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Predicting Work and Family Conflict Using Personal Values, Work Characteristics and Family Functioning Perceptions from Both Spouses

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine the value of different life domains of the individual and his/her spouse in explaining the experience of work disturbing family life (work-to-family conflict) and of the family disturbing work (family-to-work conflict). Four hierarchical regression analyses were performed, differing in the criterion variable (both types of conflict in men and women). Predictor variables were organized in three steps accordingly: 1) individual and spouse personal values (striving for achievement and attitude towards gender roles in marriage); 2) individual and spouse assessments of job characteristics (work control and demands, social support from superiors and colleagues); 3) individual and spouse assessments of characteristics of their common family domain (family competence and conflict, social support from the spouse and other close persons). Variables were measured using self-assessment scales completed by 274 employed, married couples who are parents.

The results showed that all groups of predictors significantly contributed to the explanation of work-family conflicts. Personal values of the male spouse contribute significantly, but become irrelevant for both types of work-family conflict when the work and family environments are included. Job assessments mostly contributed to explaining work-to-family conflict, while family assessments mostly contributed to explaining family-to-work conflict in both spouses. Interesting gender differences in terms of the significance of predictors, especially spouses' work assessments, were found. In general, these variables account for a maximum of 35% of the dependent variables variance, which points out the need to consider other relevant factors in explaining work-family conflicts.

Keywords: work-family conflict, work demands, social support at work and in the family, quality of family functioning, attitudes and strivings of spouses

Introduction

“Conflict between work and family roles (work-family conflict) is, thus, usually defined as the experience of incompatibility of work and family roles, that is, that satisfying the requirements of one domain makes it difficult or even disables satisfying requirements of the other domain” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, pp. 77). There is strong evidence that researchers should view both directions of work-family conflict as two separate constructs: conflict because of the disturbing effect of work on family life (hereinafter referred to as *work-to-family conflict*) and conflict because of disruptive effects of the family on work (hereinafter referred to as *family-to-work conflict*) (Byron, 2005). The determining factors that contribute to the experience of conflicting work and family roles, in an effort to prevent or at least mitigate negative outcomes, is of great importance for researchers. These problems seem especially pronounced in dual-earner families (Obradović & Čudina-Obradović, 2013).

Various theories of (professional) stress such as the Conservation of Resources Model (Hobfoll, 1989), the Job Demands–Control–Support Model (Karasek & Theorell, 1990), and the Social Identity Theory (Rothbard & Edwards, 2003) were applied in the attempts to identify factors contributing to the experience of work-family conflicts. Such attempts resulted in numerous models involving structural, social, and psychological requirements and resources of each domain as the main antecedents of work-family conflict (Carlson & Frone, 2003; Frone, Yardley & Markel, 1997; Hwang & Ramadoss, 2016), with higher requirements and less available resources being related to experiences of greater work-family conflict. Specific domain characteristics are usually shown to be more related to the disturbing effects of the same domain on another domain. Personal coping mechanisms such as social support (Carlson & Perrewé, 1999; Kossek & Perrigino, 2016; Michel, Mitchelson, Pichler & Cullen, 2010), attributes directly related to the individual such as personality traits, role salience, and values (Bruck & Allen, 2003; Knežević, Gregov & Šimunić, 2016; Michel, Mitchelson, Kotrba, LeBreton & Baltes, 2009), and variables related to cultural contexts (Ollier-Malaterre & Foucreault, 2016) are also examined as predictors of work-family conflict. Sociodemographic characteristics such as gender, life stage (age), work experience, level of education, income, religion, nationality, etc., have not proved to be sufficiently predictable in relation to other components of the models and are usually excluded from the analysis (Carlson & Perrewé, 1999).

When it comes to research on employed spouses, approaches integrated into the so-called “Spillover-Crossover Model” (Bakker & Demerouti, 2012) are increasingly being used. In this model, two mechanisms of transfer of well-being, the so-called spillover and crossover processes, are integrated. Spillover processes refer to the processes of intraindividual transfer of stress, affect, and energy from one domain to another domain in an individual’s life. Crossover processes refer to processes of interindividual transmission of stress, affect, and energy. It is used in psychological research to investigate the impact of the work domain (stress) on the family domain (stress) and then the transfer of work-related affects to other members of the household (especially the spouse). According to the assumptions of the Spillover-Crossover model, taking into account other close persons (the spouse) and their perceptions of the family and of their own work domain, and examining the predictive value of such set of variables adds to work-family research. Researchers have examined work stressors and mainly work-to-family conflict of both spouses and their relation to various outcomes (e.g. Obradović & Čudina-Obradović, 2013; Westman, Etzion & Danon, 2001) and included personal characteristics of both spouses along with individual work and/or family characteristics as predictors of work-family conflict (Abeysekera & Gahan 2017; Šimunić, 2015). However, there is no known research including personal characteristics along with the assessment of both work and family domain of both spouses. Furthermore, when including spouses in research, it is common to examine gender specific relations, taking into account a gender role theory perspective (Way, 1991; Zhao, Zhang & Foley, 2017). Since men are still considered to be the main family breadwinner from the traditional viewpoint,

most of the partner's effects research has dealt with the effects of male work-related stress on the women's well-being, while fewer researchers have explored the two-way effects of partner stress (Obradović & Čudina-Obradović, 2013; Park, 2012). The results of such research suggest that women may be more susceptible to the crossover process than men. Westman (2006) states that there are at least three groups of findings that support the claim that women are more likely to receive stress and strain experienced by their husbands: 1) women experience a higher level of stress and are therefore less resistant to coping with the burden and stress of their husbands. This issue is influenced by the accepted idea of men as supporters; 2) Women are more sympathetic to the stresses of their spouses and are therefore more susceptible to the crossover process and 3) Women are more sensitive to the crossover process due to their role as social support providers.

