

An Examination of a Work-Life Conflict Model in Higher Education

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Abstract

The authors of this study investigated a model of the predictive connections between work-family conflict (WFC), family-work conflict (FWC), burnout, career commitment, and job satisfaction among faculty in higher education institutions. The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory is adopted to explain and confirm the links between WFC, FWC, burnout, and career commitment in a sample of 213 faculty members. Findings revealed that WFC and FWC had a positive effect on job burnout. Burnout was also found to be a negative predictor of both career commitment and job satisfaction. Lastly, job satisfaction positively predicted faculty members' career commitment. Implications for practice and future research recommendations for faculty and administrators are also discussed.

Keywords: work-family conflict, family-work conflict, faculty burnout, career commitment, job satisfaction

Introduction

Tenure track positions are perceived as “dream careers” for aspiring faculty members in higher education. However, academic work environments are systematically highly stressful due to the multiple roles, demands, and expectations placed upon faculty (Cinamon, Rich, & Westman, 2007; Kinman, Jones, & Kinman, 2006). To become successful in academia, faculty members must fulfill multiple roles with utmost excellence that include a full time teaching load, research, and service to the university, or faculty may risk poor tenure evaluations and/or early job termination (Bentley & Kyvik, 2013). As a result, faculty must manage their time effectively. Faculty who lack time management skills may experience high levels of occupational stress, which overtime leads to career burnout (Gillespie, Walsh, Winefield, Dua, & Stough, 2001).

A career in academia may encompass obstacles in balancing work-related obligations along with family responsibilities. Work-family conflict (WFC) is defined as “a form of inter-role conflict in which the pressures (of) work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is, participation in the work (or family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (or work) role” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77). Researchers Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams (2000) agree that work-life conflict has a bi-directional relationship with family-to-work (FWC). Interestingly, work/ life balance in institutions of higher education has become more difficult in the past decade. It has led to poor productivity, job dissatisfaction, faculty turnover from a lack of resource, support, and institutional pressures to perform (Johnsrud, 2002). Prior studies also linked WFC with similar negative career outcomes including low job satisfaction, low job commitment, and intentions to leave the career or institution (Gillespie et al., 2001; Rosser, 2005). Other studies found women in academia experienced higher degrees of WFC than men because of childcare and/or eldercare responsibilities, and as a result, experienced job inequity and negative work outcomes (Shollen, Bland, Finstad, & Taylor, 2009). While various studies have examined work-life issues in academia, these studies examined this issue as an outcome (Cinamon, Rich, & Westman, 2007) and few studies have examined models with both WFC and FWC as the antecedents of work-related outcomes for faculty in higher education. Thus, to address this gap, the main purpose

of this study will be to investigate a model examining the effects of WFC and FWC for faculty employed at higher education institutions.

Literature Review

Work-family conflict, family-work conflict, and burnout

Researchers have implemented theories to explain work-family and family-work conflict effects on burnout. Role conflict theory (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964) conceptualizes WFC as the conflict that emerges from fulfilling both work and family roles without equity, which leads to obstacles in fulfilling mutual role obligations. Role conflict theory also suggests that work demands interfere with family life and family demands interfere with one's work duties, which can lead to negative job outcomes (Kahn et al., 1964; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Role conflict can occur from work-to-family or family-to-work due to a lack of time and/or emotional management skills (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

A theoretical framework that explains negative outcomes such as job burnout from work-family conflict (WFC) is Hobfoll's (2002) Conservation of Resources theory (COR). COR explains that individuals strive to conserve resources as “personal characteristics, objects, conditions, and energies” they value, and when individuals use all their energy and resources on one sphere (e.g., work), then individuals will have limited energy and resources available for their families, and vice versa (Hobfoll, 2001, p. 341; Jensen, 2016). In addition, COR predicts that work-family conflict leads to negative emotional states, which effects employees' emotional and psychological well-being (Hobfoll, 2002). COR-driven studies found the un-fulfillment of work and family roles can lead to burnout because of the perceived loss of resources in one domain (e.g., family) over another (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). Individuals, for instance, who invest their resources heavily in the work domain may lose family resources by spending less quality time with their families, and this leads to burnout (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004).

