RESEARCH ARTICLE

WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT: DOES TYPE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT MATTER?

*Ištoňová, Lucia and Fedáková, Denisa

Institute of Social Science, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Karpatská 5, 04001, Košice, Slovakia

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	An effort to fully understand the interface of work-family conflict and social support can be observed in psychological research for more than three decades. The aim of the present study was to examine the relationship and effect of four types of social support provided by work-based sources and the perceived work-family conflict (WFC): work interference into the family (WIF) and family interference into work (FIW).The data were collected online during the period of two-months (October 2013 – November 2013)by means of a questionnaire filled by 100 participants: female (n=64) and male (n=36), working full-time, married/cohabitating, with one or more children. The survey included The Work–Family Conflict Scale and 12 items instrument designed to measure four types of social support. The results suggested that emotional social support obtained from a supervisor alleviates strain-based WIF/FIW for women. Instrumental coworkers' support appeared to mitigate behavior-based FIW/WIF for men. Likewise, supervisory instrumental support proved to be a significant factor protecting against strain-based WIF for men. On the contrary, supervisory support increased strain-based FIW for men. The uniqueness of this study lies in its examination of all four distinct types of social support from work-based sources in WFC context. Thanks to its scope, the study broadens the understanding of social support and WFC interface.

INTRODUCTION

Family and work are without a doubt the two most important domains of everyday life. Unfortunately, these crucial spheres of life often collide, causing a so-called work-family conflict. The negative impact of this conflict might be reduced by a person's social network that provides them with affection, understanding and appraisal, or even with tangible help. Such behavior is collectively defined by the psychological term social support. In the past three decades, a rich body of literature has been dedicated to work-family conflict and its possible interface with social support (Md - Sidin *et al.* 2010; Carlson and Perrewé, 1999; Sieger and Wiese, 2009; Nabavi and Shahryari, 2012; Wadsworth and Owens, 2007; Luk and Schaffer, 2005; Adams *et al.*, 1996; Daalen *et al.*, 2006; Logue and Ayman, 2009; Blanch and Aluja, 2012; Lee and Hong, 2005; Michel *et al.*, 2010a; Ahmad, 1997). The connections between social support and work-family conflict were approached either as domain specific relations (Luk and Shaffer, 2005) or as cross-domain relations (Lee and Hong, 2005; Daalen *et al.*, 2006; Luk and Shaffer, 2005). Studies focused primarily on testing the four models of interaction between work-family conflict and social support (Sarason and Perrewé, 1999; Sieger and Wiese, 2009; Michel *et al.*, 2010b).

*Corresponding author: Ištoňová, Lucia,
Institute of Social Science, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Karpatská 5,
04001, Košice, Slovakia.

The different sources of social support represented another focal point of the research. The most commonly studied sources of social support obtained from work domain were: managerial, collegial and organizational support (Kossek *et al.*, 2011; Wadsworth and Owens, 2007; Bough and Pears, 2004; Rousseau and Aubé, 2010; Nabavi and Sharyari, 2012; Namayandeh *et al.*, 2010; Ahmad, 1997; Thomas and Ganster, 1995). The number of studies focusing solely on non-work domain sources of social support such as: spouse, broad family or friends in context of work-family conflict is small (Adams *et al.*, 1996). It is more common for researchers to combine both, work and non-work domain sources (Wadsworth and Owens, 2007; Ahmad, 1997; Noor, 2003; Daalen *et al.*, 2006).

Only two types of social support, emotional and instrumental support, were usually distinguished in the literature dealing with work-family conflict (Adams *et al.*, 1996). After a rigorous review of literature on the interface of social support and work-family conflict we identified a possible gap, which needs to be addressed. As mentioned above, research has heeded models of interaction between work-family conflict and social support, sources of social support or emotional and instrumental types of social support. Nevertheless, in the context of work-family conflict, insufficient attention has been paid to all four types of social support originating in the work domain.

The importance of a close examination of these relations is apparent, as findings might increase the effectiveness of battling with work-family conflict. Against this background, the purpose of the present research was to answer the following question: "Which type of work-based social support is the most helpful in battling work-family conflict in both its directions for employed, married/cohabitated men and women with one or more children?" This study addressed the effect of two work-based sources of social support (direct manager/supervisor and colleagues) and four types of social support (emotional, informational, instrumental and appraisal support) on work-family conflict. Both, domain specific and cross-domain relations were examined. The findings of this research are expected to broaden understanding of the work-family conflict interface with social support and to provide practical implications for supervisors and coworkers. The rest of the article is structured as follows. Firstly, the existing literature relevant to work-family conflict, social support and relationship between the two constructs is reviewed. Subsequently, the research methodology is presented. This section includes a description of the sample, the data collection method and the measurements. Finally, the results, followed by a discussion, are presented.

