Work Resources, Work-to-Family Conflict, and Its Consequences: A Taiwanese–British Cross-Cultural Comparison

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The aim of this research was to explore relations between work resources (supervisory support and organizational family supportive values), work-to-family conflict (WFC), and work- and nonwork-related outcomes in a cross-cultural comparative context involving Taiwanese and British employees. The

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authors surveyed 264 Taiwanese employees and 137 British employees using structured questionnaires. For both Taiwanese and British employees, work resources were found to be negatively related to WFC but positively related to work satisfaction. WFC was negatively related to work and/or family satisfaction. More important, the authors found that nation moderated the relationship between supervisory support and WFC: Supervisory support had a stronger protective effect for Taiwanese than British employees. It is thus recommended that, in addition to introducing various family-friendly policies, companies should be more active in cultivating a family-supportive organizational culture and mobilizing managers to act as supporters of family life, especially in societies sanctioning collectivistic values and large power distance.

The potential impact that work and family issues have on employees, family members, and organizations has caused a rising interest among researchers based in the developed Western countries. For instance, it has been found that the more time a person spends on the job, the more conflict there is between work and family (Bruck, Allen, & Spector, 2002). It is also argued that work and family issues are at least as important to organizational functioning as family functioning (Barnett, 1998). A clear connection between work and family stressors and employee strain has now been established (e.g., Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000). Despite the rather large literature concerning work- and family-related concepts, the vast majority of studies have been conducted in the United States and other Western countries; thus, a major limitation in this literature is its decidedly Western focus.

Elsewhere, work and family issues are only beginning to gain attention in developing societies such as Taiwan. In recent decades, Taiwan has undergone fundamental transformations of industrial structures from labor intensive to high tech, as well as rapid social modernization in both work and lifestyles; thus, more than ever, Taiwanese employees are becoming exposed to stressful Western and industrialized work situations (Lu, Cooper, Kao, & Zhou, 2003). Furthermore, with the rising proportion of females in the workforce, increasingly more Taiwanese people are now caught between the demands of work and family (Hsu, Chou, & Wu, 2001; Lu, Huang, & Kao, 2005), especially as family life is traditionally still highly valued in a Chinese society (Hsu, 1985). As most work/family research has been conducted in North America and Europe, we cannot be sure that these Western findings will generalize to Taiwanese people who have rather different cultural traditions, societal institutions, and family structures. Thus, to establish generalizability of the aforementioned Western findings, the thrust of the present study was to use a cross-cultural design to compare cultural Chinese people in Taiwan (collectivist, with larger power distance [PD]) against British people (individualistic, with smaller PD) in their

perceptions of antecedents and consequences of work-to-family conflict (WFC). A cross-cultural design is an answer to the call made by Poelmans, O'Driscoll, and Beham (2005) for more systematic investigations of cultural differences to determine whether correlates of WFC are culture specific or whether they cut across cultural boundaries.

WFC: A STRESS PERSPECTIVE

To date, much of the research on work and family issues has been conducted within the occupational stress perspective, focusing on stressors as antecedents of WFC and its effects on strains and well-being both at work and at home. WFC is defined as "a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respects" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77). The direction of conflict is particularly meaningful because the potential antecedents of WFC are not necessarily the same as those of family-to-work conflict (FWC; Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000; Frone, 2003; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992). Of the two, WFC may be especially critical, as it has been noted by Frone (2003), as well as in a recent national survey of Taiwanese (Lu, Kao, Chang, Wu, & Cooper, 2008), that individuals tend to experience more WFC than FWC in the West . Thus, the present study focused specifically on WFC in comparing results from two culturally dissimilar societies: Taiwan and the United Kingdom.

Furthermore, the focus on stressors (e.g., workload, working hours, and family responsibility) in the existing WFC literature needs to be expanded. A recent meta-analytic review (Byron, 2005), summarizing findings from over 60 published studies, confirmed that both work and family demands, especially job stress and family stress were consistently related to WFC and FWC. However, work or family resources were not included in the meta-analysis, indicating that there are not as many studies examining effects of these protective antecedents as those looking at negative antecedents, such as demands. We argue that resources are as important as demands in work and family domains. Also similar to demands, resources may have domain-specific effects on the work and family interface (Byron, 2005). Specifically when WFC is concerned, work resources may have a stronger effect than family resources. Thus in the present article, we focus on protective effects of work resources in reducing employees' WFC and enhancing well-being.