Burnout has been found to be positively associated with WFC and FWC in several workplace studies (Örtquist & Vincent, 2006; Jensen, 2013). Burnout is defined as a “stress syndrome of emotional exhaustion [e.g., lack of energy or resources], depersonalization [e.g., cynicism and

being impersonal to clients], and reduced professional accomplishment [e.g., poor self-evaluations]" (Maslach & Jackson, 1986, p. 1). Not only is burnout associated with WFC, but is also positively predicted by WFC. Cross-sectional studies grounded by COR have confirmed that WFC positively leads to burnout and employees who experience high levels of work-family or family-work conflict also experienced high levels of burnout (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Tayfur & Arslan, 2012).

More specifically within educational contexts, few studies have investigated the role of work-life conflict on the burnout experiences of public school educators. For instance, WFC role conflict has been found to significantly predict burnout in classroom teachers. When exploring sex differences, female teachers reported higher levels of burnout given childcare and other family responsibilities in comparison to male teachers (Greenglass & Burke, 1988). Additionally, Cinamon, Rich, and Westman (2007) found that both WFC and FWC contributed to the increase of high school teacher burnout experiences. Adding to these findings, Grund, Brassler, and Fries (2016) found WFC was a stronger predictor of teacher's emotional exhaustion, which suggests that teachers with high job demands that interfered with their family life suffered from high levels of emotional exhaustion. When examining university faculty, studies found that WFC was a significant and positive predictor of faculty burnout, and also served as a mediator between emotional labor (e.g., regulating expected emotions at work) and burnout (Noor & Zainuddin, 2011; Winefield, Boyd, & Winefield, 2014). Most recently, a study of Chinese university faculty found that work-family conflict positively predicted job burnout (Pu, Hou, Ma, & Sang, 2017). Interestingly to date, not many WFC studies have examined university faculty members. A need to investigate models that include WFC, FWC, and burnout of faculty in higher education institutions is warranted. Thus, the following hypotheses are posed.

H1: Work-family conflict has a positive and direct effect on faculty burnout.

H2: Family-work conflict has a positive and direct effect on faculty burnout.

Burnout and career commitment

Numerous studies have examined the role of burnout in faculty's career commitment. Career commitment is conceptualized as the "likelihood that a person will stay with a job and feel psychologically attached to it" (Rusbult & Farrell, 1983, p. 430). In the past decade, researchers have documented an inverse correlation between burnout and career commitment for academic professions (Lee & Ashforth, 1996; Schaufeli & Buunk, 2003; Hakanen, Bakker, & Schufeli, 2006). Therefore, faculty that encountered excessive work hours and unrealistic demands exerted more internal resources, and this led to burnout, which decreased their career commitment to their profession (Rudow, 1999).

COR theory also explains academics experience psychological strain when the resources they cherish are threatened or lost, and if they do not obtain returns from their career investments, they experience burnout, and this leads to low career commitment (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Salehi & Gholtash, 2011). Burnout impacts both novice and mature faculty at different stages of their academic careers given the stressful teaching loads, research output expectations, and the lack of professional developmental resources. Faculty who experience low career commitment often leave the profession (Tait, 2008; Brown & Roloff, 2011). The emotional exhaustion or burnout experienced by faculty has consistently been reported to be a negative predictor of career commitment in the higher education literature (Brown & Roloff, 2011; Khan et al., 2014; Kugiejko, 2015). Given the importance

of examining burnout as a predictor of career commitment in the educational profession, this study will examine this direct effect, but unlike previous studies, this study will examine university faculty at different stages of their careers. Thus, the following hypothesis will be investigated.

H3: Burnout has a negative and direct effect on faculty's career commitment.

