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## *Journal of Issues in* **Intercollegiate Athletics**

### **A Socio-Cultural Perspective of the Work-Life Interface of College Coaches: A Cohort Analysis**

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*Successful navigation of the work-life interface remains an important issue for sport management scholars and practitioners as work-life balance is linked to meaningful individual and organizational outcomes such as commitment, performance, and well-being. Building on Dixon and Bruening's (2005) multilevel model of the work-life interface in sport, this study uses a cohort analysis to investigate cohort effects of male and female coaches at various career stages on their work-family conflict (WFC) and family-work conflict (FWC). Responses from 840 NCAA Division I male (64.5%) and female (35.5%) head coaches were analyzed to assess the impact of cohort (age/career stage) and gender on WFC and FWC. Overall, MANOVA results showed that males and females in intercollegiate athletics experience similar levels of WFC across career stages. Males, particularly those with children in the home, experience the highest levels of conflict early in their careers, while females experience high levels throughout their careers. These findings reflect recent social trends regarding role expectations of mothers and fathers. Results are discussed in terms of theoretical and practical contributions and extensions.*

Successful navigation of the work-life interface remains an important issue for sport management scholars and practitioners. Within intercollegiate athletics, high levels of work-life conflict have been linked to low job and life satisfaction, lower career commitment, and high levels of stress (e.g., Bruening & Dixon, 2007; Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Dixon & Sagas, 2007). In addition, recent trend analysis from the broader work industry suggests that almost half of employees feel they are not balanced and spend considerable time outside the workplace on work-related activities. Trend analysis also reveals that there are clear cohort and life-stage impacts on perceptions of work-life expectations and outcomes (Workplace Trends, 2015). Furthermore, popular media has covered high profile incidents of clashes between professional athletes and their teams or tours over family matters (Rubin, 2014; Veciana-Suarez, 2016). Even outside of sport in the corporate domain the topic of work-family balance has been addressed (Feintzeig, 2016). Despite the research and growing awareness by the public, little is being done by sport organizations to address the challenge of balancing work and family.

In Dixon and Bruening's (2005) model of the work-life interface of intercollegiate coaches, they contended that work-family issues would be impacted at the individual, structural, and socio-cultural levels. In their empirical work based on that model (2007), they found strong and important impacts at both the individual and the structural levels. For example, women in Division I athletics with strong "Type A" personalities felt that their conflict levels were particularly high because they wanted to be great at all aspects of their lives. This led to high stress at work and home, which could be quelled by coping mechanisms such as familial support and tempered expectations. At the structural level, work supports such as autonomy, flexible scheduling, and travel support helped decrease work-family conflict (WFC) for most women in the study. At the socio-cultural level, the examination was limited to cultural notions regarding gender, and even then the results were somewhat limited in that they only investigated coaching mothers. Thus, the authors acknowledged that further examination of the socio-cultural level would be one way to extend the model and enhance our understanding of the work-life interface in sport.

Examination of cohort effects may be one way to add to the empirical investigation of this model at the socio-cultural level. A cohort is a group whose members share similar characteristics such as birth year, graduation year, career stage, or gender (Cohen, 1991). Studying groups of people with shared characteristics can shed light on the external influences that may impact these individuals as a group. For example, developmental psychologists examining impacts on generational cohorts purport that social, cultural, and historical events and expectations of given generations exert a systemic influence on the attitudes and behaviors of that generation (Elder, Modell, & Parke, 1993; Stewart & Healy, 1989; Trzexniewski & Donnellan, 2010). Human resource managers utilize cohort data to understand generational trends in worker attitudes, motivations and behaviors. Scholars and managers also utilized cohort variables such as career stage to examine differences in outcomes like work commitment (e.g., Beck & Wilson, 2001), psychological contracts (Hess & Jepsen, 2009), and work-life expectations (Bruening & Dixon, 2008; Dixon, Bruening, Mazerolle, Davis, & Crowder, 2006; Higgins, Duxbury, & Lee, 1994; Moen, 2001, 2003; Newton, Torges, & Stewart, 2012).

Darcy, McCarthy, Hill, and Grady (2012) suggested that "organizations may need to rethink their policy in relation to work-life balance and more specifically pay closer attention to

the needs of employees at differing career stages” (p. 117). Utilizing a life-group or cohort analysis could contribute to understanding the multilevel influences on the work-life interface for coaches, most notably by illuminating influences on work-life at the socio-cultural level (i.e., social, historical, and cultural influences that exert systemic effects; Elder et al., 1993). The importance of the issue and the need for exploration of these systemic effects provides the impetus for this study and the theoretical framing thereof. The purpose of this study is to examine work-family conflict from a gender and cohort perspective, one that includes both male and female coaches’ work and family conflict across the career span in Division I intercollegiate athletics. This study will contribute to the socio-cultural level of analysis in existing multilevel models of the work-life interface. When coupled with our current understandings of the antecedents and consequences of work-family conflict and/or balance at the individual and structural levels (e.g., Bruening & Dixon, 2007, 2008; Dixon & Bruening, 2005, 2007), this study aids in further building a comprehensive understanding of both theory (particularly to Dixon and Bruening’s 2005 Work-life Interface in Sport Model) and practice for managers and coaches as they design work-life cultures and practices that adapt to changing cohort expectations and needs.

