Schobert D (2007): Grundlagen zum Verständnis von Work-Life Balance. In: Esslinger AS, Schobert DB (Eds) Erfolgreiche Umsetzung von Work-Life Balance in Organisationen. Strategien, Konzepte, Maßnahmen. Deutscher Universitäts-Verlag, Wiesbaden, 19-33.

Seligman M, Csikszentmihalyi M (2000): Positive Psychology. An introduction. American Psychologist 55:5-14.

Smith J, Gardner D (2007): Factors affecting employee use of work-life balance initiatives. New Zealand Journal of Psychology 36:3-12.

Thompson C, Beauvais L, Lyness K (1999): When work-family benefits are not enough. The influence of work-family culture on benefit utilization, organizational attachment, and work-family conflict. Journal of Vocational Behavior 54:392-415.

Thompson C, Prottas D (2005): Relationships among organizational family support, job autonomy, perceived control, and employee well-being. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology 10:100-118.

Thompson, C, Beauvais, L, Allen, T. A. (2006): Work and family from an industrial/organizational psychology perspective. In: Pitt-Catsouphes, M, Kossek, EE, Sweet, SA (Eds.) The work and family handbook. Multidisciplinary perspectives, methods, and approaches. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, 83-307.

Towers I, Duxbury L, Higgins C, Thomas J (2006): Time thieves and space invaders: Technology, work and the organization. Journal of Organizational Change Management 19:593-618.

Trenberth L (2005): The role, nature and purpose of leisure and its contribution to individual development and well-being. British Journal of Guidance & Counselling 33:1-6.

Wallace J (1995): Organizational and professional commitment in professional and nonprofessional organizations. Administrative Science Quarterly 40:228-255.

Wayne J, Grzywacz J, Carlson D, Kacmar K (2007): Work-family facilitation. A theoretical explanation and model of primary antecedents and consequences. Human Resource Management Review 17:63-76.

Work-life integration among consultants:

Work-related and personal factors associated with sickness absence

Bram Peper, Claartje L. ter Hoeven & Josje Dikkers

1   Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to understand the importance and reality of work-life integration among Dutch consultants, and the associations of work-life integration with personal and situational factors by addressing two research questions:

1) Is work-life integration an issue for Dutch consultants, and – if so – which bottlenecks do they perceive and why do(n't) they use work-life policies?

2) Are personal and situational factors related to consultants' absenteeism via their work-life integration?

European employees today are offered a wide range of work-life policies, such as flexible working hours, part-time work, a compressed work week and various types of leave arrangements (e.g. Den Dulk 2001; Evans 2001; Haas et al. 2000). Nevertheless, there is evidence that many employees are not taking advantage of existing policies (e.g. Hochschild 1997; Kirby/Krone 2002; Lewis/Lewis 1996; Thompson et al. 1999, Luijn/Keuzekamp 2004). Research has also shown that employees do not always utilise existing schemes, even though in need (see, e.g., Anderson et al. 2002; Eaton 2003; Grover/Crooker 1995; Lobel 1999; Williams 2000). For example, in 2003 only 27% of Dutch employees entitled to

parental leave actually made use of their entitlement (Portegeijs et al. 2004).

One could argue that this low utilization of work-life policies is due to a lack of urgency on behalf of the employees. In other words: employees do not need to use these policies, because they do not experience any conflicts between their work and family lives. Empirical research, however, shows that around 40% of North-American and Dutch employees experience work-home conflict (i.e., the extent to which employees feel that their performance in the work or family domain is hampered by demands placed upon them in the other domain) on a regular basis (Bond et al. 1998; Geurts et al. 2003). In this study we use the term work-life integration (WLI) to refer to (high levels of) work-life balance (i.e., the extent to which employees perceive that they have achieved balance in combining work and private life), and (low levels of) life-work conflict (i.e., the extent to which employees feel that their work-related performance is hampered by the demands that their private life places upon them). The first aim of this study is to examine whether (a) WLI is also an issue for highly-educated Dutch consultants, and (b) if this is the case, which bottlenecks do they perceive in achieving work-life balance and why do they (not) use work-life policies.

In recent reviews (Byron 2005; Eby et al. 2005), antecedents of WLI are divided into three main categories: i) *work domain variables* (e.g., schedule flexibility, support from colleagues), ii) *family domain variables* (e.g., family stress, support from family members), and iii) *demographic and individual variables* (e.g., gender, coping style). Previous research is, however, ambiguous regarding the position or role of WLI; in some studies it functions as a consequence of work, family, or personal factors, whereas in others it is an antecedent in itself of work-related (e.g., job satisfaction, see Bruck et al. 2002) or personal outcomes (e.g., family satisfaction, see Parasuraman et al. 1992). Even other studies have looked into the possible mediating role of WLI in the association of work and family factors with work-related or personal outcomes. In their meta-analysis, Michel et al. (2009) examined WLI as a mediator in the association of work and family antecedents with work, life and family satisfaction. They found that work and family antecedents had only small indirect effects on family and work satisfaction via work-life and family-work conflict (2–4% explained variance). This suggests

that when taking into account direct effects, indirect effects of WLI possess little incremental explanatory power with regard to satisfaction.

