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# Work-Family Conflict in Korean-Americans

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**Work-Family Conflict in Korean-Americans**

by

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A Thesis

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### **Abstract**

Work-family conflict research has been lacking in regard to cross-cultural studies, with research being primarily composed of Western samples and studied by Western researchers (Poelmans, 2003). Similarly, demographics in America (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008) make no distinction on generations of Asian-Americans, categorizing these populations under one construct such as Japanese or Korean. While the research is limited, several personal accounts of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans (Gaertner, 2012; Kim, Huhr & Kim, 1993; Takeshita & Leong, 2007; Zeon, 1994) show the need to distinguish between the generations. This study explored the relationship between perceived work/family demand and work-family conflict, and how ethnicity and collectivism affected this relationship. Perceived work/family demand was explored as a mediator for the relationship between ethnicity and work-family conflict and between collectivism and work-family conflict. Results indicated that collectivism was a significant mediator of the relationship between demand and work-family conflict, whereas ethnicity was not.

*Keywords:* Work-family conflict, Korean-American, work interfering with family (WIF), family interfering with work (FIW), perceived work demand, perceived family demand, collectivism

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## **Work-Family Conflict in Korean-Americans**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, an Asian-American can be defined as a person with origins in the Far East, Southeast Asia, and/or the Indian subcontinent. Immigration status, citizenship (either by birthright and/or naturalization), acculturation, and language ability are some of the variables and characteristics that are used to define the “American” in Asian-American (Wood, 2006). More important to the proposed study than the definition of “Asian-American,” however, is the further distinction between generations of Asian-Americans. According to the Pew Research Center (2013), “first-generation” refers to a person born outside of the United States where neither parent was a U.S. citizen. Similarly, “second-generation” refers to people born in the United States with at least one first-generation immigrant parent. In addition, it is important to recognize the “1.5 generation;” while not as common, they are individuals who have immigrated to a new country before or during their early teens. These definitions and distinctions will be further explored in the following sections.

While there is a lack of research in the psychological field on the generations of Asians, many autobiographies and sociology studies have started looking at these distinctions. Holland and Palaniappan (2012), for example, brought up the unique issue that, while Asian-American citizens are the fastest growing racial/ethnic group in the United States, much of America’s knowledge of their health has been determined by studies that either grouped Asian-American individuals together, or simply examined one of these small subgroups alone. This is further exacerbated when considering that when national health data are reported, they are often reported for/as an aggregated group. When aggregating a race into one category, misleading phenomena may start to appear. For example, in 2009, the NHS reported that Asian-Americans have a lower

prevalence of heart disease. However, when breaking down the data, Holland and Palaniappan found that only two specific Asian-American subgroups (Asian-Indian and Filipino) actually had a higher prevalence of coronary heart disease.

In 2008, the U.S. Census Bureau gathered demographic characteristics of Asian subgroups in the U.S. and found that more than half of each Asian subgroup were foreign born; 69.3% of Chinese-Americans were foreign born, 57.3% of Japanese-Americans were foreign born, and 72.7% of Korean-Americans were foreign born. Within each of these subgroups, even larger disparities were found regarding English proficiency: 46% of Chinese-Americans spoke English less than “very well,” only 24.8% of Japanese-Americans spoke English less than “very well,” and 46.1% of Korean-Americans spoke English less than “very well.” With such large disparities of Asian-Americans being foreign born, and having language barriers, there should be an even further need to distinguish between foreign born Asian-Americans who have an elementary-level grasp of the English language and American-born Asian-Americans that have English as their primary language.

The purpose of the present study was to explore the relationships among ethnicity, perceptions of work/family demand, and work-family conflict. This study also explored the potential effect culture (individualism and collectivism) has on work-family conflict and demand. Specifically, this study explored how different generations of Korean-Americans (1<sup>st</sup> generation vs. 2<sup>nd</sup> generation) perceive work demand and family demand, and how those demands influence work-family conflict.

## **Work-Family Conflict**

The interaction between work and family was a concept first documented sometime in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by S.J. Kleinberg. In the aforementioned study, Kleinberg (1989) explored working-class families in Pittsburgh between 1870 and 1907. While these dates may seem insignificant at first, they came at a pivotal ~40 years after the estimated end dates of the Industrial Revolution (Ashton, 1997). Kleinberg highlights one key aspect of the Industrial Revolution's effect on family: the source of income changing from an internal source to an external source. Oslen (1983) further pushes the importance of the industrial revolution's impact on the family and work relationship by indicating the start of a "sharp dichotomy" of work and family. The effects and influence the Industrial Revolution had on the world (and seem to continue to have) are seemingly unstoppable. By 2012, Greenhaus and Powell (2012) noted the increase in number of dual-career couples and single parents and argued that socioeconomic forces were a large contributor to the increase of both of these family paradigms.

To understand the mechanisms underlying the work-family dynamic, one must understand the theories behind work and family. The "boundary theory" was found to be one of the most influential and constantly refined theories regarding work and family (Lavassani & Movahedi, 2014; Oslen, 1983; Pleck, 1977); Lavassani & Movahedi (2014) defined this theory as the idea that social life can be divided into two interdependent sections: work and family. Pleck (1977) was one of the first to use the boundary theory in application with work-family conflict. However, it was Oslen (1983) that pushed Pleck's research further by clarifying that work and family are two separate but interdependent spheres. Lavassani and Movahedi helped interpret Oslen's work by summarizing that in the context of work and family relationships



(according to boundary theory), an individual cannot have different roles at the same time. The application of the boundary theory is an excellent way to understand the mechanics of work-family conflict.

**Work-family conflict defined.** To understand work-family conflict, one must first understand interrole conflict; Greenhaus and Buetell (1985) defined this as a form of role conflict in which sets of opposing pressures arise from participation in different roles. With this preliminary concept in mind, they defined work-family conflict as a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect.