## Literature Review

### *The Work-Life Interface of Coaches*

The sport industry is characterized as a nontraditional work environment, one that demands long hours, nights, and weekends. This work environment creates challenges in the lives of coaches, particularly female coaches (e.g., Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Knoppers, 1992). Scholars suggest that the biggest hurdle for women attempting to make a career in college coaching is the pace that the job requires (Wilson, 2007). Recruiting, travel for competition, and taking the role of a substitute parent for student-athletes are also strong contributors to the challenge of the coaching profession (Wilson, 2007). That is, the pace and responsibilities of coaching create challenges for coaches as they try to manage work responsibilities and family responsibilities, often resulting in conflict between work and family domains. Subsequently, much of the literature addressing the challenge to balance work and non-work responsibilities has focused on conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Conflict between work and family is bi-directional. Specifically, work responsibilities can create tension in the family domain, just as family responsibilities can cause tension or interference in the work domain (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Work-family conflict (WFC) and family-work conflict (FWC) is defined as “a type of inter-role conflict wherein at least some work and family responsibilities are not compatible and have resultant effects on each domain” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77). For the purposes of this study, we adopt an inclusive definition of family in which a family is “two or more individuals occupying interdependent roles with the purpose of accomplishing shared goals” (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005, p. 126).

Direnzo, Greenhaus, and Weer (2011) suggest that two factors are most influential for contributing to WFC: (a) time requirements associated with work, and (b) the stressfulness of the job. It should be noted, however, that individual level factors (e.g., gender, personality, values, age of children, family size) and other organizational level factors (e.g., organizational culture, support, and flextime) should also be considered as potential influences of WFC (Bruening & Dixon, 2007). With these antecedents in mind, it is likely that collegiate head coaches are at risk

for high levels of WFC. When an individual experiences unresolved conflict between work and family, there are a number of negative outcomes for both the organization and the individual such as reduced job satisfaction, conflict, poor health, stress, increased job turnover, and increased family tensions (Bruening & Dixon, 2007; Dixon & Sagas, 2008; Hakim, 2006; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996).

### *Gender Role Changes in Work-Life Roles: Fathers*

Traditionally, sport management scholars examined the work-life interface of women and mothers in sport. However, more recent research suggests that fathers also struggle with balancing work and family responsibilities (Graham & Dixon, 2014; Harrington, Van Deusen, & Humberd, 2011). Several changes contributed to the shifting environment surrounding actual and expected roles men and women play in their families. Foremost is the active involvement women have taken in higher education and in the workforce. Research indicates that women now earn 57% of bachelor's degrees, 60% of master's degrees, and approximately 50% of professional degrees and doctorate degrees (Mason, 2009). When families with single mothers are included, approximately 40% of women are the primary breadwinners for their families (Wang, Parker, & Taylor, 2013). In addition, 23% of the women in dual-earning relationships earn more than their husbands (Wang et al., 2013). Historical data indicates that women previously viewed their own career aspirations as secondary or supportive to their spouses' career; however, more recent data shows no difference between the career aspirations of young women or young men (Patten & Parker, 2012). Due to these trends of women becoming increasingly active in higher education and in the work force, the way family responsibilities are shared is shifting. For instance, many women in the work force now expect their partners to not only contribute financially, but also help with household and childrearing duties (Bianchi, Robinson, & Milkie, 2006; Harrington, Van Deusen, & Fraone, 2013).

The expectation for greater familial involvement from men clashes with traditional notions of a father's responsibilities. Traditional gender roles for fathers conceptualize men as economic providers, head of households, disciplinarians, and moral teachers (Goldberg, Tan, & Thorsen, 2009). These roles place men primarily out of the home and signify that a man's place is out in the workforce. These roles do not include notions of warm, close, or nurturing activities of the father which place him in the home and position household duties as a shared responsibility (Goldberg et al., 2009). However, with the increase in women in the workforce today, modern fathers are expected to be financial providers as well as be involved with their children, provide love and emotional support, and be present in their children's lives (Bianchi et al., 2006; Harrington et al., 2011). Even though gender inequality remains, and women still spend more time on household and childcare responsibilities, scholars suggest that fathers are beginning to be more involved in the daily household and childcare responsibilities (Galinsky, Aumann, & Bond, 2011; Harrington et al., 2013; Raley, Bianchi, & Wang, 2012).

These new expectations for fathers have led to some difficult challenges, especially regarding reports of increasing levels of WFC (Galinsky et al., 2011). Men report a struggle in part because their workplaces are out of sync with the realities of the increased expectation for them to be more involved in family life (Aumann, Galinsky, & Matos, 2014). Consequently, data suggest that men are experiencing higher levels of WFC than ever before (Galinsky et al., 2011). Furthermore, detailed reports indicate that certain populations of men are more at risk for experiencing WFC than others. Specifically, the reports suggest that men with children under

the age of 18 (i.e., fathers with young children) (Aumann et al., 2014) and men who are younger as well (under the age of 40) have the highest risks of WFC (Harrington et al., 2011). “Men are under increasing pressure to do it all in order to have it all – be dedicated employees in increasingly demanding jobs, good financial providers and involved family members” (Aumann et al., 2014, p.23). This may especially be true for men working in the sport industry (Graham & Dixon, 2014). It is likely then, that men in younger cohorts, especially those with children in the home, will experience higher levels of WFC and FWC than those men in older cohorts who have not been as subject to changing social norms.