However, another shortcoming of previous WLI research is that the indicators used to measure health or well-being – like the study of Michel et al. (2009) – usually focus on mental health or well-being. Few studies measure the association of WLI with physical health. In their review, Eby and colleagues (2005) discuss two previous studies examining the association between WLI and physical health outcomes. Schmidt et al. (1980) found that work-life conflict was related to more physical health problems. In addition, in a longitudinal study, Frone et al. (1997) found that work-life conflict predicted physical health complaints and hypertension four years later. There have been few attempts to integrate work, home, and physical perspectives on sickness absence. Siegrist (1996) called for an integrative work/health approach encompassing information on the work setting, psychological information on personal characteristics, and physical information on immediate or long-term health consequences. Therefore, the second aim of this study is to examine the association of personal (i.e. family-related) and situational (i.e. work-related) factors with absenteeism duration and frequency via WLI (mediation).

The first aim of our research will be tested exploratively by analyzing focus groups with consultants from a Dutch subsidiary of an international financial consultancy firm. The second research aim will be pursued with a quantitative survey study drawn from the same population of consultants. In order to develop hypotheses with regard to the associations of work- and family-related factors with WLI and its subsequent association with absenteeism, a theoretical framework will be presented in the next paragraphs.

2   Stress and absenteeism

According to the stress model (Johns 1997) employees call in sick because they cannot adequately cope with the job demands they face. Chronic stress at work can result in affective responses, such as indifferent attitudes towards the job and poor professional self-esteem. Moreover, employees subject to constant heavy work demands may become emotionally exhausted and eventually, if they do not recover,

mentally and physically impaired (Melamed et al. 2006; Sonnentag/ Zijlstra 2006).

On the basis of these studies, our assumption is that exhaustion may pose a risk to physical health through wear-and-tear on body tissues and organs resulting from chronic overactivity or dysregulated activity of the stress system. In their review, Melamed et al. (2006) provide evidence supporting several potential mechanisms linking exhaustion with ill health, including the metabolic syndrome, dysregulation of the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis along with sympathetic nervous system activation, sleep disturbances, systemic inflammation, impaired immunity functions, blood coagulation and fibrinolysis, and self-perceived health. The association of exhaustion with various disease mediators implies that the impact of these factors on health may be more extensive than is currently assumed.

In addition, several studies show that general and work-related psychological distress due to workload and/or care load affects psychological and behavioral outcomes such as absenteeism (Hardy et al. 2003; Westman/Etzion 2000; Bekker et al. 2005; Erickson et al. 2000). These studies do not, however, illuminate the physical effect of chronic mental stress, which in our opinion causes the absence behavior. We therefore argue that the physical effects of exhaustion caused by work or family demands will lead to absenteeism. Bearing in mind that neither absence frequency nor absence duration is induced solely by ill health or by cognitive-motivational mechanisms (cf. Thomson et al. 2000), we test two pathways.

2.1. Work-related factors associated with absenteeism via work-life balance

According to the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker/ Demerouti 2007; Demerouti et al. 2001), job demands and job resources play a vital role in the development of engagement and burnout. Job demands are those physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological effort on the part of the employee and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs and, ultimately, burnout. Job resources refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the

job that (a) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, (b) are functional in achieving work goals, or (c) stimulate personal growth, learning, and development. In this study, job demands are reflected by the work-related factors *work-life barriers* (i.e., factors that pose problems for one's work-life balance) and *number of work hours per week*, whereas job resources are measured by *work-life culture*, which is the extent to which employees feel supported by their employer in combining work with private life.

In line with the JD-R model, we expect that employees perceiving high levels of work-related demands will experience high physiological and psychological costs which will reduce their chances of achieving balance between work and family. The more hours one works per week, for example, the more difficult it will become to fulfill activities/ responsibilities at home. In contrast, the more resources (organizational support) a person experiences the higher the chances of achieving work-life balance. Employees who perceive their employer to be supportive in reducing their work demands (temporarily) for private reasons, for example, will be enabled in achieving work-life balance.

The majority of work stress models – such as the Effort-Reward Imbalance model (Meijman/Mulder 1998), the Job Demand-Control model (Karasek 1989), and the more recent JD-R model (Bakker/ Demerouti 2007) – predict that employees accumulate negative load effects while working, in particular when they perceive high work-related demands. This is not necessarily problematic for their mental or physical health as long as they have the resources to back up their demands and/or if they have sufficient time to recover from these load effects during or after work. Employees who experience high demands may feel hampered in their behavior at home, thereby perceiving low levels of work-life balance. Subsequently, they may experience high levels of somatic tension and, after sustained periods of low opportunities for recovery and lack of work-life balance, they may call in sick. In line with the findings of Michel et al. (2009), we examine same-domain (i.e., work-related demands and resources) instead of cross-domain (i.e., family-related demands and resources) associations with work-life balance. Therefore, our first hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 1: Employees perceiving high levels of work demands (i.e., work-life barriers, and work hours) and low levels of work resources

(i.e., unsupportive work-life culture) will experience low levels of work-life balance, which will be associated with high levels of somatic tension and absenteeism (duration and frequency).

2.2. Family-related factors associated with absenteeism via family-work conflict

In a similar vein, we examine the associations between family-related demands (i.e., hours per week spent on household chores and care-giving tasks, and 11 critical incidents) and resources (i.e., social interactive time spent in the family domain, or 'family social time') on the one hand, and family-work conflict and absenteeism on the other hand. If we translate the JD-R model (Bakker/Demerouti 2007) to the family domain, we may expect employees perceiving high levels of family-related demands to experience high physiological and psychological costs, which will increase the interference of their family lives with their work-related performance. However, family-related resources, such as spending a nice weekend with family members, may reduce conflicts from family to work.