Main concepts

Social support

In 1976 Cobb postulated one of the earliest definitions of social support, which he understood as an input from one's social network that leads the person into believing that they are "cared for and loved, esteemed and valued, and a member of a network of mutual obligation" (Cobb, 1976; p. 300).Even though this description of social support might seem very accurate, there is no single accepted definition of social support in current academic environment. Vaux (1988; p.28) argued that: „no single definition of social support will prove adequate because social support is a metaconstruct." Nevertheless, Cobb's definition provides at least a general understanding of social support. Social support has many nuances that are reflected in the widely accepted division into social support types. House (1981) distinguished four types of support: emotional support, instrumental support, informational support and appraisal support.

- Emotional support: provides a person with empathy, trust and love.
- Instrumental support: provides a person with tangible aid and direct assistance, for example cooking a diner.
- Informational support: provides a person with potentially useful information or advice.
- Appraisal support: closely connected to one's self-evaluation that can be accomplished via constructive feedback.

It is not entirely possible to identify all sources of social support, however, in general it is possible to distinguish work-based social support from non-work- based social support. Social support from the work domain typically includes coworkers, direct supervisor and top management.

Kossek *et al.* (2011; p.292) defined work domain social support as: "the degree to which individuals perceive that their well-being is valued by workplace sources, such as supervisors and the broader organization." By discussing work or family-related problems, a supervisor can reduce the stress level of an employee. In addition, in certain cases a supervisor can provide more flexibility and thus eliminate the effect of stress on work-family conflict (Sarason and Sarason, 2009). Likewise, Luk and Shaffer (2005) noted that employees who consider their supervisors as supportive show a lower level of work-family conflict than employees who consider their supervisors as less supportive. On the contrary, unsupportive or abusive supervisors can increase perceived WFC (Wu, L *et al.*, 2012). Work-related sources can provide all four types of social support. However, only two of the types, i.e. instrumental and emotional support, have been extensively studied (Beehr, 2000). Kirrane and Buckley, (2004) or Namayandeh *et al.* (2010) belong among researchers who used the opposition of emotional and instrumental social support. Research usually focused on the combination of both, supervisory and coworkers support (Lee and Hong, 2005; Logue and Ayman, 2009; Daalen *et al.*, 2005; Thompsonand Cavallaro, 2007; Namayandeh *et al.*, 2010; Wasdworth and Owens, 2007), however, few studies focused solely on supervisory support (Eng *et al.*, 2010; Hargis *et al.*, 2011; Blanch and Aluja, 2012).

Work-family conflict

The definition of work-family conflict was postulated by Greenhause and Beuttell (1985).The authors define work-family conflict as: "a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect" (Greenhause and Beutell, 1985; p. 77), meaning that requirements from the family domain (e.g. family member birthday party) are not in harmony with requirements from the work domain (e.g. official business trip), and vice versa. The perception of work-family conflict has undergone several changes since it was described for the first time. As Greenhuase and Beuttell (1985) noted, work-family conflict was believed to have three forms: time-based conflict, strain-based conflict and behavior-based conflict. Gutek *et al.* (1991) clarified that work-family interrole conflict could occur in two directions: from work domain to family domain, also known as work interference with family (WIF) and from family to work domain, also known as family interference with work (FIW). This postulate represented a turning point in the understanding of work-family conflict, which was now no longer perceived as a uni-dimensional phenomenon. Bi-directional theoretical differentiation was subsequently supported by research demonstrating that WIF and FIW were distinct, but related constructs. Literature on work-family conflict mostly focused on its antecedents from work domain, family domain and individual characteristics. In the work domain, working hours, income, job insecurity or work stress (usually comprised of work role ambiguity and work overload) were highlighted. In the family domain, the focal point was the number of children and their age, as well as, family stress (analogically to work stress, comprised of family role ambiguity and family related responsibilities overload).

With regard to individual characteristics, negative affectivity, locus of control and self-efficacy were emphasized (Hargis *et al*., 2011).

Relationship between social support and work-family conflict

Four main models were used to explain the complicated nature of relations between social support and work-family conflict in stress-strain context. Social support was viewed as a moderator, mediator or antecedent of WFC and of the stressor from the family/work domain (Carlson and Pérrewe, 1999). Additionally, social support was considered to be an independent variable that affects WFC autonomously, without any relation to the stressor. The present study is based on an independent model, since such a model was more in line with the objectives of the study. Social support is generally perceived as a resource that is related to a reduction of work-family conflict (Seiger and Wiese, 2009).