### *Gender Role Changes in Work-Life Roles: Mothers*

Bruening and Dixon (2008) investigated coaching-mothers’ lives using a lifecourse approach (see also Elder, 1994; Moen, 2001, 2003). They found that work-life conflict remained high for mothers throughout their careers. However, coaching-mothers’ needs changed over the lifecourse, particularly as their children’s needs changed. When their children were younger, they needed more practical personal and organizational supports such as flexible schedules and dependent care allowances. As their children aged, and their career stage progressed, they needed more emotional and psychological support both at home and work to cope with increasing demands in both realms. Their work contributed to our understanding of both the individual and structural level influences and outcomes on the work-life interface, but did little to explore the socio-cultural influences.

The Kaleidoscope Career Model (KCM) is another framework that has been utilized for examining the work-life interface of coaches across time because it is structured around both gender and career stage. The KCM posits that men and women alter patterns in their careers and rotate various aspects of their lives based on their roles and relationships. Using a kaleidoscope metaphor, as the tube is rotated colored glass chips fall into different arrangements with one color being more visible and intense than the others at any given time. These colors represent three primary career needs or parameters that are said to influence employee’s career development and decisions: (a) authenticity, (b) balance, and (c) challenge (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006). Authenticity is defined as being true to oneself and making decisions that suit the self above others. Balance is described as making decisions so that the various aspects of one’s life, including work and non-work roles, form one coherent whole. Challenge emphasizes engaging in activities so that one can pursue autonomy, responsibility, and control while learning and growing (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).

These three career needs are important to employees and are active in an employee’s life (Sullivan, Forret, Mainiero, & Terjesen, 2007). However, across a person’s lifetime, career needs and priorities shift, resulting in career decisions (Cabrera, 2007). This could include individuals opting out of the workforce, downsizing one’s career (work hours), or accepting a lateral position or lower-level position (Sullivan et al., 2007). Sullivan and Mainiero (2007) used the KCM to study both men and women employees. They concluded women placed an emphasis on challenge in early career, balance in mid-career, and authenticity in late career. In contrast, men focused on challenge in early career, authenticity in mid-career, and balance in late career (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007). These findings helped describe women’s individual perspectives on their work-life needs, but they did not include a macro perspective on the socio-cultural or historical influences on women’s careers, nor did it include men’s perspectives.

Shaw and Leberman (2015) used the KCM to explore the career patterns of female CEOs in sport. Their investigation revealed that women experience nuanced and complex changes over their careers. Their life circumstances strongly impact those changes, supporting contentions that work-life issues remain salient for women throughout their career, albeit in different ways and due to varying factors. The authors argue that using career accounts provides focus for the consistent construction, de-construction and re-construction of women's career, taking into account changes to career structures in which constantly evolving macro-economic and social forces have led to the development of non-traditional, multi-directional careers and the greater integration of women in the workforce (Baruch, 2006).

Hartzell (2016) utilized a combination of lifecourse and career stage models to examine the multi-level influences on women's career longevity in athletic administration. She found strong historical and cultural impacts on women's career experiences. For example, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex in federally funded educational institutions (NCAA, 2016). Hartzell found that women in Pre-Title IX cohorts had lower career aspirations early in their careers, which were impacted by their perceptions of what roles were available to them in athletic administration. She also found that women in higher positions tended to come from areas of the country that were more politically and socially progressive or liberal. These results are congruent with other findings in sport management that suggest that socially defined gender roles have a strong influence on women's career trajectories (see Burton, Barr, Fink & Bruening, 2009; Eagly & Karau, 2002).

In summary, the literature on men's and women's changing work and social roles suggests that balancing career and family is challenging for those who pursue careers in intercollegiate athletics. It also points to a need for exploration of this issue that combines perspectives on gender and lifestyle. That is, it is important to study coaches' work-life interface for both males and females as expectations for gender roles change over time. Different age and gender cohorts are likely to experience different societal expectations on both their work and family roles. Older generational members may be influenced more by traditional notions of parenting roles, whereas younger parents may be influenced by neoliberal notions of mothering and fathering. Capturing both gender and age is important in examination of these shifting gender roles and expectations. Using career and gender cohorts, this study attempts to answer the call to examine the work-life interface for men and women coaches across the entire career in intercollegiate athletics rather than at one point in time. The following research questions guided this study:

*Research Question 1:* What are the levels of WFC and FWC for male and female coaches across early, mid, and late career?

*Research Question 2:* What are the differences between male and female coaches' levels of WFC and FWC across the career span?

## Method

### *Participants and Procedure*

Utilizing the College Coaches online database (2014), 4,933 head coaches of all sports working at Division I (DI) colleges and universities across the United States were asked to participate in the study. Participants were made aware that their responses would be kept

confidential and the study had been approved by the Institutional Review Board. A total of 1,038 surveys were completed and returned (21%). Upon reviewing the data, there were 198 surveys that contained no responses; these were eliminated from data analysis utilizing the listwise deletion approach. At the completion, there was a final sample of 840 ( $N = 840$ ) and a response rate of 17%. While the sample size may be considered somewhat small, power analysis for a MANOVA with three levels and two dependent variables was conducted in G\*Power to determine a sufficient sample size using an alpha of 0.05, a power of 0.80, and a small effect size ( $f = 0.10$ ) (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2013). Based on the aforementioned assumptions, the desired sample size is at least 486. Thus, for the analysis in this study, the sample size is robust.