ANTECEDENTS OF WFC: WORK RESOURCES

From the occupational stress perspective, identifying and eliminating stressors are important, whereas identifying and cultivating resources may also be

vital for well-being. Warren and Johnson (1995) identified three types of work resources aimed at promoting work–family balance: family-oriented benefits, family-friendly organization culture, and supportive supervisor practices. While companies in the West have recently been developing various family-oriented benefits or practices such as flextime and on-site child care (Allen, 2001; Thomas & Ganster, 1995), very few Taiwanese companies actually provide such institutional benefits. However, researchers did find that discretional supervisory supportive practices such as granting flexibility for subordinates to handle family duties at work (e.g., brief leave of absence) could indeed alleviate feelings of WFC (Lu et al., 2008). Results as such suggest that we may need to pay more attention to cultivating a family-supportive organizational culture and discretional supervisory support practices.

Furthermore, organizational and supervisory support for employees' family commitment may be as effective in balancing work–family roles as tangible family supportive policies (Tu, Chen, Lu, & Chang, 2007). Kamerman and Kahn (1987) confirmed that support at work is beneficial for both employees' work performance and integration between work–family roles. Although family-supportive policies refer to tangible family-oriented benefits or practices such as flextime and on-site child care, organizational and supervisory support are more psychological in nature, encompassing supervisors' emotional support for the employees' family needs, as well as the organization's sensitivity to and acceptance of employees' family commitments. In the present study, we focused on family-friendly organization culture and supervisory support as work resources in combating WFC.

Hughes and Galinsky (1988) purported that supervisors need to be sensitive to subordinates' family needs and willing to help them handle WFC. Although the latter (e.g., allowing flexible work time) may be constrained by company rules, supervisors can at least offer emotional support. For instance, they can recognize, acknowledge, and accept subordinates' roles as family members; furthermore, they can offer care, understanding, and help for them to balance work and family needs. Thomas and Ganster (1995) found that supervisory support could indeed alleviate WFC. Goff, Mount, and Jamison (1990) noted that, for working parents with young children, supervisory support in terms of listening to these parents and discussing their family needs with them could effectively reduce feelings of WFC. Among Taiwanese employees, researchers previously found that supervisory emotional support could alleviate the detrimental effects of work stress and enhance employees' well-being (Chang & Lu, 2007; Lu, 1999), albeit in the context of general stress rather than WFC.

Organizational family-supportive values are usually perceived by employees as an integral part of the family-friendly organization culture. Perceived organizational support is "the degree to which employees believe the organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being"

(Robbins & Judge, 2007, p. 82). For example, an employee may believe that his organization supports integration of work and family life and would accommodate him if he had a child care problem. A recent study found that organizational support climate (encouraging sharing of concerns) asserted a protective effect for employees' well-being in combination with decisions for place (home vs. nonhome) and provider (family vs. nonfamily) in caring for dependents (Kossek, Colquitt, & Noe, 2001). Other Western research has also found that organizational support could alleviate WFC (Allen, 2001), reduce absenteeism (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986), and enhance work satisfaction and organizational commitment (Scandura & Lankau, 1997).

Thus far, evidence supporting the beneficial effects of various work resources in balancing work and family life seems unequivocal. We thus hypothesized that work resources—supervisory support and organizational family values—would be negatively related to WFC (Hypothesis 1). We further hypothesized that work resources—supervisory support and organizational family values—would be positively related to work satisfaction and family satisfaction (Hypothesis 2).

CONSEQUENCES OF WFC

Research on WFC has found that this variable influences a variety of outcomes. In a recent meta-analysis synthesizing research published between 1977 and 1998, Allen et al. (2000) linked WFC to three categories of outcomes: work-related (e.g., job satisfaction), nonwork-related (e.g., life satisfaction), and stress-related (e.g., depression). Among Taiwanese employees, WFC was negatively related to job satisfaction, family satisfaction, and overall happiness (Lu et al., 2005, 2008). In the present study, we thus focused on both work- and nonwork-related consequences as outcomes of WFC. Specifically, we used work satisfaction and family satisfaction as indicators for employees' general attitudes toward their work and family life. We hypothesized that WFC would be negatively related to both work satisfaction and family satisfaction (Hypothesis 3).