In more recent times, work-family conflict has been dissected even further into two separate categories: work interference with family (WIF), and family interference with work (FIW). An example of work interfering with family (WIF) is the conflict that arises in an individual when their demands of work (overtime, too many hours, etc.) are incompatible and/or cause conflict with their family demands (being a parent, spouse, etc.). Conversely, an example of family interfering with work (FIW) can be the conflict that arises when an individual's family demands (such as being a parent/spouse) are incompatible and/or cause conflict with their work demands. The definitions of what constitutes as work and family demands will be explored in future sections of this study. While previous iterations of work-family conflict did not make a distinction with the directionality of the conflict's source, WIF and FIW are the answer to this ambiguity. Lu, Gilmour, Kao, and Huang (2006) stressed the importance of this distinction, arguing that both WIF and FIW are interrole conflicts on the work and family interface, and that the distinction lies in the direction or cause/effect of the conflict. Lu et al. elaborated further by

consulting a few previous studies on the directionality of work-family conflict (e.g., Aryee, Fields, & Luk, 1999; Matsui, Ohsawa, & Onglatco, 1995), citing strong evidence that different antecedents were related to different directions of work-family conflict. Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elfering, and Semmer (2011) further stressed the importance of distinguishing between the two types of conflict by citing meta-analytic evidence showing the different correlation patterns between WIF and FIW and the common outcome variables (e.g., Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Ford, Heinen, & Langkamer, 2007; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). In their own study, Amstad et al. found that WIF was more strongly associated with work-related outcomes and that FIW was more strongly associated with family-related outcomes.

Byron (2005) took the concepts of WIF and FIW into a larger scale, and conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis combining around 60 different studies to see the relative effects of work, nonwork, demographic, and individual factors on WIF and FIW. Consistent with Amstad et al. (2011), Byron found that work-related factors (such as hours spent at work, job stress, and schedule flexibility) were more strongly related to WIF and certain nonwork factors (such as family conflicts and stress) were more strongly related to FIW.

**Consequences of work-family conflict.** It is imperative that research pushes the understanding of work-family conflict because the consequences it can have on individuals can be very detrimental to health. Allen et al. (2000) found in their meta-analysis that work-family conflict had significant impacts on work outcomes, nonwork outcomes, and stress outcomes. This three-factor construct of outcomes was again seen in Bellavia and Frone's (2005) study, where they made similar distinctions between the three types of outcomes: work-related outcomes, family-related outcomes, and domain-unspecific outcomes (instead of stress

outcomes). Allen et al. found that work-family conflict was related the following work outcomes: job satisfaction, career satisfaction, organizational commitment, intention to turnover, absenteeism, and job performance. Specifically, work-family conflict was found to result in lower levels of job satisfaction, career satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job performance, and higher levels of turnover intent. They also found that work-family conflict resulted in lower levels of life satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and family satisfaction. In their final facet of outcomes (stress outcomes), the relationships between work-family conflict and all seven stress outcome variables were the strongest of the three factors of outcomes. They found that work-family conflict resulted in higher levels of general psychological strain, somatic/physical symptoms, depression, alcohol abuse, burnout, work-related stress, and family-related stress.

Amstad et al. (2011), in a more recent meta-analysis, found that work-related outcomes of work-family conflict may include decreased job satisfaction (e.g., Perrewé, Hochwarter, & Kiewitz, 1999), decreased organizational commitment (e.g., Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan, 2005), intention to quit (e.g., Shaffer, Harrison, Gilley, & Luk, 2001), burnout (e.g., Peeters, Montgomery, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005), absenteeism (e.g., Kirchmeyer & Cohen, 1999), work-related strain (e.g., Netemeyer, Brashear, & Boles, 2004), and reduced organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., Netemeyer, Maxham, & Pullig, 2005). Family-related outcomes of work-family conflict included decreased marital satisfaction and family satisfaction (e.g., Voydanoff, 2005), and increased family-related strain (e.g., Swanson & Power, 1999). Finally, the domain-unspecific outcomes of work-family conflict may include decreased life satisfaction (e.g., Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003), increased psychological strain and depression (e.g., Vinokur,

Pierce, & Buck, 1999), and a higher chance of substance use and abuse (e.g., Gryzwacv & Bass, 2003).

**Antecedents of work-family conflict.** Understanding the antecedents and predictors of work-family conflict is just as important as understanding the consequences. Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, and Brinley (2005) conducted a meta-analysis on work-family conflict as an entire construct (concept, antecedents, consequences); however, what separated Eby et al.'s research from others is the focus on the antecedents of work-family conflict. Similar to the meta-analyses done by Kossek and Ozeki (1998) and Allen et al. (2000), Eby et al. broke down the predictors of work-family conflict into three facets: work domain predictors, family domain predictors, and individual differences.

Regarding work domain predictors, Eby et al. (2005) found that individuals who are profit-driven, are self-employed, work unpredictable shifts and/or hours, and have greater work demands had higher levels of work-family conflict. Conversely, it was found that having a supportive organizational culture, supervisor, or mentor in an organization was found to reduce work-family conflict. In terms of family domain predictors, they found that individuals who have children at home, have higher family demands, and have less family support had higher levels of work-family conflict. In regard to personality, they found that individuals who had higher levels of neuroticism tended to have higher levels of work-family conflict. Conversely, individuals who were higher self-monitors, had Type A tendencies, and had less negative affect tended to report less work-family conflict. The relationships between work-family conflict and their antecedents/consequences will be further explored in the following sections.