The impact of social support on WFC was examined via two basic approaches: domain-specific approach (e.g. support from spouse and its impact on family interference with work and cross) and cross-domain approach (e.g. support from spouse and its impact on work interference with family). So far, research has consistently shown more significant results for domain-specific relations (Bellavia and Frone, 2005; Seiger and Wiese, 2009; Michel *et al*., 2010a). Nevertheless exceptions can be found, for instance, Luk and Schaffer (2005) found no significant domain-specific relations. However, significant cross-domain relations were also found (Daalen *et al*., 2005).

Support from the work domain usually consist of managerial/supervisor support and support from colleagues. Thomas and Ganster (1995) indicated that managerial support reduced work-family conflict. Research has consistently proved that managerial support is in negative relation to work-family support (Kossek *et al*., 2011; Wadsworth and Owens, 2007; Seiger and Wiese, 2009; Selvarajan *et al*., 2013; Goff *et al*., 1990; Thomas and Ganster, 1995; Erdwins *et al*., 2001; Nasurdin and Hsia, 2008; Wasdworth and Owens, 2007). On the contrary, Kirrane and Buckely (2004) found that neither managerial nor co-workers support had any relation to work-family conflict. Findings for collegial support were not as consistent as those for supervisory support. Namayandeh *et al*. (2010), Lee and Hong (2005) or Louge and Ayman (2007) found no relations between co-workers support and WFC. On the contrary, the findings of Daalen *et al*. (2005) suggested that there are significant relations between collegial support and WFC.

Gender differences

In her preference theory, Hakim (2007) postulated that 60% of men are work-oriented and 60% of women are family-oriented. Thus it is legitimate to assume that gender differences should be observed in perceived WIF and FIW. Some studies found that women and men significantly differ with respect to perceived WIF and FIW. Williams and Alliger, (1994) found that women reported higher WIF/FIW than men, whereas others found women to report higher WIF than men (Cinnamon and Rich, 2002).

However, not all studies confirmed gender differences in perceived WFC (Kinnunen and Mauno, 1998; Kinnunen *et al*. 2004; Geurts and Demerouti, 2003; Powell and Greehause, 2010). Carlson *et al*. (2000) distinguished two forms of WFC: strain-based and time-based WFC. They found significant gender differences in perceived WFC. Women reported higher strain-based and time-based FIW, as well as higher strain-based WIF. Similarly Daalen *et al*. (2006) found that women reported more strain-based WIF than men, however, no gender difference were found in strain-based and time-based FIW. In regard to social support and its connection to WFC, the results of previous studies indicate that in terms of the reduction of WFC, work support is more beneficial for men and family support is more beneficial for women (Jansen *et al*., 2003; Daalen *et al*., 2006). However, Blanch and Aluja, (2012) found that the effect of supervisory support on WIF was significantly higher than its effect on men. To sum up, the results concerning the influence of gender differences on WFC are inconclusive. In the present study, all statistical analyses were conducted separately for men and women.

Based on the existing literature review, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1 (domain specific): Four types of social support from work domain are negatively correlated with WIF for men.
H2 (cross-domain): Four types of social support from work domain are negatively correlated with FIW for men.
H3 (domain specific): Fours types of social support from work domain are negatively correlated with WIF for women.
H4 (cross-domain): Fours types of social support from work domain are negatively correlated with FIW for women.

Method

Sample (participants and procedure)

The target population for the present study consisted of married/cohabiting people, employed in full-time jobs, with one or more children aged from 3 to 15. Six of the submitted questionnaires were not analyzed, as the respondents were employed in part-time jobs at the time of the research, which was not in line with our research objectives. After the elimination of invalid questionnaires, the sample comprised of 100 Slovak participants, from whom 64 were female and 36 were male. The resulting sample covered the age range from 25 – 50 years, more specifically, the average age of women was M = 36.7 years (SD = 5.7) and the average age men was M= 34.7 (SD = 6.9). An overall prevalence of participants with two children (52%) was observed in our sample. Participants with one child (36%) came second and only 12 % of participants had three or more children. The sample consisted of participants from five occupational backgrounds: educational system, health service, banking sector, administration and information technology.

Data collection and analysis

Data were collected over a two-month period during October and December 2013by means of an online questionnaire. To insure that all items in the questionnaire were properly answered we included a feature that disabled the possibility to move to another question without having answered the previous one first.

This precaution helped minimize the amount of invalidly filled questionnaires. The sampling method was chosen on the basis of the specific characteristic of our sample. We decided to use the snow-ball method. The snow-ball method is considered to be a non-probability sampling approach, which was acknowledged as a limitation of the present study. The collected data were analyzed via IBM SPSS Statistic 22 using: descriptive and comparative statistics, Pearson's correlations, linear regressions and multiple stepwise regressions.

Measures

Work – family conflict

Work family conflict was measured by The Work-Family Conflict Scale (Carlson *et al.*, 2000). The scale consists of 18 items divided into two subscales (measuring WIF and FIW), both comprising 9 items. Each subscale could be further divided into three dimensions in order to measure conflict on the basis of time, strain and behavioral aspects. The response options for all 18 items were provided in the form of a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Table 1 shows the values of Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Cronbach's alphas above 0.7 are considered to be sufficient (Nunally and Bernstein, 1994).

