Work-Family Conflict:

Does Educational Attainment Influence the Amount of Negative Spillover?

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Abstract

Using a data from a purposive sample of 216 women and 218 men in Turkey, the relationship between educational attainment and the amount of negative spillover from job-to-home and home-to-job was examined. It was hypothesized that men and women with higher levels of education have less amount of negative spillover in both directions. Certain work and family characteristics were included into the multiple regression analysis to see the net effect of educational attainment. Results indicated general support for the hypothesis, with significant findings revealing that women experience more negative spillover in both directions than men. Among the work characteristics, perceived time pressure had a significant effect in reducing job-to-home spillover for both sexes. Researchers need to be aware of the possible gender differences in experiencing work-family conflict and the positive impact of educational attainment needs to be taken into account for reducing conflict between these domains.

Introduction

Work-family conflict is an interrole conflict in which the demands of work and family roles are incompatible in the sense that participation in one role makes difficult to participate in the other role (Voydanoff, 1988). It is found that the boundaries between work and family become particularly permeable when working people marry and become parents (Kelly&Voydanoff, 1985).

Previous research has mainly relied on examining work-family conflict and overlooked the other direction of influence which is family-work conflict. Thus, one of the objectives of this study is to examine job-to-home and home-to-job spillover, rather than considering work-family conflict as unidirectional. Those which looked at spillover from family to work are limited in number, yet the findings reveal that family life does affect an individual's energy, mood and attention in the work setting (Crouter, 1984).

Who experience more negative spillover: men or women? And in what direction they experience it? According to Pleck's (1977) work-family role system, women. Because their home life responsibilities would have greater interferences from family to work than those of men's and men would have greater interferences from work to family when compared to women. In their book "Diversity in Families", Zinn, Eitzen and Wells (2008) concurred that this system reinforces the traditional division of labor in family and work, assigning family roles to women and work responsibilities to men. Eagle, Miles and Icenogle (1997) tested the proposition of Pleck in their study, and found that work and family boundaries are more permeable in the sense of permitting more work roles to intrude into family setting; however, they found no gender differences. They suggested that this may be due to the changes in social conceptions of gender, parenthood, and work identity, and a greater, mutual empathy couples began to share; or it may be that many men are adapting to increased family role

expectations when both husband and wife are employed. Eagle et al. (1997) concluded that the lack of gender difference in the work-family conflict may point to increasing similarity of attitudes of men and women toward work and family issues.

Moreover, who experience more negative spillover changes due to the variables researchers take into account. For instance, whether it is a single-parent family, professional or working class family or an ethnic minority family makes a difference in terms of kind and amount of spillover a wife and a husband may experience (Bedeian et al., 1988; Burden, 1986; Gryzwacz et al., 2007). But still, the overall findings have indicated a larger spillover for women from home and higher amounts of spillover for men from work.

In order to assess how successful people are in reconciling the demands of both work and family, researchers have looked at various characteristics of work and family, such as number of hours worked, flexibility, perceived time shortage, family involvement, presence of children, spouse employment, and single-parent families (Burden, 1986; Greenhaus&Beutell, 1985; Kelly et al., 1985; Voydanoff, 1988).

Although in some research age and education were taken as control variables (Mennino, Rubin and Brayfield, 2005), they were sometimes among the most important indicators of men's and women's choice for their life aspirations with respect to job careers and family issues. Thus, education, in particular, can be considered an important element in determining one's ability and opportunities to balance work and family responsibilities.

Educational attainment is particularly important in terms of influencing the difference between men's and women's employment status and career plans for the future. It has been found that the higher the educational attainment, the more likely the women to be employed, and the higher the women are earning power (Joshi, 2002). In modern societies, especially in the last twenty or thirty years, there seems to have been a trend among women with high levels of education to deter and to postpone motherhood to be able to achieve careers. Heather

(2002) suggested that education reduces reproduction of women, but compensates by increasing production; it reduces the gender difference in earning power, and also reduces the difference in hours of paid and domestic work of the couples. At this point, education may play a significant role in women's choices between employment and housework.

