

ABSTRACT

WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT ACROSS THE LIFESPAN: FROM CHILDCARE TO ELDERCARE

By Kelly A. Dilger

Due to the recent trend that older workers are delaying retirement and that there is an increasing need for caring for the elderly, work-family conflict could be expected to expand into workers' preretirement years. The aim of this study was to examine work-family conflict (WFC) across the lifespan to determine if work-family conflict due to childcare demands experienced early in life is similar to the work-family conflict due to eldercare demands experienced later in life.

Data for the study came from the sibling sample of the 1994 wave of the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study (WLS) of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Participants completed a 1 hour telephone interview and were mailed a 20 page self-administered mail back questionnaire. Participants included in the analyses were divided into two subsamples where 1,096 men and women were identified as having childcare responsibilities and 300 men and women were identified as having eldercare responsibilities.

A series of hierarchical multiple regressions and hierarchical moderated multiple regressions were used to test the hypotheses. The hypothesis examining the relationship between childcare demands and WFC was supported, but the hypothesis examining the relationship between eldercare demands and WFC was not. In addition, the hypotheses examining how WFC due to childcare demands (experienced early in life) is similar to WFC due to eldercare demands (experienced later in life) were not supported. Interpretations of these results, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research are further discussed.

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To my husband and daughter for their support and love. I appreciate their patience with the time I had to spend away from home. Without their encouragement and commitment, I would not have been able to achieve my goals. To my mom and dad who have always supported me in all of my aspirations throughout my life.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

With 76 million baby boomers in America currently between the ages of 44 to 62, organizations are expected to face numerous challenges (Olsen, 2008) including high turnover rates due to retirement (DeLong, 2004). It is projected that by 2030, 23% of the U.S. labor force will be ages 55 and older and there will not be enough younger workers to replace them (Lee & Mather, 2008). Additionally, there is the issue of knowledge and skills gaps created by aging workers leaving the workplace and taking their critical expertise with them when they retire (Aiman-Smith, Bergey, Cantwell, & Doran, 2006). These challenges to organizations are based on the premise that workers will retire and vacate the labor force once they reach retirement age. However, there exists important research that may be contrary to this traditional notion of retirement.

This paper discusses the recent trends and changes in the nature of retirement that are associated with the idea that aging workers are actually postponing retirement and remaining in the work force (Olsen, 2008). In addition, this paper discusses how the increasing need for caring for the elderly due to individuals living longer, and aging workers delaying retirement, could lead to conflicts between the workplace and home life. Finally, this paper describes how conflict between work and home can differ for individuals depending on where they are in their work and family life-cycles. The family life-cycle begins with the care of growing children in the early years and continues with the care of aging parents in later years. The purpose of this study was to examine the

assumption that younger workers are expected to experience conflict between work and home when they have families and children to care for, but contrary to previous models (see Aldous, 1978) the conflict does not decrease after the children become older and more independent. Instead, the conflict expands into the transition to caring for elderly parents.

Retirement Trends

According to an AARP survey, 70% of respondents ages 55 to 70 years old who had not retired reported that they plan to continue working beyond retirement age and about 50% indicated that they plan to work beyond age 70 (Brown, 2003). Recent research by Mermin, Johnson, and Murphy (2007) examined data from the Health and Retirement Study in which a sample of respondents who were between 51 and 56 years old and working for pay in 1992 as well as in 2004 were asked how likely they were to continue working past ages 62 and 65. They found that the likelihood of working past age 65 increased to 33% in 2004 from 27% in 1992. These trends suggest that older workers may remain working longer than the generations before them.

Another trend that suggests that older workers may be postponing retirement is the observation that organizational human resource management have begun to implement programs (i.e., phased retirement programs) to provide incentives to older workers to remain in the workforce in order to bridge the knowledge gap (Penner, 2005). A report issued by The Conference Board (2005) stated that “In industries already facing labor and skills shortages, forward-thinking companies are recruiting, retaining, and

developing flexible work-time arrangements and/or phased retirement plans for these workers (55 years of age or older) many of whom have skills that are difficult to replace” (p. 1). One survey examining HR executives’ responses about their preparation for the aging workforce revealed that 14.3% of them already had an ongoing and formal program to retain key employees (i.e., flexible or special benefits of particular interest to older workers), and 90% of them stated they intend to have some type of retention program in place in the future (Arnone, 2006).

Most of the previous research examining retirement trends has focused on topics such as the antecedents of bridge employment (e.g., Rau & Adams, 2005; Wang, Zhan, Liu, & Shultz, 2008; Weckerle & Shultz, 1999) and the motivations behind older workers’ decisions to seek employment (Loi & Shultz, 2007). Other research has focused on work-family issues within the “sandwiched generation” (Miller, 1981), meaning those with multigenerational caregiving roles tend to experience higher levels of work-family stress and more negative outcomes than individuals with only one generation to care for (Neal, Chapman, Ingersoll-Dayton, & Emlen, 1993). However, there has been limited research focusing on the personal issues for older workers staying employed full-time such as the challenges of balancing work demands with caring for elderly family members.