In the aforementioned study on employed spouses in Croatia (Šimunić, 2015) gender role attitudes and striving for achievement of both participants and their spouses were taken into account as antecedents of work-family conflicts, while the other characteristics taken into account were perceptions of work and family characteristics of the individual. The demand-support-control resource was taken into account in choosing work and comparable family predictors, while also taking into account suggestions to include more sources of social support (Selvarajan, Cloninger & Singh, 2013): 1) work control and demands and support from the supervisor and work colleagues as work characteristics and 2) family competence and conflict in the family along with support from the spouse and other close persons as family characteristics. Gender role attitudes and striving for achievement, on the other hand, were variables that were shown to be interesting in the context of research including similar variables on spouses in Croatia and Southern Herzegovina (Gjurić, Šimunić & Gregov, 2014; Pandža, 2010; Šimunić, Gregov & Proroković, 2011). Men were shown to be on average more traditional in their attitudes towards gender roles and reported higher levels of striving for achievement than women and both variables were related to greater work-to-family and family-to-work conflict in both spouses. People with traditional gender role attitudes support the view that women should be primary caregivers and take care of the household, while men should be mainly dedicated to the work domain, which seems to be a 'negative' attitude when both spouses are employed full-time, implying lower flexibility in using different coping strategies (Cohen, 2009). Egalitarian gender role attitudes support the view that men and women should have an equal possibility to dedicate themselves to any life role. Striving for achievement measured in these studies referred to striving towards power, competition, and success (O'Neil, Helms, Gable, David & Wrightsman, 1986), which seems to be related to conflicting relationships with others (the correlation with family functioning variables was positive). The results of the research of Šimunić (2015) showed that these personal values had no significant indirect relation with work-to-family conflict in men, while both higher levels of striving for achievement and traditionality of the gender role attitudes of men significantly indirectly predicted their own perception of greater family-to-work conflict through the decrease of perceived social support received from their wife and the increase of family conflict. Greater traditionality of husbands indirectly predicted higher levels of both conflicts through a decrease in the perceived level of support they receive from husbands, but their own characteristics had no predictive value in the examined models. This points to a greater sensitivity of women to partner effects (Šimunić, Pandža & Gregov, 2017; Westman, 2006). The results obtained generally confirmed assumptions of gender role theories and the results of previous research on gender differences in the significance of the role of social support for women and a greater susceptibility of women and sensitivity of women to the needs of their partner in comparison to men.

Current research builds on the study of Šimunić (2015) in including spouses' assessment of work and family characteristics in predicting work-to-family and family-to-work conflict. Therefore, the aim of this study was to determine the value of different life domains of an individual and his/her spouse in explaining work-to-family and family-to-work conflict in men and women. Taking into account what was pre-

viously mentioned, work-family conflict is here viewed as a strain due to various personal, work, and family characteristics that contribute to the perception of disruption of work and family roles: higher levels of traditionality of attitudes on gender roles in marriage, of striving for achievement, psychological demands of work (lower control and higher work demands), lower family functioning quality (lower competence and greater conflict in family), and lower levels of social support at work and in the family (Hypothesis 1). It was also assumed that the assessment of the individual's work characteristics will explain most of the variation of work-to-family conflict of the individual, and the assessed characteristics of family life most of the variation of family-to-work conflict (Hypothesis 2). An additional assumption was that social support variables and partner variables will be more important predictors of work-to-family and family-to-work conflict in women in comparison to men, while work variables will be more important for men (Hypothesis 3). The order of variable inclusion was directed by the perspective that spouses, with their personal values and expectations (and reactions) enter the work and family domain (Katz i Kahn, 1976), with work being the domain that is separate and more structured with less flexible boundaries and family being the common domain where the spouses interact and can, among other, deal with work-family issues.

Material and methods

Participants

The research was conducted on a convenience sample of 276 employed married partners (276 men and 276 women), with at least 6 months length of service at the same full-time job. The participants were from various parts of Croatia with the majority being from Zadar County. They were from 24 to 63 years old ($M=41$; $SD=8$), and had at least one child living with them. The majority of households had 4 members on average (2 children), the youngest child being 8-9 years old and the oldest child 11-12 years old (on average), and a total monthly income of 8,001 to 10,000 kunas. The participants were very heterogeneous according to their workplaces, including hairdressers, machinists, car mechanics, drivers, caterers, educators, police officers, electrical engineers, economists, doctors, psychologists, lawyers, etc. Most participants were of middle and higher level education. Men had more years of total work experience ($Mm=17.3$; $SDm=8.11$; $Mf=14.2$; $SDf=8.14$; $F(1/718)=24.99$; $p=.000$) than women.