Previous research showed that education level also affects men's perceived negative spillover. In a study, Kinnunen and Mauno (1998) found that high education and higher number of children meant higher work-family conflict for men. For these men, high education meant high socioeconomic status, and high number of children referred to preschool children at home, which combined, and made men feel guilty for not devoting enough time to family because of their work demands, and not being a good father and husband at home. In another study, Yang (1993) hypothesized that the higher the social statuses of husbands and wives, i.e. the more educated they are, the fewer children they tend to have. His findings revealed that wives' educations have significant negative effects on fertility, while the effect of husbands' educations is positive and statistically insignificant, with their occupational and work statuses being not significantly correlated with fertility (Yang, 1993). These findings may suggest that wives have increasingly more power in fertility decisions, because they are less dependent on their husbands since they entered the labor force. Also, more educated women may use birth-control techniques more effectively, thus avoiding having children, or at least deciding to have few numbers of children. In this sense, if previous research is right about the positive correlation between presence of children at home and the amount of negative spillover, higher education may affect fertility decisions, hence reduce -or at least not increase- negative spillover between work and family settings in homes with fewer number or no children. According to Ammons and Erin's (2008) study with young adults, ones with less than a college degree were significantly more likely to report that they experience more home-to-job

interference, whereas the ones with higher educational attainment experienced more work-to-home interference, and this was found to be especially true for college educated women.

This paper aims to extend the understanding of work-family conflict in relation to educational attainment, which has often been considered a control variable in previous research. Through looking from a conflict perspective, the current research mainly concerns with negative spillover effects. By focusing on both men and women, and examining all the relationships for both sexes, I hope to contribute to work-family issues from two separate perspectives. Also, rejecting a unidirectional conceptualization of work-family interference, I want to assess negative spillover from both job-to-home and home-to-job which is more likely to reveal different sources and consequences of the conflicts between these two settings.

Measurement

Data and Sample

A non-representative sample of 434 Turkish citizens who live in Istanbul was surveyed with a 47-item questionnaire. The sample consisted of 216 women and 218 men, between the ages 17 and 74. Mean age of the women and men are 33 and 36, respectively. Of all the respondents, 75% have two year college, university or graduate education. This distribution indicates that the sample is purposive, with majority having university education. 61% of the respondents are couple which include either married or cohabiting people. The respondents were chosen from a wide range of occupations such as doctors, engineers, secretaries, accountants, human resource assistants, and teachers.

Procedure

The data collection and the data entry began in the Spring semester of the academic year 2005-2006 at Bogazici University, Istanbul and finished in the Spring semester of the academic year 2007-2008. Questionnaires were distributed to participants and collected back. Responses were given without using names, so the respondents' identities remained hidden.

Measures

The two dependent variables, home-to-job and job-to-home spillover are two indices that were replicated from Mennino et al.'s (2005) study, each composing of five questions with response categories ranging from "1=never "to "5=very often". Some questions in the job-to-home spillover index are: "In the past three months, how often have you not had enough time for yourself because of your job?", "how often have you not been able to get everything done at home each day?" Some questions in the home-to-job spillover index include "How often has your family or personal life kept you from getting work done on time at your job?", "How often has your family or personal life drained you of the energy you needed to do your job?"

Independent variable was the level of education which included response categories ranging from 1 to 7 (1=less than primary school, 2=primary school, 3=secondary school, 4=high school, 5=two year college degree, 6=university, 7=graduate).

Control variables are divided in two groups: work characteristics and family characteristics. Work characteristics include a)number of working hours per week, b)flexibility of job, c)perceived time shortage. Family characteristics include a) cohabiting or not b) presence of children under 6 years old, b) share of household and childcare. These are the most common variables that previous research has taken into account. Working hours are important in the sense that they create more or less time pressure both for men and women, hence might contribute to negative spillover. Flexibility of job may help people balance their work and family demands more easily. The perceived time shortage is also an important determinant of negative spillover, for the reason that time pressure seems to be the main source of work-family conflict (Greenhaus, 1985). Presence of children under 6 is another important variable, because several studies have found that parents of younger children, who

are more likely to be demanding of their parents' time, experience more conflict than those of older children (Greenhaus et al., 1985).