Of the 840 coaches who responded to the survey, 64.5% ( $n = 542$ ) were male and 35.5% ( $n = 298$ ) were female. The majority of coaches ( $n = 682$ ) were White/Non-Hispanic (81.2%) and married or in a committed relationship (72.2%). There were 349 coaches (41.5%) without children living in the home under the age of 18. The coaches' age range was 22-74, with an average age of ( $M = 45.9$ ;  $SD = 10.11$ ). Coaches' occupational tenure averaged ( $M = 14.5$  years;  $SD = 10.55$ ). Career stage frequencies indicate male coaches in early career ( $n = 39$ ), mid-career ( $n = 229$ ), and late career ( $n = 203$ ) and female coaches in early career ( $n = 68$ ), mid-career ( $n = 132$ ), and late career ( $n = 63$ ). Additional demographic information is displayed in Table 1.

### *Measures*

All participants received an online survey requesting them to provide information as it related to work and family conflict, coaching experience, and demographics. In an effort to ensure content validity, a panel of experts was used and included individuals who had conducted research on the KCM ( $n = 4$ ) and individuals proficient in survey development ( $n = 2$ ). Also, a pilot test was conducted; surveys were sent to head coaches working at four different conferences within the NCAA DII membership.

### *Career/Cohort Variable*

The career stage model, often used in career development, categorizes employees into areas as to where they are in their career (Super, 1957). However, there is no clear consensus amongst researchers as to how career stages should be operationalized (Cohen, 1991). Much of the literature defines career stages by an individual's amount of work experience (Lam, Ng, & Feldman, 2012; Super, 1957). While time in the workforce is a salient option to measure career stage, age (Allen & Meyer, 1993; Drenzo, Greenhaus, & Weer, 2015; Lindstrom, 2011; Sullivan, Forret, Carraher, & Mainiero, 2009) and a combination of age and tenure (Allen & Meyer, 1993) has also been used to operationalize the career stages.

In the sport management literature, there is not a specific classification for the career stages of those working in intercollegiate athletics or coaching specifically. In the coaching profession, it is common practice for individuals to start their coaching career as an assistant coach; however, there are cases in which individuals begin their career as a head coach. Also, the timing in which an assistant coach becomes a head coach varies. For example, coaches may obtain a head coaching position right after college or some become a head coach much later in life.



Based on previous literature in coaching and career modeling, for the purposes of this study, the researchers combined age and tenure (assistant coaching and head coaching experience) to define the career stage variable of the head coach participants. Coaches 20-34 years of age and with 0-10 years of coaching experience were categorized as early career, coaches 35-50 years of age and with 11-20 years of coaching experience were labeled mid-career, and lastly coaches older than 50 years of age with more than 20 years of coaching experience were grouped as late career stage. For example, if a coach was 35 years old but has only 2 years of coaching experience, they would fall under the early career stage by combining tenure and age.

*Work and family conflict.* Netemeyer et al.'s (1996) 10-item scale was used to measure D-I head coaches' work and family conflict levels. Respondents were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*) their level of WFC and their level of FWC. In review, work-family conflict refers to the impact of work responsibilities on the family domain, while family-work conflict refers to the impact of family responsibilities on the work domain. A sample question addressing WFC read: "The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill my family responsibilities." For FWC, a sample question read: "Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties" (Netemeyer et al., 1996, p. 410). The items were reliable in past studies (e.g., Netemeyer et al., 1996;  $\alpha = .88, .86$  respectively). For this study, internal consistency for WFC was  $\alpha = .91$  and for FWC was  $\alpha = .90$ .

*Coaching-related variables.* There were 7-items created that focused on head coaches' experience. These included sport(s) coached, conference affiliation, number of years as a head coach, number of years as an assistant coach, gender of team they coach, and team's past success (win/loss and standings in conference).

*Demographic variables.* While we acknowledge that the term socio-cultural is broadly encompassing, for the purpose of this study, the specific dimensions examined are limited to age, gender, and presence of children living in the home under 18 years of age. It is generally accepted that work-family balance might be particularly challenging for coaches with children (Dixon & Bruening, 2007). Thus, it is important to assess whether the presence of children contributes to WFC and FWC and how that impact might differ for male and female coaches.

### *Data Analysis*

For this study, work and family conflict served as the dependent variables and gender and career stage served as the independent variables. In subsequent analysis, we added presence of children in the home as a third independent variable. Therefore, one main Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) statistical test was conducted to answer the research questions related to the work and family conflict, gender, and career stage. Because we were examining the more global nature of socio-cultural impacts (rather than individual level differences), other demographic controls were not included in the analysis.

## Results

### *Descriptive Statistics*

Research Question 1 addressed the levels of WFC and FWC for male and for female coaches across early, mid, and late career. Results of a t-test indicate in the overall group, WFC and FWC levels for male and female coaches were not statistically different. Male ( $M = 3.04$ ;  $SD = 1.12$ ) and female coaches ( $M = 3.08$ ;  $SD = 1.09$ ) experienced similar levels of WFC,  $t(788) = -3.84$ ,  $p = 0.701$ . FWC levels were slightly higher in male coaches ( $M = 2.03$ ;  $SD = 1.0$ ) than female coaches ( $M = 1.91$ ;  $SD = .897$ ), but differences were not statistically significant,  $t(788) = 1.551$ ,  $p = 0.121$ .