RESULTS

The aim of the present study was to examine the relationships and effect of work-related social support sources and work-family conflict. Data were analyzed independently for women and men.

Average scores per item for social support from supervisor and colleagues for women and men were approximately the same. Women perceived slightly higher social support from both supervisor (M = 3.3, SD = 10.83) and colleagues (M = 3.6, SD = 11.53) than men (M = 3.2, SD = 12.24, M = 3.4, SD = 9.93). However, no gender differences were observed in case of emotional $t(98) = 0.63$, $p = 0.950$, informational $t(98) = -0.27$, $p = 0.978$, instrumental $t(98) = -0.31$, $p = 0.756$ and appraisal $t(98) = 0.18$, $p = 0.288$ social support obtained from supervisor.

Also, no gender differences were found for emotional $t(98) = 1.84$, $p = 0.068$, informational $t(98) = 0.50$, $p = 0.618$, instrumental $t(98) = 0.71$, $p = 0.479$ and appraisal $t(98) = 0.22$, $p = 0.827$ social support obtained from colleagues. Finally, no gender differences were found in perceived WIF $t(98) = -0.851$, $p = 0.397$ nor FIW $t(98) = -1.20$, $p = 0.236$.

Table 1 . Descriptive statistics and scale reliabilities

The name of the scale	No. Of items	Range of possible scores	Range of actual scores	Alpha	M	SD	Response format (Likert)
WFC	18	18-90	18-71	0.83	44.5	10.9	5
WIF	9	9-45	9-40	0.78	23.8	6.7	5
FIW	9	9-45	9-39	0.76	20.6	6	5
Global support	12	12-60	12-60	0.95	34.5	5.7	5
Emotional support	3	3-15	3-15	0.84	11.2	1.9	5
Informational support	3	3-15	3-15	0.85	11.2	2	5
Instrumental support	3	3-15	3-15	0.83	11.3	1.9	5
Appraisal support	3	3-15	3-15	0.85	11.3	1.9	5

Social support

Social support was measured by 12 items designed for the purposes of this study. The items were divided into four categories in order to stay in line with Houses' (1981) differentiation of four types of social support, namely: emotional support, informational support, instrumental support and appraisal support. Each subscale consisted of three items. Emotional support was measured by items such as: "…is willing to hear me out, when I need someone to talk to." An example of an informational support item might be: "…gives me advice when I need it." Instance of items used to measure instrumental support might be: "…helps me to manage my responsibilities." And finally, appraisal support was measured by items such as: "…gives me feedback on my behavior." The instructions for the social support scale were following: "Please select the number from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree) on the scale to assess your supervisor's/colleagues' behavior." The response options for all 12 items were provided in the form of a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). A reliability analysis showed that the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were all above 0.8.The exact values of Cronbach's alphas are shown in Table 1.

Correlation

The correlation analyses describe the bivariate relations between the four types of social support and the three types of WIF/FIW tested. Domain-specific relations were hypothesized between the four types of work domain support and WIF for men (H1). Specifically, it was assumed that there would be negative correlations between work domain support and WIF. Social support from supervisor was significantly negatively correlated only with strain-based WIF. Particularly informational $r(98) = -0.46$, $p = 0.005$, instrumental $r(98) = -0.47$, $p = 0.004$ and overall $r(98) = -0.41$, $p = 0.012$ social support from supervisor were negatively correlated with strain-based WIF. Social support obtained from colleagues was significantly negatively correlated only with behavior-based WIF. Specifically instrumental $r(98) = -0.60$, $p = 0.001$, appraisal $r(98) = -0.37$, $p = 0.026$ and overall $r(98) = -0.45$, $p = 0.006$ social support obtained from colleagues were significantly negatively correlated with WIF. Thus it might be concluded that H1 was partially supported. Cross-domain relations were assumed between four types of social support from work domain and FIW for men (H2).To put it more exactly, it was presumed that there would be negative correlations between work domain support and FIW. Social support from supervisor was, again, correlated only with the strain-based type of FIW.

However, surprisingly, the correlation was positive. Specifically, emotional r(98) = 0.33, p = 0.048, informational r(98) = 0.46, r = 0.005, instrumental r(98) = 0.34, p = 0.042 and overall r(98) = 0.37, p = 0.028 social support obtained from supervisor was significantly positively correlated with strain-based FIW. In case of colleagues, social support results were similar to the domain-specific findings. Emotional r(98) = -0.57, p = 0.001, informational r(98) = -0.46, p = 0.005, instrumental r(98) = -0.66, p = 0.001, appraisal r(98) = -0.44, p = 0.007 and overall r(98) = -0.60, p = 0.001 social support obtained from colleagues was significantly negatively correlated with behavior-based FIW. To sum up, H2 was partially confirmed for coworkers' support. However, the results for supervisor's support were contradictory to H2. Next, it was assumed that the four types of work-related social support have a negative relation to WIF for women (H3).