WFC IN A CULTURAL CONTEXT

The aforementioned literature review on work and family issues is largely based on studies conducted in the developed West. As pointed out by Spector et al. (2004), such countries share a number of important characteristics in terms of economic development, family structure, and cultural values

such as individualism (I) as opposed to collectivism (C) and small PD as opposed to large PD. Spector et al. (2004) have attempted an extensive review of the limited number of work/family studies outside of individualist countries, mostly in Asia, noting that most of these studies focused on a rather small range of variables with potentially biased small and convenient samples. For instance, in Hong Kong, Japan, and Singapore, researchers have generally found a nonsignificant relationship between WFC and strains (e.g., Aryee, Luk, Leung, & Lo, 1999). Although a few more studies were since conducted in Taiwan after Spector et al.'s publication (e.g., Lu et al., 2005, 2008), they focused mostly on the nexus of work/family demands ⇒ WFC ⇒ work/family consequences. The negative effects of WFC on individual well-being (e.g., decreased job satisfaction and life satisfaction) and organizational performance (e.g., decreased organizational commitment) have been confirmed, but the potential beneficial effects of work resources such as supervisory support and organizational family values still need to be tested systematically in non-Western developing countries. In particular, the issue of culture-specificity or culture-universality needs to be addressed here.

Systematic studies on WFC outside the developed West are in paucity; cross-cultural comparisons are even rarer. These studies adopted I/C as a general explanatory framework for cultural differences, and found that nation (operationalized to represent I/C) moderated the relationship of work/family demands with WFC (Lu, Gilmour, Kao, & Huang, 2006; Spector, Allen, et al., 2007; Spector, Cooper, et al., 2007; Yang, Chen, Choi, & Zhou, 2000). For instance, Lu et al. (2006) noted that, for both Taiwanese and British employees, work and family demands were related to WFC and that WFC was further related to job satisfaction. More important, they found a stronger positive relation between workload (work demands) and WFC for the British than for the Taiwanese. These results seem to suggest that both work and family demands are important antecedents of WFC, although they may bestow greater impact on employees in an individualist society than in a collectivist one. It is now a pressing need to examine the protective effects of work resources on WFC and various outcome variables in a cross-cultural design.

According to Hofstede's (2001) study on cross-cultural differences, Taiwan is a society with relatively larger PD, whereas the United Kingdom is a society with smaller PD. We purported that both supervisory and organizational support may be more useful for Taiwanese employees working in a larger PD work environment, for two reasons. First, acknowledgment and acceptance of employees' family responsibility outside work at the organization level implies respect for the full spectrum of individual needs and further grants autonomy and control over one's work and family life, which has been shown to be universally beneficial for employees (e.g., Karasek, 1979), and particularly for Taiwanese workers who normally have

very few opportunities to exercise control at work (Lu, Wu, & Cooper, 1999). Previous research has found that, for Taiwanese employees working in large PD organizations, supervisory support was pivotal for well-being (Lu, 1999), and far more effective than other forms of support, such as those from coworkers and friends. Second, both supervisory support and organizational support for employees to coordinate their work and family needs are likely to be perceived by employees as care and understanding from the management, especially direct supervisors. Such gestures of goodwill are consistent with a core Chinese cultural value: interpersonal benevolence (The Chinese Culture Connection, 1987). Research has shown that the endorsement of such "human-heartedness" is generally beneficial for well-being (Lu, Gilmour, & Kao, 2001). We thus hypothesized that nation would moderate the relationship between work resources—supervisory support and organizational family values—and WFC, with Taiwanese employees showing stronger relationships than their British counterparts (Hypothesis 4).

The present study contributes to the work/family literature and extends the cross-cultural research of Spector et al. (2004, 2007) and other previous studies in several ways. First, we expanded the existing occupational stress perspective to examine positive (resources) antecedents of WFC and both work and family outcomes. Second, we set out to explore both culture-general and culture-specific correlates of WFC. As compelling evidence has been obtained in the West and some fragmented evidence has been obtained in the East, supporting our Hypotheses 1–3, we expected that these three hypotheses would apply to both Taiwanese and British samples (i.e., be culture-general). On the other hand, the strength of work resources – WFC relation was expected to be a culture-specific phenomenon, tied to I/C values, as predicted in Hypothesis 4. Such cultural moderation effects have not been tested in previous research. Third, we used a well-established measure of WFC encompassing all three major forms of WFC—time-, strain-, and behavior-based aspects—unlike Spector et al. (2007), who focused on the first two aspects only. Fourth, we expanded our study population to employees of different marital and/or parenthood statuses, as worldwide surveys (Spector et al., 2004; 2007) indicated that WFC was not restricted to married people or those with children.