Further descriptive analysis suggests WFC was highest for male coaches in early career ( $M = 3.42$ ;  $SD = 1.04$ ) followed by mid-career ( $M = 3.12$ ;  $SD = 1.15$ ), and lastly late career ( $M = 2.90$ ;  $SD = 1.09$ ). Male coaches' levels of FWC were highest in early career ( $M = 2.46$ ;  $SD = 1.06$ ) followed by mid-career ( $M = 2.17$ ;  $SD = 1.09$ ) and late career ( $M = 1.81$ ;  $SD = .82$ ). For female coaches, WFC levels were highest in mid-career ( $M = 3.15$ ;  $SD = 1.05$ ) followed by early career ( $M = 3.11$ ;  $SD = 1.08$ ) and then late career ( $M = 2.97$ ;  $SD = 1.09$ ). Females reported FWC highest in mid-career ( $M = 1.92$ ;  $SD = .95$ ) followed by early career ( $M = 1.90$ ;  $SD = .90$ ) and then late career ( $M = 1.87$ ;  $SD = .82$ ). Results are further depicted in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

To determine any significant differences between WFC and FWC across the career span, one-way ANOVA was conducted. Results concluded for male coaches there was a statistically significant difference in the mean of WFC levels ( $p = .011$ ) and FWC levels ( $p < .05$ ) across the career stage. Post-hoc Tukey found significant differences between male coaches WFC levels between early and late career ( $p = .021$ ). Also, post-hoc Tukey indicated significant differences in male coaches level of FWC between early and late career ( $p = .001$ ) and middle and late career ( $p = .001$ ). Results for the one-way ANOVA concluded no statistically significant differences in the mean of WFC levels ( $p = .569$ ) and FWC levels ( $p = .941$ ) across the career span for female coaches. This suggests female coaches' levels of WFC and FWC does not significantly differ as they progress across the career span.

### *Multivariate Analysis of Variance*

Research Question 2 sought to determine differences between male and female coaches' levels of WFC and FWC across the career span. When reviewing results on the effect gender of the coach had on WFC and FWC levels at each career stage, MANOVA results show a significant multivariate main effect of gender in early career ( $\Lambda = .925$ ,  $F = 4.245$ ,  $df = 2, 104$ ,  $p = .017$ ) and middle career ( $\Lambda = .978$ ,  $F = 4.041$ ,  $df = 2, 358$ ,  $p = .018$ ). Non-significant multivariate main effect of gender was found for the late career stage ( $\Lambda = .999$ ,  $F = .154$ ,  $df = 2, 263$ ,  $p = .857$ ). Further post-hoc tests indicated gender has a statistically significant effect on FWC levels of coaches in the early career stage ( $F(1, 105) = 8.439$ ;  $p = .004$ ) and mid-career stage ( $F(1, 359) = 4.638$ ;  $p = .032$ ). Gender was not found to have a significant effect on WFC levels of coaches in early career ( $F(1, 105) = 2.173$ ;  $p = .143$ ), mid-career ( $F(1, 359) = .042$ ;  $p = .837$ ), late career ( $F(1, 264) = .218$ ;  $p = .641$ ) or FWC levels in late career stage ( $F(1, 264) = .258$ ;  $p = .612$ ).

The mean scores for WFC were not significantly different between male and female coaches in early career ( $p = .143$ ), mid-career ( $p = .837$ ) or late career ( $p = .641$ ). This implies

both male and female coaches, regardless of career stage, experience similar levels of WFC. However, the mean scores for FWC were significantly different between male and female coaches in early career ( $p = .004$ ) and mid-career ( $p = .032$ ), but not in late career ( $p = .612$ ). Data analysis shows male coaches ( $M = 2.45$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ) experience higher levels of FWC at early career stage than female coaches ( $M = 1.94$ ,  $SD = .936$ ) and when in mid-career, male coaches ( $M = 2.17$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ) again experienced higher levels of FWC than their female counterparts ( $M = 1.92$ ,  $SD = .921$ ).

When reviewing results of the effect presence of children had on WFC and FWC levels at each career stage for both male and female coaches, MANOVA results (see Table 2, and Figures 1 and 2) revealed a significant multivariate main effect of children present in the home for both male and female coaches' across the career span ( $\Lambda = .939$ ,  $F = 23.058$ ,  $df = 2, 710$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Further post-hoc tests indicated children present in the home had a statistically significant effect on WFC levels of male and female coaches' across the career span ( $F(1, 711) = 30.271$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Similar results were reported for FWC ( $F(1, 711) = 40.686$ ;  $p < .001$ ).

The mean scores for the WFC variable were higher for both male ( $M = 3.479$ ,  $SD = .135$ ) and female coaches ( $M = 3.552$ ,  $SD = .133$ ) in early career with children present in the home. Male coaches experienced higher WFC levels with children present in early career. Female coaches' WFC levels remained high across the career span with children present in the home. Results were similar with coaches' FWC levels, with both male ( $M = 2.508$ ,  $SD = .116$ ) and female ( $M = 2.408$ ,  $SD = .114$ ) coaches experiencing the highest levels of FWC in early career when children were present. Results also indicated male coaches' overall conflict levels declined later in their careers even with children present in the home. However, female coaches' experienced higher levels of WFC across the career span when children were present in the home. These significant findings suggest the presence of children in the home served as a moderator, meaning WFC and FWC levels were higher for male and female coaches at each career stage with children present in the home. However, the main relationship remained steady; that is, female coaches experienced higher levels of conflict across the career stages, with men experiencing the highest level of conflict in early career stage.