Eldercare Concerns

Eldercare, which refers to the range of activities that are provided to people who need assistance to perform normal activities of daily living because of cognitive and/or

physical impairment (Neal et al., 1993), is becoming a growing concern for older workers. Older workers who are approaching age 60 will be expected to contend with the needs of their parents and other relatives who are approaching 85 years and older (Gross, 2006) because the average human life expectancy is estimated at 77.8 years (Kung, Hoyert, Xu, & Murphy, 2008). Also, since there is an increasing need for long-term care services, but limited resources for funding (Scharlach, Lowe, & Schneider, 1991), it will be up to family members and friends to care for the elderly (Smith, 2004). Therefore, because older workers are deciding to remain in the workforce and there are eldercare responsibilities that they must attend to, older working adults are faced with a challenge of balancing their work demands with eldercare obligations similar to younger workers having family responsibilities for their children.

Conflict Between Work and Family Life

The challenge of balancing demands from work with the demands from within the family is termed work-family conflict. Work-family conflict is important because it is associated with negative outcomes such as decreased work satisfaction (Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan, 2005; Boles, Howard, & Donofrio, 2001) and life satisfaction (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Higgins, Duxbury, & Irving, 1992), as well as psychological distress (Major, Klein, & Ehrhart, 2002) and marital dissatisfaction (Bedeian, Burke, & Moffett, 1988).

Much of the research on work-family conflict was driven by the increase in dual career and single working parents in today's workforce (Ford, Heinen, Langkamer,

2007). This would indicate that childcare is one of the largest causes of conflict between work and family roles (Voydanoff, 1988). Some of the earliest research on the conflict between work and family roles shows that work-family conflict is expected to decrease as the age of the youngest child increases because the amount of childcare devoted to older children becomes much less (Staines & O'Conner, 1980). Furthermore, results from Byron's (2005) meta-analysis showed that the age of the youngest child is negatively correlated with work-family conflict. Thus, work-family conflict should become *less* for older workers because childcare is more of a responsibility *early* in life. However, due to the changing trends in eldercare demands (Scharlach et al., 1991; Smith, 2004) and the aging workforce (Brown, 2003; Mermin et al., 2007) mentioned earlier, work-family conflict would be expected to *increase* as workers become older because eldercare is more of a responsibility *later* in life.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work-Family Conflict (WFC)

Conceptually, work-family conflict (WFC) is a form of inter-role conflict in which pressures to perform role responsibilities in one domain are incompatible with the responsibilities performed in another domain (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connolly, 1983). Inter-role conflict is based on role theory, which posits that people typically behave in their defined roles given defined responsibilities (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). When individuals cannot perform the responsibilities in their defined roles due to obligations required of them in their additional roles, they experience inter-role conflict.

Much of the research on WFC has examined the construct as a bi-directional construct in which conflict may originate in either the work or family domains (e.g., Frone et al., 1992; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991). Results of a recent meta-analysis by Byron (2005) demonstrated that work-related antecedents are more strongly related to work interfering with family (WIF) and, family-related antecedents have a stronger influence on family interfering with work (FIW). For instance, WIF exists when employees believe they have minimal time at home to tend to family responsibilities due to the long hours spent at work, and the more hours spent on family, housework, and childcare, the more FIW is experienced (Frone et al., 1992). In addition, Frone et al. (1992) suggest that the relationship between WIF and FIW is reciprocal if stressors in the

work domain (e.g., hours spent at work) begin to interfere with family responsibilities (e.g. childcare), and unfulfilled family obligations may in turn interfere with performance at work.

In addition to the bidirectional nature of WFC, it is also multidimensional in nature. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), there are three categories of work family conflict from the work and family domains. These include, time-based, strain-based, and behavior based conflict. Time-based conflict occurs when the amount of time spent in one domain makes it difficult to fulfill obligations in another domain. For strain-based conflict, stress and tension experienced in one role exploits the resources that would be otherwise available for another role. For behavior based conflict, behaviors in one role make it difficult to perform the behaviors expected in another role.

Outcomes of WFC

A large body of empirical research indicates that WFC is associated with negative outcomes. In a meta-analysis of consequences associated with WFC previously published studies Allen, Herst, Bruck, and Sutton (2000) found that WIF and FIW are associated with negative consequences that can be work-related, nonwork-related, or stress related. In a separate meta-analysis of studies of WFC and the job-life satisfaction relationship, Kossek and Ozeki (1998) found that work-family conflict is associated with work-related consequences such as decreased work satisfaction. Aryee et al. (2005) found a negative relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction as well as a negative relationship between WFC and organizational commitment. Nonwork-related consequences of WFC include having a negative impact on life satisfaction (Adams,

King & King, 1996) and marital satisfaction (Bedeian et al., 1988). WFC is also associated with stress-related or psychological consequences such as having a mood, anxiety, and substance dependence disorder (Frone, 2000) or symptoms of depression (Frone, et al., 1992; Major et al., 2002).

