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Commitment to life roles and work-family conflict among managers in a post-socialist country

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to contribute to work-family literature by examining antecedents and outcomes of work-family and family-work conflict (FWC) in an under-researched post-socialist country. Building on the conservation of resources theory and identity theory, the conceptual model tests relationships among occupational and marital commitment, two types of work-family conflict (WFC) and FWC, and domain satisfaction.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected using a self-report survey filled out by married top and middle managers from Slovenia, a Central and Eastern European country. Hypotheses were tested with structural equation modelling.

Findings – While occupational commitment was positively related to perceived time- and strain-based WFC, no support was found for the path between marital commitment and the two types of FWC. The results further reveal that although time- and strain-based FWC were related to career satisfaction, only time-based WFC was associated with marital satisfaction.

Research limitations/implications – A cross-sectional research design and the validation of the model using a managerial sample limit generalizability. The study points to the relevance of the institutional and cultural context regarding interpretation of links between established concepts.

Originality/value – The study advances knowledge concerning WFC and FWC in a country that has undergone a process of transition from a socialist regime to a free-market economy. It adopts an integrative perspective and encompasses managers' professional, as well as personal domains. The study tests how theories developed with samples from traditional capitalist countries apply to post-socialist countries, characterized by disparate values, norms, and societal expectations.

Keywords Managers, Satisfaction, Work-family conflict, Family-work conflict, Occupational commitment, Post-socialist country, Marital commitment

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

As competitive pressures rise managers spend more and more time at work. Known for having an extreme job (Hewlett and Luce, 2006), each working day managers spend 13.5 hours on work-related tasks at work and at home (Deal, 2013). This attests their proverbially high occupational commitment (Meyer *et al.*, 2006; Ford and Collinson, 2011; Hewlett and Luce, 2006), defined as a psychological connection between an individual and his/her occupation (Lee *et al.*, 2000). While work remains central to their lives (Ford and Collinson, 2011) managers have also expressed a desire to maintain a life outside work, and emphasize the marital role as an important part of their identity (Ford and Collinson, 2011). This represents a shift from the traditional conception of the ideal manager who disregards the responsibilities outside his/her profession and focusses exclusively on work. Given that participation in the marital role is often viewed as inhibiting managers' career progression, researchers have turned their



attention to investigating how managers' non-work domain affects their work behavior and performance (Graves *et al.*, 2007; Weer *et al.*, 2010). To this end, studies suggest that marital quality positively influences work attitudes (Johns, 2006), and that a couple's emotional intimacy leads to fewer job concerns (McAllister *et al.*, 2012).

In an attempt to fulfill their identities, managers are oftentimes torn between the demands of their profession and marriage. To assure success in these domains, occupational and marital commitment, conceptualized as dedication to a partner and the desire to maintain the relationship (Schoebi *et al.*, 2012) require investments of limited resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Nevertheless, obligations and expectations at work and in the family are not always compatible, which leads to lower role performance and work-family conflict (WFC) (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). Grounded in the scarcity hypothesis (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000), conflict is a bi-directional construct: work can interfere with family (i.e. WFC), and family can interfere with work (i.e. family-work conflict (FWC)).

Given the salience of work and marriage for managers, this paper adopts an integrative perspective and investigates how role commitments associate with inter-role conflict and satisfaction. I propose that the integration of both occupational and marital domains offers an in-depth understanding of work-family linkages due to the interrelatedness of life domains. Specifically, work behaviors are typically shaped by various social identities (including personal), and not only a single identity (Meyer *et al.*, 2006). Along these lines, this study complements previous research that focusses exclusively on non-work commitment (Weer *et al.*, 2010; Graves *et al.*, 2007). Moreover, unlike studies that relate role commitment to WFC alone (Kim and Froese, 2012; Day and Chamberlain, 2006), this study adds the perspective of FWC, exploring both directions of conflict.

Work-family issues in post-socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe are rarely explored (Shaffer *et al.*, 2011) despite suggestions to study unique cultural contexts (Spector *et al.*, 2007; Allen, 2013) such as those found in Slovenia, a country characterized by substantially disparate cultural, welfare, and legislative systems. According to identity theory, national culture and societal norms shape the nature of commitment and behavior in a given role (Stryker and Burke, 2000), and may thereby substantially affect perceived WFCs.

To address these gaps, I draw on the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and identity theory (Stryker and Burke, 2000), and investigate how managers' occupational and marital role commitments influence time- and strain-based WFC and FWC. In turn, these may determine career and marital satisfaction. Although WFC and FWC have been associated with a number of detrimental consequences for the individual and organization (Amstad *et al.*, 2011), little research distinguishes different types of conflict (e.g. Amstad *et al.*, 2011; Hoobler *et al.*, 2010), despite calls for it (Carlson and Kacmar, 2000). Given that this study is concerned with WFC in a specific, post-socialist context, the next chapter outlines country specifics, followed by the theoretical background and model conceptualization.