## **Work and Family Demand**

One general theme from the meta-analyses of the antecedents and consequences of work-family conflict is that the variables mentioned can be categorized into either work or family demand. Yang, Chen, Choi, and Zou (2000) defined work demand as the pressures arising from excessive workloads and typical workplace time pressures. Similarly, they define family demand as the time pressures associated with tasks related to family, such as housekeeping and child care. However, Boyar, Carr, Mosley, and Carson (2007) argued that most of the measures used in assessing both work and family demand (e.g., Frone, 2000) were measuring predictors of demand and not actual demand, and that demand is a perceptual construct that accounts for an individual's overall view of his/her role responsibilities. The authors gave further examples of work and family demand being defined and conceptualized as objective constructs, such as number of hours worked and number of children at home (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Voydanoff, 1988). With this reasoning, Boyar et al. then differentiated demand from perceived demand, and defined perceived work demand (PWD) as a perception regarding the demand levels within the work domain. In other words, perceived work demand is how one perceives work demand; an example of this could be if one feels that their job requires too much of their time. Similarly, they also defined perceived family demand (PFD) as the perception regarding demand levels within the family domain. An example of perceived family demand might be if an individual feels their family requires too much or all of their attention and time.

Boyar et al. (2007) found in their study that PWD was significantly related to WIF, and that PFD was significantly related to FIW. In other words, perceived work demand resulted in higher levels of WIF, and perceived family demand resulted in higher levels of FIW. Consistent

with these results, Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesaran (2005) found that WIF had stronger relationships with work stressor variables, and FIW had stronger relationships with non-work stressor variables (such as family demand). Therefore, we can hypothesize that PWD will be positively related to WIF, and PFD will be positively related to FIW.

*Hypothesis 1: Perceived work demand (PWD) will be positively related to work interfering with family (WIF)*

*Hypothesis 2: Perceived family demand (PFD) will be positively related to family interfering with work (FIW)*

### **A Cross-Cultural History of Work-Family Conflict**

Poelmans (2003) noted a lack of cross-cultural research on work-family literature, stating that it is currently dominated by Western research using Western samples. While this was very apparent in 2003, it has advanced little in 2018. When searching for keywords such as “work-family conflict,” or even “work-family,” the first page of these searches on major databases such as Google Scholar and PsycNET are more than 80% to 90% from Western researchers and/or using Western samples.

An exception to this tendency to focus on Western samples was Yang et al. (2000), who took a cross-cultural look at work-family conflict between American and Chinese families. This study is one of the most cited and referenced studies exploring cultural aspects of work-family conflict. Yang et al. found that there was a significant difference between American and Chinese families with regard to family demand, work demand, and work-family conflict. According to their study, family demand was significantly greater for families in the United States than for families in China. They also found that the effect of family demand on work-family conflict was

greater in the U.S. than in China, whereas the effect of work demand on work-family conflict was greater in China than in the U.S.

Lu et al. (2006) found somewhat different results than Yang et al. (2000), however; Lu et al. compared work demand and family demand between Taiwanese and British samples and found that the Taiwanese sample reported greater work demand and family demand than the British sample. While Yang et al. did not distinguish the direction between WIF and FIW, Lu et al. did. As such, they found that the British sample had a stronger positive relationship between work demand and WIF, and they also had a stronger positive relationship between family demand and FIW. While the results were not similar to Yang et al., one theme was made clear: samples from Western cultures (U.S. and British samples) and Eastern cultures (Taiwan, China) significantly differed in their work demand, family demand, and work-family conflict.

**A closer look at the Korean-American population.** While large scale measures such as the U.S. Census Bureau capture an incredible range and overall sample size, their findings are usually not as specific as a more comprehensive measure (autobiography, personal interview, etc.). Answering formulaic questions such as “What is the person’s age?” or “What is the person’s race?” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018) will not yield as descriptive of a picture of an individual’s race and culture as an interview or personal account would. Fortunately, a small group of researchers recognized this need to further explore the unique aspects of different generational immigrants (in this case, Korean-Americans).

Waters (1990) argued that having an ethnic identity is something that makes one both special, and simultaneously part of a community. In a sense, it is both something that comes involuntarily through heredity and is a personal choice at the same time. Being Korean-

American, by this definition, is a unique situation in that they are both Korean by heredity and Korean and/or American by choice. This idea of a unique identity was further explored in Zeon's (1994) study of Midwestern Korean-American college students. Zeon found that the eight 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-American students that were observed tended to find solace and comfort in only other 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-American students. The Korean-American students noted that they were not entirely comfortable with their "Korean-ness" as they were surrounded by American culture, but living in a dominantly Korean home and family, ultimately finding comfort in people of similar situations. This phenomenon seemed to carry on into the early to mid-2000's, as found by Takeshita and Leong (2007), and by Gaertner (2012). Takeshita and Leong told stories of assimilation struggles, as told by fourteen different Asian-American students, and noted the pattern of a "changing concept of race in America." Similarly, Gaertner found in a small sample of 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans at Emory University that these students tended to get along best with other 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans. What was interesting about Gaertner's study was that it assessed a deeper level of self-identification of both the Korean and American aspects of these students, ultimately finding that they had a unique mixture of both Korean and American culture embedded within themselves.

In a more comprehensive look at generations of Korean-Americans, Kim, Huhr, and Kim (1993) found in their study of elderly Korean-Americans (primarily 1<sup>st</sup> generation) and young Korean-Americans (primarily 2<sup>nd</sup> generation) that their social and cultural differences were the most noticeable. Specifically, the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans had much more contact with American friends/neighbors (40% of them had American friends, 19% of them had close American neighbors, and 23% of them read American newspapers). Conversely, the 1<sup>st</sup>



generation Korean-Americans were found to be much less Americanized (20% of them had American friends, 6% of them had close American neighbors, and only 2.7% of them read American newspapers). A clear pattern seems to be emerging: Korean-Americans of different generations are clearly unique and should be distinguished for research purposes.