The results suggest that emotional r(98) = -0.32, p = 0.009, instrumental r(98) = -0.30, p = 0.016 and overall r(98) = -0.28, p = 0.024 social support obtained from supervisor was significantly negatively correlated to strain-based WIF. In case of collegial support, no significant relations were observed. Thus it might be concluded that H3 was partially supported. Lastly, cross-domain relations were analyzed. Negative correlations between the four types of social support from work domain and FIW for women were predicted (H4). Analogically to domain-specific results, significant negative correlations were observed only between strain-based FIW and emotional support r(98) = -0.34, p = 0.007 from supervisor. No significant relations were observed between social support obtained from colleagues and FIW. Hence H4 was partially supported by the findings.

Predictions

As the results suggested, there were significant moderately strong correlations between the four types of social support and WIF/FIW. To further examine these relations stepwise, multiple regressions were conducted. The purpose of these regressions was to move forward from simple correlations to possible causal relations, even if only with cross-sectional data. The four types of social support were used as independent variables, whereas the two forms of WIF/FIW were used as dependent variables. On the domain-specific level, the results suggest that emotional support from supervisor explained 11% of the variance of strain-based WIF $R^2 = 0.11$, $F(1,62) = 7.29$, $p = 0.009$. It was discovered that emotional supervisory support significantly predicted strain-based WIF for women Table 2.

Table 2. Results of stepwise linear regression for women

Emotional supervisory support				
Female	B	SE B	β	t	p
Strain-based WIF	-0.28	0.11	-0.32	-2.70	0.009
Strain-based FIW	-0.25	0.09	-0.36	-2.80	0.007

On the cross-domain level, the results suggested that emotional support from supervisor explained 11% of the variance of strain-based FIW $R^2 = 0.11$, $F(1,62) = 7.81$, $p = 0.007$. Thus results indicated that supervisory emotional support significantly predicted strain-based FIW for women Table 2.

Domain-specific results for men suggest that instrumental support explained 22% of the variance of strain-based WIF $R^2 = 0.22$, $F (1, 34) = 9.35$, $p = 0.004$. Instrumental supervisor support was a significant predictor of strain-based WIF for men Table 3.

Table 3. Results of stepwise linear regression for men

Instrumental supervisory support				
Male	B	SE B	β	t	p
Strain-based WIF	-0.32	0.08	-0.36	-3.80	0.004
Strain-based FIW	0.29	0.10	0.46	2.99	0.005

Cross-domain results indicated that instrumental support obtained from supervisor explained 21% of the variance of strain-based FIW $R^2 = 0.21$, $F (1, 34) = 8.91$, $p = 0.005$. Surprisingly, supervisory instrumental support significantly predicted the level of strain-based FIW in a direction opposite to the one hypothesized for men Table 3. Domain-specific results suggest that instrumental support given to men from colleagues explained 36 % of the variance of behavior- based WIF $R^2 = 0.36$, $F(1,34) = 19.27$, $p = 0.001$. As Table 4 indicates, instrumental collegial support significantly predicted behavior-based WIF for men. Finally cross–domain results indicate that instrumental colleagues support explained 43% of the variance of behavior-based FIW $R^2 = 0.43$, $F(1,34) = 25.84$, $p = 0.001$. As shown in Table 4, instrumental collegial support is a significant predictor of behavior-based FIW for men.

Table 4. Results of stepwise linear regression for men

Instrumental collegial support				
Male	B	SE B	β	t	p
Behavior-based WIF	-0.68	0.16	-0.60	-4.39	0.001
Behavior-based FIW	-0.74	0.15	-0.66	-5.05	0.001

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship and effect of four types of social support provided by work-based sources with respect to work-family conflict. The present study aimed to answer to the question formulated in the introduction: "Which type of work-based social support is the most helpful in battling work-family conflict in both its directions?" To our knowledge, a joint examination of all four types of support provided by the supervisor and coworkers in the context of work-family conflict has not been conducted to date. Men and women did not perceive a significantly different amount of any type of social support. Moreover, no significant gender differences were found in FIW/WIF, which is in line with numerous studies (Kinnunen and Mauno, 1998; Kinunen *et al.* 2004; Geurts and Demerouti, 2003; Powell and Greehause, 2010). However, interactions between social support and WFC were clearly different for men and women, therefore the results are discussed separately. In case of the female participants, no significant correlations were found between any type of support provided by colleagues and WFC. These finding were congruent with Daalen *et al.* (2005) and Namayandeh *et al.* (2010), who did not find any significant relations between coworkers' social support and WFC in case of female participants, either. In the case of women, significant negative correlations, both domain-specific and cross-domain, were observed only in case of support obtained from supervisor and strain-based WIF/FIW.