## Discussion

As noted previously, the purpose of this study was to employ a socio-cultural perspective to examine the work and family conflict of male and female coaches across the career span in Division I athletics. Utilizing a cohort analysis to study the work-life interface allows for a deeper understanding of the experiences of male and female coaches across the career span. Interestingly, coaches in this study experienced moderate to high levels of WFC and FWC across all the career stages regardless of gender. Although male coaches in the early career cohort experienced the highest levels of WFC and FWC, those levels decreased later in their careers. Female coaches' WFC and FWC remained steady across career stages. Both male and female coaches' WFC and FWC levels were impacted by the presence of children in the home. Clearly, as individuals and family situations evolve, the responsibilities of men and women in their family system also adjust. Furthermore, as men and women move through their career stage in search of new fulfillment, the effort to successfully balance work and family remains a challenge. That is, balancing work and family is not simply a challenge for women or men. Rather, both men and women of all life and career stages in Division I athletics face tension between their work and family responsibilities.

That being said, it is important to note the primary directionality of the conflict. Although both the men and the women in the study reported significant levels of WFC and FWC, the means of FWC were lower in early and mid-career stages. This indicates that it is most often the individual's work role creating tension in the family role, and less often that the family role is causing tension in the work role. This directionality is important to point out, as an individual's family role and work role can be demanding. The reduced FWC conflict reported by the respondents indicates that coaches may more often sacrifice their family role for their coaching role, thereby creating the increased WFC over FWC. Interestingly, the FWC reported by men in early and mid-career stages was higher than that reported by women.

These findings indicate that sport managers must realize the tension coaches in the department are facing. Athletic administrators must understand that women and men are both feeling socially induced pressure to be involved with their families to some degree, with the most pressure felt by those in early career stages, and those with children. While the most focus has been given to the pressures created by caring for young children, it is also possible that there will be increased pressure in caring for aging family members (Cabrera, 2007), which could partly explain why women's WFC remains relatively high across career stages.

The findings above also give further insight specifically into the lives of men in sport. The data suggest that male coaches who were early in their career (especially those with children in the home) experienced significantly more WFC and FWC than other male and female coaches who are in later career stages. These findings provide evidence to support studies conducted outside the context of sport that suggest younger men are most susceptible to conflict stemming from work pressures (Aumann et al., 2014; Harrington et al., 2011). It is clear that societal pressures continue to create expectations, and in many cases a necessity, for men to be more involved with familial activities. Men are slowly becoming more of a co-parent, co-financial provider, and co-homemaker and in general taking a more active role in the home (Goldberg et al., 2009; Jia & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2011). However, the socially induced pressure to be more involved in the home by itself is not likely the sole cause of increased experiences of conflict for young male coaches. As Pleck stated in 1977, "Expansion of the scope of the male family role without accommodating changes in the male work role will lead to role strain in men similar to the strains now faced by working wives" (p. 424). The sport industry culture tends to be less responsive to modern expectations of men (Graham & Dixon, 2014). As a result, a potential lack of flexibility, understanding, and support from the coaching role may be an important factor to consider in why younger men who are early in their career stage are experiencing increased levels of conflict.

This indicates that sport managers of intercollegiate athletics must take a dynamic view toward supporting the men working in their organizations. Creating blanket policies for all the employees in their organization may be less effective for supporting the men and women struggling to remedy conflict between work and family. Instead, organizations may need to support these individuals through cultivating a general work environment and work culture that allows for employees to fulfill familial roles in their own ways and on their own terms. Bruening and Dixon (2008) for example, found that just because resources are available to coaches to balance work and family, it does not mean that they feel comfortable using them. Research examining the WFB of athletic trainers in intercollegiate athletics suggests that the organizational climate, and the work environment specifically, has a great impact on reducing WFC among employees (Mazerolle, Pitney, Casa, & Pagnotta, 2011). By cultivating a climate of

understanding, support, and safety among coaches, men and women may be able to manage their work and family responsibilities in a way that fits the needs of their current life stage.

The data also recognize the continued need to support women in intercollegiate athletics. Although this study increases the depth in understanding of the experiences of men in sport, it also reaffirms previous studies that show the tension between work and family women within intercollegiate athletics consistently experience (Bruening & Dixon, 2008; Burton et al., 2009; Hartzell, 2016; Shaw & Leberman, 2015). Statistical testing failed to produce significant variations among female coaches in different stages of their career. However, women did report experiencing significantly high levels of conflict between work and family across their careers. This suggests that women experience significant *and* consistent levels of conflict throughout their careers. In contrast to men who reported higher levels of conflict early in their careers and lower experiences of conflict later in their careers, women reported experiencing conflict consistently through the career stages. This suggests that the majority of women in sport organizations are at risk for the negative outcomes of WFC and FWC, regardless of their career stage. This also points to a continued need for studying and understanding the needs of women in sport, as their struggles with balancing work and family is not likely to diminish.

Initiatives such as the NCAA's Life and Work Task Force, and suggestions for practice that came from that initiative, along with initiatives in the National Athletic Trainers Association, spurred by Mazerolle's work in athletic training (2011), have brought awareness to the issue of work-life balance among coaches and other athletic staff. Practical solutions such as establishing travel days as a countable athletics activity, creating recruiting boundaries (e.g., reducing the recruiting window calendars and creating more dead periods), and declaring one day of the week as non-athletic activity day for everyone in athletics may alleviate some of the time coaches spend working and travelling (NCAA Task Force, 2006). To date, no follow-up analysis or best practices regarding the implementation or effectiveness of policies and practices suggested by those initiatives have been reported by either group. Bruening and Dixon (2007) found that work supports such as flex-time, autonomy, paid maternity leave, and flexible travel arrangements for families helped with work-life balance. More systematic inquiry into the direct link between WLB practices and outcomes needs to be conducted.