**Demand and work-family conflict in South Korea.** Korean-Americans are a population that is compelling to explore concerning work-family conflict due to the country's notorious reputation for their extreme work culture. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), South Korea was the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in hours worked in the entire world (OECD, 2017). On average, a South Korean individual worked 2,024 hours a year; by comparison, the average American worked only 1,780 hours a year. Aside from purely objective measures of work demand (such as hours worked), subjective measures such as perceived work demand are just as important to consider. While the research is severely lacking regarding this topic, Cho et al. (2008) outlined key aspects of the differences between South Korean and Western perceptions of work stressors. They argued that organizational factors (such as work demand) associated with depression in Western societies may differ from those in Korea, where cultural factors may exert a unique and alternate influence on the perception and/or experience of stress.

Similar to work demand, research regarding family demand and family-related conflicts in South Korea are extremely limited. While there is a small amount of promising research in work demand (e.g., Cho et al., 2008), research on family demand is almost non-existent. Even in past cross-cultural studies, the Eastern samples are primarily of Chinese descent. On top of that, these cross-cultural studies provided mixed results: Yang et al. (2000) found that family demand

were greater in the United States than in China, but Lu et al. (2006) found that their Taiwanese sample reported greater family demand than their British samples. With the limited amount of research, one can infer that perceived demand will be able to explain the relationship between ethnicity and work-family conflict. Consequently, this will result in perceived demand being more strongly related to work-family conflict for 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans and less related for 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans. Finally, the smallest relationship between demand and conflict will be for Americans of European descent. In other words, we hypothesize that perceived work/family demand will mediate the relationship between ethnicity and WIF/FIW.

*Hypothesis 3a: The relationship between ethnicity and work interfering with family will be mediated by perceived work demand*

*Hypothesis 3b: The relationship between ethnicity and family interfering with work will be mediated by perceived family demand*

A unique way to look at the relationship between demand and conflict is through the lens of individualism and collectivism. Hofstede (1984) defined individualism and collectivism as characteristics of a culture. Specifically, he stated that an individualist culture assumes individuals look primarily after their own interests and the interests of their immediate families. Conversely, collectivist cultures assume individuals (either through birth or in-group association) belong to one or more close groups from which they cannot detach themselves. Triandis (1984; 1994) explored this concept further by arguing that individualists prefer to have a clear distinction between their work and family roles, usually resulting in the demand from the work and family domains to be incompatible (Aycan, 2008). Similarly, Billing et al. (2014) concluded from their study that in individualistic cultures, members may feel guilty about taking time away

from their family for fulfilling their own ambitions, usually resulting in conflict of some sort. On the other hand, members of collectivist cultures view work as “a means” to contribute to family well-being.

Cho and Yune (2010) brought a fresh perspective to the Korean and Korean-American field of research by conducting a study on South Korean students and their adjustment to college life. They argued that, due to South Korea’s relative ethnic homogeneity, a distinct collectivism has evolved within their society. While Hofstede (1984) found that most Eastern Asian countries (South Korea included) were predominantly collectivist in nature, researchers such as Han and Shin (1999) and Park and Kim (2006) have found that South Koreans have been making a shift towards more of an individualistic set of cultural values. Cho and Yune note that this may be due to the increased Western influence on the economic, social, and political spheres within South Korea. Consistent with these findings, we can predict that ethnicity will be significantly related to and will be able to predict cultural values (collectivism).

*Hypothesis 4: Ethnicity will predict cultural values in that 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans will have lower levels of collectivism than 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans, but Americans of European descent will have lower levels of collectivism than both 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans and 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans*

We can infer from these theories (e.g., Hofstede, 1984) that Western cultures may experience both more perceived work demand and more perceived family demand due to their individualistic cultural values. Applying this interpretation to the current study, I hypothesize that perceived demand will be more strongly related to work-family conflict for individuals with

lower levels of collectivism. In other words, we hypothesize that perceived demand will mediate the relationship between collectivism and WIF/FIW.

*Hypothesis 5a: The relationship between collectivism and work interfering with family will be mediated by perceived work demand*

*Hypothesis 5b: The relationship between collectivism and family interfering with work will be mediated by perceived family demand*

## **Chapter II: Method**

### **Participants**

Due to the nature of this study, Korean-American participants were selected in part from a local Korean church (Korean United Methodist Church) in San Diego, California. The sample was chosen from this church because the parishioners are generally racially and ethnically homogenous (Dougherty, 2003) and generally contain individuals from different generations. The control group (Americans of European descent) was sampled using the data gathering program MTurk. MTurk was used for the Korean-American sample as well in order to maximize sample size. Research has shown that MTurk provides a reliable source of data, provides a demographically diverse participant pool, and overall provides an inexpensive and quick source of high-quality data (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). A breakdown of sample sizes and demographics is provided in the results section.

### **Procedure**

Korean-American participants from the Korean church were administered a survey through Qualtrics. The Korean-American participants were given an anonymous survey link via their Facebook groups, and were given instructions along with the link. The control group (Americans of European descent), along with Korean-American participants (not from the church) received the Qualtrics survey through MTurk. Respondents from the MTurk sample were compensated \$0.30 per completed survey. Responses from these groups were aggregated using Qualtrics, SPSS, Microsoft Excel, and R Studio.