Measuring instruments

A set of questions on sociodemographic data was applied at the beginning of the questionnaire, where participants specified their gender, age, level of education, workplace, years of work experience, number and age of children in the household and household income ranges.

Before describing the following measurement instruments, it must be noted that the scores on total or subscales were made on the basis of the obtained factor structures of the Croatian validations (references to them are stated in each following section for each instrument) and on the basis of the research questions. The factor structure of each scale was also checked and verified for that data.

The scale of egalitarianism of attitudes on gender roles (in marriage and the family) (Šimunić, 2015) – 15 items to assess the attitudes of participants on the appropriate characteristics and behaviours of men and women within the family, who, which and how much responsibility they should take and have, who should be making choices, and how much they should be dedicated to their work and family roles. An egalitarian attitude would reflect the belief that men and women should be equally involved in work and family roles and make decisions together, while a traditional (less egalitarian) attitude reflects the belief

that men should be more involved in work roles and be the main decision maker in the family, while women should be responsible of the household and childcare. Participants expressed their level of agreement with each item on a 6-point scale (1-*strongly disagree*; 6-*strongly agree*). The reliability in terms of the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .84 and the average inter-item correlation .28. An example of the items is: 'The husband should decide on how to spend extra money.' A higher score on this scale reflects a more egalitarian (less traditional) attitude on gender roles in marriage.

Striving for Achievement Scale (Nikolić, Pavela & Šimić, 2014; O'Neil et al., 1986; subscale *Success, Power, Competition*) – 11 items including striving for success (constant concern for personal achievement, competence, failure, career progress, and well-being), for power (maintaining authority, dominance, and influence over others) and competitiveness (competition and comparison with others in order to get something or establish superiority in a particular situation). An exemplary item is: "It is important that I'm smarter/stronger than other men (version for men)/women (version for women)." Participants gave their answers on a 5-point scale (1-*strongly disagree*; 5-*strongly agree*). The Cronbach alpha coefficient on this sample was .87 and the average inter-item correlation .39. A higher result on the scale reflects a higher level of striving for achievement.

The scale of psychological demands and control at work (Gregov, Šimunić & Nikolić, 2012; Šimunić, 2015) – 12 items based on the Karasek concepts of work demands and control, including autonomy/control at work, role conflict, role ambiguity, and work overload (Karasek et al., 1998). Participants expressed their agreement with items on a 7-point scale (1-*strongly disagree*; 7-*strongly agree*). 8 items measure Control at work. An example item is: "I know exactly what tasks and responsibilities my job includes" and the Cronbach alpha of this subscale was .84 (average inter-item correlation .28). 4 items measure Work demands, for example, "My job involves a too large degree of responsibility", with a .74 Cronbach alpha (average inter-item correlation .44). Higher results on the subscales reflect a higher level of control at work and higher work demands.

The Quality of family functioning scale (Šimunić, Gregov & Pupić-Bakrač, 2010; Beavers & Hampson, 1990; *Self-Report Family Inventory-II*) - 33 items measuring the perception of family health/competencies, cohesion, conflict, leadership, and emotional expressiveness. The (dis)agreement with each item was reported on a 7-point scale (1- *strongly disagree*; 7-*strongly agree*). The items are organized into two subscales: Family Competence (25 items) and Family Conflict (8 items). Examples of items are: "My family usually functions well when we are together" for Competence and "In my family, when things go wrong, we blame each other" for Conflict. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the Competence subscale was .95 while it was .86 for the Conflict subscale. The average inter-item correlations are .47 and .45. Higher results on the subscales reflect a higher level of perceived family competence and lower level of family conflict.

Scale of social support at work and in the family (Šimunić, Gregov & Proroković, 2016) containing four 9-item subscales measuring instrumental and emotional social support for the work and family roles from 1) the supervisor, 2) colleagues, 3) spouse, and 4) other family members and close people. Participants expressed their agreement with each item on a 7-point scale (1-*strongly disagree*; 7-*strongly agree*). An example of an item measuring social support at work is "My superior/colleagues recognize(s) when I do a good job," while an example for items measuring social support in the family is "I can talk about everything with my spouse/other family members and close people. The Cronbach alpha coefficients ranged from .79 to .86, while the average inter-item correlations ranged from .41 and .43. Higher results on these scales reflect a higher level of perceived social support from the four sources.

The Work-family Conflict Scale (Šimunić, Proroković & Ivanov, 2014; Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrian, 1996) - two sets of 6 items (total of 12 items) differing only in the direction of work-family impact. They measure 1) the disturbing impact of work on family roles (work-to-family conflict) and 2) the disturbing impact of family on work (family-to-work conflict) taking into account limited time and fatigue as source-

es of conflict. Participants expressed their agreement with items on a 7-point scale (1-*strongly disagree*; 7-*strongly agree*). Sample items are “Because of the time required for my job I do not have enough time to participate in family activities” for work-to-family conflict and “Because of the time required for family activities I often have to delay and modify work activities” for family-to-work conflict. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the Work-to-family conflict subscale is .79 and .81 for the Family-to-work subscale, while the average inter-item correlations are .39 and .57. A higher result on the subscales reflects a greater level of both conflicts perceived.