Theoretical framework and hypotheses

Country characteristics

A member of the EU, Slovenia has undergone a process of transition from a socialist to a capitalist regime with a free-market economy that has brought increased global competition and the need for organizational restructuring. This new work style challenged typically socialist values such as conservatism, conformity, and hierarchy

(Schwartz and Bardi, 1997). As a part of the socialist legacy, the country has the second highest female employment rate and the highest maternal employment rate among OECD countries (OECD, 2010), an indication of highly valued and practiced gender egalitarianism (House *et al.*, 2004). Part-time employment is among the lowest in Europe (10 percent) (Eurostat, 2012). Dual-career couples have always represented the most common type of family structure, and Slovenians experienced no change in structure after transitioning to a capitalist regime. In terms of gender role ideology, the division of tasks in the family remains traditional. Women take responsibility for household activities and child upbringing, and men engage in maintenance work.

Slovenia has one of the most generous institutional policies regarding family-related leaves in the EU. To help fully employed women, the government offers a publicly funded network of subsidized childcare facilities with 55 percent of children being enrolled in childcare centers. Most women do not interrupt their careers beyond maternity and parental leave that amount to 52 weeks, with full compensation (OECD, 2010). Although there is an option of 90 days paternity leave, few fathers take advantage. Another difference from capitalist countries lies in flexible work arrangements provided by organizations. A legacy of the socialist regime, work-family problems are predominantly individual and state responsibilities, not organizational concerns (Den Dulk *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, the provision of family-friendly policies (i.e. flexible work arrangements) in organizations is weak (Kanjuo-Mrčela and Černigoj-Sadar, 2011) and the option of working from home is available to fewer than 6 percent of employees (OECD, 2010). Although organizations implement public policies formally, managers also place subtle pressures on employees who take advantage of such policies (Kanjuo-Mrčela and Černigoj-Sadar, 2011). The next section develops the theoretical linkages proposed in the conceptual model (Figure 1) based on previous findings and the institutional/cultural characteristics in Slovenia.

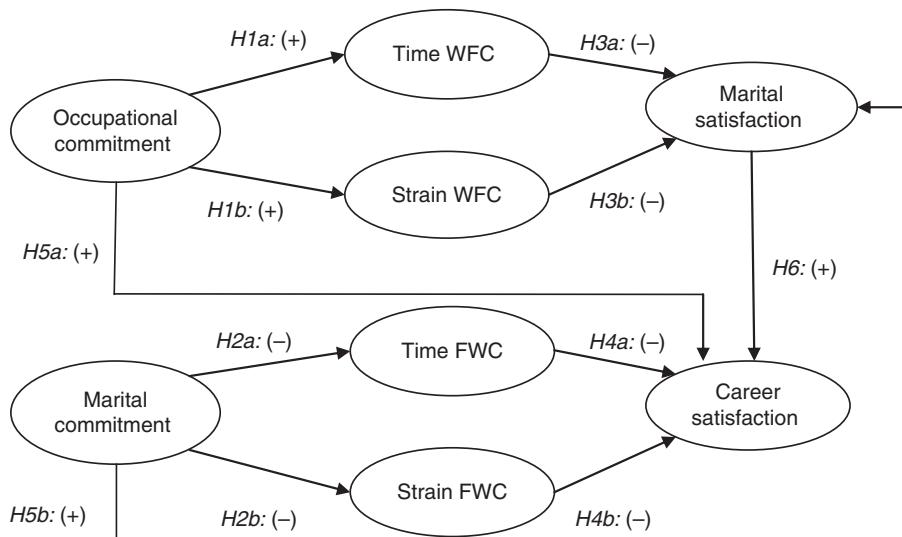


Figure 1.
The conceptual model

Notes: WFC, work-family conflict; FWC, family-work conflict

Life role commitments and inter-role conflict

Managers' emotional and cognitive work engagement reflect their high occupational commitment (Meyer *et al.*, 2006; Ford and Collinson, 2011), which requires investment of limited personal resources, such as time, attention, and energy. Considering that time invested in work limits time available for spouses and families, working long hours commonly elevates role conflicts (Major *et al.*, 2002). Previous studies reveal that a high job involvement (Beutell and Wittig-Berman, 1999; Carlson *et al.*, 2000) and time commitment to work (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1996) increase WFC. Drawing on identity theory (Stryker and Burke, 2000), I posit that managers' occupational commitment, reflected in time spent working, increases perceptions of time-based WFC, which occurs when time pressures in one role make it impossible to meet expectations in other roles (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). Long work hours may also deplete managers' other resources, (i.e. attention, energy) and subsequently increase strain and fatigue (Burke and McAtee-Early, 2006), resulting in worrying and irritability (Ng and Feldman, 2008). In light of the resource-drain perspective, the strain hinders managers' role performance because it reduces personal capacity. Therefore, given the stressful nature of the managerial profession, occupational role commitment may also lead to strain-based WFC – a spillover of negative emotions and feeling states (Grzywacz *et al.*, 2007) – which occurs when an individual is unable to function effectively in a role (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985) due to the negative physical and psychological consequences of strain (e.g. fatigue, anxiety, and frustration). Although to date, research has not investigated the link between occupational commitment and strain-based FWC, related findings suggest that such a relationship may exist, given that commitment was found to lead to psychological strain (Super, 1990; O'Neil and Greenberger, 1994). Similarly, Carlson *et al.* (2000) found that increased job involvement elevated strain-based WFC.

