Work-family conflict: The moderating effects of same-sex or mixed-sex relationships and gender on predictors and outcomes

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Abstract

Despite ample research into work-family conflict and increased focus on employee social diversity within organisations, no research has examined whether differences in relationship composition have an impact on experiences of work-family conflict. The current study aims to provide exploratory research into whether differences exist between same-sex and mixed-sex relationships in regards to experiences of work-family conflict and satisfaction with work-family balance. 135 participants completed the survey, of which 31 identified as being in a same-sex relationship. Data was analysed utilising a regression model with a moderated moderator. Results found a statistically significant three-way interaction of relationship composition and gender moderating the relationship between instrumental family support and work-to-family conflict, and a conditional moderation of gender for same-sex relationships between emotional family support and family-to-work conflict. These results have theoretical implications for understanding how relationship composition can alter experiences of work-family conflict and may be applied to better inform organisational practices. Future research should aim to expand on this line of study into same-sex relationships and the workplace to tease apart influences of contextual factors, as well as unique stigma-based stressors.

Work-family conflict: The moderating effects of same-sex or mixed-sex relationships and gender on predictors and outcomes

Work-family conflict has been an area of focus for researchers and organisational policy developers due to the substantial impact it can have on employee wellbeing. Work-family conflict has been found to have negative consequences on work, non-work, and health related outcomes, such as decreased job satisfaction, lower organisational commitment, decreased life and family satisfaction, and increased levels of depression (Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elfering, & Semmer, 2011). However, an issue with this previous research is that it focuses primarily on hetero-normative, traditional, mixed-sex relationships. Over the past decade, there has been a large development in social recognition of same-sex relationships[1], but no research has investigated whether the gender composition of relationships has an impact on how work/family demands and support relate to work-family conflict and outcomes. This lack of research may result in organisational policy and practices failing to include the entire scope of modern working family relationships in solutions for reducing work-family conflict and improving employee wellbeing.

This study aims to conduct exploratory research into whether the experiences of work-family conflict and satisfaction with work-family balance outcomes differ between male and female same-sex and mixed-sex relationships. In turn, this forms a foundation for future research into an under-developed area of study that is becoming more relevant as societal views are becoming more accepting of same-sex relationships in work and family domains, with increased recognition of more fluid gender compositions in relationships. This knowledge is necessary in order to

[1] The term relationship is defined in the current study in line the with Stats NZ (2017) definition of family including partners with or without children.

establish if organisational policy and practice needs to widen its scope in order to achieve greater inclusivity of individual wellbeing for same-sex relationship minorities.

Work-family conflict

Work-family conflict is a form of stressor that can impact individuals in the work and family domains of their lives and is defined as a type of conflict that occurs when pressures from one domain interfere with satisfactory participation in another. This means that engagement in the one domain is made more difficult by participation in the other domain (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Within Greenhaus and Beutell's model (1985) are three main areas of conflict; time-based, strain-based, and behavioural-based conflict. Time-based conflict occurs when time pressures in one role make it difficult to attend to the expectations of another role, or when preoccupation of one role interferes with time-demands of another role. Strain-based conflict occurs when demands from one role cause strain symptoms, such as tension, anxiety, or irritation, which affects performance in another role. Behavioural-based conflict occurs as a result of behaviours effective in one domain being ineffective or inappropriate in another domain (Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000). Although all three areas contribute to work-family conflict, a majority of research focuses primarily on the time- and strain-based areas of conflict (Carlson et al., 2000). This may be due to the fact that a large focus of research into work-family conflict has been on support networks, family structure, and stressors in the work and family domain as antecedents or buffers on conflict outcomes (Carlson et al., 2000; Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark, & Baltes, 2011). This aligns most with definitions in measured areas of time- and strain-based work-family conflict rather than

behavioural-based conflict because it focuses more on time pressures and how the stress antecedents or buffers may affect work-family conflict as opposed to an incompatibility of behaviours between domains. The use of Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) definition of work-family conflict implies that there is a bidirectional relationship between work and family domains in terms of conflict (Frone, 2003). Work-to-family conflict discusses specific conflict in the family domain as a result of engagement in the work domain, and family-to-work conflict discusses specific conflict in the work domain as a result of engagement in the family domain. The term 'work-family conflict' encompasses both work-to-family and family-to-work conflict in order to acknowledge the bidirectional nature of conflict and the influence of antecedents and outcomes in both work and family domains.

Impact of demands on work-family conflict

Due to the bidirectional nature of the work-family conflict model, both work and family demands have an impact on individual experiences of work-family conflict as a result of either direct domain relationships (e.g., job demands to work-to-family conflict) or indirect domain relationships (e.g., job demands to family-to-work conflict).

Job demands as a predictor of work-family conflict have been thoroughly researched and established as having a positive relationship with both work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict (DiRenzo, Greenhaus, & Weer, 2011) meaning as demands increase so does work-family conflict. Interestingly, job demands have been found by DiRenzo et al. (2011) to be the primary contributor to family-to-work conflict in higher-level work positions, which is opposed to traditional models that attribute the increase to family demands (Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002). This is

explained as higher-level workers having a greater work domain centrality, which means that increased job demands provide greater risk for the family domain to interfere with the work domain. Therefore, work-family conflict is suggested to be the result of individual appraisal of the importance of the different domains (role centrality), rather than a clear direct relationship between demands. Due to conflicting arguments such as this, it is important to consider the role of job demands in predicting both types of work-family conflict.

Along with traditional job demands that individuals may experience, individuals in same-sex relationships may also experience additional minority-specific stressors that impact how they experience demands in the workplace. Minority groups experience additional stress, beyond general stressors all individuals experience, as a result of stigmatised social identity. In this case, minority stress applies to specific stressors experienced by individuals in same-sex relationships as a result of the relationship composition. These minority-specific stressors can be separated into two categories; distal (more objective stressor) and proximal (more subjective stressors) (Holman, 2018). Several studies have shown that minority-specific stress can impact work and relationships through distal stressors such as experiences of rejection, devaluation, discrimination, and unequal legal recognition, as well as proximal stressors such as fears of rejection, perceived devaluation, and perceived discrimination (Frost et al., 2017). For example, individuals in same-sex relationships may be impacted through hiding their relationship or sexuality from supervisors or colleagues in fear of discrimination and different treatment in the workplace (Frost et al., 2017; Williamson, Beiler-May, Locklear, & Clark, 2017), resulting in additional stress. This additional stress manifests itself as a unique job demand because same-sex individuals need to utilise more resources to hide their

relationships or sexuality in order to function in their job, thus resulting in increased strain-based conflict (Williamson et al., 2017). This strain can then have cross-over effects into the family domain, which exacerbates family-to-work conflict (Williamson et al., 2017). Additional minority-specific stressors mean that individuals in same-sex relationships are at risk of experiencing greater levels of job demands than mixed-sex relationships in terms of additional time and strain, resulting in greater work-family conflict.

Similar to job demands, increased family demands have been associated with increases in family-to-work conflict as well as work-to-family conflict. However, the magnitude of effect does not differ hugely between the impact of family demands on either type of work-family conflict (Byron, 2005), which suggests that family demands may have equal effects on each type of work-family conflict. Differences between same-sex and mixed-sex relationships also occur in the family domain that may result in different levels of work-family conflict. For example, individuals in same-sex relationships may also be impacted through additional stressors in the non-work domain, such as a need to find a safe community to live in, limitations to participation in family events together, and discrepancies between partners' level of comfort with disclosing the relationship publicly, as well as contagion stress in dealing with these stressors (Frost et al., 2017; Holman, 2018). Contagion stress occurs when the stress of one individual causes stress in another. For same-sex relationships, any of the aforementioned stressors experienced by one partner may result in the other experiencing stress. For example, if a partner is stressed about disclosing a relationship in the community they live, the other partner may experience additional stress trying to hide the relationship publicly as a result of their partner's initial concerns. However, in contrast to the extra stressors same-sex relationships

may face, research has established that some family demands and roles do not follow traditional structures for same-sex relationships, such as gender-specific tasks and division of household responsibilities. Instead, individuals in same-sex relationships appear to share household tasks more equally than those in mixed-sex relationships, potentially making their household workloads more evenly distributed between partners (Bauer, 2016). This may counter some potential family time-based stressors by creating an environment where household responsibilities are handled due to capability rather than gender conformity, potentially resulting in fewer family demands for same-sex relationships as compared to mixed-sex relationships.

An explanation as to why demands are important predictors of work-family conflict lies in the role theory and resource drain theory (Hargis, Kotrba, Zhdanova, & Baltes, 2011). Role theory claims that individuals have multiple responsibilities they must fulfil within various roles (e.g., employee, parent, friend, or partner), which require resources such as time and energy (Barnett & Gareis, 2006). Resource drain theory states that the amount of resources an individual can allocate to each role is limited, which means that if an individual uses resources on the responsibilities required by one role they will have a limited capacity to achieve responsibilities in another (Hargis et al., 2011). Therefore, when demands require resources in one domain, individuals are likely to experience some form of conflict as they have limited capacity to complete responsibilities or demands in other roles as a result (Barnett & Gareis, 2006). This is even more prevalent with an increase in dual-career families, where job demands within the family are greater, resulting in role conflict (Elloy & Smith, 2004), and in turn, work-family conflict.