In line with the stress models described earlier, employees who experience high levels of family-work conflict may have high levels of somatic tension and therefore, over time, call in sick. And again we examine same-domain (i.e., family-related demands and resources) instead of cross-domain (i.e., work-related demands and resources) relations with family-work conflict. Therefore our second hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 2: Employees perceiving high levels of family demands (i.e., hours spent on household chores and care tasks, and critical incidents) and low levels of family resources (i.e., family social time) will experience high levels of family-work conflict, which will be associated with high levels of somatic tension and absenteeism (duration and frequency).

3   Method

3.1 Sample and procedure

The qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the same Dutch subsidiary of an international financial consultancy firm with over 4,500 employees (for more information on the Dutch context see De Valk et al. 2006; Schaufeli/Kompier 2001). The company is a typical post-industrial, knowledge-intensive company.

In fall 2002 four focus groups with consultants were created, interviews were held with eleven consultants in managerial positions at their work place. These focus groups and interviews were part of a larger investigation of the utilization of work-life policies (Doorne-Huiskes et al. 2005). The organization is known for its contradictory work-life culture with much organizational support for work-life issues, but at the same time barriers like time and career constraints (Den Dulk/Peper 2007). Overall, employees experience the organization as being focused on the well-being of their employees, as well as on their work-life balance.

The quantitative data were collected in 2007. This study used three types of data collection: a survey of employees, the company records of employees' absences and the company's personnel records. The survey data were collected using a Dutch web-based questionnaire. Employees were informed about the online questionnaire through digital newsletters. The employees' absence records were used for the dependent variables: individual absence frequency and duration. The personnel records were used to check the representativeness of our sample. The data sources were merged using the employees' personnel ID numbers.

Of a total of 4,617 employees, 1,014 completed the questionnaire (a 22% response rate). In order to increase the response rates, respondents were reminded several times to fill in the survey by a digital newsletter. There were somewhat more females in the response group than in the total company population (response group: 49% female vs. 51% male; company; company: 45% female vs. 55% male, t-value = 2.740, p < .01). Regarding age, education, marital status and work hours, the response group appeared to be an adequate representation of the total company population. Most employees had a university (40%) or a higher vocational education (31%); 28% of all participants had middle or lower vocational education. More than two thirds of all employees (79%) were

married or cohabiting. Respondents worked on average 36.73 hours weekly according to the company records, compared to a mean of 36.00 hours for the company's total personnel file.

3.2 Questionnaire survey measures

Absenteeism. Absence frequency or "individual absence frequency" reflects the number of times an employee called in sick in 2007, based on data collected from the company's absence records. Absence due to special leave (e.g. parental leave) or holidays is not included in this measure. Absence duration or "individual absence duration" represents the total length of time during which an individual was absent due to illness during 2007, regardless of the number of times s/he was absent. *Somatic tension.* This variable measured the employee's perceived symptoms related to tension, using an existing validated scale developed by occupational physicians in the Netherlands (VVBA 2000). All items were rated on five-point scales ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Somatic tension was measured using four items (Cronbach's α = .77), such as "Do you have pain or a tight feeling in your chest or around your heart?"

Work-life integration. Work-life balance was measured with one item: "How accomplished do you feel in finding a balance between work and family life?" The perceived family-work conflict scale was constructed so as to conceptually mirror the subscale of work-related emotional exhaustion from the Maslach Burnout Inventory-general survey (MBI_GS; Schaufeli et al. 1996). It consisted of four items (Cronbach's α = .80). Items included "I feel mentally exhausted because of the tasks I perform at home" and "Performing tasks at home is a heavy burden for me," with answer categories ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Work-related factors. Work-life culture was measured with three sub dimensions: 1) support, reflecting employees' perceptions of organizational support of their work-life balance and utilization of family-friendly arrangements (two items: "Managers in this organization are generally considerate towards the private life of employee", and "This company is supportive of employees who want to switch to less demanding reasons for private reasons"), 2) negative career consequences employees per-

ceive to be related to utilization of family-friendly arrangements (one item: "Employees who (temporarily) reduce their working hours for private reasons are less likely to advance their careers in this organization"), and 3) organizational pressure to work overtime (two items: "In order to be taken seriously in this organization, should work long days and be available all the time", and "In this organization employees are expected to put their job before their private life when necessary") . These five items reflect a short version (Cronbach's α = .69 for the total scale) of the work-life culture developed by Dikkers et al. (2007). Work-life barriers were measured with the question, "Which of the following items pose problems for your balance of work and private life?" Six fixed-answer alternatives were given, and one open alternative (Doorne-Huiskes et al. 2005). The fixed-answer alternatives included items such as "little opportunity to work part-time," and "an organizational culture of making long working hours." The number of work-life barriers people experienced was summed up. Work hours were measured as the weekly work hours including working overtime reported by the employee.

Family-related factors. Family tasks were measured as the hours spent on household chores and care tasks. Respondents filled in how many hours a week they spent on buying groceries, tidying up, cleaning, cooking, keeping the household accounts, doing repairs (household chores), taking care of children, accompanying children and caring for other people (care tasks). We used a 3-item scale based on a scale by Van der Lippe and Glebbeek (2004) to measure the social interactive time spent in the family domain (family social time). A sample is "I frequently do not have enough time to do fun things with my children/family members/friends" (reverse coded; Cronbach's α = .72). Critical life events were measured by an 11-item list of circumstances based on Billings and Moos (1981) that can have a major impact on someone's life (e.g., the birth of a child, serious health problems, marriage, and the death of loved ones). For each event, respondents could indicate if this event occurred in their life in the past twelve months and if so, how radically the event affected them (3-point scale, ranging from 1 [not radically] to 3 [radically]). To measure the event's effect on absence, all the events were summed up.