In Slovenia, performance orientation (i.e. setting challenging goals and improving performance continuously) is highly valued (House *et al.*, 2004), and work has recently become the dominant domain. Although hard work, discipline, and achievements are important, society does not regard failures in an occupation well. After the transition to a free-market economy, increased work intensity led to convictions among managers that career advancement requires long work hours. Also present is the belief that using leave and flexibility options hinders performance (Kanjuo-Mrčela and Černigoj-Sadar, 2011), thus managers are less inclined to use them (Den Dulk *et al.*, 2011). Based on conceptual reasoning and empirical findings I propose:

H1a and H1b. Occupational commitment will be positively related to (a) time- and (b) strain-based WFC.

In light of the important role that spouses play in managers' careers (Ford and Collinson, 2011) we would expect that marital commitment would ease juggling demands of professional and personal lives. Nevertheless, the results from extant studies regarding marital commitment and FWC are inconclusive. Early studies report that increased family involvement elevates FWC (Frone *et al.*, 1992). Recent studies, however, suggest negative associations between behavioral family involvement and FWC (Matthews *et al.*, 2012), as well as marital commitment and FWC (Graves *et al.*, 2007). To explain the link between marital commitment and FWC I draw on the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which proposes that people are motivated to protect, retain, and expand their resources since potential or actual loss of resources causes stress. In the

managerial profession time is highly valued, therefore, spousal energy aids protection of managers' time demands (Grandey and Cropanzano, 1999) and acquisition of other resources (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001). Furthermore, spousal support (Baltes and Heydens-Gahir, 2003) and emotional intimacy (McAllister *et al.*, 2012) were found to reduce perceived FWC. In line with this reasoning, positive marital relationships may act as resistance resources since they facilitate preservation of other valued resources. Hence, I propose that greater marital commitment should reduce time-based FWC due to proactive protection of managerial time by a spouse.

Social support from the spouse may attenuate the impact of high family demands on strain (Carlson and Perrewe, 1999), implying that marital commitment may weaken strain-based FWC. Marital commitment is reflected in the behavior toward a spouse (Schoebi *et al.*, 2012). Specifically, listening emphatically, caring, and solving problems are important spousal resources through which a manager may experience fewer strain symptoms (Grandey and Cropanzano, 1999) and thereby less FWC. Managing dual-career households is a norm in Slovenia. Thus, according to the assumption that cultural interpretations of environmental difficulties lead to stress (Hobfoll, 2001), both spouses may perceive stresses in the marriage as manageable (i.e. challenging rather than inhibitive) and not causes of strain. Other cultural specifics further support this assumption. As a result of practiced in-group collectivism which is highly valued in Slovenia (House *et al.*, 2004), instrumental support from the family is considered a primary resource in mitigating role conflicts (Spector *et al.*, 2007). For instance, a spouse assures a steady flow of information, provides instrumental aid and emotional concern, and in stressful situations, is willing to sacrifice own time demands to serve the job demands of the spouse (i.e. manager). Therefore, based on extant findings, I predict a negative relationship between managers' marital commitment and strain-based FWC:

H2a and H2b. Marital commitment will be negatively related to (a) time- and (b) strain-based FWC.

Inter-role conflict and domain satisfaction

This study conceptualizes time- and strain-based WFC as predictors of marital satisfaction, defined as an affective appraisal of overall marriage quality. COR (Hobfoll, 1989) suggests that devoting more resources to an occupation results in fewer resources available for marriage and, thereby decreased satisfaction. Meta-analytic findings demonstrate a negative relationship between general WFC and marital satisfaction (Amstad *et al.*, 2011), and related studies show that an increase in daily workload causes social withdrawal during marital interactions (O'Neil and Greenberger, 1994). Therefore, I propose that time-based WFC adversely affects marital satisfaction. Furthermore, WFC creates marital tensions and a partner's psychological distress (Matthews *et al.*, 1996), making the strain caused by competing demands a potential predictor of decreased marital satisfaction as well. Since strain-based WFC leads to psychological distress (Janzen *et al.*, 2007), it may subsequently also affect marital quality negatively. In Slovenia the introduction of a free-market economy increased work demands and heightened employees' responsibilities and accountabilities. Longer work hours and working weekends became common for managers, a work pattern unlikely under the socialist regime (Kanjuo-Mrčela and Černigoj-Sadar, 2011), thereby giving rise to WFC. Since conservatism is regarded highly in Slovenia (Schwartz and Bardi, 1997), managers' adjustments to novel

working patterns and subsequent rises in time- and strain-based WFC are particularly difficult and stressful, potentially leading to decreases in satisfaction with marriage. Therefore:

H3a and H3b. (a) Time- and (b) strain-based WFC will be negatively related to marital satisfaction.

