

Correlates of Work-Family Role Conflict and Well-Being: A Comparative Analysis by Gender

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Abstract : The main goal of the present study was to examine gender differences in the variables that explain the experience of role conflict and well-being among Jewish working fathers and mothers in the Israel. The experience of work-family conflict arises from simultaneous pressures from the work and family domains that are mutually incompatible. In light of the expansion of women's role set following the addition of paid employment outside of the home, most of the studies dealing with the impact of multiple roles on well-being have been conducted among women. However, changes in gender roles in recent years have also affected men's role set, as reflected in the terms 'new men' and 'new fathers'. Based on structural equation modeling, the study examined gender differences in variables that explain the experience of two types of role conflict - family interferes with work (FIW) and work interferes with family (WIF), as well as with the sense of well-being (positive and negative affect) among 611 employed Jewish mothers and fathers in Israel. The findings revealed that for women, both FIW and WIF conflict correlated negatively with well-being, whereas for men, a negative correlation with well-being was found only in the case of FIW conflict. For both men and women, egalitarian gender role ideology correlated with the dimension of positive effect, but the correlation was stronger for men. The findings highlight the contribution of egalitarian gender role ideology to alleviating the experience of role conflict and improving the emotional well-being of both men and women. Contrary to expectations, social support contributed more to mitigating negative effect among men than women. On the whole, the findings highlight the changes that men have experienced in the work-family system. In sum, the research findings shed new light on the masculine image in terms of the experience of FIW conflict. In contrast to the prevailing assumption that FIW role conflict is predominant among women, the findings of this study indicate that today, this type of role conflict is experienced equally by men and women whereas WIF conflict is predominant among men. Furthermore, contrary to expectations, levels of perceived social support were found to be similar for men and women, and men benefited from it even more than women did.

Keywords : FIW conflict, WIF conflict, social support, egalitarian gender role ideology, overload

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