Control variables. Two control variables were measured: age (in years) and sex (coded as 1 = male and 2 = female).

3.3 Analysis

The hypotheses were tested with a structural equation modeling approach (SEM) using AMOS (Arbuckle 1997). SEM is a preferable data analysis strategy for mediation models involving latent constructs (Baron/Kenny 1986; Judd/Kenny 1981). We used Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) approach by first testing the fit of the model's measurement components. We undertook confirmatory factor analyses (measurement model) to assess the convergent and discriminant validity of the multiple-item measures (Gerbing/Anderson 1993). All items of each latent variable were included in this measurement model. When this fit was acceptable, we tested the fit of the structural model, including causal pathways between constructs. We used the goodness-of-fit index (GFI) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) to examine the fit of the model to the data. We also utilized the comparative-fit-index (CFI), and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI). In general, models with fit indices of > .90 and an RMSEA of < .08 indicate a close fit between the model and the data (Browne/Cudeck 1989).

4   Results

4.1 Focus group results

Consultants are employees entitled to use work-life arrangements. Consultants, especially when operating on the managerial level, are role models for the other employees in the organisation and their own use of flexible schedules sets an example as a change agent. Kossek et al. (1999) explain managerial use of flexible schedules by citing three factors: personal characteristics, the influence of work group peers, and concerns about productivity. Their research pointed out that female managers, and managers whose work group peers already use the flexible schedules, are more likely themselves to use the flexible schedules. The use of flextime caused the largest concern in terms of productivity levels among the managers. The most important finding, however, was the influence of the work group peers, e.g. the social factor. A study by Drew and Murtagh (2005) also indicates the importance of peer groups. They found that senior managers do have trouble combining their private lives with a long-hours culture, but they fear career consequences if they

'break rank' and use work-life arrangements. This study emphasises the importance – or the lack – of role models for managers wanting to use work-life arrangements.

The issue of work-life integration is discussed in the focus groups, based on question around the experienced work-life balance of the employees, their experience of feeling successful in their work, their private life, and in the balance between the two domains.

Work-life balance

Based on a survey among a representative sample of the company, conducted before the focus groups, most consultants experience a good balance between their work and the rest of their life. However, one fifth of the respondents experienced not to be in balance, and one third of the respondents think they are not (at all) successful in maintaining their work-life balance (Doorne-Huiskes et al. 2005). These findings where confirmed during the focus groups, where we asked the respondents whether it was possible to adjust work and life.

> "You're pretty free in setting your working hours, because you will be evaluated on your productivity. If you manage that, you have the freedom when to work" (FI).

> "In principle, I am very happy because I can organize my own time, I have a supervisory position, therefore, I can also work at home. I think this is very positive about the company" (FII).

As long as the consultants produce the expected output, a lot is possible. However, many times the respondents mention that the possibilities depend on the site and the general manager/director. There seems to be quite some discretionary space for the CEO's.

> "It also very much depends on the partner who is your supervisor. Whether we like it or not, at the end of the line they simply looked at productivity, because that is what counts. And of course you may work part-time, if you need to pick up your child, no problem. If you need to leave an hour early, no problem. As long as at the end of the week your 40 hours are made, you will hear no one complain" (FII)

Next to this, respondents also mention the importance of the colleagues, or their peer group. As we expected on the work of Drew and Murtagh (2005), the peer group plays an important role.

> "Your life balance is largely determined by the group in which you are working" (FIV).

Another frequently mentioned issue is that the organisation does not actively approach the employees with the possibilities of the work-life policies. The consultants themselves have to express their needs explicitly.

> "You should really raise that issue yourself. You must simply take care for yourself, and Yes, I think that is working well" (FII).

Important for experiencing a work-life balance is to feel successful in work and private life (Moen/Yu 1999). During the focus group discussions, the definitions of being successful where to be found on both sides of the artificial divide between the work and private domain. We explicitly asked respondents to tell when they feel successful (in work, in private, or in both).

> "That you have sufficient time to do some things private. That you have time for the private things you like, so that you don't feel wrecked at night" (FI).

> "I have a good fun job, I have very nice customers, I work with nice partners and have some fun together. So yes I feel successful. I feel valued, that is, for me, very important" (FII)

Bottlenecks

The consultants mentioned several issues which can be seen as bottlenecks for reaching a successful work-life balance. Especially in the highly competitive financial market where the company operates, work is characterized as being intensive. The company also seems to be a greedy organisation (cf. Coser 1974), it has a culture of making long hours. This element was very much discussed in the focus groups. For the younger consultants and trainees, the extra burden of combine work with a

required study enhances the work pressure. These aspects were discussed as issues that make maintaining a balance between work and life rather difficult.

> "What I nevertheless taste each time and what I feel is rather concerning is the informal pressure. If someone comes in at nine o'clock that you hear then 'free morning?', it is meant as a joke but nevertheless not nice. It is simply very difficult to go against that informal culture" (FI).

> "I have to be in my car at 17:15 to be in time to pick up my kid, and at the office the formal office hours are 8.30 till 17.15. But I am always the first to leave. I do find that bothersome, because my colleagues are still working then. But after dinner I switch on my computer, but no one will notice." (FII).