Burnout and job satisfaction

Researchers are beginning to increase their attention to the connection between academic burnout and job satisfaction in higher education contexts. Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (p. 1300). Prior studies found that burnout is an antecedent for job satisfaction in academic settings. For instance, a cross-sectional study by Zhang and Zhu (2008) found that burnout was a negative predictor of job satisfaction among Chinese faculty members in higher education institutions. Additionally, a series of studies found burnout was positively and directly related to low job satisfaction regardless of school context (e.g., elementary, university) or international location (e.g., Irish) (Byrne, Chughtai, Flood, Murphy, & Willis, 2013; Enders et al., 2015). Another study examined the dimensions of burnout in performing organizational tasks including management/administrative, research, teaching tasks, and of these tasks, management/administrative tasks led to the highest degree of emotional exhaustion or burnout, which was inversely related to job satisfaction (Vera, Salanova, & Martin, 2010). In sum, these studies suggest that individuals who experience high levels of burnout also experience low levels of job satisfaction.

Additionally, when considering academic ranks, studies found that burnout was experienced among tenured and non-tenured faculty members. However, studies suggest tenured faculty experience less burnout and more job satisfaction in comparison to non-tenured faculty (Weaver, 1989). A handful of studies also found a negative correlation among job burnout and job satisfaction, which leads to turnover in the academic profession among non-tenured faculty members and young novice faculty (Høigaard, Giske, & Sundslø, 2012; Oshagbemi, 2013). More recently, a longitudinal study by Malinen and Savolainen (2016) also confirmed that burnout derived from a poor work climate had a negative and direct effect on faculty's job satisfaction. Given the evidence of the direct link between burnout and job satisfaction in higher education, we propose the following hypothesis.

H4: Burnout has a negative and direct effect on faculty's job satisfaction.

Career commitment and job satisfaction

Previous scholars have documented the link between career commitment and job satisfaction in managerial and educational contexts. Blau, Paul, and St. John (1993) conceptualized career commitment as, "one's attitude, including affect, belief, and behavioral intention, toward his or her occupation" (p. 311). A few organizational psychological studies found that career commitment had a positive and direct relationship with job satisfaction (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Goulet & Singh, 2002; Canrinus et al., 2012). Two meta-analytical reviews within the past decade also discussed the direct and positive relationship between career commitment and job satisfaction (Lee, Carswell, & Allen, 2000; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnysky, 2002). Such that, individuals who self-reported high levels of career commitment also reported high levels of job satisfaction in their current occupation, and those who reported low levels of career commitment also reported

low levels of job satisfaction (Goulet & Singh, 2002; Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005). Additional studies also confirm that career commitment has a positive and direct effect on employees' job satisfaction (Chen et al., 2011; Nazish et al., 2013).

Interestingly, only a few studies examined the link between career commitment and job satisfaction for university professors. Limited educational studies also found that career commitment was a positive predictor of job satisfaction for student teachers (Lam, Foong, & Moo, 1995), teachers (Mueller, Finley, Iverson, & Price, 1999; Canrinus et al., 2012), and university professors (Vandenberg & Lance, 1992; Trivellas & Santouridis, 2016). To date it has been found that being committed to an academic career, positively predicts being satisfied with one's faculty position in higher education institutions (Gutierrez, Candela, & Carver, 2012; Oza, 2015). For instance, Brown and Sargeant (2007) found that full-time university faculty who were highly committed to their jobs were also highly satisfied with their jobs, and were likely to stay in their careers long-term. However, when comparing the education attainment of faculty members, those with doctorate degrees reported to be more satisfied with their jobs and were also more committed to their jobs in comparison to faculty members without doctorate degrees (Brown & Sargeant, 2007). Age was also a factor, such that, older university faculty reported being more committed in comparison to younger university faculty, and thus, reported higher levels of job satisfaction (Brown & Sargeant, 2007). Another study found that academic researchers reported the lowest job satisfaction and occupational commitment levels in comparison to other occupations (e.g., scientists, commercial researchers) (Goswami, Mathew, & Chadha, 2007). Yet, affective career commitment, or the psychological attachment to one's vocation was positively correlated to job satisfaction regardless of research position (Goswami, Mathew, & Chadha, 2007).

