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DEVELOPMENTS IN THEORIES AND MEASURES OF WORK-FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS: FROM CONFLICT TO BALANCE

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to provide an overview of work-family studies based on an exploration of historical developments in this domain.

Design/methodology/approach – The transformations in work and family relationship during the past century have resulted in development of new theories and measurement models. Based on an investigation of these developments models and measures of work and family relationship are described and the critiques of the current methodologies which are being used in the work and family studies are discussed.

Findings – After an introduction to the historical developments in work-family relationships, different theories are presented and discussed. Our historical investigation of the dominant theories and models in the field suggests that these theories can be categorized intro three views based on their characteristics in the historical evolution of work-family studies: conflict view, compensation view and balance view. Moreover discussion of the research methodologies in this domain of study identifies important critiques and provides practical recommendations.

Research limitations/implications – Although the research in this area has furthered our knowledge, work and family relationships still lack dominant theories, since few conclusions can be drawn. While more recent studies on the indicators and factors of work and family have been conducted recently by some researchers, however more empirical studies in this area is required to help us develop more effective and reliable measures for assessing these constructs and their relationships. Also there exists a gap in the literature with regards to the investigation of individual-specific factors affecting the relation between work and family.

Practical implications – The present study is of interest to academics as well as practitioners. Understanding the past developments in theories and methodologies will pave the way to development or utilization of new theories in this area. From a practitioner's perspective, decreasing the work-family conflict has been a topic of interest, as reduction in the work-family conflict will lead to more productive workforce.

Originality/Value – The proposed segmentation-integration continuum which is developed based on the historical developments on this topic, in addition to the investigation of research methodologies in this domain, provide valuable benchmarks and guidance for future studies in this domain.

Keywords: Work-family, historical developments, measurements, conflict, compensation, balance.
Research type: General review

JEL classification:
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Introduction

The notions of 'work' and 'family' have changed notably during the past two centuries, and consequently new theories have been employed to describe the changing relationship of

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work and family. The area of work and family has been a topic of interest in academia specifically in the past few decades as a result of changes in both family and workplace. Rapid pace of technological changes, increasing role of women in the workplace, the shift to a more service base economy, and demographic changes are some of the change factors (Higgins, Duxbury & Lee, 1992; Vannoy & Dubeck, 1998). While "society and business need women to work" (Whitehead, 2008:17), diversity in the family structure has become "the new norm" (Whitehead, 2008:16); and we are now trying to conceptualize what constitutes to a "normal family" in the *modern times* (Walsh, 2012: 4).

All of these changes call for the need to develop or utilize newer theories intended for explaining the evolved relationships. In addition, new measurement systems are required to conduct research in the new environments. This study does not intend to explore the factors that have imposed changes in this area of research; rather the focus of this study is to understand the historical developments in the theories and research methodologies which have been employed in the studies of work-family relationships; with an assumption that understanding the past developments in theories and methodologies will pave the way to development or utilization of new theories in this area.

The study of work-family relationship has been a topic of interest specifically for the four major stakeholders involved in this relationship; namely, researchers, employers, workers, and workers' families (MacDermit, 2005). Increasing the number of academic studies about work-family relationships during the past two decades indicates the attention of researchers to this topic. From an employers' perspective, decreasing the work-family conflict has been a topic of interest. The underlying assumption for many corporations and governmental organizations that have expressed interest in work-family studies is that workers who experience less work-family conflict will be more productive (Watkins, 1995; Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Neerpal and Barath, 2013). Moreover, studies show that work-family conflict is a key indicator of workers and their family's quality of life (Galinsky, Bond, & Friedman, 1993), therefore this area of study is important for employees as well. These evidences illustrate the importance of this area of research for all categories of stakeholders (MacDermit, 2005).

Studying the relationship of work and family has been documented since the late 19th century when significant changes to the structure of work and family started to affect the notions of work and family. Kleinberg (1989) in her remarkable study of the working class families in Pittsburg from 1870-1907 describes the effect of industrialization on the relationship between work and family from different perspectives. She describes how the source of income shifted from inside the home to the outside during the industrialization period. With the beginning of the industrialization era, a "sharp dichotomy" of work and family started to take place (Oslen, 1983).