> "Do not be mistaken about the culture here. If you are start here fresh from college, in such a team of people who find that you must stay at the office till at least 18.30. What do you do? Then you must be very strong, if you are fresh from college. That is our culture in general. And that is not to underestimate " (FIV).

One way of dealing with this culture of long hours mentioned several times was that the top managers could set the example: to take up leaves.

> "Just as with bringing the children to school. If the first top manager starts to do this, the rest will follow. After a couple of years" (FIII).

Utilization of work-life policies

The attitudes towards the possibility to integrate work and life are very important, but the proof of the pudding is in the eating; the utilization of work-life policies. To what extent do consultants use these opportunities and how is it experienced? A large number of people uses flexible start and end times. Generally, the experience is good to very good. It should be noted that this less the case for the supporting staff. At this level is often considered to be present at fixed times, or, to regulate working hours with the colleagues according a fixed schedule. Working a day from home, occasionally, usually was no problem. The ability to do so

was experienced positive, not least because the respondents had expressed this enables them to do a lot of work undisturbed.

> "At our department it is no problem for managers to work at home one day. Women who work 4 days, work, for example, a day at home, and three days at the Office. That happens" (FI).

The possibility of working part-time is already mentioned. In all the focus groups, respondents extensively discussed the (im)possibilities of working part-time. Most respondents say four days is the only option, unless you work in supporting positions. Remarkably, most 4-day contracts in practice mean 5 days work. This was called the 'part-time dilemma' in one of the focus groups (see also Fuchs Epstein 1999). People also mentioned that full-time work usually meant more enjoyable and interesting work, compared to part-time work.

> "That part-time dilemma, when you still have to take care of the same tasks" (FII).

> "If you have a full-time contract, you will get nicer work and nicer customers. At the time I was working full-time, which opened more doors for me" (FIII).

When discussing the use of childcare facilities, the discussion became heated. The respondents were quite upset over the whole issue. There is a greater need then the company has money reserved for this policy. Most of the respondents think child care should be a responsibility of the organisation, although some think the parents have to take care of it themselves (cf. Den Dulk et al forthcoming).

> "The fact that we now have the child care arrangement has cost a lot of trouble already, I mean, you have to get approval by a lot of the partners. Next, you will get the discussion if the employer needs to pay partly for this arrangement" (FII).

A culture of long hours

When discussing the experience of the job, respondents mentioned they do not like the fact that the organisation emphasises only the output,

without paying attention to the way these results came into being. Although most respondents experience a reasonable amount of autonomy in their work, this was not the case for employees in supportive jobs. Especially for these employees, their private life is sometimes squeezed by work.

> "They look mostly to the results, without checking if you really earned these results" (FI).

Returning element in the discussions is the increasing job pressure, as a result of the culture of long hours. Most employees work more than their formal contract and a lot of them like to work a bit less. The company is a greedy organisation, despite the attention they pay on the well-being of their employees.

> "We need to do everything. You need to do so much. You see people of your own age burned out while they just finished study" (FI).

> "I cannot remember the time that I went outside for a small stroll, during lunch time. We do this kind of things no more" (FIII).

To keep track of the professional literature in your own time, is accepted of course, by the consultants, but the trend to more and more frequently move meetings to the end of the afternoon is considered bothersome by many people.

> "If you have a meeting, around something not directly related to hours you can claim on clients, these meetings are preferably scheduled at 17.00 hours. In the day time you cannot use these indirect hours" (FI).

A large proportion of the workload is attributed to the clients, that is to say, many respondents see that they are the last link to the customer for the company. If there is any delay on behalf client, then the planning of the consultants also delays.

> "All the people who work in the company are simply service providers, who want to help and I think here we go a long way" (FII).

Work-life integration?

The focus groups confirm the view that employees like to work in the company, in particular they appreciate the freedom in organizing their hours. A lot is possible, according to the respondents, as long as you take the initiative yourself. The possibilities are not actively advertised and are also highly dependent on the office and/or the partner, even for arrangements relating to the organization as a whole. As long as each person makes his or her productive and preferably chargeable hours, the organization is quite cooperative. The respondents state it is a pity that the company is mainly interested in the chargeable hours, in this way, it seems that indirect hours not to contribute to the organization, which is considered incorrect by the respondents. Issues such as coaching of young employees, following extra courses and helping each other are considered as equally important – not only for the employees themselves, but also for the organization in the long run. The focus group analysis also confirmed the importance of the influence of the peer group, as well as the managerial productivity concern. As long as employees meet output criteria a lot is possible. However, these output criteria are partly situated outside the company, because they are attributed to the needs of the clients (cf. Kossek et al. 1999; Drew/Murtagh 2005).

4.2 Questionnaire survey results

The measurement model used to test our hypotheses included four latent variables: (1) work-life culture, (2) family social time, (3) family-work conflict, and (4) somatic tension. This measurement model showed a good fit to the data ($\chi2$ (97) = 271.77 (p < .001), CFI = .94, GFI = .95, TLI = .92, RMSEA = 0.053). All items had significant loadings on the intended factors.