Analysis and Results

Firstly, sample characteristics were assessed by looking at the distribution of central tendency (the means and standard deviations) of the dependent and independent variables by sex of the respondents (Table 1).

Bivariate analysis by cross tabulation between level of education and sex of the respondent shows how many of women and of men have less than primary school, primary school, secondary school, high school, two year college degree, university or graduate education. From this single bivariate relationship, we can see that women are more likely to have two year college degree and university education than men, though almost the same percentage of men and women has high school education. However, more men continued their graduate education (women: 16%, men: 20%). However, the Chi-Square significance test revealed that these differences are not statistically significant (p=.355), which means that the observed difference between men and women in the levels of educational attainment is due to random chance.

Five questions were asked to assess information about home-to-job spillover (α= .82). Cronbach's alpha is high enough to say that these questions are in fact measuring the home-to-job spillover. Cronbach's alpha for the index of job-to-home spillover was also high (α=.89).

Table 1.

Means and Standard Deviations of the Dependent and Independent Variables By Sex of Respondent

	Women (N=216)		Men (N=218)	
Variables	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Home-to-job spillover	2.05	.83	1.95	.73
Job-to-home spillover	3.02	.98	2.96	.95
Controls				
Age (range18-64)	32.95	9.05	35.89	12.16
Education				
Less than primary school	.00		.00	
Primary school	.04		.05	
Secondary school	.05		.08	
High school	.17		.18	
2-year college degree	.07		.06	
University	.52		.43	
Graduate	.16		.21	
Work Characteristics				
Public employment	.26		.17	
Private employment	.74		.83	
Salaried	.62		.61	
Temporary	.02		.04	
Paid household labor	.02			
Unpaid household labor	.00		.01	
Employer	.06		.15	
Self-employed	.08		.06	
Job satisfaction	3.06	.84	3.14	.79
Days worked per week	5.34	.69	5.53	.80
Hours worked per day	8.61	1.80	8.81	2.02
Enough time	2.91	.98	2.97	.93
Flexible working hours	.34		.50	
Family Characteristics				
Total household income	3.000	2.159	3.427	3.025
Couple	.61		.61	
Children under 6	.20	.40	.22	.42
Children 6-12	.18	.38	.19	.40
Children 13-17	.13	.34	.17	.38
Spouse works	.53		.27	
Share of hhold	2.66	1.25	3.62	1.12

Table 2.

Bivariate analysis between educational attainment and sex

	Women (N=216)	Men (N=218)
Educational attainment		
Primary School and less	4.2	4.6
Secondary School	4.6	8.3
High School	16.7	17.5
Two Year College Degree	6.5	5.5
University	51.9	43.3
Graduate	15.7	20.0

The mean scores for home-to-job and job-to-home indices in Table 1 reveal that women have on average more spillover in both directions than men. So, looking at different educational levels between and within sex groups will be highlighting.

The procedure is, first, to look at bivariate relationships between educational attainment and job-to-home, and home-to-job spillover separately, and then to make a multivariate regression by adding up work and family characteristics into the equation.

Women: Educational Attainment and Job-To-Home Spillover

In the first regression, job-to-home spillover was regressed on educational attainment of women. 5 % of the variation in job-to-home spillover was explained by educational attainment. With the dummy coded educational levels, women with high school, two year college, university and graduate education were compared to the women with less than high school education. The overall regression model was significant, F (4, 211) = 2.751, p< .05. Women with high school, university and graduate education have less job-to-home spillover when compared to women with less than high school education. Women with high school education have .9; women with two year college degree, university education and graduate education each have .6 less spillover than women with education less than primary school, primary school and secondary school. Except two year college degree, all these differences were significant, p= .029.