Additionally, according to Cetin, Kizil, and Zengin (2013) accounting and finance faculty members who felt highly committed to their academic career and institution also reported high levels of job satisfaction, especially if they received academic mentorship. Moreover, poorly committed faculty members also reported low satisfaction with their teaching jobs, and felt less emotionally attached to their jobs in comparison to highly committed faculty, which may lead to intentions of leaving the institution, or seeking a career change (Meyer et al., 2002). Since prior correlational studies have confirmed that holding positive attitudes regarding one's academic profession can positively impact faculty employees' job satisfaction, in this study, we will examine the following hypothesis.

H5: Career commitment has a positive and direct effect on faculty's job satisfaction.

Method

Participants

This study included 213 faculty participants (25% male and 75% female) currently employed at a southwestern higher educational institution in the U.S. Ages ranged from 24 to 73, with a mean age of 41.83. The ethnicities of the participants included 125 (58.69%) Caucasian, 23 (10.79%) Hispanic, 8 (3.75%) African-American, 7 (3.29%) Asian-American, 9 (4.23%) Native-American, 4 (1.88%) Middle-Easterner, and 37 (17.37%) Other/Mixed. The marital status of the sample included 11.4% single, 80.1% married, 2.8% cohabiting, 3.8% divorced, and 1.9% widowed. Of the participants, 74.5% indicated having children in the home. Of those with children, the number ranged from 1 to 8 children, with an average of 2 children. The current

tenure status of the sample included 25.9% non-tenure track, 37.6% tenure-track, and 36.5% tenured. Faculty reported time of service at an institution of higher education with an average of 7.35 years (*Range* = 0.5 to 43 years; *SD* = 6.89).

Procedures

Upon receiving institutional review board approval, participants were invited to complete an online survey related to work life balance in academia. Participants were recruited through emails, social networking sites, and newsletters. Only faculty members who were currently employed at a higher education institution were included in this study. After participants provided their consent to participate, participants were referred to a web link via Qualtrics to complete the 20-minute questionnaire. Participants were also asked to respond to questions about their demographics, work-to-family conflict, family-to-work conflict, burnout, career commitment, and job satisfaction.

Instruments

The work-to-family conflict instrument was developed by Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian (1996) to assess work-to-family conflict. This 7-point Likert type scale ($\alpha = .94$) included five items such as "The demands of my work interfere with my home family life," "The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities," and "My job produces strain that makes it difficult to make changes to my plans for family activities." Participants' responses ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), with higher values indicating higher levels of work-to-family conflict.

Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian's (1996) Family-to-Work Conflict instrument was used to assess family-to-work conflict. Participants responded to five statements about their family-to-work conflict ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), ($\alpha = .92$). Sample items included "The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities," "I have to put off doing things at work because of demands on my time at home," and "Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties."

Pines and Aronson's (1988) Burnout Measure, a 7-point Likert-type scale, was used to assess participants' exhaustion states. Participants indicated the frequency of burnout occurrences using 21 statements. Responses ranged from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*), ($\alpha = .96$). Sample responses indicated "being physically exhausted," "being emotionally exhausted," and "being tired."

The Career Commitment Scale (Blau, 1984) was adopted to measure career commitment in academia. Participants provided their level of agreement on seven items about their commitment to their academic career. Responses ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), ($\alpha = .84$). Sample items included "I like this career too well to give it up," "I definitely want a career for myself in this profession," and "This is the ideal profession for a life's work."

The six-item Overall Job Satisfaction Scale developed by Agho, Price, and Mueller (1992) was used to measure job satisfaction. Sample items included "I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job," "I am satisfied with my job for the time being," and "I find real enjoyment in my work." Responses to the 5-point Likert-type scale ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), ($\alpha = .91$). Participants indicated job satisfaction at their employed institution, with higher values indicating higher job satisfaction.