In Figure 1, the structural model shows how the family- and work-related factors are related to absence frequency and duration through home work conflict/work-life balance and somatic tension respectively, while controlling for gender and age. This model generated a good fit: $\chi2$ (267) = 595.729 (p < .001), GFI = .94, CFI = .91, TLI = .90, RMSEA = 0.043). All associations presented in Figure 1 are significant and in the hypothesized direction. Consequently, Hypothesis 1 (Employees perceiving high levels of work demands and low levels of work resources

will experience low levels of work-life balance, which will be associated with high levels of somatic tension and absenteeism) and Hypothesis 2 (Employees perceiving high levels of family demands and low levels of family resources will experience high levels of family-work conflict, which will be associated with high levels of somatic tension and absenteeism) are supported in the quantitative part of this Chapter. Phrased differently, employees who perceive many work-life barriers, work long hours and spend many hours on household chores, report an unsupportive work-life culture in their organization and have little family social time report low work-life integration and are absent frequently and for longer periods of time.

5 Discussion

This study aimed to examine 1) whether work-life integration is an issue for Dutch consultants, and which bottlenecks they perceive in achieving work-life integration using work-life policies, and 2) which family- and work-related factors are related to consultants' absenteeism via their work-life interaction.

The focus groups made clear that even in an organization with work-life arrangements beyond statutory policies, and an active policy focused on the work-life balance and well-being of their employees, work-life integration remains an issue. Job intensification and long working hours culture, both client driven, are some of the main reasons behind this outcome. The aspect of being client driven is experienced as an external factor, out of reach of company policies. This results in a contradictory work-life organizational culture. This case illustrates that it is not always an easy task to become a healthy organization in a highly competitive market. The ambivalence sent out by the organizational culture – to be a caring organization, as well as maintaining an 'up or out' culture – was made clear by most respondents, when discussing their work-life integration (im)possibilities.

With regard to the quantitative part of this study (i.e., the questionnaire survey data), we can conclude that work-life balance and family-work conflict play a role in the association of work- and family-related factors with absence frequency and duration. Put differently,

Dutch consultants with high work demands and few work resources report low work-life integration and, subsequently, are absent frequently and for longer periods. Simultaneously, consultants with high family demands and few family resources experience high family-work conflict and, consequently, high levels of absenteeism duration and frequency.

Limitations/future research

One important shortcoming of this study is its cross-sectional design. Longitudinal designs are necessary to determine the causal direction of associations between research variables. Do high levels of work-life conflict lead consultants to call in sick, or does somatic tension cause consultants to perceive their work and/or family situation in a pessimistic light (the gloomy perception mechanism; e.g. De Lange et al. 2004)? In addition, longitudinal research is needed for the 'real-life' testing of the paths put forward by this study. Therefore, it is important for future researchers to examine associations of work- and family-related factors with WLI and absence with a longitudinal design comprised of at least three measurement points.

Another shortcoming refers to this study's focus on one Dutch consultancy as source for its data. This of course limits its generalizability to others companies, sectors or countries. As the meta-analysis of Michel et al. (2009) showed, when alternative indicators of mental well-being are considered, WLI no longer plays an important role as mediator. More studies focusing on the role of WLI as mediator in associations of work- and family-related factors with physical health in other (non-profit) companies and countries are necessary to replicate this study's findings.

Although the qualitative data shed more light to the reasons behind the need and possibilities for work-life policies, and consequently work-life integration, a shortcoming is the different moments in time the data was collected. A multi method design, preferably longitudinal, would strengthen the findings.

Practical implications

An important implication for managers following from this study's findings relates to the prevention and reduction of absenteeism among consultants. Stress intervention strategies fall into three broad categories (e.g., Kompier/Cooper 1999): primary interventions (i.e., modifying or eliminating work-related stressors), secondary interventions (i.e., extending employees' physical and psychological resources to reduce the damaging effects of stress), and tertiary interventions (i.e., assisting employees in recuperating from an illness resulting from stress). When applied to this Chapter, managers are advised to develop and implement three types of interventions related to work-life integration.

Primary interventions (or prevention) targeted at the (re-)organization of the work environment may be comprised of reducing the number of overtime hours (stressors), and creating a more supportive work-life culture (without barriers for using work-life policies). This is in line with research indicating that psychosocial work factors should be the target of preventive actions to avoid chronic symptoms related to tension (e.g., Niedhammer et al. 2008). More specifically, Kelly et al. (2008) positively review a culture change initiative which directly attempts to increase employees' control over work time. This initiative is known as the Results-Only Work Environment (ROWE) and has the philosophy: "Employees can do whatever they want, whenever they want as long as the work gets done" (see also Kelly/Moen 2007). Important in this respect is our finding that the company and employees see part of the impossibilities of work-life integration as being dependent on an external factor: the client. Despite the central importance of the client for this kind of service driven organizations, losing sight of the capabilities and needs of the employees concerning work-life integration, in the end lead to burn out, absence due to sickness etc.

Secondary interventions targeted at the individual employee may consist of increasing their work-related (and/or family-related) resources by offering work-life policies such as parental leave. Moreover, managers may create a 'road map' for personal and professional success in work meetings with their employees (e.g., Peper et al. 2010). There are three primary reasons why companies should take a strategic view of their work-life practices (Caligiuri/Givelekian 2008): (1) attracting and retaining talent; (2) increasing the time capacity of talent; and (3)

maximizing the performance of talent. Companies that are able to offer a work-life balance to their employees are more able to attract and retain talent — if not through the policies themselves, then through the effect of these policies, such as increased perceived organizational support (Lambert 2000). Increasing the time capacity of employees by reducing the non-productive aspects of the job can decrease feelings of overwork and the possible occurrence of time-based and strain-based work-life conflict (Greenhaus/Beutell 1985).