Men: Educational Attainment and Job-To-Home Spillover

Educational attainment of men explained 5.5% of the variation in job-to-home spillover, and this model was also significant, F (4, 211) = 3.099, p< .02. Men with high school education have .4, men with two year college degree have .7, men with university education have .6 and men with graduate education have .3 less job-to-home spillover when compared to men with less than high school education. Among these, only the results for two year college degree and university education were statistically significant. As it can be seen from the Table 3, both women and men experienced less job-to-home spillover, if they have university education, and these are significant, p<. 05.

Table 3.

Bivariate Regression Coefficients between Educational Attainment and Job-To-Home spillover, by Sex of Respondent

	Women			Men		
Variable	*B*	*SE* B	β	*B*	*SE* B	β
Constant	3.64	.216		3.414	.176	
High school	-.884***	.269	-.337	-.409	.233	-.163
Two-year college	-.626	.337	-.157	-.714*	.321	-.173
University	-.642**	.235	-.327	-.640**	.200	-.336
Graduate	-.599*	.272	-.223	-.321	.224	-.138

Note. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; *β (*Beta) = standardized regression coefficient
*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

Women: Educational Attainment and Home-To-Job Spillover

The results of the bivariate regression analyses for women showed that only % 1.4 of variation in home-to-job spillover was explained by the educational attainment of women. In this regression, when compared to women with less than primary school, primary school, and secondary school education, women with high school education and more have less home-to-

job spillover. However, the educational levels showed no statistically significant differences in spillover and the overall regression model was not significant, F (4, 210) = 0.722, ns.

Men: Educational Attainment and Home-To-Job Spillover

The regression model for men was also nonsignificant, F (4, 210) = 0.270, ns. Men with high school education had .07 less spillover in comparison to men with less than high school education. Men with university and graduate education have .09 and .07 less spillover respectively, when compared to men with less than high school education. However, these differences were not statistically significant. These findings suggest that there are more important factors both for women and men that point to the variation in home-to-job spillover.

Table 4.

Bivariate Regression Coefficients between Educational Attainment and Home-To-Job spillover, by Sex of Respondent

	Women			Men		
Variable	*B*	*SE* B	β	*B*	*SE* B	B
Constant	2.22	.187		2.014	.138	
High school	-.081	.233	-.036	-.074	.183	-.039
Two-year college	-.420	.292	-.124	.119	.252	.038
University	-.216	.203	-.130	-.089	.157	-.061
Graduate	-.132	.236	-.058	-.069	.176	-.038

Note. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; *β (*Beta) = standardized regression coefficient

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

Next part is the analysis of multivariate regression. Control variables were added to count for the net effect of educational attainment, and to assess new factors which affect job-to-home and home-to-job spillover.

Multivariate Analysis

In order to see the net effect of educational attainment on the negative spillover, several independent variables were included into the analysis. The net strength of the

relationship of educational attainment was assessed above and beyond the relationships maintained by work characteristics and family characteristics.

Before adding the new independent variables into the multivariate regression, I checked for multicollinearity, and ran correlation between independent variables to see if they were associated. First, I looked at the correlation between variables of work characteristics: number of working hours, flexibility of job, and perceived time shortage; then, between variables of family characteristics: cohabitating, presence of children under 6, and share of household and childcare. None of these variables had high correlation with each other, so multicollinearity was not a problem.

The relationship between educational attainment and job-to-home spillover in the previous bivariate analysis was reestablished, and the results supported my hypothesis that women with high school, two year college, university and graduate education experienced less negative job-to-home spillover when compared to women with less than primary, primary and secondary school education. All these differences were statistically significant, F (10, 203) = 2.824, $p< .01$. It is important to note that this significance is higher than the significance of the previous bivariate regression between educational attainment and job-to-home spillover, and even the insignificant two year college degree turned out to be significant in the multivariate analysis.