Although other predictors have been established as having an effect on work-family conflict (Byron, 2005; Hargis et al., 2011; Michel et al., 2011), work and

family demands have been found to encompass multiple predictors making it an effective general predictor of potential work-family conflict. Boyar, Maertz, Mosley, and Carr (2008) found that as hours worked, work role conflict, supervisory responsibilities, and income increased, so did perceived job demands. Increased number of children, hours spent caring for children, and family role conflict, as well as being married increased perceived family demands (Boyar et al., 2008). These antecedents of perceived demands focus around individual appraisals of stressors in some aspects as well, which means that work and family demands also capture areas of global antecedents such as personality (Michel et al., 2011).

The conceptual inclusion of appraisals in demands relates back to stressor-strain theory, which proposes that perceived increases in stressors result in a greater amount strain (LaRocco, House, & John R. P. French, 1980). The current measurement of demands aligns with this theory of stressor-strain relationships as it covers a wide variety of stressors that are not uniformly attributed across individuals. For example, one individual may appraise 40 working hours a week as highly demanding, resulting in work-to-family conflict via work interference of the family domain. However, another individual may not appraise this amount of time as overly demanding and therefore would not report high demands or experience work-to-family conflict. Therefore, the inclusion of perceived demands in the current research demand measurements is important for analysing individual demand stressors that may impact experienced levels of work-family conflict.

Impact of social support on work-family conflict

Although demands have been highlighted as an important predictor of work-family conflict, social support has also been shown to be an important predictor of

work-family conflict. Unlike demands, which have been suggested to increase work-family conflict, social support has been found to decrease work-family conflict (Drummond et al., 2017; O'Driscoll, Brough, & Kalliath, 2004). Therefore, it is useful to examine support in order to tease apart potentially ambiguous results with regards to work-family conflict and identify if it is a result of increased demands or decreased support. Including support as a predictor also moves beyond the role theory explanation of work-family conflict previously mentioned, and can be supported by resource theories, such as conservation of resource (COR) theory. COR theory states that a lack of, or threats to, resources result in increased work-family conflict, as insufficient resources or fear of losing resources can cause increased time pressures or strain on individuals (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). This feeds back into further loss of resources, such as energy and time, through struggling to deal with each new conflict, thus causing more conflict (Neto et al., 2016). On the opposite side of this argument, the preservation or addition of resources feeds back into further gains in resources (Hakanen, Peeters, & Perhoniemi, 2011), which limits an individual's experience of work-family conflict. This then feeds back into an ability to gather further resources to protect against work-family conflict. Social support plays a role in this conservation of resources as it has been identified as a considerable resource in organisational literature (Chen, Westman, & Eden, 2009). Therefore, social support should reduce work-family conflict by providing additional resources to protect an individual against conflict.

From the literature surrounding social support and work-family conflict, two types of support appear to have a considerable impact on how work-family conflict is experienced; supervisor support and family support in relation to managing work-family conflict.

Supervisor support in relation to work-family conflict can be defined as behaviours and attitudes enacted by a supervisor and perceived by an employee to effectively manage a balance between work and family responsibilities (Almeida et al., 2016). These behaviours and actions should demonstrate role-modelling behaviours and creative work-family management practices, as well as result in perceived emotional and instrumental support for employees (Hammer, Kossek, Bodner, & Crain, 2013). Carlson and Perrewé (1999) have found that supervisor support can limit perceptions of demands and strains directly related to work-family conflict, and therefore may be an important factor in limiting work-family conflict. This is further supported in a meta analysis on social support and work-family conflict conducted by French, Dumani, Allen, and Shockley (2018), which found that supervisor support was related to decreases in work-to-family conflict, although not to the same extent as broader support at an organisational level. Supervisor support has also been negatively related to levels of family-to-work conflict (Drummond et al., 2017; Michel et al., 2011). However, a study by Seiger and Wiese (2009) found contradictory results to this, stating that supervisor support had no direct effect with work-family conflict, nor did it act as a moderator between strain and work-family conflict. Similarly to demands, differences may exist between same-sex and mixed-sex relationships in the type and amount of support they receive. As previously mentioned, individuals in same-sex relationships may experience minority-specific stressors that causes stress around disclosing sexuality or relationships in the workplace (Williamson et al., 2017). This may result in individuals feeling uncomfortable receiving supervisor support or even experiencing purposefully less support as a result of discrimination.

Family support can be defined in relation to work-family conflict as providing emotional and instrumental support for employees by family members or relationship partners. Emotional support involves an interest in an individuals work life through behaviours and attitudes that express a willingness to listen and talk about work and provide guidance or advice based on understanding and attention (King, Mattimore, King, & Adams, 1995). Instrumental support involves demonstrating behaviours and attitudes that assist with household responsibilities through shared workloads, such as cooking, cleaning, gathering household supplies, or maintaining the household (King et al., 1995). Michel et al. (2011) found that overall, family support is negatively related to family-to-work conflict. When broken into the two forms of family support French et al. (2018) found that both emotional and instrumental family support were related to lower levels of family-to-work conflict. However, family support – instrumental – has been found to relate to higher levels work-to-family conflict (French et al., 2018; Kirrane & Buckley, 2004) unlike family support – emotional –, which is related to lower levels of work-to-family conflict (French et al., 2018). In terms of differences in family support between same-sex and mixed-sex relationships, the more equal division of household jobs in same-sex relationships (Bauer, 2016) may manifest itself as a stronger form of family support – instrumental – as it aligns with the behaviours and attitudes of instrumental support (King et al., 1995). It has also been found that perceived support for the relationship in a social context varies between same-sex and mixed-sex relationships. Mixed-sex relationships are more likely to highlight family as support providers, whereas same-sex relationships are less likely to highlight the family as the primary supporters of the relationship and more likely to rely on friendship support (Kurdek, 2005). This difference in perceived support is one of the largest differences between same-sex and mixed-sex

relationships and may be attributed to unique social stressors for same-sex relationships, such as acceptance of the relationship, which can cause individuals in same-sex relationships to seek support from chosen friendships they know will accept the relationships and provide the needed support (Blair & Holmberg, 2008; Kurdek, 2005). A lack of support from the family, as well as the stress of limited participation in family events, may also result in greater time- and strain-based conflict for individuals in same-sex relationships. While division of labour in same-sex relationships may be more equal, the responsibilities for support that are typically shared among extended family and often enjoyed by mixed-sex relationships, such as caring for children, moving home, or providing a place to relax, may not be as present for same-sex relationships, resulting in greater time- and/or strain-based family conflict.

Due to the conflicting nature of results surrounding the effects of social support in work-family conflict models, it seems reasonable to consider social support in the current study as an antecedent to work-family conflict without assuming a specific direction of effect.

Outcomes of work-family conflict

The outcomes of work-family conflict have been shown to have numerous negative effects and can be separated into three outcome categories; work-related, family-related, and global outcomes (Amstad et al., 2011). Work-related outcomes relate specifically to the work domain and have been highlighted to include a variety of individual and organisational outcomes (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000). These include decreased job and career satisfaction, fewer organisational citizenship behaviours via lower organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Foote & Li-

Ping, 2008), lower work performance via work withdrawal (Wasti, 2005), increased employee turnover or intentions to leave (Allen et al., 2000; Annor & Burchell, 2018) and increased organisational costs due to a loss of trained individuals (Batt & Valcour, 2003). Family-related outcomes include decreased marital satisfaction, family satisfaction, and family-related performance, as well as increased family-related stress (Amstad et al., 2011). Global outcomes include decreases in mental and physical health (Minnotte & Yucel, 2018), such as, increased depression (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992), anxiety, substance abuse, health problems, general stress, and burnout/exhaustion, as well as decreased life satisfaction (Allen et al., 2000; Amstad et al., 2011). Although each of these outcomes can be the result of domain-specific issues, literature suggests that the conceptualisation of outcomes need to include both work and family domains or general well-being indicators, such as satisfaction with work-family balance (Amstad et al., 2011; Haun & Dormann, 2016). By focusing on the general well-being indicator of satisfaction with work-family balance, the current study aims to encompass a variety of work-family conflict outcomes under a single measure as a predictor of these outcomes.