In addition, emotional supervisor support seems to reduce of both WIF and FIW. Thus, the results suggest that obtained emotional supervisory support alleviates strain-based WIF/FIW. These results are in line with the findings of Namayandeh et al. (2010), who also discovered significant negative correlations between supervisory support and WFC. On the contrary, Daalen et al. (2005) did not observe any relations between supervisory support and WFC. Furthermore, they discovered that supervisory support increased perceived time-based WIF for women. In this respect, it is important to take into account the significance of emotional social support for women. Women tend to subjectively experience emotions more intensely than men (Grossman and Wood, 1993), which might explain why emotional support is a significant predictor of WIF/FIW. Also, Greenhause and Friedman, (2000) noted that direct emotional support is often more helpful than indirect behavioral support. Since women are more focused on their emotions, Greenhouse's and Friedman's (2000) findings might be more applicable to women than men.

The results for men are discussed below, separately for support obtained from supervisor and support obtained from colleagues. In case of supervisory support, the results were mixed and unanticipated. Significant negative correlations were observed on the domain-specific level between supervisor support and strain-based WIF. This is in line with the finding of Lee and Hong (2005), who also observed a negative correlation between strain- and time-based WIF and supervisory social support. In general, our findings are congruent with the research of Thomas and Ganster (1995), Wadsworth and Owens (2007), Sieger and Wiese, (2009) or Kossek et al. (2011).

Additionally, instrumental support appeared to reduce WIF. This might be explained by the fact that men tend to be more focused on tangible forms of help, such as instrumental help. Surprising, results were detected on the cross-domain level, where the support from a supervisor significantly positively correlated with FIW. Moreover, instrumental support was identified as the best predictor of FIW. Thus, supervisory support intensified strain-based FIW for male participants. Men are more likely to be oriented on the work environment than on the family sphere. In her preference theory, Hakim (2007) claimed that 60 % of men are work-oriented, 30 % are adaptive and only 10 % are family-oriented. Our findings might be explained on the basis of the presented distribution. For instance, when a supervisor provides instrumental help to an employee (e.g. let employee take care of family issues in work) it directly influences FIW. Men, who are more work-oriented, might perceive an intensification of FIW in such a case.

Significant negative correlations between support from colleagues and behavior-based WIF/FIW were observed. These findings are compelling because behavior-based conflict was significantly correlated with perceived support only in the case of colleagues. On both, the domain-specific and the cross-domain level, instrumental support seems to be the protective factor of WIF/FIW. Thus, it seems that instrumental coworkers' support mitigate behavior-based WIF/FIW. The presented findings give rise to the question why is the support behavior-based subscale important in the case of colleagues'.

First of all, it is important to consider the specific nature of the environment between colleagues. Collegial relationships are informal, however, they must be in line with the code of conduct of the organization, which makes these relationships formal at the same time. With this said, it might be assumed that support provided by colleagues enables employee to learn new behavioral patterns which can be applied also in the family environment, since collegial interactions are informal. This is also applicable vice versa. The findings of the present study on relations between coworkers support and WFC are congruent with Thompson and Caralleo (2007), however, a majority of studies found no significant relations (Lee and Hong, 2005; Lounge and Ayman, 2007; Namayandeh et al., 2010; Wasdworth and Owens, 2007). There are two major strengths of the present study. First, this study provides a comprehensive image of the relations between the four types of social support provided by two primary work-related sources of social support and WFC. Second, the present study examines both, domain-specific and cross-domain relations and effects.

Limitations

Despite these strengths, there are two main limitations to the present study, which require consideration. Firstly, it is the choice of a non-probability procedure of data collection, i.e. the snow-ball method. This method could have negative consequences. The main concern is the problem of generalization of the findings to a larger population. However, when choosing the snow-ball sampling method, it was taken into consideration that people with a certain lifestyle (employed, married and with children) are more likely to make acquaintances with other people with whom they may share this lifestyle. Thus participants contacted directly were easily able to recruit their acquaintances with the specific characteristics required for the purpose of this study. Therefore, snowballing appeared to be the best possible choice of a data collection procedure. Secondly, the research sample comprised of only 100 participants, which admittedly is not a representative sample. However, as this was the first time all fours distinct social support types from work-related sources were examined together, the present study can be understood as the very first probe into this issue. However further research with a more representative sample is needed.