Finally, it is important for organizations to recognize that they are comprised of multiple cohorts and generations of employees that co-exist in the work environment. This study provides evidence that there are generational, career stage, as well as gender differences in the context of the work-life interface (see also Shaw & Leberman, 2015). Consider that only approximately 20% of American families are made up of the traditional family structure, in which the husband works and the mother stays at home (i.e., the breadwinner-homemaker family) (Cohn, Livingston, & Wang, 2014). In comparison, 40 years ago, approximately 40% of households were structured in this fashion (Cohn et al., 2014). The traditional family structure is becoming more the exception than the rule for modern organizations. Therefore, it is important for athletic administrators to understand that their workforce has evolved and now has different needs than it once did.

Athletic administrators must provide the resources for coaches to manage work and family at all stages of their career, and athletic departments must promote a climate that supports coaches' need to balance work and non-work demands. Furthermore, they must recognize the evolving tensions male coaches' experience as they seek to find harmony between the traditional gender role of being a financial provider and the modern expectations that they be increasingly involved with their families. In fact, both Dixon and Sagas (2007) and Bruening and Dixon

(2007) argued that a supportive work climate, from the direct supervisor in particular, was the strongest factor in predicting work-life tensions. Other practices such as flexible time and place arrangements, extended performance timeclocks, and paid support for child and adult care are showing promise for reducing work-life tension in other fields (e.g., higher education, business; Feintzeig, 2014; Galinsky et al., 2011; Workplace Trends, 2015). Such practices could be applied to sport, yet as argued before, more work needs to examine the specific practices that are being utilized and the effectiveness thereof in a sport context. This study illuminates career trends, but is limited in its ability to speak to solutions toward reducing work-life conflict.

## **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

Cohort analysis proved to be a valuable lens for examining the work-family tensions of male and female coaches across the career cycle. This study, although it is based on a small response rate, provides evidence for the ongoing need for complex investigations and theorization of what is a multi-faceted and dynamic career and life progression.

Specifically, theory and empirical work – across sports, genders, cohorts, races, and collegiate divisions – needs to continue to address the needs and experiences of men and women, such that further nuances in the antecedents and outcomes of these coaches can be uncovered. For example, it is possible that some organizational-level policies and practices may be more effective at reducing conflict for men than for women, or for African-Americans than Latinos. Or, that some individual level supports or behaviors may be more suited for older than younger coaches, or for football vs basketball coaches.

Further investigation that includes additional socio-cultural variables and a decisively representative sample would prove valuable. In addition, work-life tensions are dynamic and change over the lifecourse. It is important that future investigations take into account not only lifestage differences, but also sociocultural differences including generation, cohort, resources, and background when understanding the work-family lives of coaches.

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Table 1  
*Descriptive Statistics for Coaches' Background Variables*

		Head Coaches ( <i>n</i> = 840)	
Background variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	542	64.5
	Female	298	35.5
<b>Age</b> ( <i>M</i> = 45.89; <i>SD</i> = 10.11)	21-29	34	4.0
	30-39	184	21.8
	40-49	262	31.0
	50-59	186	22.2
	60-69	71	8.6
	70+	5	0.5
	Missing	98	11.7
<b>Ethnicity/Race</b>	African American/Black	31	3.7
	American Indian/Alaskan Native	3	0.4
	Asian	7	0.8
	Caucasian/White	682	81.2
	Hispanic or Latino	14	1.7
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2	0.2
	Multiple Ethnic/Racial Background	9	1.1
	Other	5	0.6
	Missing	87	10.4
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	101	12.0
	Married	550	65.5
	Committed Relationship	65	7.7
	Divorced	33	3.9
	Widowed	2	0.2
	Missing	89	10.6
<b>Number of Children</b>	0	349	41.5
	1	113	13.5
	2	168	20.0
	3	68	8.1
	4+	25	2.9