Caregiving

Previous studies have shown that informal caregiving for the elderly, or care provided by a family member, is associated with caregiver burden (Aneshensel, Pearlin, Mullan, Zarit, & Whitlach's, 1995; Dura, Haywood-Niler, & Kiecolt-Glaser, 1990; Iecovich, 2008; Pinguart & Sorensen, 2003). Caregiver burden is a psychological response resulting from the “physical, psychological, emotional, social, and financial problems experienced by families caring for impaired older adults” (George & Gwyther, 1986, p. 253). Caregiver burden has been shown to be related to feelings of overload (Zarit, Reever, & Bach-Petersen, 1980), loss of control (Morris, Morris, & Britton, 1988), as well as work pressures (Stephens, Kinney, & Ogrocki, 1991). In addition, studies have shown that caregiving is related to caregiver burden based on the functional status of the elderly and the severity of their health (Chappell & Reid, 2002; Sherwood, Given, Given, & Von Eye, 2005).

Due to the negative outcomes of caring for the elderly, there have been various types of formal services (e.g., nursing home care; adult day care centers) provided to alleviate caregivers' burden (Buhr, Kuchibhatla, & Clipp, 2006). However, formal caregiving is associated with higher costs, leaving families to become the primary source

of care and support for the elderly (Rubin, 2002). Arno, Levine, and Memmott (1999) estimated the total cost of formal home health care to be \$32 billion and \$83 billion for nursing home care for the 25.8 million caregivers during that time. Now, with 30 to 38 million adults providing care to the elderly who have limited functionality (reported by the AARP in November 2006), that estimate could be greater (McGuffey, 2008). With 70% of caregiving being informal care (Arno et al., 1999), and 60% of those caregivers being in the workforce (McGuffey, 2008), caregiving could result in a rise in costs to employers (Greene, 2006). The result of families taking on the responsibilities of caring could cost employers billions (McGuffey, 2008) because of costs associated with turnover, absenteeism, workday interruptions, unpaid leave, and reduction in hours (Metlife, 2006). Eldercare is not only expected to create financial costs for the caregiver's employer, but it could also create psychological costs such as conflict from struggling to balance the demands of caregiver and work roles.

It is important to discuss the notion that caregiving for the elderly is defined differently than caregiving for children. Caregiving variables for children have not typically been measured by the extent of the care provided. Rather, childcare is typically measured in one of three ways, (a) whether there is the presence of children (b) by the number of children present, or (c) by the age of the youngest child. Still, using these "crude" measures of childcare demands meta-analysis shows that family demands lead to conflict between work and home (Byron, 2005).

Eldercare and WFC

The conceptualization that WFC is a form of inter-role conflict can be used as a foundation for understanding the relationship between work-family conflict and eldercare. Early in life, the responsibilities from the family domain that interfered with those at work came from caring for children and the competing roles of parent (caregiver) and worker. However, as workers age and begin caring for elderly individuals (i.e., parents) it can be predicted that the inter-role conflict or WFC is a result of the competing roles of child (caregiver) and worker. Findings of Barling, MacEwen, Kelloway, and Higginbottom (1994) indicated that there is a strong relationship between the level of involvement in one's eldercare role and inter-role conflict. The results also indicated that WFC lead to psychological strain and partial absenteeism. Lee (1997) examined the effects of balancing eldercare responsibilities and work and found that individuals caring for elderly individuals reported more symptoms of stress and had more absences from work compared to noncaregivers. Furthermore, Gordon, Whelan-Berry, and Hamilton's (2007) results showed that work-family conflict was negatively related to job satisfaction and positively related to turnover intention for older working women.

WFC Across the Life Span

In order to gain an understanding of how work-family conflict varies for adults during specific stages of their life, it is important to discuss the topic of life-cycle stages (Aldous, 1978). Baltes and Young (2004) describe eight stages of the life-cycle, which are based on several criteria including family size and developmental age of the oldest

child (Duval & Hill, 1948), along with the work status of the breadwinners (Hill, 1986).

Table 1 provides a summary of these eight life-cycle stages.