## Measures

**Demographics.** Demographic data were collected to measure the following variables: age, gender, ethnicity, degree to which one is religious, and employment status. The survey listed multiple options for race: Korean-American, American of European descent, and Other. If the participant selected Korean-American, they were prompted to select from a secondary option: 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-American, 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-American, and Other (middle generations such as 1.5 or 2.5 generation Korean-Americans). Participants may experience ambiguity or confusion regarding generation selection so they were provided thorough definitions of all choices. The Pew Research Center's (2013) generational definitions were used; a first-generation Korean-American refers to a person born outside of the United States to parents neither of whom was a U.S. citizen currently living in the U.S.; a second-generation Korean-American refers to a person born in the United States with at least one first-generation immigrant parent; finally, a 1.5 generation Korean-American is a person that has immigrated to America before or during their early teens. Unfortunately, because of the severe lack of information and research on what a 1.5 generation Korean-American (indicated as "Other" in the survey) is and because of very limited sample size, data were collected from these individuals but were not a part of the main study. Degree to which one is religious was assessed using 2-items. These items asked participants "To what degree do you consider yourself religious?" and "How often do you attend religious services?" and were answered on a 5-point response scale, with the first item ranging from 1 (*not religious at all*) to 5 (*very religious*), and the second item ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*every week*). These two items were averaged so each participant had one religiosity score, which was then used for all analyses using this variable. Finally,

employment status was assessed using a 3-point response scale, ranging from 1 (*unemployed*), to 3 (*full-time employment*).

**Work-family conflict.** Work-family conflict was measured using Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian's (1996) 5-item measure. A 5-point response scale was used, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). An example of an item from this measure is: "The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life." Netemeyer et al. reported strong levels of internal consistency with their work-family conflict scale ( $\alpha = .89$ ). Similarly, our sample produced strong levels of internal consistency as well ( $\alpha = .88$ ). It is important to note that the construct "work-family conflict" was used interchangeably with "work interfering with family."

**Family-work conflict.** Family-work conflict was measured using Netemeyer et al.'s (1996) 5-item measure. A 5-point response scale was again used, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). An example of an item from this measure is: "The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities." Netemeyer et al. report strong levels of internal consistency with their family-work conflict scale also ( $\alpha = .89$ ). This study resulted in slightly higher levels of reliability ( $\alpha = .92$ ). It is important to note that the construct "family-work conflict" was used interchangeably with "family interfering with work."

**Perceived work demand.** Perceived work demand was measured using Boyar, Carr, Mosely, and Carson's (2007) 5-item measure. A 5-point response scale was used, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). An example of an item from this measure includes: "My job requires all of my attention." Boyar et al. reported strong levels of internal consistency

with their perceived work demand scale ( $\alpha = .91$ ). The sample in this study had similar levels of internal consistency ( $\alpha = .90$ ).

**Perceived family demand.** Perceived family demand was measured using Boyar et al. (2007) 4-item measure. A 5-point response scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) was used. An example of an item from this measure includes: “My family requires all of my attention.” Boyar et al. reported strong levels of internal consistency with their perceived family demand scale ( $\alpha = .83$ ). The sample in this study had strong internal consistency also ( $\alpha = .85$ ).

**Collectivism.** Collectivism was measured using Yoo, Donthu, and Lenartowicz’s (2011) 6-item measure. A 5-point response scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) was used. An example of an item from this measure includes: “Individuals should sacrifice self-interest for the group.” Yoo et al. reported strong levels of internal consistency with their collectivism scale for both American ( $\alpha = .85$ ) and Korean ( $\alpha = .89$ ) samples. For all ethnicity groups in our sample, we found slightly higher levels of internal consistency on the collectivism measure ( $\alpha = .90$ ). When broken down by the three ethnicity groups, results showed strongest internal consistency for 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans, ( $\alpha = .96$ ), followed by Americans of European descent ( $\alpha = .86$ ) and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans ( $\alpha = .62$ ) having lower levels.

**Carelessness.** Meade and Craig (2012) highlight the potential issue of data quality when using anonymous Internet surveys as a method of collection. Therefore, carelessness was measured using Meade and Craig’s method of using bogus items. Specifically, three bogus items with obvious answers will be embedded into the survey. An example of an item from this



measure includes: “All my friends are aliens.” A 5-point response scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) was used. All three bogus items had to be answered with a 1 (*strongly disagree*) or a 2 (*disagree*). However, due to the misinterpretation of the three carelessness scores (further detailed in the results section), only one of the carelessness items (question 2) was used. If a participant scored a 3 or higher on this item, they were removed from the study.

**Data analysis.** Means, standard deviations, and correlations were explored for all variables. In addition, mean differences among the three samples (1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-American, 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-American, Americans of European descent) were explored for several study variables. Regression analysis was also implemented, requiring a check of assumptions for linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using correlations and linear regression methods. Hypothesis 4 was also tested using correlations and a linear regression model. For Hypotheses 3a and 3b, the mediating effect of perceived demand was tested using a hierarchical regression model. Hypotheses 5a and 5b was also used to test for the mediating effect of perceived demand using a hierarchical regression model as well. In addition to hierarchical regression, mediation indirect effects were evaluated using bootstrapping (Preacher & Hayes, 2004).

## Chapter III: Results

### Descriptives

**Careless responding.** First, careless responses were analyzed to exclude individuals who responded carelessly. However, the results indicated that there was a potential misunderstanding for the bogus items. Specifically, the first and the last question did not have a clear answer according to Beach (1989), whereas the second carelessness question had a clear right or wrong answer. Specifically, the first question was “All of my friends are extraterrestrial beings” and the third question was “I currently possess multiple superhuman abilities, including immortality and super-strength” whereas the second question (“ $1 + 1 = 900$ ”) had a much clearer distinction on what a correct answer is. This was further supported when the results showed that the second carelessness question resulted in 85% answering the item “carefully” whereas for questions one and three, only 47% to 49% answered the items “carefully.” As such, we only used the second carelessness question as the criteria for a careful response.