Procedure

The research was conducted with the help of fellow psychologists and graduate students of psychology from various cities and towns in Croatia. Pairs of identical questionnaires were distributed in various work organizations to male and female employees working at the same workplace for at least six months, with an employed spouse (who would fill in the second questionnaire) and at least one child in the household. A part of the sample of participants satisfying these conditions was recruited through personal acquaintances. The participating spouses were warned that they must fill out the questionnaires individually, without an insight in each other’s answers. Furthermore, they were asked to use a common code and return the questionnaires in sealed envelopes. Approximately 800 pairs of questionnaires were distributed. The collection was completed with the data from a total of 358 employed spouses, leading to 276 couples after excluding the sets of questionnaires that were not completely filled out by both spouses.

Results

Before conducting correlation and regression analyses, indexes of the distribution shape (skewness and kurtosis) and machalobis distances were checked. The values inspected were not problematic in allowing the conduction of the planned analyses. However, the results indicated higher levels of family competence and conflict, social support of the spouse and other close persons, and low levels of family-to-work conflict. The linearity of the relationships between variables was determined by inspection of scatterplots. Basic descriptive statistics and Pearson coefficients of correlation between all the variables are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Bivariate Pearson coefficients of correlation between all examined variables and basic descriptive parameters (N=276)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	M	SD
1. m-Striv.f.achievement	-																							2.72	0.75
2. m-Egal.gend.rol.att.	-.24	-																						4.45	0.76
3. f-Striv.f.achievement	.48	-.19	-																					2.57	0.74
4. f-Egal.gend.rol.att.	-.12	.48	-.09	-																				4.88	0.62
5. m-Work control	-.07	.11	-.03	.01	-																			5.10	1.00
6. m-Work demands	.02	.07	.03	.02	-.13	-																		4.80	1.35
7. m-Soc.supp.supervisor	-.13	.24	-.04	.06	.45	-.16	-																	5.00	1.16
8. m-Soc.supp.colleagues	-.03	.21	-.03	.14	.30	-.03	.45	-																5.30	0.99
9. f-Work control	-.15	.10	-.13	.03	.13	.06	.17	.17	-															5.18	1.00
10. f-Work demands	-.03	.04	.02	-.07	.04	.25	-.07	-.11	-.26	-														4.51	1.34
11. f-Soc.supp.supervisor	-.18	.27	-.16	.18	.08	.17	.27	.21	.57	-.16	-													4.99	1.27
12. f-Soc.supp.colleagues	-.10	.14	-.12	.11	.01	.05	.07	.24	.26	-.18	.36	-												5.36	0.99
13. m-Family competence	-.24	.49	-.02	.18	.29	.11	.35	.31	.14	.14	.20	.16	-											5.88	0.90
14. m-Family conflict	-.24	.40	-.11	.09	.26	.08	.28	.26	.12	.14	.10	.08	.75	-										5.66	1.13
15. m-Soc.supp.spouse	-.21	.46	-.06	.22	.29	.07	.31	.36	.19	.10	.24	.17	.72	.65	-									5.91	0.92
16. m-Soc.supp.other	-.25	.35	-.12	.16	.27	.03	.38	.34	.20	-.00	.27	.18	.54	.43	.55	-								5.37	1.06
17. f-Family competence	-.20	.36	-.18	.22	.14	.18	.23	.23	.25	.08	.31	.28	.68	.53	.59	.37	-							5.86	0.88
18. f-Family conflict	-.20	.28	-.21	.13	.09	.14	.22	.16	.24	.07	.24	.19	.53	.60	.45	.32	.75	-						5.64	1.11
19. f-Soc.supp.spouse	-.18	.38	-.19	.15	.15	.17	.23	.27	.32	-.00	.34	.24	.49	.39	.49	.33	.69	.60	-					5.76	1.06
20. f-Soc.supp.other	-.24	.30	-.31	.14	.11	.12	.25	.25	.32	.02	.38	.39	.34	.25	.27	.50	.43	.40	.53	-				5.41	1.08
21. m-WaF conflict	.15	-.16	.11	-.02	-.42	.38	-.35	-.21	-.05	.12	.07	-.11	-.21	-.31	-.25	-.15	-.15	-.17	-.11	-.03	-			3.36	1.24
22. m-FaW conflict	.20	-.18	.06	-.12	-.33	.13	-.26	-.28	-.17	.04	-.09	-.13	-.37	-.44	-.49	-.38	-.30	-.26	-.20	-.18	.30	-		1.93	1.04
23. f-WaF conflict	.13	-.18	.16	-.08	-.13	-.01	-.10	-.19	-.45	.27	-.43	-.28	-.18	-.21	-.21	-.28	-.21	-.19	-.31	-.23	.21	.13	-	3.26	1.15
24. f-FaW conflict	.17	-.26	.19	-.15	-.15	-.04	-.16	-.25	-.28	.04	-.23	-.19	-.22	-.24	-.28	-.22	-.32	-.31	-.40	-.29	.13	.32	.32	1.96	1.07

Note: Bold correlations - $p < .05$; Prefix m- assessment of husbands; Prefix f – assessments of wives