Analysis

AMOS 21.0 was used to test our hypothesized model with structural equation modeling (SEM) with maximum likelihood estimation (See Figure 1). Structural equation modeling is appropriate for investigating the underlying effects of measurable variables (Kline, 2010). To estimate missing values, we adopted Graham's (2003) procedural recommendations in the application of full information maximum likelihood estimation (FIML). Implementing a two-step process enabled us to test the reliability of the measurement model and the results of the hypothesized model. To determine the model's fit, several recommended indices were used including chi-square, ratio of chi-square to its degrees of freedom, comparative fit index (CFI), incremental fit index (IFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). The fit criteria of a model is established when the χ^2 is insignificant, $\chi^2/df < 5$, CFI > 0.90 , IFI > 0.90 , TLI $> .90$, and RMSEA < 0.08 (Hair et al., 2006; Kline, 2010).

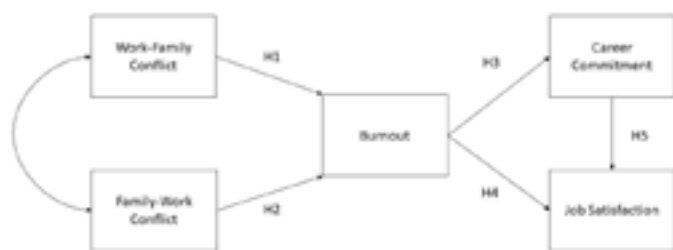


Figure 1. Hypothesized Model.

Results

Correlations, means, standard deviations, and the Cronbach's alpha reliabilities among the study's variables are displayed in Table 1. A confirmatory factorial analysis (CFA) was adopted to validate the measurement of the concepts in this study. Results showed the measurement model provided an acceptable fit to the data [$\chi^2(62) = 159.52$; $\chi^2/df = 2.573$, CFI = .95; IFI = .95; TLI = .92; and RMSEA = .06]. The alpha reliabilities of all measures ranged from .84 to .96, which indicate internal validity of the measures. Also, all the factor loadings were significant and above 0.70. Therefore, the measurement model supports the relationships among the manifest variables and the constructs of this study.

Table 1. Reporting Means, Standard Deviations, Scale Reliabilities, and Correlations of Variables

Measure	1	2	3	4	5
1. Work-Family Conflict	1				
2. Family-Work Conflict	.46**	1			
3. Burnout	.54**	.36**	1		
4. Career Commitment	-.26**	0.10	-.60**	1	
5. Job Satisfaction	-.27**	-.17*	-.67**	.68**	1
<i>M</i>	4.51	3.48	3.38	4.03	4.2
<i>SD</i>	1.57	1.55	1.04	0.79	0.82
α	0.94	0.92	0.96	0.84	0.91

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

After applying a confirmatory factor analysis, the hypothesized model was shown to indicate a good fit to the data [$\chi^2(4) = 8.40$, $p > 0.5$; $\chi^2/df = 2.10$, CFI = .99; IFI = .99; TLI = .95; and RMSEA = .07]. The structural equation modeling estimates of the structural model are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. SEM Parameter Estimates

Path	Estimates	Standardized Estimates	Standard Error	CR	P value
WFC to Burnout	0.33	0.49	0.05	7.14	***
FWC to Burnout	0.10	0.15	0.05	2.16	*
Burnout to Commitment	-0.45	-0.60	0.05	9.97	***
Burnout to Satisfaction	-0.32	-0.41	0.05	6.7	***
Commitment to Satisfaction	0.46	0.44	0.06	7.2	***

Note. CR = critical ratio, WFC = work-family conflict, FWC = family-work conflict. *** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$.