**Sample descriptives.** The original, total sample size of the combined groups (church sample and MTurk sample) was 124 total participants. After removing participants who failed the carelessness measure (18 people removed) or selected “Other” (38 people removed), however, that number fell to 68 participants. The average age of those 68 participants was 31.87 ( $SD = 10.04$ ). The sample consisted of 27 females and 41 males, and 24 of the individuals identified as Americans of European descent and 44 identified as Korean-American. Of the 44 that identified as Korean-American, 22 identified as 1<sup>st</sup> generation, and 22 identified as 2<sup>nd</sup> generation. Of the 68 total participants, 47 of them indicated that they are currently full-time employed, 16 indicated part-time employment, and 4 indicated that they are unemployed and/or

looking for work. Of the 68 total participants, 16 were from the church sample and 52 were from the MTurk sample. When splitting both ethnicity and type of sample together, we found 24 Americans of European descent from the MTurk sample, 17 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans from the MTurk sample, and 11 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans from the MTurk sample. For the church sample, there were 5 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans, and 11 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans.

A Welch two-sample t-test was conducted between the MTurk sample and the church sample for the two dependent variables (WIF and FIW). Results indicated that there were no significant differences between the groups for WIF, but there were significant differences between groups regarding FIW; the MTurk sample had significantly higher levels of FIW ( $M = 2.86$ ) than the church sample ( $M = 2.11$ ),  $t(66) = -2.60, p < .05$ . Demographic differences between the two samples were assessed as well. There were no significant age or gender differences between the two groups, but there were some significant differences between the groups and their degree of religiousness, as well as employment status. As expected, the church sample had higher levels of religiousness than the MTurk sample ( $t(66) = 4.75, p < .05$ ). Interestingly, however, the MTurk sample was significantly more likely to be on the side of full-time employment than the church sample ( $\chi^2(3, N = 68) = 8.18, p < .05$ ).

When considering the effects of religiosity and employment status on the dependent measures (WIF, and FIW), analyses revealed no statistically significant effects, except for the effect of religiousness on WIF. Specifically, religiousness had a significant positive relationship with WIF ( $r = .29, p < .05$ ) but not with FIW ( $r = .17, ns$ ). Finally, employment status also had

no effect on WIF ( $F(3, 64) = 0.70, ns$ ) or FIW ( $F(3, 64) = 0.88, ns$ ). Thus, only religiousness will be used as a control variable when analyzing work-interfering with family.

Mean scale scores were assessed for the three different ethnicity groups (Americans of European descent, 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans, and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans). For perceived work demand, Americans of European descent scored the highest ( $M = 4.00$ ), with 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans scoring the second highest ( $M = 3.60$ ), and 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans scoring the lowest ( $M = 3.35$ ), however, the effect of ethnicity on perceived work demand was not significant ( $F(2, 65) = 2.74, ns$ ). For perceived family demand, Americans of European descent were again the highest scorers ( $M = 3.92$ ), with 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans again scoring the second highest ( $M = 3.44$ ), and 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans scoring the lowest ( $M = 3.14$ ); ANOVA results indicated that the three groups significantly differed from each other ( $F(2, 65) = 3.93, p < .05$ ). Next, we found WIF scores to be the highest for Americans of European descent ( $M = 3.29$ ), slightly lower for 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans ( $M = 3.19$ ), and the lowest for 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans ( $M = 2.92$ ), but the three groups did not significantly differ from each other ( $F(2, 65) = 0.91, ns$ ). For FIW, we found Americans of European descent to have the highest scores ( $M = 3.10$ ), with 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans being lower ( $M = 2.58$ ), and 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans having the lowest scores ( $M = 2.34$ ); these three ethnicity groups significantly differed from each other on the FIW scale ( $F(2, 65) = 3.31, p < .05$ ). Finally, for collectivism, we found Americans of European descent to have the highest levels ( $M = 3.67$ ), followed closely by 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans ( $M = 3.60$ ), and 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans having the lowest scores ( $M = 3.16$ ). On the collectivism scale, the three ethnicity groups did not significantly differ from

each other ( $F(2, 65) = 2.91, ns$ ). For a full look at full scale descriptives and correlations, refer to Table 1.

### **Hypothesis Testing**

**Demand and conflict.** Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 sought to answer whether demand (work and family demand) were positively related to work-family conflict (WIF, and FIW). A correlation analysis was done between these sets of variables. Considering the total sample, we found perceived work demand to have a strong, significant relationship with WIF ( $r = .63, p < .01$ ). The relationship between perceived family demand and FIW was also found to be significant ( $r = .37, p < .01$ ). Interestingly, results indicated perceived work demand to be significantly correlated to perceived family demand ( $r = .61, p < .01$ ) and FIW ( $r = .32, p < .01$ ). Similarly, perceived family demand was also significantly correlated to WIF ( $r = .35, p < .01$ ). Implications for these results will be discussed in the discussion section. Overall, we find support for both Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2.

**Ethnicity.** With Hypothesis 3a, we predicted that the relationship between ethnicity and WIF would be mediated by perceived work demand. Using Baron and Kenny's (1986) method of conducting mediation analysis, we first analyzed the relationship between the main predictor (ethnicity – dummy coded) and the main outcome variable (WIF), controlling for religiousness, using regression analysis. This relationship, however, was found to be not significant ( $\Delta F(2,64) = 0.58, ns$ ), as ethnicity did not predict anything about WIF. Next, because some researchers believe the path from the predictor to the criterion does not need to be significant for a mediation analysis (Shrout & Bolger, 2002), we tested the relationship between the mediator variable (perceived work demand) and the predictor (ethnicity). As noted earlier, ethnicity did not predict

work demand ( $R^2 = .08$ ,  $F(2, 65) = 2.74$ , *ns*). Because ethnicity was neither related to work demand nor WIF, there was no mediation effect of work demand between ethnicity and WIF. Therefore, we find no support for Hypothesis 3a.

