

Others note that job type may also act as a surrogate measure for other important demographic context variables such as education, income, commitment, and identification with the work role which are, in turn, linked to work-life conflict and stress. Managers and professionals have been reported to be more highly educated, to receive greater remuneration, to spend more time and energy in the work role, to have greater job mobility and to be more highly committed to and involved in their work than their counterparts in non-professional positions. Each of these factors has been linked to an increased ability to cope with work-family conflict and stress, and more positive work outcomes (i.e. higher commitment, higher job satisfaction).

Parental Status and Work-Life Balance

A large body of research links the parental responsibilities of working couples to the incidence of work-family conflict (Bowen and Pittman, 1995 for a good review of this literature). Non-parent couples can act relatively independently as they do not have the constraints of caring for children. The addition of the parent role complicates the couple's life situation, however, as it places greater demands on them at the same time as it adds constraints.

The Approach Used in this Paper to Examine Gender Differences in Work-life Conflict

This paper takes a fairly unique approach to the analysis of gender impacts on work-life conflict by examining gender differences within job type and parental status. Gender and job type (operationalized as manager/professional versus non-professional) are considered simultaneously (the data are shown in Figure 5) to accommodate for the fact that in Canada job type and gender are highly confounded (Statistics Canada, 2000) with Canadian women being "compressed" into many of the lower paying positions within organizations. For example, in 1999, 70% of all employed women (versus 29% of employment men) worked in occupations in which women have traditionally been concentrated: teaching, nursing. One in four women worked in clerical or administrative positions (Statistics Canada, 2000).

Gender and parental status are also considered simultaneously in this analysis (the data are shown in Figure 6 (to accommodate the literature which suggests that "motherhood" is different than "fatherhood").⁴ Virtually all of the literature in the work-life arena notes that working mothers assume a disproportionate share of family responsibilities and that even in the new millennium society judges women's worth by their performance of family roles (i.e. mother, elder care giver, cook, homemaker) while men's merit is judge by their success as a "breadwinner." As Vanderkolk and Young (1991, pg. 45) note most eloquently:

"Even as women's attitudes and needs have changed regarding the world of work, corporate America has by and large been stuck in the '50s with a TV image of "Harriet" keeping the home together while "Ozzie" goes off to the office or the plant. The fact of the matter is that "Harriet" has now taken on both roles"

⁴The following references present arguments or data illustrating the difference impacts of motherhood and fatherhood: Vanier Institute, 2000, Statistics Canada, 2000, Hochschild, 1989, O'Neil and Greenberg, 1995; Bowen and Pittman, 1995