Career satisfaction, an indicator of subjective career success, comprises individual perceptions of professional success over time (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1996). Although rarely examined in the work-family literature (Hoobler *et al.*, 2010) two studies report a negative relationship between FWC and career satisfaction (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1996; Beutell and Wittig-Berman, 1999), but neither considers time- and strain-based conflict. Slovenians spend a considerable amount of time doing unpaid work within the family, which may give rise to FWC. On a weekly basis, they spend 21 hours caring for children, 12 hours for household work, and 11 hours caring for the elderly (Eurofound, 2012). The latter is among the highest in Europe, a reflection of close family relationships. In turn, this leaves less time available for work. In accordance with COR (Hobfoll, 1989) and previous studies, I posit that the more time-based FWC managers experience, the more negatively they evaluate career-related outcomes.

Meeting expectations regarding family performance and fulfilling family demands can be stressful for managers and can cause strain. Specifically, the primary characteristic of non-work relationships in Slovenia is that in case of personal and financial problems the vast majority (more than 95 percent – the highest percentage in EU) of Slovenians turn to friends or family (Eurofound, 2012). In this regard, providing help may lead to exhaustion, whereas discussing illness and other problems may evoke negative emotions and fatigue. Consequently, these moods may spill over to the work domain and over time worsen the perceptions about work performance. As found recently in related research strain-based FWC exacerbates job satisfaction (Cunningham and De La Rosa, 2008). Similarly, it may be assumed that strain-based FWC negatively affects career satisfaction. Thus:

H4a and H4b. (a) Time- and (b) strain-based FWC will be negatively related to career satisfaction.

Recent research suggests that work commitment correlates positively with work satisfaction (Perrone *et al.*, 2006; Ballout, 2009). Based on this I propose, that a high occupational commitment – reflected by high career expectations managers set for themselves – results in high career satisfaction. More specifically, people tend to experience the greatest satisfaction by participating in roles that are highly meaningful to them (Bagger and Li, 2012), as this increases their perceptions of self-worth and creates positive self-images (Kim and Froese, 2012). Since the occupational role is highly salient to managers, engagement in this role is presumed to result in high career satisfaction.

Taking into account that apart from role strain multiple role commitments may also lead to role satisfaction (Super, 1990), I presume that managers' marital commitment increases marital satisfaction. Managers committed to marriage may be motivated to engage more in solving work-family problems and exhibit constructive behaviors during disagreements. This corresponds with findings that marital commitment and cooperative decision making lead to less frequent marital conflicts

(Dush and Taylor, 2012). Over time, committed partners experience slower declines in relationship satisfaction (Schoebi *et al.*, 2012). I expect this link to be particularly strong due to the high importance ascribed to stable marital relationships in Slovenia and the dominance of dual-career families, which require strong partnerships to meet employer and family expectations. Therefore:

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H5a. Occupational role commitment will be positively related to career satisfaction.

H5b. Marital role commitment will be positively related to marital satisfaction.

Marital satisfaction not only predicts family attitudes (Greenberger and O'Neil, 1993; Schoebi *et al.*, 2012), it also affects work behaviors. For example, marital satisfaction during the prior evening was identified as a source of positive job satisfaction the following afternoon (Heller and Watson, 2005). Consistent with the spillover hypothesis (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000), managers' marital satisfaction positively impacts career satisfaction. They may view the positive spillovers from marital satisfaction as a personal resource that elevates work well-being (Heller and Watson, 2005). Further corroborating this are managers' acknowledgments that they can focus on work responsibilities because of career support provided by spouses (Ford and Collinson, 2011). Accordingly, in light of increasing public expectations that to be perceived as successful, managers need to thrive in the non-work domain as well, it is possible that a high marital satisfaction will generate positive feelings and moods which will, due to a spillover effect, increase career satisfaction. Lastly, the importance of family in Slovenia – attributed to a collectivist culture (House *et al.*, 2004) and high valuing of harmonious relationships (Schwartz and Bardi, 1997) – further supports the proposed relationship:

H6. Marital satisfaction will be positively related to career satisfaction.

Methods

Sample

Invitations and questionnaires were sent to top managers in all registered large and medium Slovenian organizations, a population of 1,200. The response rate was 34 percent, with 413 managers participating. In total, 85 questionnaires were removed due to frequent missing values or because participants were not in a relationship. Respondents held managerial positions in a range of industries including, but not limited to manufacturing, sales, construction, insurance, finance, and IT. The final sample included 328 managers (69 percent male, 31 percent female) with an average age of 46.32 years ($SD = 8.36$). In total, 88 percent of managers were married and 12 percent were in common-law relationships. On average, respondents had 22.50 years of work experience ($SD = 8.85$). In total, 74 percent were top managers, 18 percent middle managers, and 8 percent lower-level managers. In terms of working hours, 24 percent worked 40-45 hours per week, 39 percent between 46 and 50 hours, 26 percent between 51 and 55, and 11 percent more than 56 hours. In total, 87 percent lived in dual-career households, with partners working 40 hours per week. In total, 36 percent of households had the youngest child older than 18 years. In 16 percent of cases, children were aged between 13 and 18 years. In total, 19 percent of the managers had their youngest child in the age group between six through 12 years, and 19 percent had at least one child younger than six.

Measures

The chosen constructs were measured with established scales, whereby a translation-back-translation procedure was used to prepare the Slovenian version of the questionnaire. All items were self-reported and used a five-point Likert scale ranging from: strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

Life role commitment. Five items measuring occupational and five items measuring marital commitment from the life role salience scale (Amatea, 1986) were used to assess commitment to life roles. An example of an occupational role commitment item is “I value being involved in a career and expect to devote the time and effort needed to develop it.” A sample item for marital role commitment is “I expect to commit whatever time is necessary to making my marriage partner feel loved, supported, and cared for.”

Conflict between work and family. In total, 12 items from Carlson *et al.* (2000) measured two types of WFC and two types of FWC (time- and strain-based). Three items measured each type of inter-role conflict. A sample item is “I have to miss family activities due to the amount of time I must spend on work responsibilities.”

Career satisfaction. Career satisfaction represents an outcome of an individual’s career as a whole, measured with three items from Martins *et al.* (2002). A sample item includes “In general, I am satisfied with my career status.”

Marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction was measured with three items from a scale (Norton, 1983) that assesses the degree to which an individual is satisfied with the quality of his/her marital relationship. A sample item is “I feel that my relationship with my partner is very stable.”

Results

The hypotheses in the conceptual model were tested with structural equation modelling, which takes a confirmatory approach to data analysis and consists of two stages: the evaluation of the measurement and structural model. Analyses were performed using Mplus program and maximum-likelihood estimation. To determine model fit, various fit indices were used together with χ^2 due to their insensitivity to sample size. Table I reports descriptive statistics, and reliabilities for the constructs. As presumed, the correlations among different types of conflict were positive and significant. Also, most correlation coefficients confirm the hypothesized directions of the relationships between constructs. Nonetheless, the correlations among inter-role conflicts, commitment, and satisfaction are relatively low. This accords with findings of existing cross-cultural studies which revealed, that the associations between work

Construct	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Time-WFC	2.92	1.05	(0.89)							
2. Time-FWC	2.10	1.04	0.18**	(0.88)						
3. Strain-WFC	2.69	1.03	0.53**	0.16*	(0.87)					
4. Strain-FWC	1.85	1.02	0.21**	0.80**	0.16**	(0.91)				
5. Marital satisfaction	4.28	0.78	-0.16**	-0.02	-0.13*	-0.12*	(0.93)			
6. Career satisfaction	4.19	0.73	-0.01	-0.04	-0.05	0.08	0.19**	(0.87)		
7. Occupational commitment	2.77	0.69	0.19**	-0.01	0.18**	-0.04	-0.04	0.12*	(0.78)	
8. Marital commitment	3.60	0.73	-0.05	0.02	-0.16*	-0.02	0.48**	0.09	0.06	(0.66)

Notes: $n = 328$. WFC, work-family conflict; FWC, family-work conflict. Internal reliabilities appear in the parentheses on the diagonal. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Table I.
Descriptive statistics
and reliabilities of the
constructs

demands and WFC were stronger in individualist than collectivist societies (Spector *et al.*, 2004, 2007). Similarly, the magnitude of relationship between WFC and job attitudes was also weaker in collectivist than individualist countries (Spector *et al.*, 2007). The present findings may lend further support to the notion that cultural specifics may affect individual interpretations of work and family demands, preferences for segmentation, or integration of these domains and subsequent perceptions of inter-role conflict.

The observed zero-order correlations below 0.6 support the distinctiveness of the constructs. Yet, the high correlation between time- and strain-based FWC suggests high convergence between the constructs, which is addressed in the estimation of an alternative measurement model. Lastly, an inspection of reliability coefficients reveals a relatively low Cronbach α for marital commitment. Thus, composite reliabilities were calculated, which exceeded the threshold of 0.60 (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988) for all focal variables, demonstrating that all indicators provided reliable measures of the underlying latent constructs.

In the first stage of structural equation modelling, the measurement model was estimated, which determines the validity and reliability of the indicators. Concerning convergent validity, one indicator of occupational commitment and two indicators of marital commitment exhibited low loadings and were dropped. In the purified measurement model all factor loadings were significant, suggesting the interrelatedness of indicators and representation of underlying constructs. The proposed measurement model was compared with three alternative models (Table II), whereby:

- (1) all FWC indicators loaded on the same factor;
- (2) all WFC indicators loaded on the same factor; and
- (3) all indicators were constrained to load on a single factor.

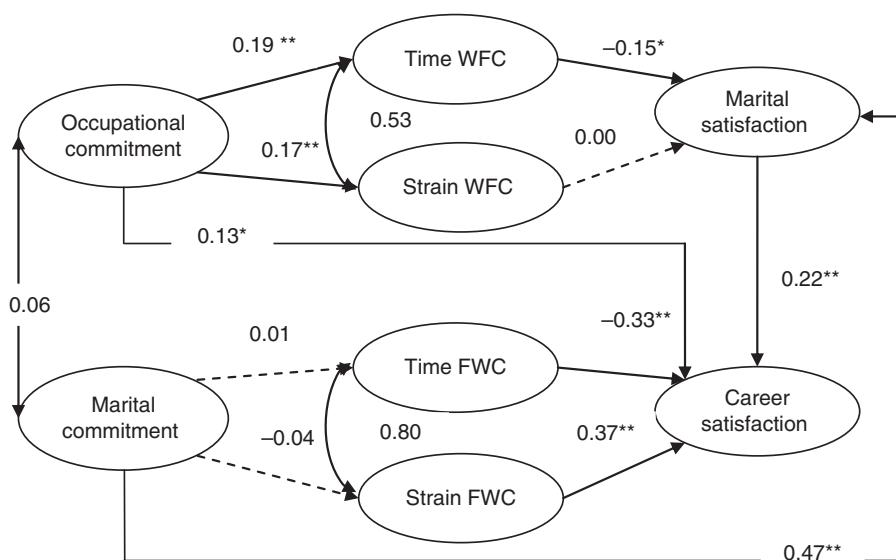
The results show that the hypothesized eight-factor solution is appropriate ($\chi^2_{(247)} = 367.704$, $p = 0.000$, CFI = 0.974, TLI = 0.968, RMSEA = 0.039, SRMR = 0.037).

The second stage involves the specification of structural paths between constructs, taking into account random measurement error (illustrated in Figure 2), whereby all

	χ^2	df	p	$\Delta\chi^2$	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
Hypothesized eight-factor measurement model	367.704	247	0.000	–	0.039	0.037	0.974	0.968
One-factor measurement model	3,491.147	275	0.000	3,123.443***	0.190	0.178	0.295	0.231
Seven-factor measurement model (time- and strain-based FWC as a single factor)	525.675	254	0.000	157.971***	0.058	0.042	0.940	0.930
Seven-factor measurement model (time- and strain-based WFC as a single factor)	721.204	254	0.000	353.500***	0.075	0.055	0.898	0.879

Table II.
Fit indices of the measurement models

Notes: $n = 328$. RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; SRMR, standardized root mean square residual; CFI, comparative fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; WFC, work-family conflict; FWC, family-work conflict. *** $p < 0.001$



Notes: WFC, work-family conflict; FWC, family-work conflict. Regression coefficients are based on a standardized solution. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Figure 2.
Hypotheses testing

constructs are modelled as fully latent. In accordance with previous studies (Lapierre *et al.*, 2008; Frone *et al.*, 1992), time- and strain-based WFC as well as time- and strain-based FWC were allowed to correlate. Theoretically, this is reasonable, since both types of conflict denote FWC and WFC, and they share some common causes beyond marital and occupational commitment (Spector *et al.*, 2007). The modification indices did not suggest that any additional paths between constructs should be added. To determine whether the proposed model fits the data best, other theoretically plausible models were tested. The results are presented in Table III and demonstrate that the alternative models exhibit a poorer fit than the hypothesized model. In addition, none of the added paths were significant, which suggests that the hypothesized model is the most parsimonious and can thus be accepted ($\chi^2_{(261)} = 397.145$, $p = 0.000$, CFI = 0.970, TLI = 0.966, RMSEA = 0.040, SRMR = 0.061).

Figure 2 displays regression coefficients of the structural model. Results indicated that occupational commitment was significantly related to time- ($H1a$: $\beta = 0.19$, $p < 0.01$) and strain-based WFC ($H1b$: $\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.01$). No support was found for the relationships between managers' marital commitment and time- and strain-based FWC ($H2a$, $H2b$). Moreover, the influence of WFC on marital satisfaction was partially supported. While marital satisfaction was influenced by time-based WFC ($H3a$: $\beta = -0.15$, $p < 0.05$), the effect of strain-based WFC was not significant ($H3b$). Time- ($H4a$: $\beta = -0.33$, $p < 0.01$) and strain-based FWC ($H4b$: $\beta = 0.37$, $p < 0.01$) were each significantly related to managers' career satisfaction. Furthermore, the results supported the role commitment-role satisfaction relationship for occupational ($H5a$: $\beta = 0.13$, $p < 0.05$) as well as marital commitment ($H5b$: $\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.01$). Lastly, managers' marital satisfaction significantly influenced career satisfaction ($H6$: $\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$). I turn now to the discussion of findings[1] and implications.

Table III.
Fit indices of the hypothesized and alternative structural models

	χ^2	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	RMSEA	SRMR	CFI	TLI
Model 1: the hypothesized model	397.145	261	–	0.040	0.061	0.970	0.966
Model 2: added path career satisfaction → marital satisfaction ($\beta = -0.19$, $p = 0.159$)	394.922	260	2.223	0.040	0.060	0.970	0.966
Model 3: added path time-WFC → career satisfaction ($\beta = -0.080$, $p = 0.207$)	395.565	260	1.580	0.040	0.061	0.970	0.966
Model 4: added path strain-WFC → career satisfaction ($\beta = -0.062$, $p = 0.320$)	396.160	260	0.985	0.040	0.061	0.970	0.966
Model 5: added path time-FWC → marital satisfaction ($\beta = -0.019$, $p = 0.746$)	397.040	260	0.105	0.040	0.060	0.970	0.965
Model 6: added path strain-FWC → marital satisfaction ($\beta = -0.083$, $p = 0.139$)	394.968	260	2.177	0.040	0.059	0.970	0.966

Notes: $n = 328$. RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; SRMR, standardized root mean square residual; CFI, comparative fit index; TLI, Tucker-Lewis index; WFC, work-family conflict; FWC, family-work conflict

Discussion

The central aim of this study was to investigate the relationships between role commitment, time- and strain-based WFC and FWC, and role satisfaction in a post-socialist country. The results support Super's (1990) notion that a high commitment to different life roles leads to satisfaction or strain and even both. Among Slovenian managers, occupational commitment significantly predicted career satisfaction and was positively associated with time- and strain-based WFC. Moreover, while marital commitment influenced satisfaction in marriage, contrary to expectations, it was not related to either FWC type. It is possible, that commitment to family roles affects an individual's functioning positively rather than negatively by leading directly to role satisfaction rather than elevating conflict (Perrone *et al.*, 2006). Yet, results can also be interpreted culturally. Although family characteristics (e.g. spouse employment, and number/age of children) raise perceived role conflict in traditionally capitalist countries in the EU, the results are not significant for post-socialist countries, suggesting that cultural norms may moderate the effect (Shaffer *et al.*, 2011). From a cultural perspective, family in Slovenia is subordinate to work (Kanjuo-Mrčela and Černigoj-Sadar, 2011). Consequently, schedules in the family need to conform to work schedules and spouses who are committed to marriage may be supportive of a manager's career and thus engage in more housework, which might cause a manager to not perceive FWC.

Furthermore, the negative relationship between time-based WFC and managers' marital satisfaction supported the hypothesis, whereas strain-based WFC had a non-significant effect on marital satisfaction. This implies that frustration and exhaustion caused by excessive work demands do not reduce managers' perceived marital quality. Being overloaded at work may not necessarily lead to marital arguments, as managers may view the WFC as a price to pay to achieve success (Bagger and Li, 2012). Another explanation for the non-significant effect might be that dual-career couples report a more equitable division of household work and higher marital satisfaction than single-career couples (Helms *et al.*, 2010).

Finally, while time-based FWC was found to exacerbate managers' career satisfaction, the opposite was found relative to strain-based FWC. This may indicate that Slovenian managers refrain from transmitting strain symptoms caused by family demands to their professional environment. It may well be that in the workplace managers portray themselves as individuals highly capable of meeting different role requirements and coping with conflicts between personal and professional lives. In Slovenia, solving WFCs is considered a personal obligation (Den Dulk *et al.*, 2011) and is regarded as a criterion of personal success. Hence, managers may manage impressions about their personal life in such a way that it does not jeopardize their reputation. More specifically, confessing to having problems in the family might undermine co-workers' beliefs about managers' competences and thereby negatively influence opportunities for career advancement.

Theoretical implications

The findings reported herein offer four main implications for theory and research on work-family issues. The first contribution of this study lies in the fact that it developed a model which adopted an integrative perspective to studying life role commitments and WFCs. While existing studies focussed on one role commitment (Graves *et al.*, 2007; Weer *et al.*, 2010), this study explored both occupational and marital commitment. For managers, role commitments appear to have varying effects on conflict between work and family, which may reflect "substantive differences in what commitment to the different roles entails, as well as differences in the experience of conflict between specific roles" (Day and Chamberlain, 2006, p. 126). In turn, the conceptual model captures WFC as well as FWC, which is a less frequently studied concept in the work-family literature (Hoobler *et al.*, 2010). Yet, FWC is important because, apart from negatively affecting the family domain, it undermines work-related attitudes and work performance (Amstad *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, in terms of methodological contributions, the analyses employed in this study allowed to test the model as a whole, and not just tests of single relationships, taking into account that work and family are interrelated domains which do not operate independently from one another. Thereby, this study addresses the need for more model development and testing in the work-family literature (Eby *et al.*, 2005, p. 183).

Second, in response to calls for finer-grained analyses of conflict (Eby *et al.*, 2005) the present study extends existing research by testing time- and strain-based conflict types rather than investigating a general WFC. My findings suggest that independently investigating time and under-researched strain-based conflict is necessary due to effect-size differences. It is important to distinguish between the two types of conflict considering that they are conceptually different in terms of personal intent (Edwards and Rothbard, 2000). While a rise in time-based conflict is intentional (i.e. a shift in time results from intentional allocation decisions), transfer of strain and consequent occurrence of strain-based conflict is unintentional. Correspondingly, if anxiety and fatigue arise at work, an individual does not intentionally attempt to create interferences with family life (i.e. forces that encourage conflict).

Third, this study adds to the extant work-family literature by investigating constructs such as career satisfaction, which is rarely studied (Amstad *et al.*, 2011) and marital role commitment, which is the least frequently investigated role commitment (Greer and Egan, 2012). As non-work commitment indirectly affects work performance (Graves *et al.*, 2007; Weer *et al.*, 2010), more research in this area would be informative.

Fourth, my findings also contribute to the understanding of WFC and FWC in a post-socialist country that has undergone significant institutional and attitudinal transformations in the last couple of decades. While most work-family research is based on Anglo cultures (Shaffer *et al.*, 2011), an analysis from culturally dissimilar societies may provide additional evidence of generalizability of theories. Changing institutional patterns, societal trends, and national cultures are contextual dimensions (Johns, 2006) that shape the meaning of work and family and profoundly influence interpretations of causes and consequences of WFC and FWC.

Practical implications

From a practical standpoint, this study highlights that organizations may benefit from realizing that commitment to marriage does not necessarily deplete resources and lead to FWC. By applying organization skills and increased self-confidence gained via the marital role to work situations, employees could improve their performance. HR practitioners could therefore develop interventions to help employees in their self-reflection and identification of the personal resources they can generate in non-work domains. In addition, HR could also promote how employees can effectively reallocate their personal resources across work and family domains (Lau *et al.*, 2013).

Organizations could encourage employees to engage in the marital role they are committed to, because this enhances marital satisfaction which is considered to be at least as important, if not more important, than satisfaction in work roles (Greenberger and O'Neil, 1993; Bagger and Li, 2012). Given the positive effects of marital satisfaction on career satisfaction reported in this study, organizations could, as part of their family-friendly programs organize formal gatherings for employees and their spouses as a sign of support of employees' participation in the non-work domain. Moreover, employees should pay attention to the impact that multiple role commitments have on perceived conflicts between work and family. By assessing how important different life role commitments are to employees, HR practitioners could help them mitigate conflicts through strategies for managing the work-family boundaries and flexible work arrangements. Another way to assist employees who experience problems in meeting the demands of work and family would be for organizations to offer access to counseling and coaching services.

The present study highlights that time-based conflicts have a greater impact on decreasing domain satisfaction than do strain-based conflicts. Organizations and supervisors could thus advocate against a culture of face time and for efficiency at work in an attempt to alleviate employees' time-based WFC. By learning time management skills (Baltes and Heydens-Gahir, 2003) and setting priorities based on individual values employees could also better control their time engagements in all domains. In times of excessive workload they could schedule more time for the work domain and spouses could adapt accordingly. Yet, during the periods of below-average workload the marital domain could benefit in the same manner.

Finally, given that managers are viewed as role models for employees and wider society, their work-family attitudes and behaviors are a meaningful sign of the importance that a personal domain has for professionals and its significance in the process of achieving career success. By advocating the value of being fulfilled at work and in the family, they demonstrate, particularly to younger generations, that professional success does not need to be achieved by sacrificing family life. On the contrary, to a certain extent family life can support professional life and contribute to career satisfaction, which in turn, positively influences job performance.

Limitations and future directions

Apart from contributions, several limitations associated with this study should be recognized. First, the data were cross-sectional, which limits the ability to demonstrate causality. Although the investigated relationships were theoretically grounded and alternative models were tested, causality can only be determined by collecting data at different points in time. Thus, future studies could benefit from longitudinal designs, that would account for variations in commitment, conflict, and satisfaction over time and further reveal the nature of the relationships among these constructs. With regard to the research design relying on self-reported data might cause concerns due to possible common method variance. Yet, the single-factor test yielded poor fit, suggesting there was no indication of that. Second, although anonymity and confidentiality were assured, social desirability bias may exist. Future research might consider integrating spousal perceptions of marital commitment and explore spouses' views of managers' WFC and FWC. In terms of model conceptualization, I recommend that researchers also analyze crossover effects within the dyad and explore how spousal role conflicts affect a manager's perceived role conflicts via transmission of strain and emotions. Furthermore, homogeneity of the sample limits generalizability. Hence, validating the model on other occupational groups may provide additional insight into linkages as would further exploration of gender differences among managers from post-socialist countries. Finally, the insignificant paths uncovered in this study provide an interesting avenue for future research. More studies are needed in order to establish whether the insignificant effects may be attributed to the specific context, given that cultural variables were not included in the model.

Note

1. In the *post hoc* analysis, I investigated the strength of relationships proposed in the conceptual model separately for male and female sub-sample. I thank an anonymous reviewer for this thoughtful suggestion. The analysis of the two sub-models revealed that the link between occupational commitment and WFC was significant only for male managers (time-based WFC: $\beta = 0.21$, $p = 0.006$, strain-based WFC: $\beta = 0.27$, $p = 0.001$). The relationship between marital commitment and FWC was not significant for either gender. Furthermore, the influence of marital satisfaction on career satisfaction was stronger for females ($\beta = 0.24$, $p = 0.010$) than males ($\beta = 0.16$, $p = 0.034$). Regarding the predictive value of WFC types on marital satisfaction, only time-based WFC among male managers significantly impacted marital satisfaction ($\beta = 0.17$, $p = 0.037$). The relationship between FWC and career satisfaction was significant only among female managers (time-based FWC: $\beta = -0.57$, $p = 0.000$; strain-based FWC: $\beta = 0.50$, $p = 0.001$). Finally, occupational commitment significantly predicted career satisfaction only among female managers ($\beta = 0.24$, $p = 0.015$) and marital commitment influenced marital satisfaction among female ($\beta = 0.46$, $p = 0.000$) as well as male managers ($\beta = 0.46$, $p = 0.000$). While a detailed analysis and discussion of findings were beyond the scope of this study, the statistically significant results are informative and suggest that further research in this area is essential to reveal how male and female managers' life role commitments predict role conflict and domain satisfaction.

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