In summary, the purpose of this study was to investigate differences and similarities between cultures in terms of antecedents and consequences of WFC among employees in Taiwan and the United Kingdom as representative cultures of the East and the West. To verify our choice of country for comparison, we consulted Hofstede's (2001) ranking of nations. On the dimension of I/C, the United Kingdom scored 89 and ranked 3; and Taiwan scored 17 and ranked 44. On the dimension of PD, the United Kingdom scored 35 and ranked 44; and Taiwan scored 58 and ranked 29. Because higher scores represent higher individualism and larger PD, the United

Kingdom and Taiwan are quite different on both dimensions of cultural values. The relationship between work resources, WFC, and outcomes, the possible moderating effects of work resources, were examined in each country and compared across cultures.

METHOD

Participants

Data were collected from multiple companies to represent as wide a variety of sectors/organizations/positions as possible. Various recruitment methods were used in both Taiwan and the United Kingdom. For example, some participants who were enrolled in executive education programs were recruited in classes, some were recruited through personal contacts, and some were members of professional organizations who were contacted and asked to participate. Consequently, the Taiwanese sample was composed of 264 participants (response rate = 80.7%), and the British sample had 137 participants (response rate = 75.0%). Surveys were conducted at the same time in both countries. Participants completed structured questionnaires at their leisure and returned them in sealed envelopes to researchers.

The Taiwanese sample was 39.1% male, with a mean age of 33.23 ($SD =$ 8.61) and mean job tenure of 7.32 years ($SD =$ 7.23 years). Less than half of them (42.0%) were managers of various levels. Half of the sample (50.0%) was married, and 82.9% had a spouse working. The British sample was 49.6% male, with a mean age of 35.36 ($SD =$ 8.46) and mean job tenure of 6.92 years ($SD =$ 6.94 years). Over half (56.1%) were managers of various levels. Most (62.1%) were married, and 88.0% had a partner working.

Measures

Work Resources

Two types of work resources were measured: (a) Supervisory support was assessed by 3 items developed by Clark (2001), tapping supervisor's emotional support for the employee's family needs. A sample item is "My supervisor listens when I talk about my family." (b) Organizational family values were assessed with 14 items developed by Allen (2001), tapping employees' perceived organizational values supporting the integration of work and family life. Sample items are "Employees are given ample opportunity to perform both their job and their personal responsibilities well," and

"Work should be the primary priority in a person's life" (reversed score). We used 5-point rating scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) for both measures. Thus, high scores represent more supervisory support or organizational family values. The internal consistency of the supervisory support scale was .86 in both the Taiwanese and British samples. The internal consistencies of the organizational family values scale were .80 and .75 in the Taiwanese and British samples, respectively.

WFC

The nine-item Work–Family Conflict Scale (Carlson et al., 2000) assesses WFC. Sample items are "My work keeps me from my family activities more than I would like," and "Due to all the pressures at work, sometimes when I come home I am too stressed to do the things I enjoy" (1 = *strongly disagree,* 5 = *strongly agree*). Thus, high scores represent high levels of WFC. The internal consistencies of this scale were .81 and .82 in the Taiwanese and British samples, respectively.

Outcomes

Three items from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1979) assess work satisfaction: "In general, I like working here," "All in all, I am satisfied with my job," and "In general, I don't like my job" (reversed score). Participants rate their family satisfaction on three items: "My family life is very enjoyable," "All in all, the family life I have is great," and "In general, I am satisfied with my family life" (Edwards & Rothbard, 1999). Six-point rating scales ranging from 1 (*disagree very much*) to 6 (*agree very much*) apply to both satisfaction measures, with high scores representing high levels of work satisfaction or family satisfaction. The internal consistencies of the work satisfaction scale were .86 and .88 for Taiwanese and British samples, respectively; and those of the family satisfaction scale were .97 and .96, respectively.