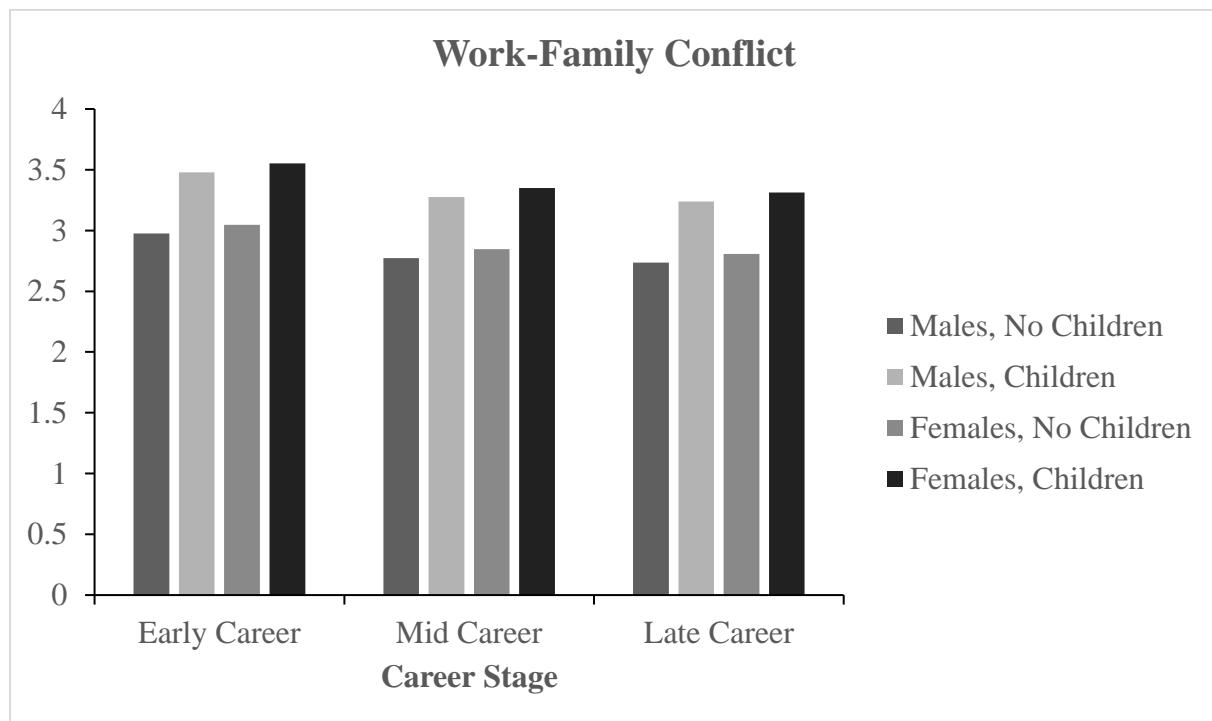


Figure 1. Mean scores for male and female coaches' work-family conflict (WFC) levels across the career span (with and without children in the home).

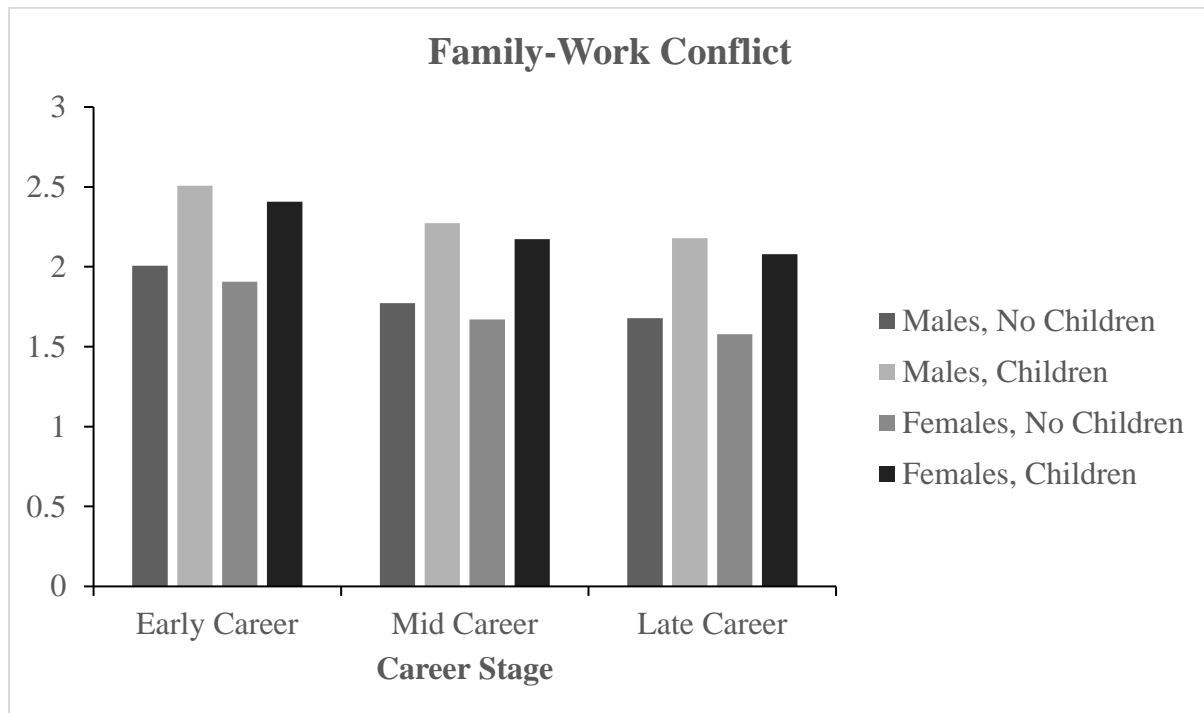


Figure 2. Mean scores for male and female coaches' family-work conflict (FWC) levels across the career span (with and without children in the home).

Table 2  
*Descriptive Statistics for Coaches' Conflict Levels across Independent Variables*

Dependent Variable	Career Stage	Children Present	Gender:	Mean
Work-Family Conflict	Early	No children	Male	2.976
			Female	3.048
		Children	Male	3.479
			Female	3.552
	Mid	No children	Male	2.774
			Female	2.846
		Children	Male	3.277
			Female	3.349
	Late	No children	Male	2.736
			Female	2.808
		Children	Male	3.239
			Female	3.312
Family-Work Conflict	Early	No children	Male	2.007
			Female	1.907
		Children	Male	2.508
			Female	2.408
	Mid	No children	Male	1.772
			Female	1.671
		Children	Male	2.273
			Female	2.172
	Late	No children	Male	1.678
			Female	1.578
		Children	Male	2.179
			Female	2.079