Perceived time pressure had a significant negative relationship with job-to-home spillover, meaning that women who agreed that they have enough time at work have less job-to-home spillover ($p= .001$). Cohabiting and marriage had negative relationship with job-to-home spillover. This is the reverse of what previous studies have found. Here, women who are couples have less negative job-to-home spillover, when compared to ones who are not married or cohabiting. However, this was not significant. Although most of the previous studies found that children at the very early ages require more care, thus increasing mothers'

spillover, here the coefficient was zero, and the relationship was not significant. In other words, presence of children under 6 had not any effect on women's job-to-home spillover. This reveals one of the measurement problems in the questionnaire. The question regarding the number of children grouped responses into three age categories, yet it did not ask the respondents whether they have children at all, therefore it is difficult to assess the difference of spillover among women who have children and who do not. So, only mothers with children less than 6 years can be compared to those who have children between ages 7-12 and 13-18.

Because R square increases as we add more independent variables, to see more clear if added variables make a significant contribution to the model, I looked at adjusted R square, for it compensates for the number of variables in the model. For women, 7.9% of the variation in the negative job-to-home spillover was explained by these independent variables, and the overall multivariate regression model was significant (p= .003). After educational attainment, perceived time pressure was the next important variable in explaining the negative spillover from job-to-home, and this was significant (p= .001).

The same regression was conducted for men and the hypothesis was once again validated: The more educated the men, the less spillover they have from job-to-home, F (10, 200) = 3.681, p< .001. While having high school and university education was more likely to decrease women's job-to-home spillover, it was more significant for men that having two year college degree decreased job-to-home spillover. The more flexible their job, the less negative spillover they experienced from job-to-home, and this was significant (p=.005). Furthermore, the more they agreed that they have enough time at work, the less they had negative spillover, (p=.000).

These variables explained 11.3% of variation in negative job-to-home spillover, and the overall multivariate regression model was significant (p=.000) After having university and

two year college education, perceived time pressure and having a flexible job were the most important variables in explaining negative spillover for men.

Table 5.

Multivariate regression for Job-To-Home Spillover

	Women			Men		
Variable	*B*	*SE* B	β	*B*	*SE* B	β
Constant	4.151	.262		4.153	.240	
High school	-1.03***	.270	-.390	-.400	.227	-.160
Two-year college	-.719*	.336	-.181	-.817**	.313	-.199
University	-.757***	.233	-.385	-.732***	.198	-.382
Graduate	-.700*	.272	-.260	-.352	.220	-.149
Working hours	.001	.001	.048	-.001	.001	-.071
Flexibility	-.028	.144	-.014	-.362**	.127	-.190
Perceived time pressure	-.480***	.142	-.225	-.503***	.142	-.234
Couple	-.123	.137	-.061	-.220	.130	-.113
Child less than 6	.000	.000	-.095	.000	.000	.001
Share of hhold and childcare	.139	.165	.057	-.002	.169	-.001

Note. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; *β (*Beta) = standardized regression coefficient

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

When home-to-job spillover was regressed on the same variables for women, there was again a negative relationship between educational attainment and home-to-job spillover. In other words, women with high school, two year college, university and graduate education had less home-to-job spillover. However, as in the bivariate regression, these differences were not statistically significant, *F* (10, 202) =1.288, ns.

As women had more flexible jobs, they had more home-to-job spillover, and this was significant at p< .05. This showed that flexibility of job did not necessarily decrease the burden of women. Women who were married or cohabiting had more home-to-job spillover, as expected and confirmed in the previous literature. Although it was not significant in this regression analysis, with a more proper questionnaire and a more representative sample, this relationship may give statistically significant results. Flexibility and having a university education were the most important variables in explaining home-to-job spillover for women.

All these variables explained only1.3% of variation in home-to-job spillover, and the overall multivariate regression model was not significant.

For men, although there was a negative relationship between educational attainment and home-to-job spillover, these differences were not significant, F (10, 199) = 0.701, ns. Men who work more hours had less home-to-job spillover. The more flexible their job, the less they experienced home-to-job spillover. The more they think they have enough time at work, the less they had home-to-job spillover. Married or cohabiting men experienced less home-to-job spillover as opposed to women. Presence of children under 6 did not have effect on men's home-to-job spillover. Men who participate in the household labor and childcare had less home-to-job spillover. However, all these relationships and the overall model were not significant.

Table 6.