Table 1

Summary of the Life-cycle Stages

Title	Description
1. Establishment stage	Newly married couple and no children
2. First parenthood	Introduction to parenthood; family with infant to 3 years old
3. Family with preschool children	Oldest child is 3-6 years old
4. Family with school children	Oldest child is 6-12 years old
5. Family with adolescents	Oldest child is 13-20 years old
6. Family as launching center	Children begin to leave the home
7. Family in middle years	Post-parental empty nest
8. Family in retirement	Breadwinners begin retirement

Research that has examined the relationship between the life-cycle stages and WFC (e.g., Higgins, Duxbury, & Lee, 1994; Staines & O’Conner, 1980) has mostly focused on the first seven stages in which children are the focus and not retirement. For example, Higgins et al. (1994) used three life-cycle stages— (a) families with preschool children, (b) families with young school-age children, and (c) families with adolescents— and found that both WIF and FIW was the greatest for mothers and fathers during the first life-cycle stage compared to the other two stages. In other words, the relationship between WFC and the life-cycle stages is nonlinear in that WFC is expected to increase

during the first few stages of the life-cycle (e.g., moving from the establishment stage to the first parenthood stage) and then decrease as individuals have fewer demands from children (e.g., moving from the family with preschool children stage to the family with adolescents stage) (Hochschild, 1989).

Although chronological age is not assigned to each of the life-cycle stages, it is important to note that the stages are correlated with age (Baltes & Young, 2005). For example, Rexroat and Shehan (1987) used a sample of 1,618 husbands and wives in their study on the life-cycle stages and reported descriptive statistics showing that the parents' mean age increases as they progress through the stages. Another study on the life-cycle stages that included sample of 3,616 respondents showed similar results in that the mean age was about 39 for fathers and 36 for mothers with children between 6 and 12 years of age, and around 43 for fathers and 41 for mothers with children between 12 and 19 years of age (Higgins et al., 1994). Therefore, childcare demands could be expected to be more of a responsibility for younger workers than for older workers.

Since WFC is expected to increase at the beginning of the life-cycle stages and then decline when approaching the final stages, and age is correlated with these stages, then WFC should show this same nonlinear relationship with age. WFC should be expected to increase for younger workers and then decline as they become older. For example, (although not the primary focus of these studies) Frone (2000) examined a sample of 2,700 working adults that were either married or had a child of 18 years or younger and found a negative correlation between age and WFC. In addition, Aryee et al. (2005) reported a negative correlation between age and WFC using a sample of 267

working parents. Because the parents' mean ages were between 30 and 40 years of age, the ages when they are most likely to be transitioning out of the life-cycle stages that have less childcare demands (i.e., parents with school children; parents with adolescents), the correlation between WFC only reflects how WFC may decline during the stages where there are less childcare demands. It does not, however, reflect how WFC could increase for older workers who are bearing the responsibility of eldercare. Therefore, WFC should be examined as a function of age such that at younger ages when childcare is more prominent, WFC is experienced, and at older ages when eldercare is more prominent, WFC continues to be experienced.

Hypotheses

In sum, this paper addressed the nonlinear relationship between age and work-family conflict (Aldous, 1978) where work-family conflict is expected to increase for younger workers during their child rearing years, then decline during a period where children are no longer present, and then begin to expand through their preretirement years due to eldercare demands. The following hypotheses examined the relationship between WFC and childcare and WFC and eldercare:

Hypothesis 1: Childcare demands are positively related to WIF and FIW.

Hypothesis 2: Eldercare demands are positively related to WIF and FIW.

In order to examine WFC across the lifespan, and how WFC due to childcare demands (experienced early in life) is similar to WFC due to eldercare demands (experienced later in life), the current study examined the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3: For younger workers, the relationship between childcare demands and WIF and FIW is stronger than the relationship between eldercare demands and WIF and FIW.

Hypothesis 4: For older workers, the relationship between Eldercare demands and WIF and FIW is stronger than the relationship between childcare demands and WIF and FIW.

METHOD

Data

The data for the study came from the sibling sample of the 1994 wave of the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study (WLS) of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The WLS is a long-term study of 10,317 randomly selected men and women who graduated in 1957 from Wisconsin high schools. In the 1994 wave of the study, 9,571 siblings were selected to complete a 1 hour telephone interview and were mailed a 20 page self-administered mail back questionnaire. About 56% ($N = 5,365$) of the siblings completed the interview and the questionnaire.

Participants

Participants included in the analyses were divided into two subsamples based on the criteria of having either childcare or eldercare responsibilities. Participants selected in the childcare subsample were identified as those caring for children who were 18 years old or younger. Twenty percent ($n = 1,098$) of the original sample was included in the childcare subsample. Participants selected in the eldercare subsample were identified as those caring for individuals who were at least one generation above them (e.g., mother, aunt, grandfather). Six percent ($n = 300$) of the original sample was included in this subsample. Of those in the childcare subsample, 592 (54%) were men and 504 (45%) were women with an average age of 49 years ($SD = 6.2$). Of those in the eldercare

subsample, 105 (35%) were men, and 195 (65%) were women with an average age of 52 years ($SD = 6.8$).

By dividing the sample into two subsamples, a larger sample size is retained. If the analyses included participants having both childcare and eldercare responsibilities, the sample size would dramatically reduce to 2% of the original sample due to missing data. Retaining a large sample is important for obtaining sufficient statistical power. Therefore, separate analyses were conducted for each subsample.