Practical implications

There are several practical implications of these findings. Organizations, as well as supervisors themselves, could find the results of the present study helpful in order to alleviate employees' work-family conflict. First, supervisory support appears to have a key role in relation to WFC for both, male and female participants. Supervisors should be aware of gender differences when providing subordinates with social support and differentiate whether they are providing social support to male or female subordinates. In order for employees to benefit from the social support, supervisors should provide men mostly with instrumental support and women mostly with emotional support. However, the provision of informational and appraisal support should not be neglected, either. Furthermore, supervisors should provide social support in the way that it would not be counterproductive to subordinates.

Supervisors should supply subordinates with such support, which would enhance the employees' ability to balance work and family requirements. Secondly, organizations and direct supervisors should encourage the provision of training in soft-skills, such as assertive and effective communication, because learnt behavioral patterns enable coworkers to cooperate more effectively, provide help to each other and create a synergy effect. This means that when one colleague helps another in a professional, yet friendly manner, such experience might trigger a learning process in the recipient of the support. The recipient could then adopt this effective behavioral pattern and use it in the family domain. Furthermore, the importance of teamwork should be highlighted. Lastly, this study broadens the theoretical understanding of the interaction between social support and WFC especially by a close examination of the four types of social support.

REFERENCES

Adams, G.A., King, L. A. and King, D. W.1996. Relationship of Job and Family Involvement, Family Social Support, and Work-Family Conflict with Job and Life Satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology,* 8(4): 411 – 420.

Ahmad, A. 1997.Work-Family Conflict and Social Support: A study of Female Secretaries in Malaysia. Pertanika *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 5(2): 93 – 101.

Beehr, T.A., Jex, S.M., Stacy, B.A. and Murray, M.A. 2000. Work stressors and coworkers support as predictors of individual strain and job performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 21(4): 391-405.

Bellavia, G. and Frone, M. 2005. Work-family conflict, In: Barling, J. *et al.* (Eds.), Handbook of Work Stress, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 113-147.

Blanch, A. and Aluja, A. 2012. Social support (family and supervisor), work-family conflict, and burnout: Sex differences. Human relations, 65(7): 811 – 833.

Brough, P. and Pears, J. 2004. Evaluating the influence of the type of social support on job satisfaction and work related psychological well-being. *International Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 8(2): 472-485.

Carlson, D. S. and Perrewé, R. L. 1999. The role of social support in the stressor-strain relationship: An examination of work-family conflict. *Journal of Management,* 25(4): 513-540.

Carlson, D. S., Kacmar, K. M. and Williams, L. J. 2000. Construction and validations of multi-dimensional measure of work-family conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior,* 56(2): 249-276.

Cinnamon, R. G. and Rich, Y. 2002. Gender Differences in the Importance of Work and Family Roles: Implications for Work-Family Conflict. Sex Roles, 47(11/12): 531-541.

Cobb, S. 1976. Social support as a moderator of life stress. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 38(5): 300 – 314.

Daalen G., Sanders, K. and Willemson, T.M. 2005. Sources of social support as predictors of health, psychological well-being and life satisfaction among Dutch male and female dual – earners. *Journal of Women and Health*, 41(2): 43-62.

Eng, W., Moore, S., Greenberg, L.E. and Sikora, P. 2010. What Influences Work-Family Conflict? The Function of Work Support and Working from Home. *Current Psychology*, 29(2): 104-120.

Erdwins, C. J., Buffardi, L. C., Casper, W. J. and O'Brien, A. S. 2001. The relationship of women's role strain to social support, role satisfaction, and self-efficacy. Family Relations, 50(3): 230-238.

Findings". In M. J. Schabracq, J. A. M. Winnubst, and C. L. Cooper (Eds.), The handbook of work and health psychology. Chichester, England: Wiley, pp. 279 –312

Geurts, S. A. E. and Demerouti, E. 2003. Work/non-work interface: A review of theories and

Goff, S. J., Mount, M. K. and Jamison, R. L.1990. Employer supported child care, work/family conflict, and absenteeism: A field study. *Personnel Psychology*, 43(4): 793-809.

Greehause, J.H. and Beutell, N. J. 1985. Sources of conflict between work and family roles. Academy of Management Review, 10(1): 76-88.

Grossman, M. and Wood, W. 1993. Sex differences in Intensity of Emotional Experience: A Social Role Interpretation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 65(5): 1010-1022.

Gutek, B., Searle, S. and Klepa, L. 1991. Rational versus gender role explanations for work-family conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76(4): 560-568.

Hakim, C. 2007. Work-lifestyle choices in the 21st century: preference theory, Oxford University Press, New York

Hargis, M. B., Kotrba, L. M. and Zhdanova, L. 2011. What's really important? Examining the relative importance of antecedents to work-family conflict. *Journal of Managerial Issues,* 23(4): 386-408.

House, J.S. 1981. Work stress and social support, Reading. Mass: Addison-Wesley Publishing, Boston.