The covariates, work-family conflict and family-work conflict were positively correlated ($r = .47$, $p < .001$). The first hypothesis stated that work-family conflict would positively impact burnout, and this hypothesis was supported ($\beta = .49$, $p < .001$). The second hypothesis predicted that family-work conflict would positively impact burnout, and this hypothesis was supported ($\beta = .15$, $p < .05$). Burnout was found to negatively impact career commitment, thus, hypothesis three was also supported ($\beta = -.60$, $p < .001$). The fourth hypothesis predicted that burnout would negatively impact job satisfaction was also supported ($\beta = -.41$, $p < .001$). Career commitment positively impacted job satisfaction ($\beta = .44$, $p < .001$), which supports the fifth hypothesis. The model accounted for 33% of the variance in burnout, 35% in career commitment, and 57% in job satisfaction. The full hypothesized model is displayed in Figure 2.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate WFC, burnout, career commitment, and job satisfaction of faculty in academic positions. A valuable contribution of this study was the evidence that both work-family conflict (WFC) and family-work-conflict (FWC) are antecedent predictors of faculty burnout in academia. These outcomes confirm prior findings that revealed WFC is a positive predictor of job burnout (Tayfur & Arslan, 2012; Cinamon, Rich, & Westman, 2007) since work demands interfere with faculty members' family lives. It also replicates previous findings that have examined the effect of FWC on job burnout (Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Tayfur & Arslan, 2012) when family responsibilities interfere with faculty members' work environments. Conservation of Resources (COR) theory explains when faculty members use their limited emotional and social resources from experiencing WFC issues, this leads to negative emotional outcomes such as burnout (Hobfoll, 2002). According to COR if faculty members lose resources in one domain, either work or family, this perceived loss can lead to job burnout manifested as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). Likewise, if faculty members experience low levels of WFC issues, COR theory explains that emotional resources could also be built to gain a surplus in resources, and to buffer against future WFC losses, which can prevent job burnout in academic careers and lead to overall well-being at work (Hobfoll, 2001).

A negative and direct relationship was found among faculty burnout and career commitment. Because high burnout rates have been documented in other teaching academic occupations, prior studies have confirmed the correlation between burnout and career commitment (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Previous studies also found that burnout was inversely related to faculty's career commitment (Nagar, 2012; Kugiejko, 2015). Educators who experienced burnout dealt with high

amounts of emotional and social job stress when working with difficult students, colleagues, or supervisors, which disabled them from coping with everyday job tasks effectively (e.g., teaching, research) (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000). According to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, when emotional exhaustion occurs due to loss of perceived personal losses (e.g., lack of time; no incentives), faculty members' commitment to their jobs may decrease, and faculty members may exert less effort, less motivation, and display weaker work goals (Wright & Hobfoll, 2004). COR theory also explains that diminished work performance can occur when faculty members are less committed to their jobs due to patterns of job burnout (Hobfoll, 2002). If burnout is left unmanaged, then faculty members may become less loyal to their institutions, and as a result, their career commitment drops (Mueller et al., 1999). Once career commitment is decreased, faculty members may seek alternative occupations or leave their current institutions (Khan et al., 2014). Thus, burnout can negatively affect faculty members' commitment toward their academic careers.

Another finding supported the fact that faculty burnout negatively affected job satisfaction in academic careers. Faculty may experience burnout or emotional exhaustion when a) workloads become excessive, b) class enrollments are high, c) number of advisees are increased, and d) research performance pressure is high (Watts & Robinson, 2011), and this can negatively impact faculty's satisfaction in their academic jobs. These findings have been confirmed in prior research studies that demonstrated high levels of job burnout can lead to decreased job satisfaction in academic settings (Schubert-Irastorza & Fabry, 2014; Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). Experiencing burnout reduces job satisfaction, which may also decrease faculty members' work engagement and productivity (Schubert-Irastorza & Fabry, 2014). Interestingly, faculty who experience low levels of burnout may also experience high levels of job satisfaction because of their overall sense of emotional well-being in the workplace. Therefore, decreased burnout may also yield lower stress levels and the perception of positive work climates in higher educational institutions, which may explain the increase in job satisfaction levels (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). Experiencing high job satisfaction levels in teaching, research, and service obligations may also help diminish faculty's intentions to leave an institution and reduce faculty turnover in higher educational institutions (Høigaard, Giske, & Sundslø, 2012).