Measures

Work-Family Conflict

There are six items used in the WLS that measured work-family conflict. These items are an adapted version of the survey developed for the 1995 National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS) (see Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). Three of these items assessed work interfering with family (WIF): “To what extent do you agree your job reduces the amount of time you can spend with the family?”, “To what extent do you agree that problems at work make you irritable at home?”, and “To what extent do you agree that your job takes so much energy you don’t feel up to doing things that need attention at home?” The remaining three items assessed family interfering with work (FIW): “To what extent do you agree that family matters reduce the time you can devote to your job?”, “To what extent do you agree that family worries or problems distract you from your work?”, and “To what extent do you agree that family activities stop you from getting the amount of sleep you need to do your job well?” Items

for both indices used a 5-point scale ranging from *strongly agree* (1) to *strongly disagree* (5). All items were scored in order to indicate more work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW).

Childcare demands

Childcare demands were measured with responses to the total number of children currently living with respondent who are 18 years old or younger.

Eldercare Demands

Eldercare demands operationalized as the care provided to people who have difficulty performing normal activities of daily living because of cognitive and/or physical impairment were assessed with the responses given to the telephone questions: “During the last 12 months, have you, yourself, given personal care for a period of one month or more to a family member or friend because of a physical or mental condition, illness, or disability?” If respondents answered “yes,” the following question was asked: “To whom did you give the most personal care?” In addition, the nature of care given was assessed with responses to the following questions: “Did you provide him/her personal help with getting around inside the house or going outside?”, “Did you provide him/her personal help with managing money, making phone calls, or taking medications?”, “Did you provide him/her personal help with shopping, cooking, housework, or laundry?”, and “Did you provide him/her personal help with bathing, dressing, or going to the bathroom?” The sum of these caring activities was calculated to indicate the total amount of care provided.

Control Variables

The demographic information of gender, marital status, and average number of hours employees worked per week are frequently used control variables in previous studies examining work-family conflict (e.g., Frone, 2000) and were used in the present analyses to prevent potential confounding relations between the predictor and outcome variables.

Analyses

The hypotheses were tested using a series of hierarchical multiple regressions and hierarchical moderated multiple regressions (HMMR). Before entering the study variables into the regression equations, the control variables were entered first to determine if the hypothesized relationships among the study variables were still present when the demographic covariates were statistically accounted for. In the HMMR models, the predictor variables were centered to yield meaningful interpretability and reduce nonessential multicollinearity as recommended by Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003).

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 provides the means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations computed for the variables of the childcare subsample and Table 3 provides the means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations computed for the variables of the eldercare subsample. As shown in Tables 2 and 3, coefficient alpha was .63 for work interfering with family (WIF), .67 for family interfering with work (FIW), and .41 for eldercare. The average level of WIF reported was 2.88 ($SD = .85$) for the childcare sample, and 2.73 ($SD = .87$) for the eldercare sample. The average level of FIW reported was 2.37 ($SD = .81$) for the childcare sample and 2.36 ($SD = .81$) for the eldercare sample. The average number of children living with the respondent who were 18 years or younger was .97 ($SD = 1.06$) for the childcare sample. The average number of caring activities provided to the elderly was 1.69 ($SD = 1.58$) for the eldercare sample.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Study Variables for Those with Childcare Demands

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	49.40	6.15	—						
2. Gender	.54	.50	.04	—					
3. Marital status	.89	.31	-.08*	.17**	—				
4. Hours worked per week	44.92	13.72	-.01	.41**	-.01	—			
5. WIF	2.88	.85	-.15**	.04	.05	.19	(.63)		
6. FIW	2.37	.81	-.20**	-.03	.02	-.04	.31	(.67)	
7. Childcare demands	.97	1.06	-.50**	.17**	.10**	.08**	.13**	.18**	—

Note. Gender coded, 1= Male, 0 = Female. Coefficient alpha reliabilities are in the diagonal. $n = 1098$. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Study Variables for Those with Eldercare Demands

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	51.67	6.80	—						
2. Gender	.35	.48	.14*	—					
3. Marital status	.77	.42	.02	.09	—				
4. Hours worked per week	41.68	12.57	-.08	.27**	-.05	—			
5. WIF	2.73	.87	-.13*	-.04	.05	.25**	(.63)		
6. FIW	2.36	.81	-.16**	-.01	-.03	.07	.31**	(.67)	
7. Eldercare demands	1.69	1.58	-.10	-.11	.05	-.05	.00	.04	(.41)

Note. Gender coded, 1= Male, 0 = Female. Coefficient alpha reliabilities are in the diagonal. $n = 300$. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Hypothesis 1

To examine whether the relationship between childcare demands and WIF and FIW (hypothesis 1) was positive, two hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. As shown in Table 4, childcare demands explained a significant additional proportion variance in WIF ($\Delta R^2 = .02$, $F(1, 1093) = 17.49$, $p < .01$) and a significant additional proportion of variance in FIW ($\Delta R^2 = .03$, $F(1,1093) = 38.16$, $p < .01$). As predicted, childcare demands explained a significant proportion of variance in WIF ($R^2 = .06$, $F(4,1093) = 16.38$, $p < .01$) and in FIW ($R^2 = .04$, $F(4,1093) = 10.16$, $p < .01$). The results also indicated that childcare demands are significantly and positively related to WIF ($\beta = .13$, $t(1093) = 4.18$, $p < .01$) and FIW ($\beta = .19$, $t(1093) = 6.18$, $p < .01$).