Scale Equivalence

All of the aforementioned measures originated from the West, although some were already translated into Chinese and have proven their usability in previous cross-cultural research; for example, WFC and the family satisfaction scales in Lu et al.'s (2006) article and the work satisfaction scale in Spector et

al.'s (2007) article. We adopted the standard procedure of back-translation to produce the Chinese versions of supervisory support and organizational family values scales. To further ensure equivalence, we conducted multisample tests for these two scales, following recommendations by Schaffer and Riordan (2003). Using AMOS 5.0, we conducted two-sample tests for our measures of supervisory support and organizational family values. Fit indices were within the usually accepted values of .90 for the generalized fit index (GFI; .93, .92) and comparative fit index (CFI; .92, .91) and .10 for root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA; .07, .08), indicating acceptable fit for these measures.

Participants also provided information on gender, age, tenure on the job, rank, and marital status.

RESULTS

Within-Cultural Analysis

We conducted Pearson correlation analyses separately in the Taiwanese and British samples among all the research variables, and results are shown in Table 1. As the Taiwanese and British samples were not exactly compatible in terms of demographics (more women and fewer managers in the Taiwanese sample), gender, marital status, tenure, and managerial position were dummy coded and included in the correlation analysis. This was done to inform us whether sample differences may influence the relationships among our main research variables. The dummy coding of demographic variables was conducted following established practice in WFC research (cf. Byron, 2005). Results showed that neither gender nor managerial position correlated with WFC in the two samples.

As can also be seen in Table 1, for the Taiwanese both types of work resources (supervisory support and organizational family values) negatively correlated with WFC. Supervisory support positively correlated with work satisfaction. WFC negatively correlated with family satisfaction. The pattern of correlation for the British sample was largely similar, although there were some differences in the degree of significance between samples.

To test for Hypotheses 1–3, we performed hierarchical regression analyses separately in the Taiwanese and British samples. In predicting WFC, demographic variables (i.e., gender, marital status, managerial role, and tenure) were entered into the equation first to control for their possible contributions, followed by work resources. In predicting outcomes, the same demographic variables were entered at the first step, followed by work resources at the second step, and WFC at the final step. Full regression models are presented in Table 2 (Taiwan) and Table 3 (United Kingdom). Standardized regression coefficients (βs) were taken from the final models.

For both Taiwanese and British employees, work resources were nega-
tively related to WFC; hence, our Hypothesis 1 was fully supported. For the
British, work resources were positively related to work satisfaction, and
supervisory support was further positively related to family satisfaction; for
the Taiwanese however, only supervisory support was positively related to
work satisfaction. Hence, our Hypothesis 2 was partially supported. For both
Taiwanese and British employees, WFC was negatively related to family
satisfaction, and it was further related negatively to work satisfaction for the
Taiwanese. Hence, our Hypothesis 3 was largely supported. Again, some
differences in the degree of significance between samples should be noted.

Also can been seen from regression results, tenure was negatively related
to WFC, and managerial role was positively related to work satisfaction for
Taiwanese employees.

Cross-Cultural Analysis

To obtain an overall picture of possible cross-cultural differences on our
study variables, we conducted t tests on work resources, WFC, and outcomes
comparing the two samples. As presented in Table 4, there were few
cross-cultural differences. The British employees perceived more supervisory
and organizational support than their Taiwanese counterparts. However, the
two samples were not different on either WFC or outcomes.

We then tested Hypothesis 4, that nation would moderate the relation
between work resources and WFC, using moderated regression (Cohen,
Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). Following procedures suggested by Cohen et
al. (2003), predictors were standardized and interaction terms were then
created from these standardized predictors. We would report unstandardized
coefficients from the output. This technique is designed to provide us with
less biased regression coefficients for analysis of moderating effects.

We coded nation as 1 for Taiwan and 2 for the United Kingdom. We
entered the same four demographics at the first step as controls: gender,
marital status, tenure, and managerial role. The main variables of interest
were work resources, nation, and Work Resources $\times$ Nation, with WFC
as the criterion. As none of the control variables were significant when all
predictors were in the model, they were taken out to simplify the model.
Final results are summarized in Table 5.