Finally, this study found that career commitment was a positive predictor of job satisfaction. Demonstrating a high level of commitment to one's career can lead to levels of high job satisfaction in academic careers. This finding is consistent with previous education studies that found career commitment was directly linked to job satisfaction of university instructors and professors (Gutierrez et al., 2012; Trivellas & Santouridis, 2016). When faculty feel a sense of commitment to their academic jobs via their teaching, research, and service roles, they have a sense of satisfaction in their jobs. This realization may contribute to the retention of faculty members in higher education institutions (Gillespie et al., 2001). Alternatively, academics in higher education who feel less committed emotionally to their institutions also tend to become less loyal to their institutions and report being less satisfied with their job roles (Trivellas & Santouridis, 2016). In addition, when faculty are satisfied with their academic careers they are more likely to perform their job responsibilities more effectively in comparison to academics who are dissatisfied, and this enhanced performance benefits students' learning experiences (Nagar, 2012).

Limitations and future directions

Several limitations of this study will be discussed along with future research recommendations. First, this study adopted self-report

measures, which may pose a threat to social desirability biases in the sample. To avoid a bias in future research, researchers may need to adopt other-report measures to confirm participants' responses from the perspectives of their deans, department head supervisors, colleagues, and family members. Second, this study collected cross-sectional data, which does not provide longitudinal evidence of the model. Future researchers may consider using time series analyses using work-life and career commitment constructs across the academic careers of faculty (e.g., assistant to full professor). Additionally, researchers may design up-to-date work-life balance interventions to reduce faculty burnout in academic environments. Third, the sample size was moderately small, thus, the findings were not generalizable to all faculty members in the United States. Future research can examine this model using a large national sample across universities in the United States to confirm the results of this study.

Implications for practice and conclusion

The findings from this study yielded several implications of practice for faculty and administrators. First, this study found that work-family and family-work conflict both positively contributed to burnout in higher education, however, work-family conflict has a stronger impact on burnout. Yet, both WFC and FWC combined may lead to experiencing a significant amount of faculty burnout, which may produce health risks and faculty may need to reduce burnout by reducing WFC/FWC. However, because WFC was the strongest predictor of burnout, addressing WFC can help reduce faculty burnout. Strategies to reduce WFC can include reducing the amount of work hours, practicing time management skills, and integrating exercise and healthy habits (Haslam, Sanders, & Sofronoff, 2013). Administrators may also help faculty reduce their WFC by developing flexible workload policies and career counseling interventions that enable faculty to effectively integrate their professional and personal lives. Also, WFC/FWC interventions may be implemented across institutions at the faculty level that inform faculty about strategies to reduce the effects of WFC/FWC. For instance, to reduce FWC faculty may develop house rules (e.g., closed door policy during writing sessions) and delegate family responsibilities (e.g., childcare, chores/cleaning, shopping) to one's partner, grown-up children, relatives, or close friends, especially during the intense aspects of an academic semester (e.g., midterms; finals). Alternatively, faculty may need to hire a house manager to care for the children, or a weekly housecleaner to gain additional time.

Second, given that burnout leads to decreased career commitment and job satisfaction, it is important to prevent or reduce burnout in academic settings. Faculty may need emotional management trainings to become aware and cope with burnout symptoms to protect their overall psychological and physical well-being (Noor & Zainuddin, 2011). Administrators may also provide faculty with access to trainings or webinars (e.g., stress management; mindfulness) to help new and ongoing faculty members with managing difficult situations as they emerge while performing multiple work roles (teaching, research, and service) (Noor & Zainuddin, 2011). Finally, another implication was the value of maintaining faculty members' career commitment in academia to sustain their job satisfaction. Faculty members may need to revisit their career goals to maintain their motivation to sustain a career in academia. Administrators can also aid in faculty's career commitment by providing salary incentives or bonuses for faculty's efforts, offering semester leaves or release time to re-energize faculty, rewarding excellence, providing professional development opportunities, and providing detailed annual evaluation reports to maintain the commitment of their faculty members. In sum, this study provides a work-family/family-to-work conflict model that can inform

faculty and administrators about WFC/FWC and burnout issues in academic settings.

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