The Current Study

The accumulation of recent research suggests that same-sex relationships vary in unique ways from traditional family dynamics in relation to work stressors and interactions, as well as family demand structures. However, despite this increase in knowledge about how same-sex relationships may differ in the workplace and household stressors and responsibilities, as well as a positive social shift in recognising same-sex relationships, there has been no research to analyse whether traditional predictors of work-family conflict can be generalised to individuals in

same-sex relationships. It is also important to consider the role of gender in same-sex relationships, as male-male relationships may have different experiences from female-female relationships. Gender differences have been explored in mixed-sex relationships previously (Shockley, Shen, DeNunzio, Arvan, & Knudsen, 2017), however, the dynamics of same-sex relationships may differ in relation to the demands and support experienced by individuals when the relationship compromises of a single gender. Therefore, differentiating between genders as a moderator in the theoretical model is an important factor.

This study aims to explore how demands and support affect work-family conflict, and in turn, how work-family conflict affects satisfaction with work-family balance in relationships with different relationship compositions and genders. The overall model (Figure 1) presents five predictors onto work-family conflict, and satisfaction with work-family balance as a result of work-family conflict.

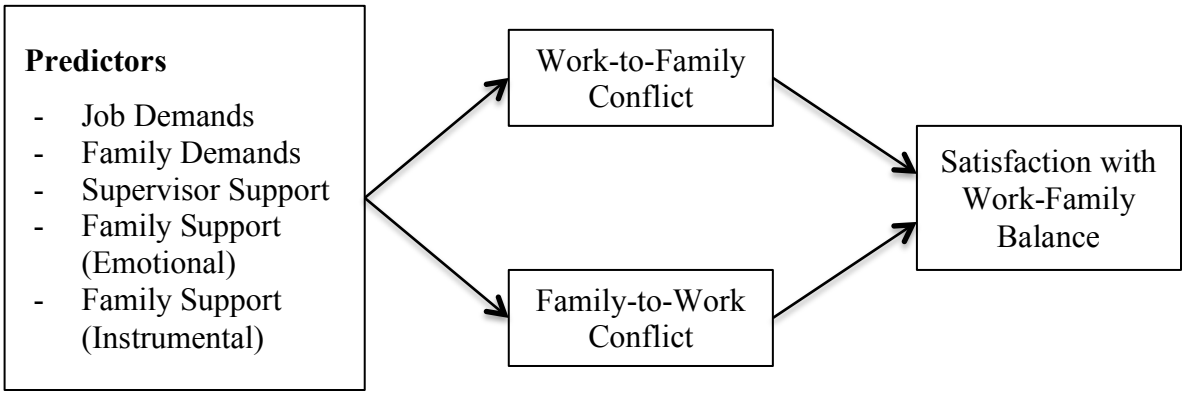

Figure 1. Overall model of potential antecedents of work-family conflict and the measured outcomes of conflict

The overall model is broken into four smaller sub-models for each path to examine the moderating effect of relationship composition. Relationship composition

is operationally defined as the three-way moderation interaction between relationship type (mix-sex, same-sex) and gender (male, female). Work-family conflict differentiates into two sub-models focusing on how gender and relationship composition moderates the relationship between demands and support predictors and work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict outcomes. The model examining work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict is shown in Figure 2.

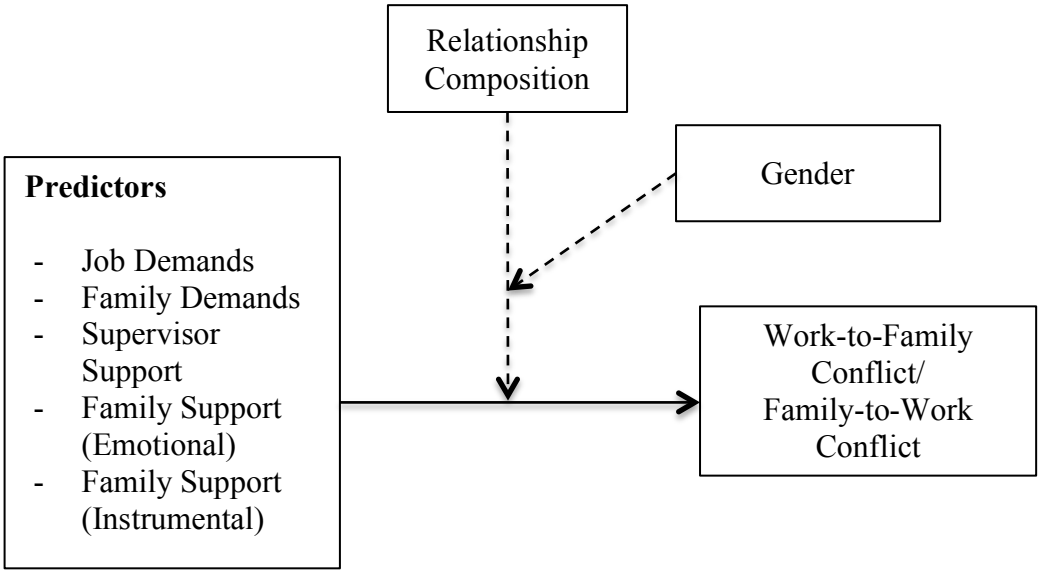

Figure 2. Three-way moderation of relationship composition and gender on how each predictor affects work-to-family conflict or family-to-work conflict. When predicting work-to-family conflict, family-to-work conflict will be included as a covariate, and vice versa, along with the other predictors not being measured

The final model looks at how relationship composition and gender moderates the effects of work-family conflict on satisfaction with work-family balance outcomes, as shown in Figure 3.

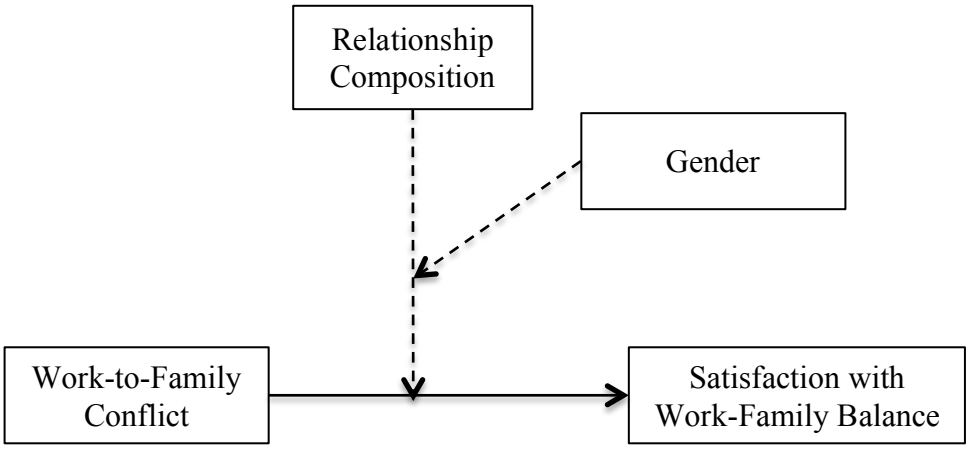

Figure 3. An example of the three-way moderation of relationship composition and gender on how conflict effects satisfaction with work-family balance. The same model exists for both forms of work-family conflict

Research questions

Based on the literature, the current study aims to explore the following questions as central to the research:

RQ1. Does relationship composition and/or gender moderate the effects of predictors on work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict?

RQ2. Does relationship composition and/or gender moderate the effects of work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict on satisfaction with work-family balance outcomes?

RQ3. Do differences exist between same-sex, mixed-sex, men, and women groups in overall work-to-family conflict, family-to-work-conflict, and satisfaction with work-family balance?

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited over a six-week period through social media and University of Canterbury alumni networks, as well as approaching private organisations. Response rate was not estimated, as this is difficult to achieve with the sampling technique utilised. 178 participants completed the survey, however, 43 were excluded from analysis due to being single or not responding to all the measured variables. Of the remaining 135 participants 56 were male (41.5%) and 79 were female (58.5%). No participants identified as gender diverse. 31 out of the 135 participants were in a relationship with a same-sex partner (13 same-sex male relationships and 18 same-sex female relationships). The mean age was 42 years (SD = 11.9; range = 21-71 years). Participants were from a variety of occupational and educational backgrounds, living and working in New Zealand.

Procedure

Participants were recruited by sending emails to organisations requesting a further email invite be sent out to employees. This invite (Appendix A) was a shortened version of the information sheet (Appendix B). Organisations were also approached to recruit participants from their membership via social media and emails containing the same information sent out in the employee invite.

Participants were informed that participation in the survey contributed to the research being undertaken as part of a Masters of Science in Applied Psychology dissertation at the University of Canterbury, as well as part of a larger international study known as the "International Study of Work and Family (ISWAF)". They were also ensured that all information gathered from the research was confidential. To

begin the survey, participants followed a link to the Qualtrics website that was used to run the survey. Participants were provided with an information sheet outlining the purpose of the survey and the general content. In order to progress with the survey participants had to check a box indicating they understood the information provided and consented to participate in the survey and then click the next button. The first section of the survey asked demographic questions, such as gender, age, relationship status, ethnicity, education, and occupation. Participants then completed the rest of the survey questions relating to the measures of the study. At the end of the survey participants were given the option to partake in a follow-up survey for future analysis (Appendix D). 98 participants agreed to partake in a follow-up survey.