The overall regression was significant, $F(7, 273) = 7.16$, $p < .001$.
Furthermore, Supervisory Support $\times$ Nation was significant in predicting
WFC. The exact nature of this interaction was plotted in Figure 1. Supervi-
sory support had a stronger negative relationship with WFC for the Taiwan-
ese than for the British, as indicated by the difference in steepness of the two

Table 1. Correlation Matrices for All Variables in Two Samples

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Gender	—	$-.20^*$	.11	.02
2. Marital status	$-.34^{***}$	—	.09	.02
3. Tenure (in months)	$-.33^{***}$	$.41^{***}$	—	.18
4. Managerial role	$-.25^{**}$	$.28^{***}$	$.35^{***}$	—
5. Supervisory support	$-.03$	$.17^{**}$	.04	$.14^*$
6. Organizational family values	.11	$-.14^*$	$-.13^*$	$-.08$
7. WFC	.02	$-.10$	$-.18^{**}$	.04
8. Work satisfaction	$-.10$	.10	.03	$-.05$
9. Family satisfaction	$-.10$	$.27^{***}$	$.20^{**}$	$.14^*$

Note. The upper triangle is the correlation matrix for the British sample, the lower triangle is the correlation matrix for the Taiwanese sample. WFC = work-to-family conflict. For gender: 1 = male, 2 = female. For marital status: 1 = married/cohabiting, 0 = not married. For managerial role: 1 = manager, 0 = nonmanager.
$^* p < .05.$ $^{**} p < .01.$ $^{***} p < .001.$

regression lines. Thus, our Hypothesis 4 was partially supported in terms of supervisory support but not organizational family values.

DISCUSSION

The crucial impact of work/family issues on the well-being of employees, their families, and their organizations has been recognized and responded to with a growing amount of research in this area in the Western countries. However, very few studies have explored cross-cultural differences, and most studies that have been conducted outside of territories of the Anglo tradition have not been comparative. Our present study examined work resources as antecedents and work and nonwork outcomes as consequences of WFC. More important, we compared results in two distinct cultural groups: the collectivist Taiwanese (cultural Chinese) with high PD and the individualist British with low PD. We found that some results generalize nicely, whereas others produced differences.

We noted that, across cultures, WFC demonstrated a consistent relationship with family satisfaction. This finding expands the scope of one previous Taiwan–United Kingdom comparative study, which noted a consistent relationship between WFC and work satisfaction (Lu et al., 2006). With a large national representative sample in Taiwan, researchers also found that WFC demonstrated a negative relationship with work satisfaction (Lu et al., 2008). Thus far, WFC seems to have negative effects on both work- and nonwork-related outcomes across cultures.

Also in the present study, we noted that work resources in the form of supervisory emotional support and organizational family values, had consistent protective effects for reducing WFC across the cultural boundary. Also

5	6	7	8	9
−.01	−.07	.03	.07	−.18*
.07	.12	−.12	−.13	.17*
.04	−.21*	−.01	.22*	−.05
−.08	−.02	.04	−.03	.19*
—	.52***	−.21*	.27*	.16
.05	—	−.33***	.23*	.30***
−.30***	−.32***	—	−.25*	−.40***
.23***	.03	−.06	—	.01
.05	.10	−.30***	.19**	—

noted in the aforementioned nationwide study in Taiwan, supervisory family supportive practices (allowing brief leave to take care of family matters) were effective in reducing subordinates' WFC. It thus seems that WFC can be ameliorated through both tangible support practices and an emotional/psychological support climate at the supervisory level and the organizational level. As previous cross-cultural studies have already revealed that work demands are generally related to WFC (Lu et al., 2006; Spector, Allen, et al., 2007; Spencer, Cooper, et al., 2004; Yang et al., 2000), we now have a more comprehensive framework to conceptualize antecedents of WFC, including both threats (demands) and protectors (resources).