Multivariate regression for Home-To-Job Spillover

	Women			Men		
Variable	*B*	*SE* B	β	*B*	*SE* B	β
Constant	2.145	.229		2.281	.195	
High school	-.030	.237	-.013	-.061	.184	-.032
Two-year college	-.404	.295	-.120	.087	.254	.028
University	-.208	.204	-.125	-.125	.161	-.086
Graduate	-.255	.238	-.112	-.117	.179	-.065
Working hours	.000	.001	.010	-.001	.001	-.095
Flexibility	.294*	.126	.167	-.141	.103	-.098
Perceived time pressure	-.176	.125	-.097	-.148	.116	-.090
Couple	.130	.121	.076	-.097	.106	-.066
Child less than 6	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.032
Share of hhold and childcare	.153	.145	.074	-.008	.137	-.004

Note. *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; *β (*Beta) = standardized regression coefficient

*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study provides evidence that people with higher educational attainment have less spillover in both directions. However, women experience more negative spillover in both

directions than men. At this point, women's university or graduate education makes more difference than men especially with respect to job-to-home spillover.

These findings were reestablished with multivariate regression, and the hypothesis was supported: People with high educational attainment had less spillover in both directions when compared to ones with less than primary school, primary school and secondary education. Having university education is important both for men and women in reducing their spillover from job-to-home. This may be due to the kind of jobs and positions one may attain as a university graduate.

The control variables which were grouped as work characteristics and family characteristics varied in their effects for women and men. For the work characteristics, perceived time pressure was very significant in its effect in reducing job-to-home spillover for both sexes. It was found that flexibility at work decreased women's spillover from job-to-home, but did not affect spillover in reverse direction. For men, flexibility of job decreased spillover in both directions, but it was significant only for job-to-home spillover. Despite it was nonsignificant in this study, among the family characteristics when the status of marriage or cohabiting was analyzed; it was found that women who are married or cohabiting had more spillover from home-to-job, whereas married or cohabiting women experienced less spillover from job-to-home. As opposed to women, married or cohabiting men's negative spillover was always less in both directions, but this relationship was again nonsignificant. It can be said that marriage or cohabiting status did not give real effect on negative spillover in this study, but for further research it would be worth to add to the sample the couples themselves, so that the difference in spillover for wives and husbands can be measured. This would be more highlighting in assessing the comparative amount of negative spillover between the two sexes.

Some of the present study's findings supported part of Pleck's (1977) work-family role system theory in the sense that home interferes with work more for women, particularly

for the ones who work in flexible jobs. However, because of the limited measures and the lack of a large and representative sample, the present findings did not reveal statistically significant results for home-to-job spillover for both sexes. So, it is difficult to reach an accurate conclusion. However, with advanced research tools, the gender differences can be assessed in the amounts of negative spillover from both directions, and can be compared to the previous findings.

Inefficiency of the questionnaire in terms of asking better worded questions with respect to having children, again limits my inferences from results. I could not assess if women without children have less spillover than the ones with children. Moreover, from this data it is difficult to reach a conclusion about women's fertility decisions. Similarly, although the previous research suggested that men's share in the housework may contribute to a decrease in women's home-to-job spillover, and the attitudes of husbands and wives towards work are becoming increasingly similar, this data was not intended to exclusively include couples. Nonetheless, the present study gives a snapshot of the conflicts men and women experience in family and work settings and the influence of their educational attainment on the negative spillover.

Although the limited nature of the sample and data prevents to make robust analysis and comparison with the previous studies, the results indicated that educational attainment makes a difference in terms of balancing work and family conflict for both sexes. The work characteristics and family characteristics varied in their effects on negative spillover for women and men, but they did not show very significant effects. For further research, if a more exhaustive questionnaire is prepared, new independent variables are included, sample size is increased and chosen carefully to represent the population, the net effect of education may become more significant and the results would be generalizable. In spite of the weaknesses of the present data and sample, I hope this paper would contribute to the work-family studies via

the conceptual importance of the role of education in work-family conflict, its inclusion of both male and female perspectives, and the overall conceptualization of work-family conflict as bidirectional.

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