Hypothesis 3b predicted that the relationship between ethnicity and FIW would be explained largely by perceived family demand. Using Baron and Kenny's method, we first analyze the relationship between ethnicity and FIW. This overall relationship was found to be significant ( $R^2 = .09$ ,  $F(2, 65) = 3.31$ ,  $p < .05$ ). However, group differences were found only for factor 2 (dummy coded as factor 2 = 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans vs. Americans of European descent,  $\beta = -0.34$ ,  $t(65) = -2.50$ ,  $p < .05$ ; and factor 3 = 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans vs. Americans of European descent,  $\beta = -.23$ ,  $t(65) = -1.72$ , *ns*). Next, we tested the relationship between ethnicity and the perceived family demand. This relationship was significant ( $R^2 = .11$ ,  $F(2, 65) = 3.93$ ,  $p < .05$ ). As previously noted, factor 2 ( $\beta = -.37$ ,  $t(65) = -2.77$ ,  $p < .05$ ) was significant but factor 3 ( $\beta = -.23$ ,  $t(65) = -1.69$ , *ns*) was not. Finally, a hierarchical regression was conducted, putting only ethnicity as a predictor in the first step, and both ethnicity and perceived family demand in the second step. Results indicated a significant change when incorporating the mediator ( $\Delta F(1,64) = 6.31$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .08$ ), and the regression weights of both factors to weaken. To further assess the effect of the indirect effect, bootstrapping was conducted. Results (using 1,000 simulations) showed that the indirect effect was significant ( $IE = -0.24$ , 95% CI [-0.51, -0.01]), indicating a significant mediating effect, supporting Hypothesis 3b.

**Collectivism.** Hypothesis 4 sought to answer whether ethnicity could predict collectivism levels. A regression analysis was conducted, where collectivism was regressed on a

dummy coded ethnicity variable (Americans of European descent was used as the comparison variable). The results showed that, ethnicity was not a significant predictor of collectivism ( $R^2 = .08$ ,  $F(2, 65) = 2.91$ ,  $ns$ ). Overall, these results do not support Hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 5a predicted that the relationship between collectivism and WIF would be largely explained by perceived work demand. Using Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation analysis method, we first assessed for the main effect between collectivism and WIF. Regressing WIF on collectivism, controlling for religiousness, yielded a significant relationship ( $\Delta F(1,65) = 13.66$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .16$ ). Next, the mediating variable (perceived work demand) was regressed on the predictor (collectivism). The results indicated that collectivism significantly predicted perceived work demand ( $\beta = .58$ ,  $t(66) = 5.73$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Finally, a hierarchical regression was conducted, putting only religiousness as the first step, then collectivism as a predictor as the second step, and finally religiousness, collectivism and perceived work demand as the third step. Results indicated a significant change when incorporating the mediator ( $\Delta F(2,64) = 10.12$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .10$ ), and the regression weight of collectivism to weaken and lose significance. To further assess the effect of the indirect effect, bootstrapping was conducted. Results (using 1,000 simulations) showed that the indirect effect was significant ( $IE = 0.27$ , 95% CI [0.09, 0.48]), indicating a significant mediating effect, supporting Hypothesis 5a.

Hypothesis 5b predicted that the relationship between collectivism and FIW would be largely explained by perceived family demand. A mediation analysis was again conducted using Baron and Kenny's method. The main effect between collectivism and FIW was found to be significant ( $\beta = .28$ ,  $t(66) = 2.36$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The relationship between collectivism and perceived family demand was also found to be significant ( $\beta = .45$ ,  $t(66) = 4.12$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Hierarchical

regression results of the last step of the mediation analysis indicated a significant change when incorporating the mediator ( $\Delta F(1,65) = 5.69, p < .05, \Delta R^2 = .07$ ), and the regression weight of collectivism to weaken and lose significance. To further assess the effect of the indirect effect, bootstrapping was conducted. Results (using 1,000 simulations) showed that the indirect effect was not significant ( $IE = 0.12, ns$ ) indicating no significant mediating effect. Overall, we found partial support for Hypothesis 5b.



## Chapter IV: Discussion

Hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported, showing that individual levels of perceived work demand and perceived family demand were positively related to levels of WIF and FIW, respectively. In other words, we found that high levels of perceived work demand resulted in high levels of WIF, and high levels of perceived family demand resulted in high levels of FIW. These results were consistent with past literature (e.g., Boyar et al., 2007); Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesaran, 2005). While not a part of the hypothesis testing, results also showed a strong correlation between perceived work demand and perceived family demand. The original authors of the scale (Boyar et al.) conducted discriminant validity testing on perceived work demands with other related scales, and perceived family demand with other related scales. However, they did not test for any sort of discriminant validity between the two perceived demands. One explanation for this could be that individuals are simply predisposed to experiencing both types of demand. Another interesting result was that perceived work demand had a much higher correlation with WIF than perceived family demand had with FIW. One explanation for this could be that the sample was far more individualistic than expected, leading to less family interfering with work. Another explanation for this could be that the perceived family demand did not have predictive validity with this particular demographic on family interfering with work. Future research should attempt to specify dimensions of perceived work and family demand into subfacets when predicting WIF and FIW. Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark, and Baltes (2011) introduce an extensive model of the antecedents of WIF and FIW, by breaking down work demand into 4 dimensions (role stressors, role involvement, social support, and work characteristics) and family demand into 4 dimensions (role stressors, role involvement, social

support, and family characteristics). They also incorporated personality (locus of control and negative affect) as a potential predictor, introducing a much more comprehensive predictive model of work-family conflict than the present study. Specifying subfacets of both work and family demand should give stronger predictive validity towards work-family conflict. One final future consideration would be to focus on the strong correlations between both WIF and FIW. The relationship between these two outcome variables were very strong and positively correlated. However, this relationship could have been due to the nature of the respondents' type of work, such as working from home or having flexible work practices. This relationship could have also been due to the respondents' family make-up, such as an individual having many children or being a single parent. Future research should focus on incorporating both the type of work, and family structure/make-up.