In the 21st century different kinds of influences on the relationship between the work and family life have been observed around the globe; such as the increase in the number of single parents and dual-career couples (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012). As a result of these socioeconomic forces the roles of individuals, values and hence the relation between work and family were significantly affected. The previous state of equilibrium which was in place for centuries shifted significantly during the early industrialization era. After describing the historical developments in the major theories of work-family relationship in the next section, developments in the measurement of work and family constructs and their relationship are presented. Our recommendations for employing more appropriate methodologies in measuring work-family relationships is presented in the following section, and it is followed by synthesis of the study.

Work –Family Theories: From Conflict to Balance

Work and family studies historically focus on studying the conflict between different roles that individuals have in their society, specifically their roles at work, and their roles as a family member (Adams, King, & King, 1996; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Grzywacz 2000; Grzywacz & Marks 2000a). Boundary theory and border theory are the two fundamental theories that researchers have used to study these role conflicts. Other theories are built on the foundations of these two theories.

Most of the early studies in this area have looked at the relationship between work and family from a *boundary theory* perspective (cf. Pleck, 1977; Oslen, 1983; Small & Riley, 1990). Pleck (1977) is one of the seminal authors who described the application of boundary theory in exploring the constraints and conflicts in the relationship of work and family. Pleck (1977) was mainly concerned with the negative effect of the relationship between work and family which rose from the individual constraints and role conflict. In 1983, Oslen (1983) provided further insight into the application of boundary theory in studying the work and family; although the main focus of her study was on changes and reforms in the workplace from gender, law and ideology points of view. From boundary theory perspective, social life has been divided into two separate but interdependence spheres, work –or what Oslen (1983) refers to as 'market'– and family. According to this theory, since people have different roles in their workplace and in their family life, they are frequently engaged in the role transformation (Chen, Lai, Lin & Cheng, 2005); which means, they have to leave a role and play another role (Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate, 2000). In the context of work and family relationships, according to this theory, each individual can not have different roles at the same time.

Border theory in comparison to boundary theory is a relatively newer theory that improves our understanding of the relationship between work and family in modern societies (Chen et al., 2005). Similar to boundary theory, border theory considers work and family as two different spheres; however it emphasizes the understanding of the influence each sphere has on the other (Chen et al., 2005). This theory focuses on identifying the factors that create work and family conflict, and tries to find ways to manage these two spheres and the border between them, in order to reach a balance between work related roles and family related roles (Clark, 2000; Desrochers & Sargent, 2002). Based on explicit study of these two fundamental theories, Nippert-Eng (1995, 1996) explains that individuals can select different boundary management strategies on a continuum ranging from segmentation to integration. In other words, individuals may select one of the divisional strategies: keeping distance between work and family life and treat work and family roles as different roles that playing one role requires leaving another role; or integrating work and family domains, and try to manage a balance between these two spheres (Rothbard, Phillips, & Dumas, 2005). The following section describes seven major work-family theories within the continuum of boundary and border theories.

Three Dominant Views: Seven Major Theories

Based on our literature review, we identified seven major and commonly suggested theories for explaining work and family relationships: structural functioning, segmentation, compensation, supplemental and reactive compensation, role enhancement, spillover, and work enrichment model. In this section of the paper these theories will be explained in the context of the segmentation-integration, conflict-balance and boundary-border continuums. We categorized these seven theories into three groups based on their view of the work-family relationship as displayed in Figure 1.