Jansen, N., Kant, I., Kristensen, T. S. and Nijhuis, F.J. 2003. Antecedents and consequences of work-family conflict: A prospective cohort study. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 45(5): 479–491.

Kinnunen, U. and Mauno, S. 1998. Antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict among employed women and men in Finland. Human Relations, 51(2): 157 - 177.

Kinnunen, U., Geurts, S.and Mauno, S.2004. Work-to-family conflict and its relationship with satisfaction and well-being: a one-year longitudinal study on gender differences. Work & Stress, 18(1): 1-22.

Kirrane, M. and Buckley, E. F. 2004. The influence of support relationships on work-family conflict: differentiating emotional from instrumental support. Equal Opportunities International, 23(1/2): 78 – 96.

Kossek, E. E., Pichler, S., Bodner, T. and Hammer, L. B.2011. Workplace social support and work-family conflict: A meta-analysis clarifying the influence of general and work-family-specific supervisor and organizational support. *Personnel Psychology*, 64(2): 289-313.

Lee, CH. and Hong, K. 2005. Work-Family Conflict and Its Relationship with Social Support: A Study at Private Educational Institution in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. *Educational Research Journal*, 20(2): 221- 243.

Logue, A.A. and Ayman, R. 2009. Role of Social Support and Work-Family Conflict on Turnover Intentions. Paper presented at the ICWF Conference, July 2009- Barcelona, Spain

Luk, D. M. and Shaffer, M. A. 2005. Work and family domain stressors and support: Within-and cross-domain influences on work-family conflict. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 78(4): 489-508.

Md – Sidin, S. 2010. Relationship between work☐family conflict and quality of life: An investigation into the role of social support. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 25(1): 58 – 81.

Michel, J. S., Kotrba, L.M., Mitchelson, J.K., Clark, M.A. and Baltes, B.B.2010b. Antecedents of work-family conflict:A meta-analytic review. *Journal of organizational behavior*, 23(5): 689-725.

Michel, J. S., Mitchelson, J. K., Pichler, S. and Cullen, K. L. 2010a. Clarifying relationships among work and family social support, stressors, and work–family conflict. *Journal of vocational behavior,* 76(1): 91-104.

Nabavi, A.H. and Shahryari M. 2012. Linkage between worksite support with work role expectation, role ambiguity and its effects of work-family conflict. *Canadian Social Science*, 8(4): 112-119.

Namayandeh, H.,Yaacob,. N. and Juhari, R.2010. The Influences of work support family support on Work-Family Conflict (W-FC) Among Married Female Nurses in Shiraz-Iran. *Journal of American Science*, 6(12): 534 – 540.

Nasurdin, A.M. and Hsia, K.L. 2008. The Influence of Support at Work and Home on Work-Family Conflict: Does Gender Make a Difference? Research and Practice in Human Resource Management**,** 16(1): 18-38.

Noor, N.M. 2004. Work-Family Conflict, Work – and –Family Role Salience, and Women's Well-being. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 144(4):398-405.

Nunally, J. C. and Bernstein, I. H. 1994. Psychometric theory (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Powell, G. N. and Greenhause, J. H. 2010. Sex, gender, and the work-to-family interference: Exploring negative and positive interdependencies. Academy of Management *Journal,* 52(3): 513-534.

Rousseau, V. and Aubé, C. 2010. Social support at work and affective commitment to the organization: the moderating effect of job resource adequacy and ambient conditions. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 150(4): 321-340.

Sarason, I. G. and Sarason, B. R. 2009. Social support: Mapping the construct. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 26(1): 113- 120.

Seiger, CH. P. and Wiese, B. S. 2009. Social support from work and family domains as an antecedent or moderator of work-family conflicts? *Journal of vocational behavior*, 75(1): 26-37.

Selvarajan, T. T.,Clonninger, P. A. and Singh, B. 2013. Social support and work-family conflict: A test of an indirect effects model. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 83(3): 486-499.

Thomas, L. T. and Ganster, D.C. 1995. Impact of family-supportive work variables on work-family conflict and strain: A control perspective. *Journal of applied psychology*, 80(1): 6-15.

Thompson, B.M. and Cavallaro, L. 2007. Gender, work-based support and family outcomes. Stress and Health, 23(2): 73-85.

Vaux, A. 1988. Social Support – Theory, Research and Intervention, Praeger, New York.

Wadsworth, L. L. and Owens, B.O. 2007. The effects of social support on work-family enhancement and work-family conflict in the public sector. Public Administration review, 67(1): 75-87.

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

Wu, L., Kwan, H.K., Liu, J. and Resick, CH.J.2012. Work-to-family spillover effects of abusive supervision. Journal of Managerial Psychology, 27(7): 714 – 731.

****