work and parental roles to be just as psychologically important (O'Neil & Greenberger, 1994). In the present study, however, family salience was not related to job satisfaction. This result was not totally unexpected in light of the outcome measure that was used; that is, the outcome measure, job satisfaction, was made up of items pertaining specifically to work and its conditions. It is probable that if I had used family or life satisfaction as the outcome, family salience may have been an important predictor.

In contrast, I found the interactive effect of salience and work-family conflict to fit the data on distress outcome. In this case, salience was not related to outcome, but the interaction terms between salience and conflict, entered as a block, were highly significant. This was due to the Work Salience \times WIF Conflict cross-product term. However, contrary to prediction, it was found that work salience exacerbated the negative impact of WIF conflict, rather than FIW conflict, on well-being.

Although I had predicted that the salience of the role that another role interferes with should moderate the relationship between conflict and well-being (i.e., work salience should exacerbate the negative effects of FIW conflict on well-being, and vice versa for family salience), the present findings showed otherwise. A possible interpretation is that these women who consider work as highly salient view the family as equally important. Having given part of their time and energy to the work role, what they look for on returning home is to give time and energy to the family. So, they are likely to feel upset and distressed when work responsibilities intrude into the family domain. Therefore, stress may have negative impact on well-being when stress occurs between roles that are highly salient and in which there are some expectations of stress.

As the present study shows, both direct and moderator effects of salience are possible. However, this possibility depends on the outcome measures that are used. Therefore, previous conflicting findings of these two effects may be attributable to the different outcome measures. In addition, the findings may be due to a confounding with certain personality variables, notably that of NA. In the present study, I observed that when NA was not controlled for in the prediction of

distress, both WIF conflict and FIW conflict were significant. However, with NA in the model, only FIW conflict was related to distress (WIF conflict had been reduced to an insignificant level). Therefore, in this case, NA acted as a confound that caused untrue findings of earlier studies (e.g., Noor, 1997; Parkes, 1990).

The different patterns of findings that I observed for the two outcome measures also reflect the issue of specificity in stressor-outcome relations as well as the importance of using both positive and negative outcomes in studies of women's well-being. Although correlated, the two outcome measures are distinct measures, each having different predictors. One practical implication here is that in trying to reduce stress or strain, one needs to consider the outcome chosen and to examine the perspective that describes the outcome.

Limitations and Conclusions

The present study has some limitations. The data that I used were cross-sectional, and thus it is impossible to ascertain the causal ordering of the relations among study variables. Although I assumed that conflict preceded poorer well-being, the reverse may also hold. Whether the conflict-before-well-being order is indeed the direction of causality is a question that investigators can answer only by carrying out longitudinal studies. A related point concerning the measures is that all of them were taken from self-reports, subjecting the results to problems of method variance. Although other objective measures would strengthen the study, these measures are not always feasible, especially when subjective states are being assessed.

The sample was relatively small and was made up of only women with children. I chose this group of women because I felt that many of them at this period in their lives are often faced with problems of juggling work and children, rather than those problems that are related to other family arrangements (such as care for elderly or sick family members). Also, the women were employed in several different jobs. Although in the present study, I controlled for this factor by categorizing the jobs into two groups, jobs of professionals and jobs of nonprofessionals, the term *professional* is still rather loose. Differences in job characteristics may influence well-being independently of role experiences. These issues, therefore, underscore the need for caution in generalizing the present findings to other groups of women.

Prior investigators of the main or moderator effects of salience have only considered its effects on stress within specific social roles (e.g., Martire, Stephens, & Townsend, 2000). The present study extended previous research by showing that role salience may also influence stress that is experienced at the crossroad or interface between work and family. As in the previous studies, both main and interactive effects were observed, depending on the outcome measures that were being used. Investigators need to further investigate this issue of specificity in stressor-outcome relations. For example, why should certain outcomes

be more likely to be linked to some predictors and not to others? It may be that low job satisfaction represents a different type of outcome (i.e., an affective rather than physical outcome), or this finding could be an artifact of the positive wording of the scale, as has been suggested (Burke, Brief, & George, 1993). In addition, it would be interesting to see whether investigators observe different results using other mental health outcomes (such as anxiety, depression), physical health, or absenteeism from work.

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