Hypotheses 3a and 3b focused on the relationship between ethnicity and both WIF and FIW. We predicted that these relationships would be largely explained by perceived work and family demand. Results were mixed, as ethnicity was a poor predictor of WIF but not for FIW. Specifically, results showed that there were significant group differences between Americans of European descent and 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans in their levels of both perceived family demand and family interfering with work. Perceived family demand was also found to be a significant mediating variable in the relationship between ethnicity and FIW, potentially explaining the group differences between ethnicities (particularly Americans of European descent and 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans). Hypothesis 4 introduced collectivism into our work-family study and found that, surprisingly, the three ethnicities (Americans of European descent, 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans, and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans) did not differ

significantly in their levels of collectivism. While there weren't too many studies on levels of collectivism in Korean-American immigrants of the U.S., literature has generally stated (e.g., Hofstede, 1984) that Eastern Asian individuals have higher levels of collectivism than Western individuals. One possible explanation for the results of Hypotheses 3a, 3b, and 4 is that 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans in the present sample were far more Westernized than the average Korean-American. As someone who grew up in this particular Korean church community, it was very apparent that the large majority of them were heavily influenced by Western culture. Future research should look into sampling multiple Korean-American communities, as well as controlling for variables such as English language proficiency (Kim et al., 1993) and years lived in America.

As such, Hypotheses 5a and 5b explored collectivism as a predictor of WIF and FIW, and perceived demand being a potential explanatory variable for this relationship. Results found support for these two hypotheses (only partial support for Hypothesis 5b), implying that higher levels of collectivism led to higher levels of work-family conflict and perceived demand, and that perceived demand is the primary influence behind this relationship. Collectivism should be a focal predictor of work-family conflict for a few reasons. First, the current study found main effects between collectivism and work-family conflict, but mixed results for ethnicity and work-family conflict. Second, literature (e.g., Yang, 2005) indicates that collectivism and individualism are much more explanatory and deep-rooted in the work-family balance than ethnicity would be. Finally, with the lack of research on Korean-American generational differences, collectivism and individualism measures seem to capture the intricacies of how Korean-Americans blend both values of their Korean side and their American side. Future

research should look to identify other potential explanatory variables of Korean-American predispositions on work-family balance and conflict.

Overall, the results from this study contribute to the literature in a few different ways. First, the results further the work-family conflict literature in the context of Korean-Americans. Specifically, we found the previously researched relationships between perceived work demand and WIF, and perceived family demand and FIW to be significant for Korean-American individuals. Second, this study explored predicting work-family conflict with both collectivism and ethnicity, which were a relatively unexplored part of work-family conflict and Korean-American literature. Third, the results indicated that, contrary to previous literature, 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans, 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans and Americans of European Descent did not differ in their levels of collectivism. These unexpected results could mean that Korean-Americans and Americans of European Descent are more culturally similar than previously researched.

### **Limitations**

One of the largest limitations our study faced was the sample. A small sample size occurred for a few different reasons. First, narrowing our main study into three ethnicity groups (Americans of European descent, 1<sup>st</sup> generation Korean-Americans, and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Korean-Americans) disqualified a large portion of potential participants. Second, the church sample yielded only 16 responses, when we were expecting closer to 100 responses (the church population averages around 200-300 people). Future research on this topic and sample should focus on increasing response rates and garnering more attention towards the study. While the

study yielded certain significant results, we would have much more statistical power in these results with a larger sample size.

Another limitation of this study was that the measures used were completely self-report. One of the biggest problems with self-reported data comes from self-report bias (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002). This bias (sometimes called social desirability), comes from the respondent wanting to respond in a way that makes them look as good as possible, resulting in them under-reporting less than desirable behaviors and over-reporting desirable behaviors. Future research on this study should attempt to incorporate an objective measure of work-family conflict, collectivism, and perceived demand.

Another issue in this study was that two of our predictors, perceived work demand and perceived family demand, were highly correlated with each other ( $r = .61, p < .01$ ). While these results could be stemmed from the fact that individuals are generally predisposed to experiencing high levels of both demand simultaneously (as noted above), these two measures could also be measuring similar constructs.

One final limitation to note was the nature of our ethnicity variable being a multicategorical independent variable. According to Hayes and Preacher (2014), the majority of statistical mediation analysis have been based on the independent variable being either dichotomous or continuous. As such, a potential explanation for the results of Hypotheses 3a being not significant could be that another statistical approach should have been used instead of Baron and Kenny's model.

## **Conclusion**

The current study contributed a few advancements and implications to the literature. First, our study was one of the first to explore work-family conflict with inter-generational differences. Previous cross-cultural literature either did not attempt to distinguish between generations of immigrants (e.g., Cho et al., 2008; Lu et al., 2006; Yang et al., 2000) or did not focus on work-family conflict (e.g., Gaertner, 2012; Takeshita & Leong, 2007; Zeon, 1994). Second, the results indicated that, contrary to previous literature stating that Eastern Asian individuals were more likely to be higher on levels of collectivism (Hofstede, 1984), Korean-American immigrants (both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation) are much more similar to Western levels of collectivism than previously measured.

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**Appendix: Table**

Table 1

*Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Perceived Work Demand	3.66	0.97				
2. Perceived Family Demand	3.51	1.00	.61** [.44, .74]			
3. Work Interfering with Family	3.14	0.96	.63** [.46, .75]	.35** [.12, .54]		
4. Family Interfering with Work	2.69	1.06	.32** [.08, .52]	.37** [.14, .56]	.62** [.45, .75]	
5. Collectivism	3.48	0.79	.58** [.39, .72]	.45** [.24, .62]	.48** [.27, .64]	.28* [.04, .48]

*Note.* *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .