ROSABETH MOSS KANTER
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN
WORK-FAMILY RESEARCH

Shelley MacDermid Wadsworth, Director

Center for Families at Purdue University
BACKGROUND

- Begun in 2000
- Named for Rosabeth Moss Kanter because of her leadership in framing the modern work-family research agenda

Work-family community is:
- Interdisciplinary (good) & fragmented (bad)

Corporate practitioners:
- interested in research but …
- hard to find / access
- hard to wade through
GOALS

• To find and promote the “best of the best”

• To increase and extend the impact of the research

• To foster discussions about quality – of research and of programs
PROCESS

• International jury

  61 scholars, 14 countries, many fields

• Round #1: Journals Reviewed

  82 journals, over 2500 articles

• Round #2: Nominees Selected

  37 nominated articles, each rated by 3 reviewers

• Round #3

  Top 5 papers rated by all reviewers AND corporate panel
Thank you!
Opportunities for ‘translation with traction’

• Ammunition for persuading leaders
• Ideas for creating or improving programs
• Content for educating and equipping supervisors or workers to prevent or deal with challenges
• Poking holes in stereotypes, assumptions and misconceptions
• Adding nuance to existing knowledge, and expanding boundaries with new knowledge
• Interesting conversation at happy hour (?)
DECIDING BETWEEN WORK AND FAMILY: AN EPISODIC APPROACH
KRISTEN M. SHOCKLEY
TAMMY D. ALLEN

• Making decisions to choose work or family: what matters?
  • Pressure from ‘role senders’?
  • Emotional or instrumental support?
  • Importance of the activity?

• A ‘person-centered’ approach – focus on differences WITHIN persons over time rather than differences BETWEEN people at one time.
Predictions

- Role sender pressure about work/family increases likelihood of choosing THAT domain
- Role sender support about work/family increases likelihood of choosing the OTHER domain
- Choices will favor domains thought to be more important
Method

• Every day for 10 days, participants described their experiences of work-family conflict
• Over 270 episodes experienced by 92 participants
Results

- Similar numbers of episodes of work interfering with family and vv – this is quite different from previous research
- All hypotheses supported, EXCEPT that family emotional support had no influence – possibly because it was a kind of ‘constant’
- Role pressure and support are powerful: work role-sender pressure was the largest work predictor of WFC decision making
- Given the weight that this cue carries, we believe these results speak of the need for organizations to consider the extent that the culture signals to individuals that they should choose work over family. Our results highlight its importance in actual decision-making processes. Organizational change initiatives aimed at altering work–family culture should consider this concept as an integral part of the change process.
Work–life balance/imbalance: the dominance of the middle class and the neglect of the working class

Tracey Warren

• Reminder that concerns about work/life often are ‘tuned’ more to white-collar than blue-collar workers

• Examination from the UK about the impact of the economic downturn on patterns of work/life concerns among workers in different occupations.
Examples

- ‘White collar’ workers often want to work less; blue collar workers sometimes need to work more
- Through the recession:
  - Percent of workers wanting to work more increased
  - By the end, 1 in 3 workers in some occupations working part-time involuntarily
  - Daytime hours fell; in some occupations 2 in 3 workers now working nights, evenings, or weekends
  - Percent of workers reporting financial difficulties:
    - Managerial rose from 17 to 25%
    - Blue collar rose from 25 to 50%
PROFESSIONAL IMAGE MAINTENANCE: HOW WOMEN NAVIGATE PREGNANCY IN THE WORKPLACE
LAURA M. LITTLE, VIRGINIA SMITH MAJOR, AMANDA S. HINOJOSA, DEBRA L. NELSON

• 3 studies
  • Explore
  • Develop a measure
  • Analyze
How do women navigate pregnancy?

- 2 major types of strategies
  - Image maintenance
    - Maintaining pace
    - Not requesting accommodation
    - Taking on more work during pregnancy
    - Truncating maternity leave
  - Decategorization
    - Minimizing the pregnancy – not talking about it, downplaying it
    - Hiding the pregnancy – dressing to conceal, turning down in-person meetings; ‘passing’
Studied relationship to…

- Perceived discrimination
- Burnout
- Returning to work
Note: Dotted arrows = direct effects. Dashed arrows = non-significant effects.
Work–Family Conflict, Emotional Exhaustion, and Displaced Aggression Toward Others: The Moderating Roles of Workplace Interpersonal Conflict and Perceived Managerial Family Support
Yihao Liu, Mo Wang, Chu-Hsiang Chang, Junqi Shi, Le Zhou, Ruodan Shao

- A ‘resource-based self-regulation’ perspective
- Daily diary data from 125 employees collected 4 times during each workday for 3 consecutive weeks
- China
• Morning family-to-work conflict was positively related to afternoon emotional exhaustion, which in turn predicted displaced aggression toward supervisors and coworkers in the afternoon and displaced aggression toward family members in the evening.

  • Example: ‘When someone made me angry, I took it out on [supervisor/coworker/family members]’

• In addition, morning workplace interpersonal conflict exacerbated the impact of morning work-to-family conflict on afternoon emotional exhaustion, whereas perceived managerial family support alleviated the impact of morning family-to-work conflict on afternoon emotional exhaustion.
Figure 3. Workplace interpersonal conflict moderates the effect of work-to-family conflict on emotional exhaustion.
Figure 4. Perceived managerial family support moderates the effect of family-to-work conflict on emotional exhaustion.
‘Bad Mum Guilt’: The representation of ‘work-life balance’ in UK women’s magazines

Cath Sullivan

- Multiple roles portrayed as leading to stress, problematic
- Women’s desires are seen as the problem
- Women still have to surmount
- Still up to women to work out the work/life solution and arrange with her family
- Focus on guilt
‘This situation touches the nerve of working mothers everywhere’ says child development specialist Anita Pflock. ‘Chances are, you’re doing what’s best for you and your family so feel free to defend your choice by asserting yourself as The Expert when it comes to the needs of you and your family’. If you work long hours or you genuinely feel your kids are suffering, don’t beat yourself up. But do start to make moves to try to increase your hours at home.
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Try to limit your children to one activity each per week — and make yourself time for a ten minute cuppa before you start on dinner. And don’t feel guilty about that tea — stress is infectious and if you feel hassled, so will the kids.
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Very individual solution — up to the woman to solve
‘finding a job that’s interesting, flexible and pays enough for me to afford childcare is proving impossible’

Very individual solution – up to the woman to solve
• Women’s multiple roles are presented in a conflicting way: maternal employment is positioned as normative and inevitable yet also as a choice that women make.

• Traditional ideals of motherhood and the gendered division of labor are not challenged; men’s combination of parenthood and paid employment is not positioned as problematic.

• Multiple roles are clearly cast as stressful, potentially damaging to health and as leading to guilt. The focus upon guilt is particularly interesting because it gives the impression of empathy with women’s emotions and experiences but simultaneously makes the idea that working mothers should feel guilty seem inevitable and therefore, unquestionable.

• Characterizing maternal employment as a choice, and a matter of personal responsibility, positions working mothers as responsible for their own ill health and guilt.
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