Tertiary interventions aimed to assist employees in recovering from absenteeism following stress may be comprised of a combination of interventions. A review by Michie and Williams (2003) showed that successful interventions that improved psychological health and levels of sickness absence used training and organisational approaches to offer resources such as increased participation in decision making and problem solving, increased support and feedback, and improved communication.

Theoretical implications

This study's findings have, by employing a multi-method design, supported an integrative model predicting absenteeism. That is, work- and family-related factors both affect absence duration and frequency through their effect on work-life interaction. By combining the findings of qualitative and quantitative studies, triangulation was achieved supporting Siegrist's (1996) call for an integrative work/health approach encompassing information on the work setting, psychological informa- tion on personal characteristics, and physical information on immediate or long-term health consequences.

References

Anderson, S.E., Coffey, B.S. R.T. Byerly (2002): Formal organizational initiatives and informal workplace practices: Links to work-family conflict and job-related outcomes, in: Journal of Management, 28(6), p. 787-810.

Bakker, A.B., Demerouti, E. (2007): The Job Demands-Resources model: state of the art, in: Journal of Managerial Psychology, 22, p. 309-328.

Bond, J. T., Galinsky, E., Swanberg, J. E. (1998): The 1997 national study of the changing workplace. New York: Families and Work Institute.

Bruck, C. S., Allen, T. D., Spector, P. E. (2002): The relation between work- family conflict and job satisfaction: A finer-grained analysis, in: Journal of Vocational Behavior, 60, p. 336-353.

Byron, K. (2005): A meta-analytic review of work-family conflict and its antecedents, in: Journal of Vocational Behavior, 67, p. 169-198.

Caligiuri, P., Givelekian, N. (2008): Strategic human resources and work-life balance, in: S. A. Y. Poelmans/P. Caligiuri (Eds.). Harmonizing work, family, and personal life: From policy to practice. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Coser A. (1974): Greedy institutions: Patterns of commitment. New York: The Free Press.

Demerouti, E., Bakker, A.B., Nachreiner, F., Schaufeli, W.B. (2001): The job demands-resources model of burnout, in: Journal of Applied Psychology, 86, p. 499-512.

Dikkers, J.S.E., Geurts, S.A.E., Den Dulk, L., Peper, B., Taris, T.W., Kompier, M.A.J. (2007): Dimensions of work-home culture and their relations with the use of work-home arrangements and work-home interaction, in: Work/Stress, 21 (2), p. 155-172.

Doorne-Huiskes, J. van, Dulk, L. den, Peper, B. (2005): Organisational change, gender and integration of work and life, in: B. Peper, J. van Doorne- Huiskes, L. den Dulk (Eds.), Flexible working and organisational change. The integration of work and personal life, p. 39-61. Cheltenham: Edgar Elgar.

Dulk, L. den (2001): Work-family arrangements in organisations. A cross- national study in the Netherlands, Italy, the United Kingdom and Sweden. Amsterdam: Rozenberg Publishers.

Dulk, L. den, Peper, B. Sadar, N. Č., Doorne-Huiskes, A. v., Lewis, S., Peper, B., Smithson, J. (forthcoming): Work family and managerial attitudes and practices in the European workplace: Comparing Dutch, British and Slovenian financial sector managers. Social Politics (special issue).

Drew, E., Murtagh, E. M. (2005): Work/life balance: Senior management champions or laggards?, in: Women in Management Review, 20(4), p. 262-278.

Eaton, S.C. (2003): If you can use them: Flexibility policies, organizational commitment, and perceived performance, in: Industrial Relations, 42 (2), p. 145-167.

Eby, L. T., Casper, W. J., Lockwood, A., Bordeaux, C., Brinley, A. (2005): Work and family research in IO/OB: Content analysis and review of the

literature (1980-2002), in: Journal of Vocational Behavior, 66, p. 124-197.

Fuchs Epstein, C. (1999): The part-time paradox. Time norms, professional lives, family, and gender. New York: Routledge.

Evans, J. M. (2001): Firms' contribution to the reconciliation between work and family life (occasional paper): OECD.

Geurts, S. A. E., Kompier, M. A. J., Roxburgh, S.,/Houtman, I. L. D. (2003): Does work-home interference mediate the relationship between workload and well-being?, in: Journal of Vocational Behavior, 63, p. 532-559.

Grover, S.L., K.J. Crooker (1995): Who appreciates family-responsive human resource policies: The impact of family-friendly policies on the organizational attachment of parents and non-parents, in: Personnel Psychology, 48, p. 271-288.

Haas, L. L., P. Hwang, G. Russell (eds.) (2000): Organizational change and gender equity: International perspectives on fathers and mothers at the workplace. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Greenhaus, J. H., Beutell, N. J. (1985): Sources of conflict between work and family roles, in: Academy of Management Review, 10, p. 76-88.

Hochschild, A. R. (1997): The time bind: When work becomes home and home becomes work. New York: Henry Holt.

Karasek, R. (1989): Demand-control model: A social, emotional, and physiological approach to stress risk and active behaviour development, in: J. M. Stellmann (Ed.), Encyclopaedia of occupational health and safety, p. 6-34. Geneva, Switzerland: International Labour Office.

Kelly, E.L., Moen, P. (2007): Rethinking the clockwork of work: Why schedule control may pay off at work and home, in: Advances in Developing Human Resources (Special Issue on Work-Life Integration). 11, 9, p. 487-506.