To determine the value of different life domains of the individual and his/her spouse in predicting conflict due to work-to-family and family-to-work conflict in male and female spouses, four hierarchical regression analyses differing in the criterion variable were performed: 1) work-to-family and 2) family-to-work conflict in men; 3) work-to-family and 4) family-to-work conflict in women. Predictor variables were organized in three steps accordingly: 1) individual and spouse estimates of their own personal values (striving for achievement and attitude towards gender roles in marriage); 2) individual and spouse assessments of job characteristics (work control and difficulty, social support from superior(s) and colleagues); 3) individual and spouse assessment of characteristics of their common family domain (family competence and conflict, social support from the spouse and other close persons). The standardized regression coefficient beta (β) was used as an indicator of the contribution of individual predictors to the explanation of the total criterion variance, and the coefficient of multiple determination (R^2) and the changes in the values of the multiple determination coefficients in subsequent steps (ΔR^2) were used as indicators of the contributions of each group of predictors. Although analyses of principal components confirmed such categorization of the predictors, it should be noted that the social support variables had significant saturations ($>.35$) on the component in line with this categorization and another component distinguishing them from the other categories. Thus, it should be taken into account that the order of variable insertion could have influenced the predictive values of variable categories. It should also be mentioned that parallel analyses including control variables (age, educational level, household income, number and the age of children, etc.) were conducted and the results were without differences. Therefore, due to brevity and clarity, the control variables were excluded from the presented analyses. The results of the four hierarchical regression analyses are presented in Table 2, showing that all groups of predictors significantly contributed to the explanation of work-family conflicts.

Table 2 Results of 4 hierarchical regression analyses with Work-to-Family and Family-to-Work conflict in men and women as criterions (N=276)

Predictors	β- criterion: W→F conflict Men			β- criterion: W→F conflict Women			β- criterion: F→W conflict Men			β- criterion: F→W conflict Women		
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
1. Personal values												
m-Striv.f.achievement		.09	.08	.06	.05	.02	-.02	.17**	.15*	.08	.07	.05
m-Egal.gend.rol.att.	-.15*	-.12*	-.08	-.13*	-.09	-.02	-.11	-.06	.07	-.19**	-.13*	-.08
f-Striv.f.achievement	.04	.04	.04	.10	.06	.07	-.04	-.04	-.03	.10	.09	.05
f-Egal.gend.rol.att.	.06	.04	.03	-.00	.04	.02	-.05	-.06	-.06	-.04	-.04	-.04
m-Work control		-.28**	-.26**		-.09	-.06		-.21**	-.14**		-.06	-.05
m-Work demands		.26**	.27**		-.00	.02		.09	.11*		-.02	.01
m-Soc.supp.supervisor		-.15**	-.15*		.09	.12		-.05	.00		.00	.02
m-Soc.supp.colleagues		-.03	-.02		-.06	-.02		-.13*	-.05		-.13*	-.11
f-Work control		-.03	-.02		-.23**	-.21**		-.11	-.07		-.19**	-.14*
f-Work demands		.05	.07		.16**	.16**		-.02	.04		-.03	-.01
f-Soc.supp.supervisor		.19**	.17**		-.19**	-.20**		.08	.07		.01	.02
f-Soc.supp.colleagues		-.12*	-.13*		-.09	-.10		-.07	-.05		-.07	-.04
m-Soc.supp.spouse			-.06			.05			-.27**			-.04
m-Soc.supp.other			.05			-.16*			-.12			-.01
m-Family competence			.09			.04			.10			.11
m-Family conflict			-.18*			-.18*			-.23**			-.04
f-Soc.supp.spouse			.00			-.15*			.06			-.20**
f-Soc.supp.other			.08			.09			.00			-.02
f-Family competence			-.04			.03			-.06			-.01
f-Family conflict			-.06			.06			.01			-.08
R^2	.04*	.34**	.38**	.05**	.30**	.34**	.06**	.20**	.35**	.08**	.17**	.23**
ΔR^2		.30**	.04**		.25**	.05*		.14**	.15**		.09**	.06*

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; Prefix m- assessment of husbands; Prefix f - assessments of wives

Overall, these variables explained 38% of the variance of *work-to-family conflict* in men and 32% in women. The largest percentage of variance was explained by the characteristics of the spouses' work assessments (30% for men, 25% for women), then family characteristics (4% for men, 5% for women) and personal values (4% for men, 5% for women). In the final step of the analysis, significant individual predictors of higher levels of work-to-family conflict in both men and women (as in the previous steps) were: lower levels of work control (men: $\beta=-26, p<.01$; women: $\beta=-21, p<.01$), higher work demands (men: $\beta=.27, p<.01$; women: $\beta=.16, p<.01$), lower levels of social support by the superior at their own job (men: $\beta=-15, p<.05$; women: $\beta=-20, p<.05$), and higher levels of family conflict perceived by the male spouse (men: $\beta=-.19, p<.05$; women: $\beta=-.18; p<.05$). For men, lower levels of social support the wife receives (perceives) by work colleagues ($\beta=-.12; p<.05$) and, interestingly, higher levels of social support she receives (perceives) by her superior ($\beta=.18; p<.01$) were also significant individual predictors of greater work-to-family conflict, while for women lower levels of the social support she perceives from her husband ($\beta=-.16; p<.05$) and lower levels of social support from other family members and close persons estimated by her husband ($\beta=-.16; p<.05$) were additional significant predictors. For both spouses, higher traditionality of the male spouse was a significant individual predictor of greater work-to-family conflict in the first step. For women, it becomes insignificant in the second step, after entering assessments of the work domain for women, while it becomes insignificant in the last step for men, after including family assessment.