Hypothesis 2

To examine whether the relationship between eldercare demands and WIF and FIW (hypothesis 2) was positive, two hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. As shown in Table 5, eldercare demands did not explain an additional proportion of variance in WIF ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $F(1,296) = .00$, $p = .99$) or in FIW ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $F(1, 296) = .57$, $p = .45$). Eldercare care was not significantly related to WIF ($\beta = .00$, $t(296) = -.00$, $p = .99$) nor was it significantly related to FIW, ($\beta = .04$, $t(296) = .76$, $p = .45$). Therefore, the results provided no support for hypothesis 2.

Table 4

Hierarchical Regression Testing the Relationship Between Childcare Demands and WIF and FIW

Variable	Dependent variable			
	WIF		FIW	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Hours worked per week	.22**	.21**	-.03	-.04
Gender	-.06	-.08*	-.02	-.05
Marital Status	.06*	.05	.02	.01
Childcare demands		.13**		.19**
F ^a	15.78**	16.38 **	.80	10.16**
Overall R ²	.04	.06	.00	.04
Change in F ^b		17.49**		38.16**
Change in R ²		.02		.03

Note. ^a Step 1 degrees of freedom = 3, 1094; Step 2 degrees of freedom = 4, 1093.

^b Step 2 degrees of freedom = 1, 1093.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 5

Hierarchical Regression Testing the Relationship Between Eldercare Demands and WIF and FIW

Variable	Dependent variable			
	WIF		FIW	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Hours worked per week	.29**	.29**	.09	.09
Gender	-.12*	-.12*	-.03	-.03
Marital Status	.08	.08	-.02	-.02
Eldercare demands		.00		.04
F ^a	8.61**	6.44**	.79	.73
Overall R ²	.08	.08	.01	.01
Change in F ^b		.00		.57
Change in R ²		.00		.00

Note. ^a Step 1 degrees of freedom = 3, 297; Step 2 degrees of freedom = 4, 296.

^b Step 2 degrees of freedom = 1, 296.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Hypothesis 3

To examine whether the relationship between childcare demands and WIF and FIW is stronger than the relationship between eldercare demands and WIF and FIW for younger workers (hypothesis 3), two HMMR analyses were conducted. As shown in Table 6, the interaction between childcare demands and age did not account for an additional proportion of variance in WIF ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $F(1,1091) = .67$, $p = .41$) or in FIW ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $F(1, 1091) = .68$, $p = .41$). In addition, the interaction of childcare and age was not significantly related to WIF ($B = -.00$, $t(1091) = -.82$, $p = .41$) or to FIW

($B = -.00$, $t(1091) = -.82$, $p = .41$). Therefore, the results did not provide support for hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4

To examine whether the relationship between Eldercare demands and WIF and FIW is stronger than the relationship between childcare demands and WIF and FIW for older workers (hypothesis 4), two HMMR analyses were conducted. As shown in Table 7, the interaction between eldercare demands and age did not account for an additional proportion of variance in WIF ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $F(1,294) = .44$, $p = .51$) or in FIW ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $F(1, 294) = .91$, $p = .34$). In addition, the interaction of eldercare demands and age was not significantly related to WIF ($B = -.00$, $t(294) = -.67$, $p = .51$) or to FIW ($B = .00$, $t(294) = .96$, $p = .34$). Therefore, the results did not provide support for hypothesis 4.

Table 6
HMMR Testing the Relationship Between Childcare Demands, Age, and WIF and FIW

Variable	Dependent variable					
	WIF			FIW		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Hours worked per week	.01**	.01**	.01**	-.00	-.00	-.00
Gender	-.11	-.11*	-.11	-.03	-.04	-.04
Marital Status	.17*	.13	.13	.05	-.00	-.00
Childcare demands		.06*	.04		.09**	.07
Age		-.02**	-.02**		-.02**	-.02**
Childcare demands X age			-.00			-.00
F ^a	15.78**	15.21**	12.78**	.80	12.00**	10.11**
Overall R ²	.04	.07	.07	.00	.05	.05
Change in F ^b		13.81**	.67		28.73**	.68
Change in R ²		.02	.00		.05	.00

Note. ^a Step 1 degrees of freedom = 3, 1094; Step 2 degrees of freedom = 5, 1092; Step 3 degrees of freedom = 6, 1091.