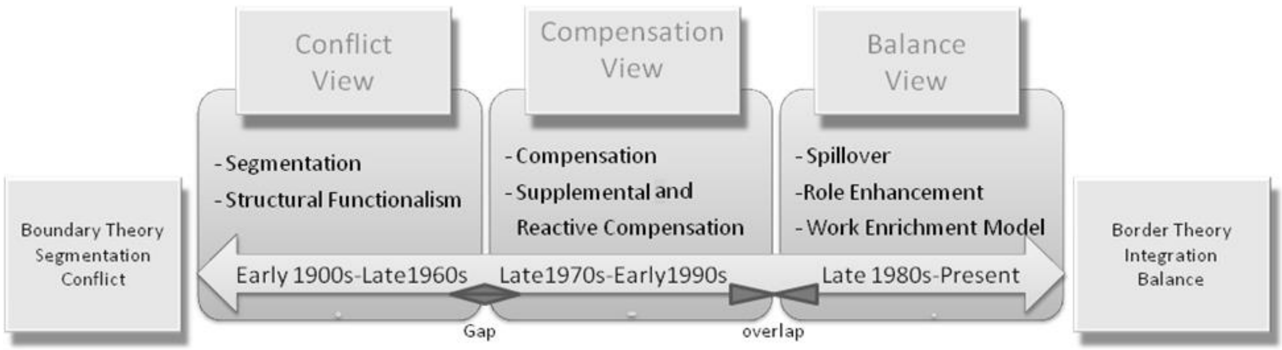

Figure 1. Work-Family Views: Segmentation-Integration Continuum

In the following the historical evolution of these theories are explicitly explained.

1. First View of Work-Family: Conflict

The theories presented in this era are the earliest theoretic views of work-family relationships. These theories –structural functionalism and segmentation– have two fundamental common characteristics: a. approving the separation between work and family life, and b. focusing merely on the *negative* effect of work and family relationships. Studies done based on the conflict theory show that work and family have both direct and indirect effects on each other (cf. Michel, Mitchelson, Kotrba, LeBreton, and Baltes, 2009). Here these two dominant theories of work-family during the period of the early 20th century until the late 1960s are described.

1.1 Structural Functionalism. The roots of this theory can be traced back to the early 20th century, when industrial revolution was separating economic work from the family home (MacDermit, 2005). The 19th century's technological advancements in machinery and manufacturing initiated the separation of work from family. However, it was not until the early 20th century that the first view of work-family theories started to shape. Structural-functionalism as one of the dominant sociology theories of early 20th century was a natural candidate (Demerath, 1966). World War II (WWII) revitalized the economy after the big depression, largely through the boom in manufacturing of required war equipments and weapons. During WWII, large numbers of productive workforce, mainly men, were sent overseas for the war. As a result women were encouraged to enter the work force. Immediately after the war many women who had recently entered into the workforce, were persuaded to return to home, engage in their family roles, and to make room for returning soldiers to join the work force (Doherty, Boss, LaRossa, Schumm, & Steinmetz, 1993). The structural functionalism theory which emerged following WWII was largely influenced from the industrial revolution and the changes in the social role of men and women during this period. This theory implies that the life is concerned mainly with two separate spheres: productive life which happens in the workplace and affective life which is at home (Oslen, 1983). Structural functionalism theory believes in the existence of radical separation between work (institution, workplace, or market) and families. According to this theory, these two (workplace and family) work best "when men and women specialize their activities in separate spheres, women at home doing expressive work and men in the workplace performing instrumental tasks" (Kingsbury & Scanzoni, 1993; as cited in MacDermid, 2005: 18). By the late 1960s, many researchers started to question the dominance of structural-functionalist for describing the social issues of the time (Demerath, 1966); which gave way to the development of new views for describing the work-family relationship.

1.2 Segmentation. The root of this theory, as one of the earliest views of work-family relationship, goes back to industrial revolution of early 20th century as well. Based on this theory work and family –or what Blood and Wolfe (1960) call *home life*– do not affect each other (Blood & Wolfe, 1960), since they are segmented and independent from each other (Hart, 1999). Blood and Wolfe (1960), who were pioneers of this perspective, applied this concept to blue collar workers. They explained that workers in unsatisfying or un-involving jobs would naturally separate work and home. Moreover, according to segmentation theory, any role specific pressure (such as work related or family related pressures) does not affect the role pressure in the other sphere (Michela & Hargis, 2008).

2. Second View of Work-Family: Compensation

By the late 1960s many researchers started to question the dominance of segmentation and structural-functionalist for describing the social issues of the time (Demerath, 1966). In 1979, Piotrkowski, opened the way to the development of second view of work-family theories –compensation view– by arguing that this segmentation of work and home would be a deliberate rather than natural act. Compensation and supplemental and reactive compensation theories, as two of the dominant theories within this view, are described here.

