

Alleviating Work-Family Conflict for Women Managers in a Global Context



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Multi-National Study of W-F Conflict

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Challenges Due to W-F Conflict

- Women around the globe experiencing increasing W-F conflict
- Organizational culture: work long hours and do more with less
- Stereotypes of women as secondary wage earners; primarily family oriented

Consequences of W-F Conflict

- Personal costs- distress and dissatisfaction at home & work, mental & physical health problems
- Organizational costs-absenteeism, turnover, recruitment costs, lost productivity

Resources for Overcoming Consequences

- Personal coping strategies
- Social support at home and at work
- Organizational policies and practices
- Governmental/social policies

Preliminary Findings

- W-F conflict culture dependent
- India, Indonesia, Taiwan- collectivist, traditional gender roles (little spouse support); few org. & gov't policies; reliance on extended family
- Israel & Turkey- more legislation; support from family & paid help, but not spouses
- Spain- work hours do not match family hours; lack of institutional childcare

- Guilt (women more than men)
 - Not fulfilling gender role (Israel-Arab, Indonesia, Taiwan)
 - Not being a superwoman (Australia, India)
 - Having to put job before children (USA)
 - Ignoring academic needs of children (India)

Coping

- Lower standards at work- PT jobs (Australia, Turkey)
- Delegation- Israel (Jewish)
- Compartmentalize, negotiate role with partner, use org. policies- (Canada & USA)

How Our Study Differs From Previous Research

- Multi-national
- Countries theoretically selected
 - gender egalitarianism
 - support mechanisms available
- Theory based W-F model (Frone) includes both antecedents & outcomes

- Multi-level: micro & macro
(including social policy analysis)
- Addition of cultural variables
 - vertical & horizontal individualism/collectivism
 - traditional vs. egalitarian gender-role attitudes
 - monochronic/polychronic time orientation

- Multiple methods
 - Qualitative (focus groups)/quantitative (survey)
 - Emic (culture specific)/etic
- Prospective design (two wave survey)
- Indigenous researchers (cross-cultural enhanced validity)
- Collaborative team

Where Are We At?

- All countries have conducted focus groups with employed women
- In Canada: done on-line with both men & women
- Focus group results analyzed
 - to provide emic understanding of each culture (e.g., guilt)
 - to help develop surveys (measures of guilt and coping developed)

Survey Data

- Two wave survey developed
- Translated into all languages
- Data collection for first survey underway in 4 sectors (education, health, finance, manufacturing)
- Men and women employees with spouse/partner and child <21