As our present results suggest that the generic relationship between work resources and WFC holds across cultures, it is imperative to take into account the

Table 2. Predicting WFC and Work and Family Outcomes: Results for the Taiwanese Sample

Step and variable	WFC		Work satisfaction		Family satisfaction	
	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β
Step 1						
Gender		−.01		−.07		−.02
Marital status		−.10		−.02		.05
Tenure		−.25***		−.01		.03
Managerial role	.09*	.06	.04	.23*	.02	.03
Step 2						
Supervisory support		−.24***		.23*		.05
Org. family values	.16***	−.30***	.03	.01	.03	.06
Step 3: WFC			.04*	−.21*	.06*	−.27**
Total R^2	.25		.11		.11	

Note. Org. = organizational; WFC = work-to-family conflict.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3. Predicting WFC and Work and Family Outcomes: Results for the British Sample

Step and variable	WFC		Work satisfaction		Family satisfaction	
	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β
Step 1						
Gender		−.10		.01		−.13
Marital status		−.07		.09		.07
Tenure		−.01		.13		−.03
Managerial role	.02	−.03	.06	−.06	.09	.25*
Step 2						
Supervisory support		−.18*		.33*		.19*
Org. family values	.20***	−.34*	.20**	.15*	.14**	.07
Step 3: WFC			.01	−.08	.08**	−.31**
Total R^2		.22		.27		.31

Note. Org. = organizational; WFC = work-to-family conflict.
* $p < .05$.   ** $p < .01$.   *** $p < .001$.

role of work resources in the WFC experiences for workers in different cultural contexts. In so doing, the issue of cultural specificity needs to be considered as well.

The most important cultural specificity effect we found was the moderation effect of nation on the supervisory support–WFC relationship. Our hypothesis, based on the theorizing of Hofstede (2001) regarding PD, was that there would be stronger relationships between work resources and WFC in a high-PD society (Taiwanese) than in a low-PD society (British). Our theory presumes that, for Taiwanese employees working in large-PD organizations, supervisory support will be pivotal for well-being and organizational support will be perceived as a goodwill gesture conveying group solidarity and humaneness sanctioned by core Chinese cultural values of collectivism and human benevolence. Moderated regression results supported our hypothesis in the case of supervisory support.

As a manifestation of the Chinese patriarchal culture, research has

Table 4. Comparison of Means on Work Resources, WFC, and Work and Family Outcomes Across Nations

Variable	Taiwanese		British			
	M	SD	M	SD	t	df
Work resources						
Supervisory support	8.80	2.86	10.40	2.62	−5.56***	391
Organizational family values	40.99	6.69	43.02	7.24	−2.77*	390
WFC	26.06	6.72	26.34	5.26	−0.48	377
Outcomes						
Work satisfaction	9.67	1.84	9.95	1.09	−1.39	292
Family satisfaction	14.44	3.17	14.46	3.66	−0.05	395

Note. WFC = work-to-family conflict.
* $p < .05$.   *** $p < .001$.

Table 5. Moderated Regression of WFC on Work Resources, Nation, and Their Product Terms

Predictor	B (unstandardized)	R^2	ΔR^2
Nation[+]	2.23***	.01	.01
Supervisory support[+]	−0.41**		
Org. family values	−0.26***	.14	.13***
Nation × Supervisory Support[+]	0.77*		
Nation × Org. Family Values	0.23	.16	.02*

Note. A superscript plus sign indicates a new step in hierarchical regression. Unstandardized B and F are taken from the final equation. For nation: 1 = Taiwan, 2 = United Kingdom. Org. = organizational.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

revealed that in most Taiwanese organizations, regardless of size and sectors, authoritarian and paternalistic practices still prevail (Lu, Tseng, & Cooper, 1999; Redding & Casey, 1976). In other words, Taiwanese managers generally hold dominant positions in a high-PD work environment. It is thus no exaggeration that Taiwanese employees' welfare is largely in the hand of their immediate supervisors. Understandably, having a supportive superior at work can make all the difference in the world. Indeed, supervisors can supply necessary information and guidance, provide appreciation and recognition, decide performance evaluation and promotion, assign prestige and status, delegate control and power, and so forth. Our present finding also corroborates previous results indicating that supervisory support was pivotal to Taiwanese subordinates' emotional well-being (Lu, 1999) in the general context of work stress. The power of Taiwanese supervisors really can be put to the good cause of helping employees to balance work and family life.