^b Step 2 degrees of freedom = 2, 1092; Step 3 degrees of freedom = 1, 1091.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 7
HMMR Testing the Relationship Between Eldercare Demands, Age, and WIF and FIW

Variable	Dependent variable					
	WIF			FIW		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Hours worked per week	.02**	.02**	.02**	.01	.00	.00
Gender	-.22*	-.19	-.19	-.06	.00	.00
Marital Status	.16	.16	.16	-.03	-.04	-.04
Eldercare demands		-.01	-.01		.02	.02
Age		-.01	-.12		-.02*	-.02*
Eldercare demands X age			-.00			.00
F ^a	8.61**	5.74**	4.85**	.79	2.07	1.88
Overall R ²	.08	.09	.09	.01	.03	.04
Change in F ^b		1.41	.44		3.97*	.91
Change in R ²		.01	.00		.03	.00

Note. ^a Step 1 degrees of freedom = 3, 297; Step 2 degrees of freedom = 5, 295; Step 3 degrees of freedom = 6, 294.

^b Step 2 degrees of freedom = 2, 295; Step 3 degrees of freedom = 1, 294.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine work-family conflict across the lifespan where younger workers are expected to experience conflict between work and home when they have children to care for, and older workers are expected to experience conflict between work and home when they have elderly family members to care for. Due to the increase in dual career couples and single working parents in today's workforce (Ford et al., 2007) much of the work-family conflict research has focused on childcare as one of the largest causes of conflict between work and family roles (Voydanoff, 1988). However, due to a more recent trend that older workers are delaying retirement (Brown, 2003) and there is an increasing need for caring for the elderly (Gross, 2006), older workers are faced with the challenge of balancing work demands with eldercare responsibilities, similar to younger workers having family responsibilities for their children. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine work-family conflict (WFC) across the lifespan where work-family conflict due to childcare demands experienced early in life is similar to the work-family conflict due to eldercare demands experienced later in life.

Four hypotheses were tested. The first hypothesis examined whether childcare demands and work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW) were positively related. This hypothesis was supported indicating that even after controlling for hours worked, gender, and marital status, the more children in the home, the more work interferes with family. The current study's results yielded similar results

of Byron's (2005) meta-analysis, which found that employees caring for children living in the home, the higher level of WIF and FIW reported. Therefore, the more childcare demands are present, the more likely individuals will experience work-family conflict.

The second hypothesis examined whether eldercare demands and WIF and FIW were positively related. Unfortunately, this hypothesis was not supported indicating that the more personal care activities provided to individuals who were at least one generation older than them did not lead to conflict between work and home life. These results were not consistent with previous research showing that eldercare is related to work-family conflict (Barling et al., 1994). One interpretation of these results is that there may be other factors that result in WIF and FIW. For instance, Barling, et al., (1992) noted that eldercare involvement is more than the amount of care provided for the elderly that leads to WIF and FIW. It is the qualitative role demands such as the amount of psychological help provided that may lead to conflict.

In addition to the conceptualization of eldercare having both quantitative and qualitative demands, eldercare could involve much more than just the nature of care that is provided. Eldercare could be defined as a central part of one's self-concept. Frone et al. (1992) used a measure of family involvement which assessed the level of family involvement, or extent to which family is the center of one's self concept, and found a strong relationship between one's family involvement and FIW. Therefore, there could be multiple characteristics of eldercare demands, such as the amount of care provided, the psychological help provided, as well as whether eldercare is a part of one's identity that could lead to WIF and FIW.

Lastly, a statistical reason for insignificant results could be due to the low reliability of the eldercare demands measure which was .41. The low reliability produces attenuation in the correlation coefficients due the observed variable of the eldercare demands being inflated by measurement error.

The third hypothesis examined whether the relationship between childcare demands and WIF and FIW was stronger than the relationship between eldercare demands and WIF and FIW for younger workers. The results of this hypothesis were not significant indicating that age did not significantly moderate the relationship between childcare demands and WIF and FIW. These results suggest that the relationship between childcare demands and conflict between work and home does not significantly change depending on a person's age. In other words, WIF and FIW due to childcare demands do not decrease or increase with age.

An interpretation of these results is that it is not age that moderates the relationship between childcare demands and WIF and FIW, but possibly where the individual falls within the life-cycle stages. For example, as individuals near the end of the life-cycle stages, (i.e., family in middle years when children leave the home) childcare demands become less of a demand, leading to less WIF and FIW experienced. Even though research has shown that age is correlated with these stages (Baltes & Young, 2005), these results indicate that age is not the only indication of when individuals experience more or less WIF and FIW in their life time. Rather, it shows that the level of WIF and FIW experienced is based on the stage individuals are in and that moving through these stages is not determined by their age but by the developmental age

of the oldest child and family size (Duval & Hill, 1948). For example, an older worker could be in the family with preschool children stage along with a younger worker, and both experience similar levels WIF and FIW because they are experiencing the same level of childcare demands regardless of their age.