2.1. Compensation. The second era of work-family theories started in the late 1970s. In 1979, Piotrkowski in his seminal study of exploring the relation between work and family described that employees "look to their homes as havens, [and] look to their families as sources of satisfaction lacking in the occupational sphere". Following Piotrkowski's (1979) work, Lambert (1990) explored the workers' response to occurrences in both their work and their family lives. The results of this study led to the compensation theory that states, "individuals may try to compensate for a lack of satisfaction in work or home by trying to find more satisfaction in the other". The theory of compensation views workers as individuals who are "seeking out greater satisfaction from their work or family life as a result of being dissatisfied with the other" (Lambert, 1990). What distinguishes compensation theory from the previous theories is that, in compensation theory, for the first time, the positive effect of work to family has been recognized. However, it is important to note that the original view of compensation theory (which was proposed by Piotrkowski, 1979) had focused mainly on the negative effect of family life and work life, and it was only the more advanced view of compensation theory –proposed by Lambert, 1990– that specifically recognized the positive effect of work and family along with its negative effect on the work-family relationships. Further development of the latter view of work and family theory led to the development of new theories –balance view– of work-family.

2.2. Supplemental and Reactive Compensation. Supplemental and reactive compensation theories are two dichotomies of compensation theory which were developed during the late 1980s and the early 1990s. Kando, Summers, Zedeck and Mosier are among the seminal authors who shaped these theories (cf. Kando & Summers, 1971; Zedeck & Mosier, 1990; Zedeck, 1992). While compensation theory describes the behavior of employees in pursuing an alternative reward in the other sphere, supplemental and reactive compensation theories try to describe the reason behind the work-family compensation behavior of employees (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). Supplemental compensation occurs when an individual finds out that his or her exogenous and endogenous rewards in one sphere (work or family) is not sufficient, and as a result the individual strives to supplement that lack of rewards in the other sphere. In contrast, the reactive compensation occurs when an individual has an undesirable experience in one sphere and seeks for contrasting experience in the other sphere (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). It is important to note that in this second view of the work-family theories, there exists a fundamental principal that work and family are two separate spheres, and that employees make the choice to excel in one sphere by lightening up in the other sphere

(Goldsmith, 2007). Although this second view of work-family, acknowledges the linkage between these two spheres, however these theories mainly describe the negative relationship between the work and family rather than the positive relationship between the work and family.

3. Third View of Work-Family: Balance

The third view of work-family theories initiated in the late 1980s and the early 1990s with seminal research studies of Glowinkowski and Cooper (1986) and Kirchmeyer, (1992). The work-family theories in this era were further developed by the work of Milkie and Peltola (1999) and other researchers in the 21st century –which are discussed in this section. This era of work-family studies acknowledged the relationship between work and family. Moreover, these theories considered both positive and negative effects of work to family and family to work, while highlighting the positive effects of work to family and family to work. Here three dominant theories in this category are described.

3.1. Role enhancement theory. According to the role enhancement theory, "multiple roles bring rewards such as income, heightened self-esteem, opportunities for social relationships, and the experience of success." (Barnett & Hyde, 2001) From this perspective, the combination of certain roles has a positive, rather than a negative effect on well-being, and "only beyond certain upper limits may overload and distress occur" (Kinnunen, Feldt, Geurts, & Pulkkinen, 2006). This theory states that "participation in one role is made better or easier by virtue of participation in the other role" (Frone, 2003). Moreover, this theory acknowledges the negative effect of the work-family relationship, in which, only beyond a certain upper limit may overload and distress occur, however, the central focus of this perspective is mainly on the *positive* effects of work and family relationship, such as resource enhancement (Kirchmeyer, 1992), work-family success or balance (Milkie & Peltola, 1999), positive spillover (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000b) and facilitation (Frone, 2003; Grzywacz & Bass, 2003; Wayne et al ., 2004).

*3.2. Spillover***.** Spillover is a process by which "an employee's experience in one domain affects their experience in another domain" (Hart, 1999). Spillover occurs "where the events of one environment affect the other" (Glowinkowski & Cooper, 1986). Theoretically, spillover is perceived to be one of two types: positive or negative (Crouter, 1984; Lambert, 1990). Spillover occurs "where the events of one environment affect the other" (Glowinkowski & Cooper, 1986). According to this theory "workers carry the emotions, attitudes, skills and behaviors from their work role into their family life and vice versa" (Lambert, 1990). Spillover as the most popular view of relationship between work and family, considers multidimensional aspects of work and family relationship (Figure 2). These multidimensional aspects are: positive or negative work to family and family to work effects (Kirchmeyer, 1993).

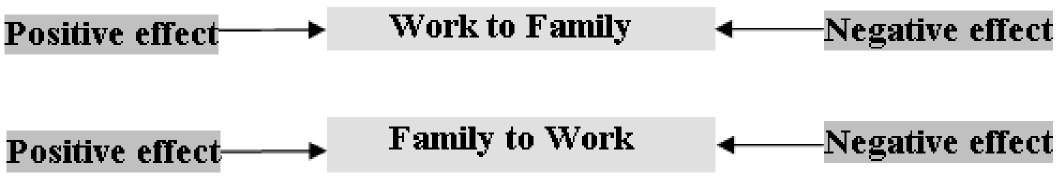

Figure 2. Multidimensional Aspects of Work-Family Spillover

3.3. Work Enrichment Model (Also referred to as work enrichment *theory* in seldom recent publications; cf. Michel & Clark, 2011). One of the recent models for explaining the relationship between work and family is proposed by Greenhaus and Powell (2006) and has already attracted the attention of many scholars. According to this model, experience in one role (work or family) will enhance the quality of life in the other role. In other words, this model tries to explain the positive effects of the work-family relationship (the left side of Figure 2). Halpern (2008) in her study of combining work and family describes that more recent studies tend to be more conscious couscous of the positive interface of work and family. A consensus among the researchers in this area is forming that confirms the dominance of the third view theories for explaining today's relationship of work and family. Specifically more scholars are encouraging the study of positive effects of work and family (Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz, 2006).

Greenhaus and Powell (2006) in their study of work and family propose their model of work-family enrichment based on a comprehensive review of literature in this area. Lapierre and Allen (2006) also conducted an empirical study which suggested the positive effects of work to family and positive effects of family support to work. Carlson et al. (2006) call for more research in exploring positive relationships of work and family and propose a measurement system for assessing the positive aspect of work-family interface. Grzywacz, Carlson, Kacmar and Wayne (2007) explore the synergies between work and family and creatively by proposing a model for understanding process that work-family relationship can be facilitated. Building on the Carlson et al.'s (2006) enrichment model, Masuda, McNall, Allen, and Nicklin (2012) further investigate the measurement models of work and family relationships and find that some measures of positive spillover have also loading on the work enrichment constructs. This is an interesting finding that provides evidence for the fact that in our proposed clash to balance model (Figure 1) the new theories do not replace the previous construct, rather they complete previous perspectives based on the advancements in the area and changes in the work and like spheres in time.

Measures of Work-family Spillover

In this section of the paper the most influential models which have been employed in the studies of work-family relationship are explored to identify the deployed measurement methodologies. The focus of this section is on the methodologies and specifically the measures that scholars have used in their models for assessing the work-family relationships. After presenting some of the dominant models in this area and explaining their contributions to this area of study, the analysis and critiques of these models are presented.

1. Small and Riley Work Spillover Scale

The first empirical measurement of work-family relationship can be traced back to the seminal study of Small and Riley (1990). Previous studies (cf. Blood & Wolfe, 1960), were mostly concerned with the notion of *work* rather than the notion of *family*. In their pioneering study of work and family relationship among bank executives, Small and Riley (1990) developed a Work Spillover Scale (WSS) consisting of 20 items. The authors assessed the extent to which work had *negative* spillover into four major family roles: the parent role, the marital role, the leisure role, and the home management role.

One of the highlights of their study is that the data was collected from both the workers and their spouses. The sample of the study consisted of 618 bank executives, and of 236 spouses. Different versions of questionnaires were prepared for workers and their spouses to measure the negative effect of work-family relationships. This methodology can help to decrease the self assessment bias in data collection.

In their 1990 study, Small and Riley were focusing only on the negative effect of work-family relationship. Their main goal was to measure the *role-conflict* of workers when they transform their role. Although these researchers did not develop a specific measure for *positive* spillover, but some of the items in their WSS reflect the concept of positive spillover. Therefore, on the segmentation-integration continuum (Figure 1), Small and Riley's perspective can be pinpointed around the middle of continuum, between second view theories and third view theories.

2. Grzywacz and Mark's 16-item Scale

In their groundbreaking study Grzywacz and Mark (2000) developed a scale for measuring various dimensions of the work and family spillover. Their scale consisted of 16 items. Using the data (N=1986) from National Survey of Midlife Development in United State (MIDUS), the authors found that negative work to family spillover, negative family to work spillover, positive family to work spillover, and positive work to family spillovers are "distinct work-family experiences" (Grzywacz & Mark, 2000). Unlike Small and Riley (1990) who had focused on role-conflict (and therefore, negative work-family relationship), Grzywacz and Mark (2000) recognized both positive and negative effects of work-family relationship, and developed their measurement model accordingly. Based on the description of proposed segmentation-integration continuum (Figure 1), Grzywacz and Mark's perspective can be best described by third view theories.

3. Kinnunen, Feldt, Geurts and Pulkkinen's four-factor Model

In their study of 202 Finnish employees, who had a spouse or partner, Kinnunen et al. (2006) studied both the negative and positive work to family and family to work spillovers. Kinnunen et al. (2006) proposed four distinguished groups of measures for each form of spillover. These researchers proposed "a four-factor model" (including negative work-to-family spillover, negative family-to-work spillover, positive work-to-family spillover, and positive family-to-work spillover). Confirmatory factor analyses indicated that this approach was "superior" compared to the other factor models examined (including Grzywacz & Mark's 2000 model). Kinnunen et al.'s (2006) approach best fits in the third view of conflict-balance continuum.

4. Other Measures

In addition to the above mentioned seminal measures, other measures have been suggested by other scholars for studying work-family relationships. However, most of the latter mentioned measures have mainly used Small and Riley's (1990), and/or Grzywacz and Mark's (2000) methodologies. Some of the most cited measurement models are briefly described here:

- Negative spillover was assessed by 8-item measures based on Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) three forms of inter-domain conflict (time based, Strain based, and behavior based).
- Kirchmeyer (1993, 2000), developed particular sets of measures for assessing positive and negative spillovers.
- Higgins, Duxbury and Lee (1994) and Higgins and Duxbury (1998) assessed the Positive, Neutral, and Negative impacts of work-family spillovers, on seven aspects of their work-life (e.g. productivity, their ability to relocate, their ability to travel, etc.). These authors used role enhancement theory for developing their measures.

More recently, several studies have been conducted with particular attention to the analysis of the work role and family roles at the individual level, taking into account factor such as social support (Matthews, Bulger & Barnes-Farrell, 2010), networks (Matthews, Barnes-Farrell, & Bulger, 2010), affective reaction, cognitive appraisal (Zhao, Qu, & Ghiselli, 2011), and family-relatedness (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012). Masuda et al.'s (2012) approach on model development in identifying measures of work and family is of importance to be mentioned at it provides more comprehensive analysis of model development by assessing several seminal and recent measurement models.

Critiques of the Work-Family Research Methods

Critiques presented in this section are limited to the methodology alone, and does not include the critique of the theories. Virtually all of the studies in this area have used similar strategy for data gathering which is, asking respondents via questionnaire to indicate to what extent their work-family interferes with their family-work. The answer options are usually in a 5- or 7-points Likert scale (Kossek & Lambert, 2005).

The respondents usually go through a complex cognitive work and follow the following five steps for answering each question: "1. Understand the question, 2. Recall relevant behavior, 3. Infer and estimate the data with which to answer the question, 4. Map the answer onto the response format, and 5. Edit the answer for reasons of social desirability" (Schwarz & Oyserman, 2001; as cited in MacDermid, 2005: 24). This data gathering methodology imposes some major challenges, including "self-assessment" bias, "self-serving" bias, accuracy of "time intervals", and "errors of recall" including memory errors (Campbell & Sedikides, 1999; MacDermid, 2005).

Discussion

Several researchers have called for the need to further work on the development of theories and measures of work-family relationship (cf. Greenhaus & Powell, 2012; Greenhaus, Peng, & Allen, 2012). The present study shows that while the roots of these theories go back to the early 20th century, it was not until the late 20th century that the organizational measures of work-family relationship was developed; hence the development of research methodologies have been behind the theory deployments by decades. Although the research in this area has furthered our knowledge and understanding with regards to the relationship of work and family, this relationship is still unclear since few conclusions can be drawn.

One of the problems in this area is the lack of a dominant theory (Tenbrunsel, Brett, Moaz, Stroh, & Reilly, 1995). We explicitly described a continuum of theories from segmentation to integration, and we mentioned that in each period one or a number of theories were dominant. However, this should not imply that in each period only the dominant theories are appropriate to be used in all environments and in all cases. In other words the theories never expire. For example, segmentation theory still has strong applications in describing the work-family relationships in certain environments. It is practically possible to find cases which can be described appropriately by each of these theories. An extreme example for segmentation theory would be studying work and family relationships of families working in certain industries (e.g. mining operations) of a developing country; where a complete separation between work and family could be observed; "women at home doing expressive work" and taking care of children, "and men in the workplace performing instrumental tasks" (Kingsbury & Scanzoni, 1993; as cited in MacDermid, 2005: 18).

As it was explained in the historical evolution of work and family relationships, the separation view of work and family is becoming weaker and can be observed in fewer environments. This may be caused partly by industrialization, partly by changes in the culture of societies, and partly by changes in working culture of organizations. On one hand, the cultural and technical barriers of joining women to the workforce are decreasing, and on the other hand, integration of family life and work life (for both men and women) is becoming more acceptable and possible due to changes in norms in society, organizational processes, type of works and technical advancements, such as development of telecommunication technologies (Chesley, 2005). In today's new work environment –and specifically in the developed countries– the first view theories alone, can hardly explain the common work-family relationships. Moreover, our literature review of various models which are developed by scholars for explaining work-family relationships, indicate that none of the models can be describe solely by a single view, whether it is the second view theories or the third view theories. While some researchers such as Judge and Watanabe (1994) believe that all of these theories are appropriate, and that researchers should find out what theory is more appropriate for which study; others including Lambert, (1990) suggest that it is more appropriate to use various theories as overlapping theories. This study supports both, the Lambert's (1990) and the Judge and Watanabe's (1994) perspectives, which assert, in explaining work and family relationships, researchers should find the combination of theories (and not necessarily a single theory) that can best describe their study. It is critically important that researchers treat these theories as overlapping, supplementary theories, and not as substitutionary theories. Another issue –beside the theory development and application– which was discussed in this study relates to the research methodology. The typical research methodology strategy in work-family studies includes asking respondents via questionnaire to indicate to what extent their work/family interferes with their family/work. The challenges of using this methodology were explained explicitly in the previous section. For decreasing the self-assessment bias, self-serving bias, and humans' perception error, one possible solution is to collect information from spouses (or partners) and/or peers of the respondents as well as the respondents themselves. Small and Riley (1990) and Kinnunen et al. (2006) used this approach in their empirical studies. However, this method has some weaknesses, such as an increase in the amount of missing or incomplete data, an increase in the costs associated with the study, and an increase in the duration of data gathering and data analysis. Moreover, in some cases gathering data from spouses (or partners) and peers of the individuals is very hard or simply impossible. In conclusion, gathering data from spouses (or partners) and/or peers of individuals is highly recommended, where constrains of the study (e.g. time, cost, accessibility) allows the researches to do so.

Future Studies

Although the research in this area has furthered our knowledge, work and family relationships still lack dominant theories, since few conclusions can be drawn (Tenbrunsel et al., 1995). There are few studies that have actually developed measures of work-family spillovers. And there are even less studies that have developed measures that differentiate among different types of spillover. Kinnunen's et al. (2006) work in this area is one of the first studies that use different measures for each type of work-family spillover. In a recent study Neerpal and Barath (2013) made significant contribution in this domain. While more recent studies on the indicators and factors of work and family have been conducted recently by some researchers (cf. Greenhaus et al., 2012), however more empirical studies in this area is required to help us develop more effective and reliable measures for assessing these constructs and their relationships. The typical data gathering strategy that ask respondents via a questionnaire to indicate the effect of work and family on each other, creates some challenges for drawing solid conclusions from the empirical studies. Conducting empirical studies using the recommended data gathering method can enrich our understanding of the relationship between work and family. Another growing venue of research in this area is the study of work-family relationship over the life course in which Bruening and Dixon (2008) and Moen, Kelly and Huang, (2008) have made interesting contributions. Individual-specific factors affecting the relation between work and family can be another fruitful area for future studies to complete the more popular domain-specific approach (Ballout, 2008). For example Adem et al. (2013) explored the role of individual's value system on work-family relationship.

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