Measures

A full version of the survey can be found in Appendix C. Some scales have been shortened in order to avoid issues of excessive survey length and to remove irrelevant sections of the scales to the current study. To ensure that the dimensionality of each scale measuring latent variables conformed to expectations, an exploratory factor analysis was carried out in SPSS using Principle Axis Factoring, an Oblimin rotation with Kaiser Normalisation, and an eigenvalue criterion of greater than 1.0. This was done as the scales were being used in a different context from how they were developed and were shortened versions of the original scales. All scales loaded onto the expected factors.

Relationship composition. Relationship composition was measured by asking for participants' gender identity as well as their partners' gender identity. This was done to avoid issues with grouping participants under homosexual labels, as some individuals may be in a current same-sex relationship but not identify as gay or

lesbian (Blair & Holmberg, 2008). Relationship composition was coded on a scale of 0 to 1 (same-sex = 0 and mixed-sex = 1).

Gender. Gender was measured by asking participants to indicate what gender they identified with. Gender was coded on a scale of 0 to 2 (Male = 0, female = 1, and gender diverse = 2), however, after data exclusions due to missing data no participants identified as gender diverse.

Job demands (shortened). Job demands were measured utilising a shortened version of the Swedish Demand-Control-Support Questionnaire (DCSQ) developed by Sanne, Torp, Mykletun, and Dahl (2005). The original DCSQ contained 17 items and was developed to measure the workplace environment in relation to psychological demands, decision latitude, and social support. The shortened version contains three out of the five original items measuring psychological job demands. Responses are measured on a 5-point scale ranging from (1) never to (5) very often. A sample item is "Does your job require you to work very fast?" High scores indicate high levels of job demands. The scale has a Cronbach alpha value of .77. Final composite scores were derived using item-level means.

Family demands (shortened). Family demands were measured utilising a shortened version of parental demands developed by Aryee, Luk, Leung, and Lo (1999). The shortened version contains two out of the five original items. Responses are measured on a 5-point scale ranging from (1) never to (5) very often. A sample item is "How often do you feel overwhelmed by the demands of your family?" Items have been changed in the same manner as changes made by Biggs and Brough (2005) to serve the purpose of the current research focus. For example, the item "How often do you feel overwhelmed by the demands of *your family*?" has been changed from "How often do you feel overwhelmed by the demands of *parenting*?" High scores

indicate high levels of family demands. The scale has a Cronbach alpha value of .88. Final composite scores were derived using item-level means.

Supervisor support (shortened). Supervisor support was measured using the family supportive supervisor behaviour short form (Hammer et al., 2013), which covers supervisor emotional support, role modelling, instrumental support, and creative work-family management. The original scale contained 14 items aimed at assessing the four previously mentioned categories of support. The shortened scale contains four items measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. A sample item is " My supervisor makes me feel comfortable talking to him/her about my conflicts between work and non-work." The scale has a Cronbach alpha value of .91. Final composite scores were derived using item-level means.

Family support, emotional and instrumental (shortened). Family support was measured using a shortened version by Shockley and Allen (2013), which measures a total of 6 items (three items are designed to measure family support – emotional – and three items measure family support – instrumental). Responses to items are measured utilising a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. A sample item for family support – emotional – is "When I am frustrated by my work, someone in my family tries to understand". High scores indicate high levels of family support – emotional. A sample item for family support – instrumental – is "Members of my family help me with routine household tasks". High scores indicate high levels of family support – instrumental. Cronbach alpha values for family support – instrumental – and family support – emotional – are .78 and .83 respectively. Final composite scores for family support – emotional – and family support – instrumental – were derived using item-level means.

Work-family conflict (shortened). Work-family conflict was measured using a shortened version by Carlson et al. (2000), which only measures time- and strain-based conflict and not behaviour-based conflict. A shortened version of the survey is being utilised for reasons aforementioned in the introduction that align with the research questions. The scale also acknowledges the dual direction of conflict relationships breaking the scale into sections measuring work-to-family and family-to-work conflict. The scale contains 11 items (six items designed to measure work-to-family conflict and five items to measure family-to-work conflict) measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. A sample item for work-to-family conflict is "My work keeps me from my family activities more than I would like." High scores indicate high levels of work interference in the family domain resulting in conflict. A sample item for family-to-work conflict is "Due to stress at home, I am often preoccupied with family matters at work." High scores indicate high levels of family interference in the work domain resulting in conflict. Cronbach alpha values for work-to-family and family-to-work are .91 and .84 respectively. Final composite scores for work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict were derived using item-level means.

Satisfaction with work-family balance. Satisfaction with work-family balance was measured using a scale designed by Valcour (2007) to create a more reliable measure of work-family balance that does not focus on a lack of conflict, as well as providing a non-directional holistic measure. This scale is highly relevant to the current study as the wording of items have been designed to be relevant to respondents with or without children and living in traditional or non-traditional family structures, such as same-sex relationships. The scale contains five items measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) very dissatisfied to (5) very

satisfied. A sample item is “How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with how well your work life and personal or family life fit together?” High scores indicate a high level of satisfaction with work-family balance. The scale has a Cronbach alpha of .95. Final composite scores were derived using item-level means.

Results

Dataset preparation

Prior to analysis, a Little’s MCAR test was run and found that the data was missing completely at random ($p = .10$). Therefore, the use of listwise exclusion for analysis was acceptable. Data from 43 participants were removed during analysis, via listwise exclusions, due to incomplete responses or not meeting the requirement of being in a relationship. Data for relationship status was compiled from questions about participant gender and their partners and assigned a unique variable code.

Statistical analysis

Correlations

Descriptive statistics and correlations for the 10 measured variables are shown in Table 1. A point-biserial correlation was run for all relationships with the categorical variables gender and relationship composition involved.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics and correlations for study variables*

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.Gender[a]	0.59	0.49									
2.Relationship Composition[b]	0.77	0.42	.01[c]								
3.Job Demands	3.47	0.73	.08[c]	.01[c]							
4.Family Demands	2.50	1.06	.20*[c]	.06[c]	.15						
5.Supervisor Support	3.68	1.07	.02[c]	-.05[c]	-.34**	-.24**					
6.Family Support – Emotional	3.93	0.80	.13[c]	-.11[c]	.09	-.17*	.15				
7.Family Support – Instrumental	3.89	0.91	-.12[c]	-.05[c]	.04	-.32**	.19*	.45**			
8.Work-to-Family Conflict	2.96	0.98	.11[c]	-.13[c]	.56**	.38**	-.44**	-.01	-.02		
9.Family-to-Work Conflict	2.11	0.80	.08[c]	-.04[c]	.16	.49**	-.22**	-.14	-.21*	.41**	
10. Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance	3.43	0.95	-.10[c]	.14[c]	-.43**	-.32**	.51**	.07	.11	-.66**	-.26**

Note. [a]Gender: 0 = *male*, 1 = *female*. [b]Relationship Composition: 0 = *same-sex partner*, 1 = *mixed-sex partner*. [c]Correlatitions with a point-biserial variable (either gender or relationship composition)

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Listwise $n = 135$

Moderation regression

Moderation regression analyses were conducted using Model 3 of the PROCESS v3.1 macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2013). All variables were centred using the option in the PROCESS macro, with the exception of gender and relationship composition as these already contained a meaningful zero value. P-values have been reported as significant < .10 following the recommendation of Aguinis and Vandenberg (2014), who identifies small sample sizes a potential issue for power. In order to avoid issues of low statistical power, the current analysis utilises a higher p-value to increase power. Following the recommendations of Aguinis and Vandenberg (2014) the use of a higher p-value cut-off has been evaluated against the implications of a type I error (stating that difference do exist between same-sex and mixed-sex relationships and the measured variables when they do not) versus a type II error (stating that no difference exists between same-sex and mixed-sex relationships and the measured variables when in reality they do) and has been deemed an acceptable risk, as stating that a relationship exists when it does not has fewer implications for individuals than falsely rejecting a relationship that does exist.

Work-to-family conflict

Table 2 presents the results for all the moderated regression analyses onto work-to-family conflict. Results suggest that relationship composition and gender interacted with family support – instrumental – to predict work-to-family conflict. This is shown by a statistically significant model, $R^2 = .55$, $F(12,122) = 12.34$, $p = .00$, with an R squared change = .01, F change (1,122) = 2.75, $p = .10$ for the three-way interaction. These results show that the three-way interaction explains 1.0% of the variance in work-to-family conflict outcomes. Figure 4 shows the plotted interaction, which plots work-to-family conflict at high (+ 1 SD) and low (- 1 SD) levels of family support – instrumental. The overall results of this

interaction show that the effect of family support – instrumental – is larger for same-sex women and mixed-sex men. All other moderation regression analyses onto work-to-family conflict yielded inconclusive data, suggesting that relationship composition and gender do not play a moderating role in predicting work-to-family conflict for job demands, family demands, supervisor support, or family support – emotional.

Family-to-work conflict

Table 3 presents the results for all the moderated regression analyses onto family-to-work conflict. Results suggest that gender interacted with family support – emotional – to predict family-to-work conflict, conditional on same-sex relationships, $F(12,122) = 3.17$, $p = .08$, as no interaction was found between mixed-sex relationships, $F(12,122) = 0.00$, $p = .95$. Figure 5 shows the plotted interaction, which plots family-to-work conflict at high (+ 1 SD) and low (- 1 SD) levels of family support – emotional. All other moderation regression analyses onto family-to-work conflict yielded inconclusive data, suggesting that relationship composition and gender has no moderating effect on the relationship between job demands, family demands, supervisor support, family support – emotional, or family support – instrumental, and family-to-work conflict.

Table 2. *Three-way moderation regression of demand and support predictors onto work-to-family conflict outcome*

Predictor Variable	Job demands		Family Demands		Supervisor Support		Family Support – Emotional		Family Support – Instrumental	
	B	*p*	B	*p*	B	*p*	B	*p*	B	*p*
Covariates										
Job Demands	0.33	.24	0.56	.00*	0.56	.00*	0.56	.00*	0.58	.00*
Family Demands	0.19	.01*	0.13	.62	0.17	.02*	0.18	.01*	0.17	.01*
Supervisor Support	-0.20	.00*	-0.22	.00*	-0.04	0.93	-0.21	.00*	-0.21	.00*
Family Support – Emotional	-0.04	.62	-0.03	.74	-0.03	.75	-0.17	.58	-0.00	.99
Family Support – Instrumental	0.14	.08+	0.14	.09+	0.13	.10+	0.13	.14	0.14	.61
Family-to-Work Conflict	0.25	.01*	0.26	.00*	0.25	.01*	0.26	.00*	0.26	.00*
Interaction Terms										
Predictor × Gender	0.18	.62	0.07	.81	-0.32	.46	0.28	.48	0.29	.41
Predictor × Relationship	0.41	.22	0.16	.58	-0.09	.84	0.10	.78	0.20	.51
Gender × Relationship	-0.31	.30	-0.29	.37	-0.33	.32	-0.21	.49	-0.22	.45
Predictor × Gender × Relationship	-0.38	.36	-0.21	.53	0.19	.68	-0.21	.62	-0.64	.10+

Note: All covariates and predictors were centred at their means. 90% Bootstrap confidence intervals (CI) were calculated for robustness, p-values have been reported to save space, as they were consistent with the CI.

+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$. Listwise $n = 135$

Table 3. *Three-way moderation regression of demand and support predictors onto family-to-work conflict outcome*

Predictor Variable	Job demands		Family Demands		Supervisor Support		Family Support - Emotional		Family Support - Instrumental	
	B	*p*	B	*p*	B	*p*	B	*p*	B	*p*
Covariates										
Job Demands	0.08	.76	-0.06	.54	-0.06	.58	-0.07	.50	-0.07	.47
Family Demands	0.27	.00*	0.37	.13	0.29	.00*	0.27	.00*	0.26	.00*
Supervisor Support	-0.02	.79	0.00	.97	0.24	.54	0.01	.92	-0.00	.98
Family Support – Emotional	-0.03	.75	-0.04	.67	-0.03	.75	0.21	.48	-0.05	.57
Family Support – Instrumental	-0.06	.45	-0.08	.28	-0.08	.33	-0.74	.36	0.19	.47
Work-to-Family Conflict	0.24	.01*	0.24	.00*	0.24	.01*	0.24	.00*	0.26	.00*
Interaction Terms										
Predictor × Gender	0.23	.51	-0.02	.93	-0.42	.32	-0.66	.08+	-0.24	.48
Predictor × Relationship	-0.13	.69	-0.23	.42	-0.33	.95	-0.20	.54	-0.46	.13
Gender × Relationship	0.08	.77	0.32	.79	-0.06	.40	-0.12	.68	-0.03	.91
Predictor × Gender × Relationship	-0.39	.33	0.32	.65	0.60	.85	0.65	.12	0.48	.21

Note: All covariates and predictors were centred at their means. 90% Bootstrap confidence intervals (CI) were calculated for robustness, p-values have been reported to save space, as they were consistent with the CI.

+ $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$. Listwise $n = 135$

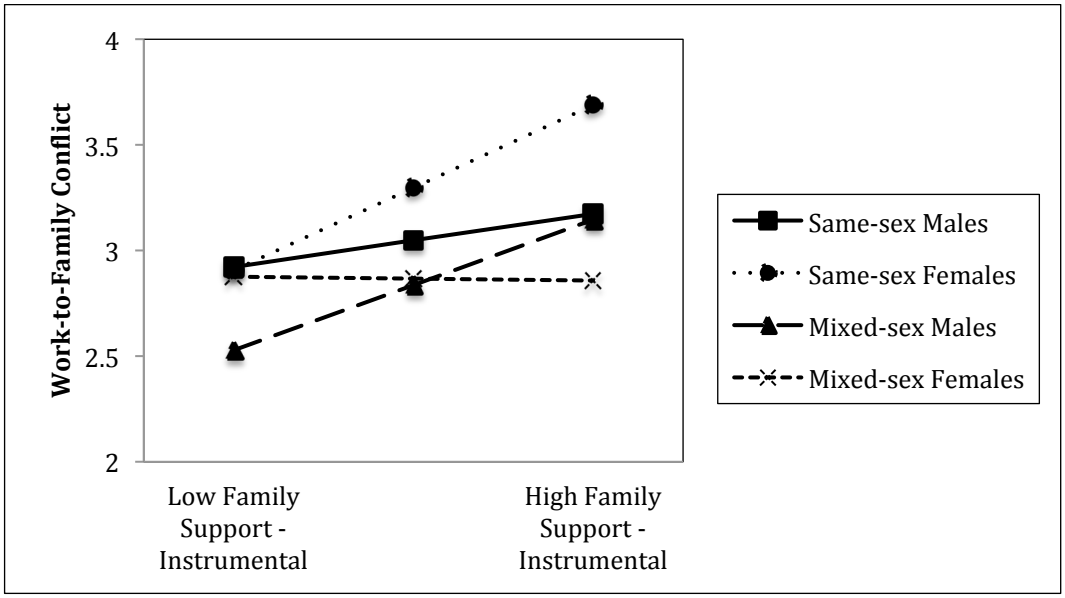

Figure 4. Interaction effect between family support – instrumental – and work-to-family conflict, with a moderating effect of gender and relationship composition

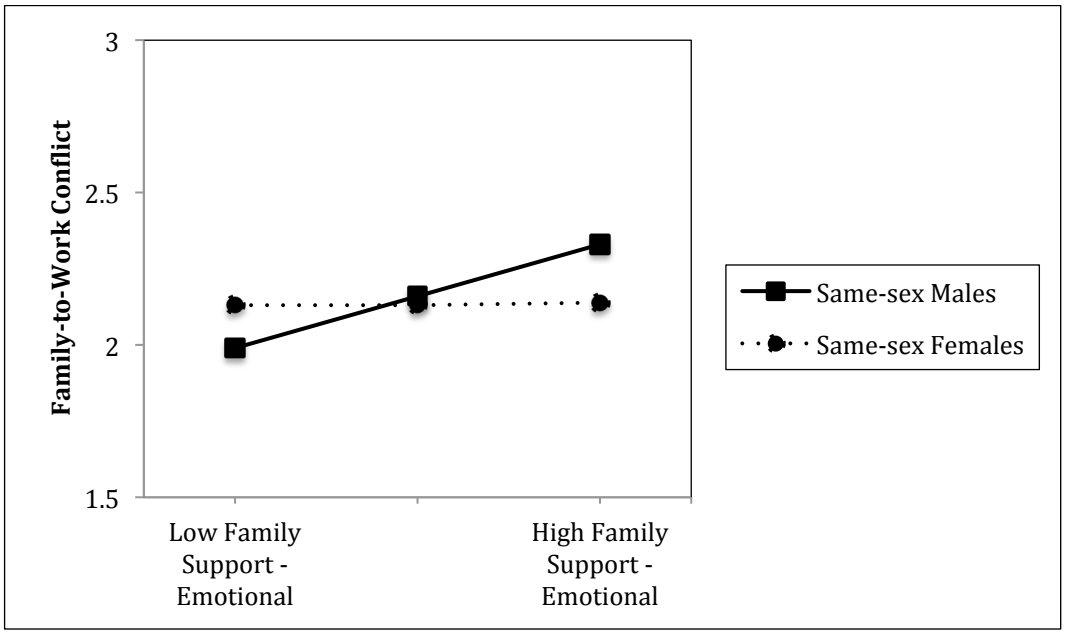

Figure 5. Interaction effect between family support – emotional – and work-to-family conflict, conditional on same-sex relationship

Satisfaction with work-family balance

Table 4 presents the results for the moderated regression analyses onto satisfaction with work-family balance for work-to-family and family-to-work conflict predictors. Results do not show any statistically significant interactions between relationship composition and gender onto work-to-family or family-to-work conflict in predicting satisfaction with work-family balance.

Table 4. *Three-way moderation regression of work-family conflict onto satisfaction with work-family balance outcome*

Predictor Variable	Work-to-Family Conflict		Family-to-Work Conflict	
	B	*p*	B	*p*
Covariates				
Work-to-Family Conflict	-0.78	.01*	-0.47	.00*
Family-to-Work Conflict	0.07	.45	0.26	.51
Job Demands	-0.08	.42	-0.09	.41
Family Demands	-0.07	.33	-0.05	.47
Supervisor Support	0.25	.00*	0.23	.00*
Family Support – Emotional	0.02	.83	0.01	.89
Family Support – Instrumental	0.04	.63	0.05	.55
Interaction Terms				
Predictor × Gender	0.33	.29	-0.34	.42
Predictor × Relationship	0.23	.44	-0.03	.95
Gender × Relationship	-0.02	.95	0.02	.95
Predictor × Gender × Relationship	-0.15	.67	0.14	.77

Note: All covariates and predictors were centred at their means. 90% Bootstrap confidence intervals (CI) were calculated for robustness, p-values have been reported to save space, as they were consistent with the CI.
+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$. Listwise $n = 135$

Simple comparison of means

An additional two-way ANOVA analysis was run in order to identify any differences in levels of work-family conflict and satisfaction with work-family balance between the four groups (same-sex men, same-sex women, mixed-sex men, and mixed-sex women). A Levene's Test of equality of error variances was run and failed to reject the null hypothesis for each outcome, so analysis continued with the assumption of homogeneity of variances.

Simple main effect analysis shows that there was a statistically significant difference between gender in terms of work-to-family conflict and satisfaction with work-family balance. Group means for work-to-family conflict, family-to-work conflict, and satisfaction with work family balance are shown in Table 5. Males experience statistically significant lower levels of work-to-family conflict ($F(1,134) = 3.11$, $p = .08$) and statistically significant higher levels of satisfaction with work-family balance ($F(1,134) = 2.97$, $p = .09$). No statistically significant differences were found between gender and family-to-work conflict ($F(1,134) = 1.75$, $p = .19$). Simple main effects also showed no statistically significant differences between relationship composition and work-to-family conflict ($F(1,134) = 2.38$, $p = .13$), family-to-work conflict ($F(1,134) = 0.60$, $p = .44$), and satisfaction with work-family balance ($F(1,134) = 1.87$, $p = .17$).

Table 5. *Descriptive group means for each of the measured outcomes*

Group	Work-to-family conflict (*M*)	Family-to-work conflict (*M*)	Satisfaction with work-family balance (*M*)
Same-sex men	2.86	2.04	3.54
Same-sex women	3.50	2.38	2.94
Mixed-sex men	2.87	2.05	3.55
Mixed-sex women	2.90	2.13	3.47

Discussion

The current study aimed to provide insight into a relatively unexplored area of work-family conflict in order to inform organisations of factors that need considering for diverse employee wellbeing practices, as well as encourage further research into same-sex relationships and the field of employee wellbeing. The research was conducted in an exploratory manner, providing three general research questions. Research question one sought to explore whether relationship composition and/or gender interacted with predictors to influence experienced levels of work-to-family or family-to-work conflict. Research question two sought to explore if the interaction of relationship composition and/or gender affected the relationship between work-family conflict and satisfaction with work-family balance. Finally, research question three sought to examine whether differences in either work-family conflict or satisfaction with work-family balance occur between the four research groups. Results found partial support for research question one and three. Interaction effects were found for both work-to-family and family-to-work conflict, supporting research question one, and simple main effects were found between groups, supporting research question three. Each outcome is individually discussed below.

Overall findings

Work-to-family conflict

Research question one was partially supported, as there was a three-way interaction effect of relationship composition and gender found between instrumental family support and work-to-family conflict. Interestingly, this relationship showed no significant effect for same-sex men or mixed-sex women but had a significant positive effect among same-sex women and mixed-sex men; meaning that those with

higher levels of instrumental family support also had higher levels work-to-family conflict in these two groups. This result appears contradictory to many assumptions as support was suggested to decrease work-family conflict (Drummond et al., 2017; Pluut, Ilies, Curşeu, & Liu, 2018). A potential explanation as to why those with higher levels work-to-family conflict have higher levels of instrumental family support may be that knowing one's family was providing extra time and resources to support the family domain resulted in guilt, and therefore conflict, as the work domain interfered with the ability to contribute in the family domain.

The positive relationship between work-to-family conflict and instrumental family support in same-sex women may be the result of gender differences between men and women in regards to traditional social expectations on who should provide for the family through work and who should remain at home and take care of the family domain, which may be exacerbated in same-sex relationships. In general women tend to experience greater levels of work-to-family conflict than men, which has been interpreted as the result of women being required to work to the same capacity as men but also having the social pressure of traditional gender roles in the family domain (Cinamon & Rich, 2002; Van Veldhoven & Beijer, 2012). This means that women are expected to, or value, family domains more importantly, and therefore, experience greater levels of work interfering with family roles, resulting in conflict. This can be further justified by examining societal expectations of static gender roles despite increased gender representation in the workforce. Hagqvist et al. (2017) found that countries with higher support for women employment resulted in higher levels of work-family conflict as opposed to countries that supported traditional gender roles and lower equality for women in the workplace, demonstrating that women experience dual expectations of maintaining the family

domain as well as working, resulting in work-to-family conflict. These explanations may also explain the simple main effect of gender on work-to-family conflict found in the comparison of means analysis.

However, the argument that women experience more work-to-family conflict than men does not explain why mixed-sex men also experienced higher levels of work-to-family conflict in relation to higher levels of instrumental family support. Instead, this may be explained by looking at the relationship as work-to-family conflict causing increased instrumental family support in mixed-sex males. Men typically provide instrumental support over emotional support (Matud, Ibáñez, Bethencourt, Marrero, & Carballeira, 2003), however, if work-to-family conflict increases, the female partner in the relationship may be required to provide more instrumental family support to cover tasks in the family domain that the male is not able to assist with. This aligns with the results that show mixed-sex men having a noticeably lower level of instrumental family support than other groups when work-to-family conflict is low. The reason that same-sex men and mixed-sex women do not experience higher levels of work-to-family conflict with higher levels of instrumental family support may be that for same-sex men the requirement and acceptance of instrumental family support is more consistent due to a more likely equal division of household responsibilities (Bauer, 2016), and for mixed-sex women their male partner is likely to be perceived as providing greater levels of instrumental family support as a preference of support than female counterparts in mixed-sex male relationship (Drummond et al., 2017; Matud et al., 2003).

Family-to-work conflict

A statistically significant conditional interaction was found between emotional family support and family-to-work conflict, demonstrating further partial

support for research question one. The conditional interaction found that gender was a moderating factor on the relationship between emotional family support and family-to-work conflict, but only for same-sex relationships. For same-sex relationships, male-male relationships appear to show a positive relationship between family-to-work conflict and emotional family support as opposed to female-female relationships, which show no difference in family-to-work conflict with higher levels of emotional family support. This may be explained that females more consistently demonstrate emotional family support than males (Van Daalen, Sanders, & Willemsen, 2005), which may mean family-to-work conflict is not overly affected by changes in emotional family support. Interestingly, similar to instrumental family support and work-to-family conflict, there is a positive relationship between family-to-work conflict and emotional family support for same-sex males, which contradicts research that suggests family support should decrease work-family conflict (French et al., 2018; Michel et al., 2011). This could be explained as a higher level of emotional family support increases the importance of the family domain for same-sex male relationships, thus creating conflict with the work domain. However, it may also be that same-sex male relationships are more reactive with emotional family support when family-to-work conflict increases as a way to manage the conflict.

The lack of a main effect of gender aligns with previous research into gender differences of work-family conflict, which has found that only marginal differences occur between men and women in relation to experiences of work-family conflict in respect to dual-earning partners, parents, and comparisons of working the same job, and that overall work-family conflict is more similar than different between men and women (Shockley et al., 2017). In relation to differences between same-sex and mixed-sex relationships, it may be that the differences in stressors and support

counterbalance for both types of relationship, thus resulting in no statistically significant difference between the two groups in relation to experiences of family-to-work conflict. However, the difference within same-sex relationships indicates same-sex relationships do provide some form of unique relationship between emotional family support and family-to-work conflict.

Satisfaction with work-family balance

No support for research question two was found as no significant interaction effect of relationship composition and/or gender was identified between work-family conflict and satisfaction with work-family balance. However, the comparison of means analysis indicated that gender had a simple main effect on outcomes, which provides support for research question three. The results suggest that men in general experience higher levels of satisfaction with work-family balance than women. This may be due to the fact that gender also showed a simple main effect for work-to-family conflict, with men experiencing less work-to-family conflict than women. Therefore, it may be assumed that men experience greater satisfaction with work-family balance as a result of less work-to-family conflict, as higher levels of work-to-family conflict have been shown to be related to lower levels of satisfaction with work-family balance (Carlson & Perrewé, 1999). However, this assumption would need further evidence to support it as the inverse relationship may not be true and a lack of conflict does not necessarily imply increased satisfaction in work-family balance as it is a multifaceted variable.

Theoretical implications

A theoretical implication that the current research has for research into same-sex relationships and work-family conflict is that differences appear to exist between

same-sex and mixed-sex relationships in regards to family support predictors. Previous research has found that family support is an important factor in influencing individuals experiences of work-family conflict with emotional family support relating to lower levels of work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict, and instrumental family support relating to higher work-to-family conflict and lower family-to-work conflict (French et al., 2018). The current research aligns with the results of French et al. (2018) for higher levels of instrumental family support showing higher levels of work-to-family conflict, however, it challenges the suggestion that emotional family support relates to lower levels of family-to-work conflict, as same-sex males were shown to have higher levels of family-to-work conflict with higher levels of emotional family support. This may be a unique relationship between the two variables for same-sex relationships, as this relationship was not found for mixed-sex relationships.

An additional theoretical implication is that the results provide evidence for the argument of whether social support is a main effect or a buffer on work-family conflict. Previous research has argued that social support can act as either a main effect or a buffer of work-to-family conflict (Cohen & Wills, 1985). The main effect model of social support suggests that social support has a direct effect on the baseline amount of conflict that occurs through increasing stress perception thresholds, but does not stop conflict arising when additional stressors such as demands and ambiguity increase (Seiger & Wiese, 2009; Shockley & Allen, 2013). The buffer effect model of social support suggests that social support is more responsive to increases in additional stressors and can minimise the impact of stressors on work-family conflict directly rather than only lowering the baseline of conflict, which is supported by Pluut et al. (2018). However, it is noted that the buffering effects of

social support are reliant on when social support is available relative to when increased stressors occur. The current research appears to be more supportive of the main effect model as the buffer model would not account for social support to be related to higher levels of work-to-family conflict, which instrumental family support was found to do for mixed-sex males and same-sex females. A similar relationship of higher family-to-work conflict and emotional family support was also found for same-sex males, which also cannot be accounted for by the buffer effect model. However, further research would be needed relating specifically to research questions surrounding the effect debate to draw any sound conclusions.

Practical applications

The increased focus on relationship diversity in research has also resulted in applied organisational practices aimed at improving overall employee wellbeing and organisational outcomes. Such practices and outcomes include the adoption or creation of Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) roles (Shi, Pathak, Song, & Hoskisson, 2018), improved operating performance and stock values (Li, 2013), improved overall wellbeing, and decreased discrimination (Lloren & Parini, 2017).

The current study provides further information to suggest some differences do exist between same-sex and mixed-sex relationships, which should further encourage organisational uptake of diversity positions and practices to improve employee wellbeing and organisational outcomes. This may be further applied to current diversity agendas in New Zealand, which focus on female diversity in male-dominated industries (The Diversity Agenda, 2018), to also include same-sex relationship minorities. Practices that lower the need for instrumental support for same-sex females may be an additional component for the diversity agenda to

implement in order to avoid increased instrumental family support strains on families, which are related to higher levels of work-to-family conflict. This may be necessary as attempts to push a diversity agenda for individuals may have an initial push back of additional stressors on employees.

A further consideration organisations could take from the current research is the potential indirect consequences of higher emotional family support for same-sex male relationships and family-to-work conflict. When an individual experiences higher levels of family-to-work conflict, their partner or family are required to provide additional emotional support to manage this conflict, which may cause emotional burnout on the partner or family. This burnout, in turn, may result in contagion stress onto the individual requiring additional emotional family support, which then manifests in negative organisational outcomes. Therefore, organisations could look into creating practices that help employees manage contagion stress.

Limitations

The evidence of this research needs to also be considered alongside some of its limitations in methodology. One methodological limitation is the reliance on only self-reported data, which can be open to issues of common method variance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) in the form of social desirability biases. The social desirability bias holds that individuals may provide false responses that they believe to be more socially desirable rather than what they actually believe or how they feel (Krumpal, 2011). Although the current study aims to limit this with the emphasis on confidentiality, individuals in same-sex relationships may be more prone to over or understating actual responses to avoid confronting challenge's that may be present due to their relationship and minority-specific stress. However, this is

difficult to avoid, as the information gathered cannot necessarily be acquired by asking others about it. Future research may be able to address this issue by gathering information on work-family conflict from both individuals in the relationship. This could provide a combined view of individual experiences that are shared within the relationship in order to limit the effects of social desirability biases.

Another limitation of the study is that cross-sectional designs cannot predict causality. However, the relationship composition and gender variables can be assumed to be moderators due to the categorical nature of relationship composition and gender. In the case of the theorised predictors and outcomes, analyses cannot confirm the direction of the relationship. For example, as previously mentioned, although there is a statistically significant positive relationship between work-to-family conflict and instrumental family support for mixed-sex men, it may be the case that work-to-family conflict is predicting instrumental family support rather than instrumental family support predicting work-to-family conflict. Another example of this is the noticeably large amount of work-to-family conflict same-sex women experience with higher levels of instrumental family support. Although the aforementioned rational for the results may explain this relationship, it may be that same-sex women experience higher levels of instrumental family support as a result of higher levels of work-to-family conflict rather than the other way around. Longitudinal research may provide more clarity as to the direction of these relationships.

A final limitation is the lack of consideration into how cohabitation and dual-earning relationships may affect the measured variables. Both of these factors may have theoretical effects on the levels of demand and support experienced by individuals, which may have been worth separating from the general demands and

social support measured. Cohabitation may provide more consistent social support for partners due to living in the same household, however living together may also increase family demands and stress more than living apart due to more structural commitments of the relationship (Funk & Kobayashi, 2016). Dual-earning relationships may also experience greater demands and role stress as a result of combined job demands, transference of stress between partners, and the stress of challenges to traditional gender role attitudes (Elloy & Smith, 2004). However, as suggested in Aguinis and Vandenberg (2014) these variables were not separated in order to avoid issues of the "throw them all into the analyses approach" (p. 588), which can lead to so little residual variance that no substantial predictor variables can be identified. This was deemed appropriate for the current study as it aimed to only distinguish between groups in relation to relationship composition and gender. The concepts of cohabitation and dual-earning relationships examine more peripheral ideas to the central research questions, which may be best answered through further examination in future research.

Suggestions for future research

The current research provides a foundation to expand work-family conflict research to include same-sex relationships and inform greater inclusivity for workplace diversity support. To expand beyond the current study, future research should look at contextual factors surrounding same-sex relationships, such as cohabitation or dual-earning relationships. An exploration into whether cohabitation impacts perceived levels of work-family conflict would provide an interesting extension of the current research and may provide a clearer distinction between same-sex and mixed-sex relationships. For example, the division of household labour may

have a more significant effect on levels of work-family conflict beyond the current study due to the fact that certain relationships would not have had any division of labour or may have included multiple house members in a group living situation. Previous research has also found that relationships with dual-earning partners experience increased levels of work-family conflict because of greater demands and role stress (Elloy & Smith, 2004), which is becoming more regular with social acceptability and expectations for gender diversity in the workplace. An interesting extension of same-sex relationships would be to consider how these dual-earning relationships might differ as a result of being comprised of a single gender. Further clarifying the impact of contextual factors and how these may vary between same-sex and mixed-sex couples could play an important role in ensuring substantial inclusivity and acceptance of same-sex minorities in the workplace and support the development of more in-depth organisational practices to support same-sex minorities.

Future research should also expand the scope of work-family conflict covered in the current study to explore how additional stigma-based work-family conflict identified by Sawyer, Thoroughgood, and Ladge (2017) may impact outcomes, such as satisfaction with work-family balance. The establishment of a new stigma-based facet of work-family conflict allows for further expansions into how same-sex relationships may differ in the workplace, and provide interesting knowledge into whether supervisor support varies in relation to stigma-based conflicts. Although this research may not necessarily compare same-sex and mixed-sex relationships in line with the current research, it could look at how demand and support predictors of stigma-based conflict, as well as additional contextual factors previously mentioned, relate to gender differences.

Finally, future research should aim to provide longitudinal analyses of relationships between theorised predictors and consequences in order to establish a model of causality and differences between same-sex and mixed-sex relationships. By providing greater support for causal influences, organisations will have more practical information to inform inclusive policies and support networks for employees.

Conclusion

With the growing importance of employee wellbeing for positive organisational outcomes, as well as the increase in acknowledgement of employee diversity, research that aims to provide an understanding of how individuals in same-sex relationships experience traditional aspects of organisational and family factors is important. The current research has indicated that the impact of instrumental family support on work-to-family conflict differs between different relationship compositions and genders, and provides an interesting starting point into exploring how work-family conflict differs between same-sex and mixed-sex relationships. Emotional family support has also been found to differ in relation to family-to-work conflict within same-sex relationships and it is worth further exploring why this occurs. Future research into this field will provide information on how individuals in relationships with different gender compositions manage work and family domains to inform organisations of the best practices to support employee diversity and improve general employee wellbeing and organisational outcomes.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Email Invite

"You are invited to participate in the International Study of Work and Family's survey. The survey will be open from today until the *(Survey closing date)*.

This survey is part of an international research project that aims to understand the positive aspects of work-family boundary management in a New Zealand context, as well as a University of Canterbury Masters student's research into the role that gender diversity of families plays in work-family conflict and life satisfaction outcomes. Participants are required to work 20+ hours a week. In this study, the family doesn't necessarily involve a child/children, the family can be just the partners in the relationship.

Your participation would be hugely appreciated and contribute to international research, as well as a unique field of gender diversity and aspects of combining work and family. If you have a partner that also works 20+ hours a week, feel free to pass the survey link onto them.

To start the survey, please click on the link below:
(Survey Link)

In case of any questions, please contact the survey providers: Hadley Anderson at hadley.anderson@pg.canterbury.ac.nz or Dr. Katharina Näswall at katharina.naswall@canterbury.ac.nz or on 03 369 4332."

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any queries please feel free to contact either Dr. Katharina
Näswall at katharina.naswall@canterbury.ac.nz or myself at hadley.anderson@pg.can
terbury.ac.nz

Kind Regards,
Hadley Anderson

Appendix B – Information Sheet and Consent

Gender composition, work and family, and life satisfaction

The project is being carried out as a requirement for a Masters of Science in Applied Psychology by Hadley Anderson, under the supervision of Dr. Katharina Näswall. They will both be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in the project.

This research is the New Zealand component of a cross-national project with the International Study of Work and Family with collaborators all over the world, as well as providing some unique information on the effects of family gender composition on work-family conflict. The survey will ask you a variety of questions related to various aspects of combining work and family. You will be asked about your experiences of how work and life outside of work interact. As the project is cross-national, unique cultural dimensions of work and family interaction in New Zealand will be investigated.

Some of the questions in the survey may be considered sensitive, such as questions on family support and perceptions of job demands. If you do not feel comfortable answering these questions, or you experience distress, feel free to withdraw from the survey at any time – you just close your browser window. If you require further assistance, we have provided a list of potential sources of help at the bottom of this page.

If you choose to take part in this study, the survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. You will have the opportunity to indicate your interest in future research at the end of the survey.
If you chose to partake in a second follow up survey you will have the opportunity to win one of five $100 shopping vouchers.

By submitting the survey it will be understood that you have consented to participate in the project, and that you consent to the publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved.

Participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any stage of the survey, however, once the survey has been submitted it will not be possible to withdraw your response from the data.

The results of this study will be published in a dissertation, which will be available through the University of Canterbury Library. The results of the project may also be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation: your identity will not be made public. To ensure confidentiality, no identifying information will be collected unless participants choose to be involved in follow-up research. If you chose to do so, your contact information will be treated confidentially and the data with your responses will not be possible to match to any identifying information. Before data are analysed, you will be assigned a unique ID code and your identifying information will be removed from the dataset. Data will be stored for 10 years after the conclusion of the project as per standard HEC principles and then destroyed.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and participants should address any complaints to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

Many thanks,

Hadley Anderson (hadley.anderson@pg.canterbury.ac.nz) Ph. 0277591492
Dr Katharina Näswall (katharina.naswall@canterbury.ac.nz) Ph. 03 369 4332

Should you find anything in this survey distressing please utilise the resources mentioned below:

- Lifeline New Zealand offers free phone-based counselling and support. Lifeline can be contacted at 0800 543 354
- The New Zealand Association of Counsellors provides a counsellor search tool which enables you to find counselling services and is accessible at http://www.nzac.org.nz

Or contact your local GP

To continue the survey, please check the box below:

○ I have read and understand the information above, and I agree to take part in the survey □

Appendix C – Questionnaire

Demographics

Please select the following options that apply to you or state your response

Gender:

a) Male
b) Female
c) Gender diverse (optional to specify):

_____

Age:

_____

Relationship status

a) Single
b) In a relationship
c) Married/Cohabiting
d) Separated
e) Widowed

Partner's gender

a) Male
b) Female
c) Gender diverse (optional to specify):

_____

Country of citizenship

Select one: *(Drop down option of all countries)*

Country of birth

Select one: *(Drop down option of all countries)*

Postal code (This will be used to get a sense of the geographical distribution of participants):

_____

Highest education

a) Less than secondary school
b) Secondary school
c) Tertiary diploma
d) Bachelor's degree
e) Bachelor honours degree or postgraduate certificate/diploma
f) Master's degree
g) Doctoral degree

Please indicate which industry sector you are in:

a) Manufacturing
b) Hospitality
c) Service
d) Education
e) Finance
f) Entertainment

g) Medical/Social service
h) Security/Protection
i) Government
j) Military
k) Other (please specify):

_____

Job Demands
Please respond to the following questions about your job demands. *(1 = Never to 5 = Very Often).*

1. Does your job require you to work very fast?
2. Does your job require you to work very hard?
3. Does your job require too great a work effort?

Family Demands
Please respond to the following questions about your family demands. *(1 = Never to 5 = Very Often).*

4. How often do you feel that you have too much family-related work to do?
5. How often do you feel overwhelmed by the demands of your family?

Supervisor Support
Consider how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements on supervisor support. *(1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).*

My supervisor...

6. …makes me feel comfortable talking to him/her about my conflicts between work and non-work
7. ...works effectively with employees to creatively solve conflicts between work and non-work.
8. ...demonstrates effective behaviours in how to juggle work and non-work.
9. ...organises the work in my department or unit to jointly benefit employees and the company.

Family Support
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. *(1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).*

10. When I'm frustrated by my work, someone in my family tries to understand.
11. Members of my family are interested in my job.
12. I usually find it useful to discuss my work problems with family members.
13. Members of my family help me with routine household tasks.
14. When I'm having a difficult week at my job, my family members try to do more of the work around the house.
15. If I have to work late, I can count on someone in my family to take care of everything at home.

Work-family conflict
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. *(1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).*

16. My work keeps me from my family activities more than I would like.

17. The time I must devote to my job keeps me from participating in household responsibilities and activities.
18. I have to miss family activities due to the amount of time I must spend on work responsibilities.
19. When I get home from work I am often too frazzled to participate in family activities/responsibilities.
20. Due to all pressures at work, sometimes when I come home I am too stressed to do the things I enjoy.
21. I am often so emotionally drained when I get home from work that it prevents me from contributing to my family.
22. The time I spend with my family often causes me not to spend time on activities at work that could be helpful to my career.
23. The time I spend on family responsibilities often interfere with my work responsibilities.
24. I have to miss work activities due to the amount of time I must spend on family responsibilities.
25. Due to the stress at home, I am often preoccupied with family matters at work.
26. Because I am often stressed from family responsibilities, I have a hard time concentrating on my work.

Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance

Please state how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with… *(1 = very dissatisfied to 5 = very satisfied).*

27. …the way you divide your time between work and personal or family life?
28. ...the way you divide your attention between work and home?
29. ...how well your work life and your personal or family life fit together?
30. ...your ability to balance the needs of your job with those of your personal or family life?
31. ...the opportunity you have to perform your job well and yet be able to perform home-related duties adequately?

Final Question

If you want, please provide any feedback about the questions or other content in this survey

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Note: Questions listed are only part of the current study and not the ISWAF.

Appendix D – Follow-up Survey Invite

Nice work - you're at the end of the survey! As mentioned in the beginning, this survey is conducted by researchers at the University of Canterbury. As part of this research, we would like to be able to understand the effects of gender on work-family conflict and perceptions of life satisfaction over time. We would really appreciate your help with this research and will provide the chance to win one of five $100 shopping vouchers as a reward for participating in a follow-up survey!

If you would be happy to participate in this research, please provide a personal code, which we can use to match your responses with the next survey. Please note that we will NOT be able to identify who you are with this information.

Please enter your personal code below, which will be your mother's maiden name and the last two digits of your birth year. For example, Smith56.

We would like to remind you once again that this is optional and can NOT be used to identify you.

Please enter your personal code below:

_____