However, it also needs to be pointed out that work resources in the form of organizational family values did not have a differential effect on WFC across the two cultures, as shown in our moderated regression results. To our knowledge, there has been no cross-cultural study examining the effects of
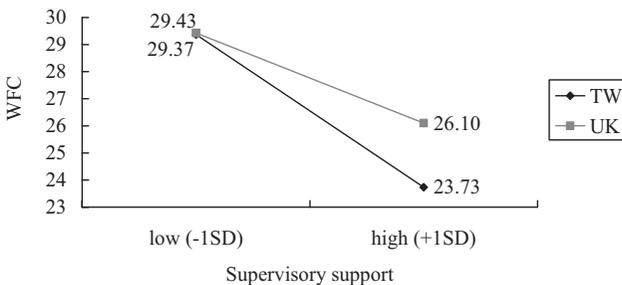
Figure 1. The moderating effect of nation on the relation between supervisory family support and work-to-family conflict (WFC).

organizational family-friendly climate in the context of work–family inter-
face; hence, our finding still awaits further replication. We can speculate,
however, that one possible reason for the differential effects of supervisory
support and organizational climate lies in the subjective perception of em-
ployees. Although having a generally supportive work environment is con-
ducive to employees' efforts in balancing work and family roles (Kossek et
al., 2001), daily interactions with a supportive and caring supervisor may
produce a more personal and profound experience for Chinese employees
who are culturally programmed to be more relationship oriented and rela-
tionship sensitive (Hsu, 1985; The Chinese Culture Connection, 1987) than
their British counterparts.

CONCLUSIONS

Our study has made a significant contribution to bridging the gaps of
knowledge in work/family issues in a cross-cultural perspective. How-
ever, before drawing conclusions, there are certain methodological limi-
tations which should be kept in mind. First, our data came from a
cross-sectional study; thus, no causal conclusions are legitimate. For
example, job satisfaction is often considered an outcome of work/family
stressors, but it is possible that job satisfaction may act as a cause rather
than an effect. For instance, those who are satisfied with their jobs may
tend to put more time and energy into work, to the detriment of family.
Thus, longitudinal designs should be adopted in the future.

A second problem is the lack of compatibility between the demographics
of two samples: The Taiwanese sample had more females and fewer man-
agers. However, preliminary analysis revealed that gender and managerial
position did not correlate with WFC in both countries. We further tested
two three-way interactions, Nation $\times$ Gender $\times$ Supervisory Support and
Nation $\times$ Rank $\times$ Supervisory Support in predicting WFC, to rule out
alternative explanations. Neither interaction reached statistical significance.
It seems that the sampling bias is negligible in the present study.

Another limitation is that we managed to compare Taiwanese participants
only with British participants because of limited time and resources; thus, no
conclusions should be drawn concerning other cultural groups. Our results may
not even generalize to other Chinese societies, such as the People's Republic of
China, which has its unique political, economic, and social characteristics (Lu et
al., 2003). However, Spector et al. (2004; Spector et al., 2007) did include a much
wider range of regions in their studies, and our results regarding the culture-
general effects of WFC on outcomes largely corroborate theirs. This convergence
of results from different data sources and regions is encouraging for promoting

work/family studies worldwide, and to a certain extent lessens worries over methodological considerations inherent in a cross-cultural approach. However, it must be noted that Spector et al.'s studies focused on work demands whereas the present study focused on work resources; thus, the two series of studies may be regarded as complimentary.

Despite its limitations, this study was able to show that some relationshhips of work resources with WFC and those of WFC with outcomes generalize across the individualist, low-PD and collectivist, high-PD societies, whereas specificities within each culture remain. It is important to establish relations among focal variables at the first stage in developing a research area. In the future, however, researchers should adopt a greater variety of methodologies to tease out the exact mechanisms linking work resources and outcomes; for instance, including additional sources of data from coworkers, supervisors, and family members.

Our results have many practical implications for management, especially in multinational companies. For example, the widely practiced policies in reducing work/family stress that have been found to be effective in Western societies may not be as effective in a different culture. For example, previous research (Lu et al., 2006; Lu et al., 2008) has noted that the Western-style flexible work options may be less meaningful for Taiwanese workers, who may be helped more by reducing the absolute number of long working hours, providing concrete monetary compensation for overtime, or providing a more adequate supply of resources to relieve heavy workloads. Even supervisory discretion for brief personal leave to attend family matters may be as effective as institutional flextime arrangement. The power of psychological support in combating WFC has been underlined in the present study: Cultivating a family-supportive organizational culture and mobilizing managers to perform as first-line counselors may have benefits for reducing employees' work/family conflict and enhancing their well-being. In Chinese organizations or international companies operating in Chinese societies, training supportive and caring supervisors may reap even greater benefits.

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