Kelly, E. L., Kossek, E., Hammer, L. B., Durham, M., Bray, J., Chermack, K., Murphy, L. A., Kaskubar, D. (2008): Getting there from here: Research on the effects of work family initiatives on work-family conflict and business outcomes, in: The Academy of Management Annals, 2(1), p. 305-349.

Kirby, E.L., Krone, K.J. (2002): "The policy exists, but you can't use it": Negotiating tensions in work-life policy, in: Journal of Applied Communication Research, 30, p. 50-77.

Kompier, M.A.J., Cooper, C.L. (Eds.) (1999): Preventing stress, improving productivity: European case studies in the workplace. London: Routledge.

Kossek, E. E., Barber, A. E., Winters, D. (1999): Using flexible schedules in the managerial world: The Power of Peers, in: Human Resource Management, 38(1), p. 33-46.

Lambert, S. (2000): Added benefits: The link between work-life benefits and organizational citizenship behavior, in: Academy of Management Journal, 43, 5, p. 801-815.

Lange, A.H., de, Taris, T.W., Kompier, M.A.J., Houtman, I.L.D., Bongers, P.M. (2004): The relationships between work characteristics and mental health: Examining normal, reversed and reciprocal relationships in a 4-wave study, in: Work/Stress, 18 (2), p. 149-166.

Lewis, S., Lewis, J. (1996): The work-family challenge, Rethinking employment. London: Sage Publications.

Lewis, S., R. Rapoport (2005): "Looking backwards to go forwards: the integration of paid work and personal life", in: B. Peper, A. van Doorne-Huiskes and L. den Dulk (eds.), Flexible Working and Organisational Change: The Integration of Work and Personal Life, North Hampton, MA, Edward Elgar, p. 297-311.

Lobel, S.A. (1999): Impacts of diversity and work-life initiatives in organizations. In: G.N. Powell (Ed.), Handbook of gender and work, p. 453-474. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Luijn, H. van, S. Keuzenkamp (2004): Werkt verlof? Het gebruik van regelingen voor verlof en aanpassing van de arbeidsduur. Den Haag: Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau.

Meijman, T. F., Mulder, G. (1998): Psychological aspects of workload, in: P. J. D Drenth, H. Thierry, C. J. de Wolff (Eds.), Handbook of Work and Organizational Psychology, p. 5-33. Hove, England: Psychology Press/Erlbaum.

Michel, J.S., Mitchelson, J.K., Kotrba, L.M., LeBreton, J.M., Baltes, B.B. (2009): A comparative test of work-life conflict models and critical examination of work-life linkages, in: Journal of Vocational Behavior, 74, p. 199-218.

Michie, S., Williams, S. (2003): Reducing work related psychological ill health and sickness absence: a systematic literature review, in: Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 60, p. 3-9.

Moen, P. and Yu, Y. (1999): Having it all: Overall work/life success in two-earner families. Research in the Sociology of Work 7, p. 107-137.

Niedhammer, I., Chastang, J.F., David, S. (2008): Importance of psychosocial work factors on general health outcomes in the national French SUMER survey, in: Occupational Medicine, 58, p. 15-24.

Parasuraman, S., Greenhaus, J. H., Granrose, C. S. (1992). Role stressors, social support, and well-being among two-career couples, in: Journal of Organizational Behavior, 13, p. 339-356.

Peper, B., Dikkers, J.S.E., Van Engen, M.L., Vinkenburg, C.J. (2010): Work-life policies and supervisor support in relation to work-life integration and career advancement: A study of Dutch professionals and their supervisors, in: S. Kaiser, M. Ringlstetter, D. R. Eikhof/M. Pina e Cunha (Eds.), Creating balance? International perspectives on the work-life integration of professionals. Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer Publications.

Portegijs, W., A. Boelens, L. Olsthoorn (2004): Emancipatiemonitor 2004. Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau/Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek.

Siegrist, J. (1996): Adverse health effects of high-effort/low-reward conditions, in: Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 1, 1, p. 27-41.

Thompson, C.A., Beauvais, L.L., K.S. Lyness (1999): When work-life benefits are not enough: the influence of work-life culture on benefit utilization, organizational attachment, and work-life conflict, in: Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 54 p. 392-415.

Williams, J. (2000). Unbending gender: Why family and work conflict and what to do about it. New York: Oxford University Press.

Work-family balance and its correlates among Finnish academic professionals:

Profiling the experiences of work-family conflict and enrichment

Saija Mauno, Johanna Rantanen & Ulla Kinnunen

1   Starting point and theoretical background

The importance of work-family balance (henceforth *WFB*) on life quality has been widely acknowledged by work-family scholars as well as in political agendas. Thus far, however, WFB has relatively rarely been explicitly studied, that is, defining and measuring the concept consisting of both work-family conflict *and* enrichment instead of regarding it just an absence of work-family conflict. In this chapter, we examine how well Finnish academic professionals (n = 1,406) have succeeded in finding WFB in their lives. Specifically, we provide a theoretical overview into con-temporary and typological approaches on WFB. Then we test the latter using latent profile analysis (LPA). We examined whether four types of WFB – beneficial, harmful, active, and passive – conceptualized and formed on the basis of role conflict and role enhancement theories can be identified via this advanced statistical method. In exploring the possible combinations of work-family conflict and enrichment we focus on both directions, that is, work-to-family and family-to-work. Further-more, we also examine whether the WFB profiles differ in demographic factors, perceived job characteristics and subjective well-being. Finally, we present conclusions and implications based on our findings.