The fourth hypothesis examined whether the relationship between eldercare demands and WIF and FIW was stronger than the relationship between childcare demands and WIF and FIW for older workers. The results of this hypothesis were not significant indicating that age did not significantly moderate the relationship between eldercare demands and WIF and FIW. However, these results do provide some insight to the question raised in Baltes and Young (2007) chapter, "...do older workers report more/less work/family conflict than younger workers?" (p. 253). Based on the current study's results, the answer may be that older workers may not experience different work-family conflict as younger workers. A second answer may be that eldercare may not play into the criteria used to define the life cycle-stages. Baltes and Young (2007) note that there may be unique challenges that eldercare bring into individuals' efforts to balance their work and home responsibilities. Therefore, there may be other factors that could interact with the relationship between eldercare and work-family conflict. For example, the types of coping strategy used to mitigate eldercare responsibilities (i.e., using formal eldercare, or receiving additional care assistance from other resources) has shown to buffer the relationship between eldercare and work-family conflict (Neal et al., 1993). The next section discusses the limitations of the current study and topics for future research.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Limitations of the study should be acknowledged. First, it should be noted that the conclusions are based on variables examined in 1994 because the data came from the 1994 sibling sample of the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study. This is a limitation because conclusions made about the relationship between eldercare and work-family conflict could change over time, which would make it difficult to generalize those conclusions across today's population. According to Azameoff and Scharlach (1988), conflict associated with eldercare demands may become more burdensome overtime. Thus, eldercare demands experienced in 1994 may be related to work-family conflict later in life. Therefore, future research examining work-family conflict across the lifespan should be examined longitudinally.

In addition, the current issues in today's population may not have been present in 1994 that could lead to the challenge of balancing eldercare demands with work demands. For instance, because there are more older working adults today and more elderly adults that need care compared to 1994, eldercare may be more of a concern now. In addition, due to the rise in health care costs today, older working adults are left with the responsibilities of caring for their elderly family members in order alleviate the high costs of formal care services. Lastly, eldercare may not have been as much of a concern in 1994 because of the community based services that were available that time. Therefore, the differences in the trends and issues of the population in 1994 compared to today's population could have influenced whether eldercare demands lead to conflict

between work and home life. Future research should examine WFC across the lifespan using current data.

A second limitation of the study is that age was used as a proxy for childcare demands. If childcare demands could have been measured in a way that reflects the stage of the life-cycle individuals are in, WFC across the lifespan could be examined more closely. Therefore, future research examining WFC across the lifespan should measure childcare demands in a way that reflects all eight life-cycle stages as developed by Aldous (1978).

A third limitation of the study is that it only focuses on childcare and eldercare demands as predictors of work-family conflict across the lifespan. There are many other factors in an individual's life that could affect work-family conflict across the lifespan. For example, there could be a time period where individuals are caring for two generations (e.g., caring for children and a mother or father) that could influence the level of work-family conflict experienced (Neal, et al., 1993). A recent study by Cullen, Hammer, Neil, and Sinclair (2009) assessed the relationship between work-family conflict and the profiles of dual-career couples in the sandwich generation that they identified. They found that women with high childcare and parent demands had more work-family conflict than women in the high work demand group; and men with high work demands had more work-family conflict than men in the high childcare and parent demands group. Therefore, future research examining work-family conflict across the lifespan could include the "sandwich generation" in the model instead of only childcare responsibilities.

Lastly, it should be noted that this study primarily concentrated on the negative aspects of eldercare. However, I do not want to end on a negative tone and conclude that eldercare leads to conflict or burden. Rather, caregiving could be associated with positive aspects such as caregiver satisfaction (Lopez, Lopez-Arrieta, & Crespo, 2005), or family-work facilitation where experiences in the caregiving role improves the quality of life in the employment role (Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson, Kacmar, 2007).

In conclusion, this study attempted to answer the question of whether older workers experience similar work-family conflict when caring for the elderly as their younger counterparts who are caring for children. This research question was based on how baby-boomers delaying retirement (Brown, 2003) and the limited resources for providing care to their elderly relatives (Scharlach et al., 1991) could lead to conflict between work and home. The theory for this study was developed around inter-role conflict or the notion that individuals experience work-family conflict when they cannot meet the expectations from work and family simultaneously (Greenhuas & Beutell, 1985). Therefore, it was assumed that when younger workers are unable balance childcare demands, and older workers are unable to balance eldercare demands, they would experience conflict between work and home life. However, the current study did not yield results supporting this assumption and concludes that eldercare demands having negative consequences for older workers who are delaying retirement is not much of a concern as expected. Further research is needed to provide more insight to the relationships between eldercare and the work-family conflict variables in today's population.

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