When it comes to *family-to-work conflict* the situation is quite different. The total set of predictors explained 35% of the variance in men and only 23% of the variance in women. The personal values of the spouses in the first step of the analysis explained 6% of the variance for men and 8% of the variance for women, work characteristics explain an additional 14% of the variance in the second step for men and yet 9% for women, and in the last step family characteristics an additional 15% of the variance for men and only 6% for women. The only mutual significant individual predictor of higher family-to-work conflict in men and women in the final step was lower control at the individual's work (men: $\beta=-.14; p<.01$; women: $\beta=-.14; p<.05$). Another mutual predictor of higher family-to-work conflict was lower perceived social support by work colleagues of the male spouse in the second step (men and women: $\beta=-.13; p<.05$) which becomes insignificant when including family characteristics. For men, other individual significant predictors of higher levels of family-to-work conflict were: higher work demands (which was not significant in previous steps: $\beta=.11; p<.05$), lower levels of social support from his wife ($\beta=-.27; p<.01$), and higher levels of family conflict estimated by him ($\beta=-.23; p<.01$). In the previous steps, his higher striving for achievement was a significant predictor ($\beta=.17; p<.01$ in the first step to $\beta=.15; p<.05$ in the third step) but becomes insignificant after introducing family characteristics in the last step. The only other significant individual predictor in the last step in women was a lower estimated level of social support from the husband ($\beta=-.20; p<.01$). A more traditional attitude of the husband on gender roles in marriage was a significant predictor in the first ($\beta=-.19; p<.01$) and in the second step ($\beta=-.13; p<.05$), while becoming insignificant in the third, after introducing family assessments. When viewing the predictive power of individual variables it could be said that family-to-work conflict is related more to family characteristics and personal values than work-to-family conflict is, while work-to-family conflict is predicted mostly by work characteristics, especially in men.

Discussion

Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to examine how different groups of variables contribute to the explanation of work-to-family and family-to-work conflict in men and women. The regression models included assessments of some personal values and characteristics of the work and family domains of both spouses, with the assumption of so-called crossover effects, i.e. the transfer of stress and strain of one spouse affecting the level of stress and strain of the other spouse. Consequently, work-family conflicts were assumed to represent strain due to various personal, work, and family characteristics contributing to the perception of disruption of work and family roles: higher levels of traditional attitudes on gender roles, of striving for achievement, of psychological demands of work, lower family functioning quality and lower levels of social support for work and family.

The results of research in our country (Gregov et al., 2010; Gjurić et al., 2014; Šimunić et al., 2017; Šimunić et al., 2011) have shown so far that attitudes on gender roles and striving for achievement, to a greater or lesser extent, correlate with work-to-family and family-to-work conflict in men and women. It was therefore assumed that these characteristics of both spouses would significantly contribute to explaining the variance of such conflict, which was confirmed in all cases. However, after the introduction of other variables, none of these variables remain a significant individual predictor, implying a possible mediation effect of work and family characteristics in the relation between personal values and work-family conflict.

According to the generally accepted integrative model of work-family conflict (Frone et al., 1997) and the results of numerous studies (e.g. Himali, 2017; Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark & Baltes, 2011), it was assumed that the assessment of the individual's work characteristics would explain most of the variation of work-to-family conflict of the individual, and the assessed characteristics of family life most of the variation of family-to-work conflict. Most of the variation of work-to-family conflict in women and men was undoubtedly explained by the characteristics of their own work. For family-to-work conflict the situation is slightly different when considering relative contributions to explaining the criterion variance after entering family characteristics in the last step. But since the most important individual predictor was social support from the spouse for both men and women in the final step, and, in men, another important predictor was the male spouses' perception of family conflicts, the hypothesis is considered to be confirmed. In women, the gender role attitude of the spouse was a significant predictor in the first two steps and if the characteristics of the spouse are also viewed as a characteristic of the family domain, this could also be in line with this part of the hypothesis.

With regard to the Spillover-Crossover model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2012) it was assumed that the characteristics of the partner's work domain (estimated by the partner) would contribute to explaining work-family conflicts in men and women, but this is only confirmed when it comes to work-to-family conflict in men, and before introducing family characteristics when it comes to family-to-work conflict in women. More about this will be said in the next paragraphs.

Considering the individual significant predictors in the last step of the analysis, it can be said that a higher level of perceived *work-to-family conflict in men* is predicted by higher levels of perceived psychological demands of their work, i.e. lower levels of work control and higher levels of work demands, lower levels of perceived social support from the superior and a higher level of family conflict assessed by him. This is in line with the demand-control-support model (Karasek & Theorell, 1990) postulating that the perception of work stress will be greater with the perception of lower control and support along with increased work demands, and increased work stress can take away the time and energy needed for quality participation in family activities (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The experience of work disturbing family life is higher the more traditional men are in their gender role views, possibly because they justify it more (Zhao et al., 2019) or are less flexible when coping with such disturbance (Cohen, 2009). This becomes irrelevant when taking

family support and functioning into account. If an individual is experiencing a higher level of family conflict (family stressor), the experience of disruption of family life can be more intense, or it could be that precisely because of the family conflict that arises due to work one can perceive an increased level of disruption. It is not excluded here that the relationship is reciprocal. Perhaps the increased experience of interference of work with family life makes one start to experience work as more stressful and to have a greater need for support at work, which may seem insufficient during such situations. Moreover, if the disturbance of family life by work generates family conflict (e.g. because of unfulfilled expectations of other family members), men may assess the work domain even more negatively.

An interesting finding of this study is that a higher level of work-to-family conflict in men was also predicted by a lower level of their wife's perceptions of social support from their colleagues and a higher level of support from the superior at the wife's job. Although this seems illogical, since lower levels of social support at work are considered a predictor of higher levels of this conflict (Frone et al., 1997), an explanation for this may be found in the family situation. If a lower level of social support by the superior of men is a predictor of higher work-to-family conflict (as was obtained), due to increased family disturbances and less chance for the husband to engage in family activities (as evidenced by the significant correlation of higher levels of work-to-family conflict in men and a lower level of social support their wife receives from them) it is likely that their wife reduces engagement at work, with the support of her superior, to dedicate herself to the family. In doing so, she may perceive less support and understanding from her colleagues. However, to determine the pre-supposed causal relationships, one should carry out a research with an experimental and/or longitudinal design.

A higher level of perceived *work-to-family conflict in women* was shown to be predicted with a lower level of job control, a higher level of work demands, and a lower level of perceived social support from the superior. Such results can be explained in the same manner as previously in men. When considering family characteristics, work-to-family conflict in women was predicted by a lower level of perceived social support from the husband, and the husband's perceptions of lower levels of social support from other family members and close persons and of higher levels of family conflict. Increased work stress and experience of work-to-family conflict may be enhanced if at the same time a woman perceives a lack of support from her spouse, and thus experiences increased responsibility for family obligations and activities. Moreover, a positive correlation between social support from the husband and the supervisor with work control could mean that the fact that there is such support increases women's perceptions of workplace control. Furthermore, if the husband perceives poor family communication and interactions, he may be unwilling to participate in family activities. Accordingly, there is a positive correlation between women's perceptions of social support from the husband and his perceptions of the quality of family functioning. On the other hand, it is possible that greater disruption of family life due to women's work leads to an increased need for social support from other family members and close persons, since the husband is also employed or does not manage to handle certain obligations in the family. If such support is lacking, it is very likely that more family demands will not be met, which is likely to further increase a woman's sense of responsibility for the family.

All of the above could lead to family conflict and increase personal needs for additional support from other people. It should also be taken into account that all these assessments are in a significant, positive, and more than moderate correlation between men and women, so it is not excluded that the same assessment in women is an essential determinant of perceptions of the disruptive effects of work on the family in women. Personal values of the spouses should not be ignored, since they were a significant group of predictors in the first step, before introducing work assessment, with higher traditionality of the husband's gender role attitudes being a significant predictor of a higher work-to-family conflict. This could also be explained by such men justifying the disturbance of family life by their work roles, making women look for more support at her job to meet higher family demands. Striving for achievement in women somewhat stands out as being

related to higher work-to-family conflict in women. This trait implies increased investment in employment in terms of the importance of running a successful family life along with a successful business life, which takes away time and availability for the needs of the family (Carlson & Frone, 2003).

When it comes to *family-to-work conflict in men*, it was significantly predicted by lower social support from the wife and greater family conflict (assessed by men). Disagreement with the spouse and family tensions and conflicts may significantly contribute to the perception of a higher level of family-to-work conflict (Michel et al., 2011), and may also be the result of less social support from spouses (Carlson & Perrewé, 1999). Conflicts and the lack of support from their wives could be a psychological strain while the man is at work. Thus, the resources or capacities needed to successfully perform work tasks are reduced. Lower work control and greater work demands also proved to be significant predictors, which may be the result of interruptions at the job due to family life, or perhaps the insight that the job 'suffers' leads to the perception of a higher level of family-to-work conflict.

The results also point to a possible mediating role of family characteristics (social support and the quality of family functioning) in the relationship between striving for achievement and the perception of family-to-work conflict. Men and women with greater striving for achievement have more pronounced negative attitudes and seek less assistance from other people (Good, Robertson, Fitzgerald, Stevens, & Bartels, 1996), express hostility and dominance (Mahalik, 2000), hostility towards and stereotyping of women (Rando, Rogers & Brittan-Powell, 1998), etc., which likely affects the level of family support and the quality of family functioning, and these aspects ultimately contribute to an increase in family-to-work conflict. The results also point to a possible mediating role of work demands and family characteristics in the relationship between the social support from colleagues and family-to-work conflict. An employee may, for example, ask colleagues to change shifts or help perform work tasks in order to be able to leave earlier and attend an important family event or obligation. If there is an absence of such support from colleagues or the colleagues generally do not show understanding of family affairs, problems in the family domain and an experience of greater work demands may arise, which ultimately increases the perception of job interference due to family responsibilities and stress. The latter also applies to a wife's experience of family-to-work conflict.

In women, lower levels of social support from the husband were the most important predictor of greater *family-to-work conflict*. This confirms the results of previous research that point to the importance of social support in dealing with stress in women, who use support more appropriately and frequently when available (Tomova, von Dawans, Heinrichs, Silani & Lamm, 2014; Matijaš, Merkaš & Brdovčak, 2018). The understanding and support of her husband can be used to reduce household obligations or can be relied on when it is necessary, for example, to stay longer at work and not be distracted by phone calls or otherwise while at work. A husband who has a more egalitarian attitude will feel greater relative responsibility for family issues and will have more understanding of his wife's work issues and will value her work more. This may be the reason the attitudes of the husband pointed out as one of the predictors in the previous steps of the analysis. However, it seems to be very important for a man with a more egalitarian attitude on gender roles, who is more likely to seek such support, has the support of his colleagues to be able to provide support for his wife and be available for the family. Moreover, the perception of greater control at work in women is a significant predictor of a lower level of family-to-work conflict, which is understandable, since a person with greater control at work (greater autonomy or freedom to decide on the type, quantity and duration of work tasks) has more resources available to deal with work issues (Kossek & Perrigino, 2016), and also for family issues, for example, through more flexible working hours. On the other hand, when a woman's family interferes with her work, she may lose a sense of control over work (for example, when calls and family requests are excessive) and the sense of responsibility for the family domain may make her start losing the sense of being in control over situations in the work domain. Consideration should also be given to the possible reciprocity of the relationship between social support from the spouse and family-to-work

conflict. Namely, a woman who has the feeling that her family acts disruptive to work may also estimate that she does not have enough support from her husband. In addition, given the high correlations between the aspects of family functioning and the social support from the husband, which could also thus be viewed as one of the aspects of family functioning, it is not excluded that the quality of family functioning generally contributes to the perception of family-to-work conflict in women.

Support from the spouse and job control are significant predictors of both work-to-family and family-to-work conflict in women, showing that job control could be a significant coping resource to reduce work-family conflict for female employees (Hwang & Ramadoss, 2017). Social support was important in explaining work-family conflicts for men also, especially the support from the wife for family-to-work conflict, and even the support their wife receives at work was important for work-to-family conflict. However, work demands were relatively more important than supervisor support in explaining work-to-family conflict (whereas supervisor support was more predictive for such conflict among women) and, contrary to women, had predictive power in explaining family-to-work conflict. What was also gender specific, was the relationship of work-family conflict in women with the personal values of their spouse. It seems that the relatively more egalitarian women in this sample are more vulnerable to their partner values, especially their attitude on gender roles in marriage. This is thought to be the result of gender-specific socialization expectations and experiences. Women's, that is, the feminine gender role allows and encourages the expression of dependence on others, while the masculine gender role places emphasis on strength and individuality (Obradović & Čudina-Obradović, 2001). A number of studies have been carried out on the issue of gender differences in the influence of male/female partner characteristics and there is some evidence that women are more sensitive to the influence of stressors affecting their husbands (Westman, 2006). As women are more involved in satisfying the needs of family members, it is possible that they are more exposed to the effects of stressful events affecting their family members. The results of this research only partly confirmed the last hypothesis of this study.

It should be considered that spouses of non-pathological families (the assessment of family quality were high) and those who had time to complete ten pages of the questionnaire (voluntarily) participated in the research. It would be interesting to include targeted dysfunctional families and couples with sufficient amounts of work-family conflict and to look for causes for such conflicts within the family and among different roles. Additionally, the research method included non-experimental assessment using questionnaires and self-assessment scales, resulting in a possible problem of non-objective and socially desirable responses, and the inability to reach a reliable conclusion on causal relationships that could be inferred by experimental and longitudinal designs. In this research, besides self-assessment measures, the spouses' assessments on the work and family domain were also taken into account. Further research should include assessments of other significant persons in different domains.

Conclusions

A general overview of findings shows that all three groups of predictors significantly contributed to the explanation of work-family conflicts and the hypotheses were mainly confirmed. The most relevant relationship is among one's own work characteristics and work-to-family conflict (both for men and women). Moreover, speaking of work-to-family conflict in men, one's own perception of family conflict is the second main relationship, followed by the wife's social support from work. In women, the husband's perceptions of family functioning is also the second main relationship, but the husband's perception of work environment is not relevant at all. When viewing family-to-work conflict, in men, one's own perception of wife's support and family conflict explains a slightly higher variance than job demands and control. In women, job control

also explains the significant variance, with the same predictive power as in men, but the only other and a more significant predictor is social support from their husbands. In addition, it should be outlined that personal values of both spouses become irrelevant for work-family conflicts when work and family environment are included. Non-significant relationships are of special relevance here as these results appeared in previous research as most outstanding.

A substantive amount of the variance of work-to-family and family-to-work conflict in men and women remained unexplained (especially for family-to-work conflict in women). The complexity of the experience of conflicts of work and family role needs to be taken into consideration, and one research can not fully comprehend all the essential determinants. It is necessary to consider the interrelationships of different groups of variables, particularly with social support at work and in the family, and to take into account that the order of introducing each group of variables could have influenced the significance of the contributions.

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