

Critique of a Research Article

Rachel Mernagh

Research Methods and Analysis

Alliance Graduate School of Counseling

Abstract

This paper describes and analyzes the research and results of Golden, Veiga, & Simsek's (2006) article, *Telecommuting's Differential Impact on Work-Family Conflict: Is There No Place Like Home?* by understanding the purpose, research methodology, research design, statistical methods, results, and discussion. It also looks for ways in which this data could impact evidence-based practices, highlighting that advances and developments in technology and workplace norms will have a significant effect on telecommuters in therapy today.

## Critique of Research Article

**Introduction of the Article**

The article, *Telecommuting's Differential Impact on Work-Family Conflict: Is There No Place Like Home?* by Golden, Veiga, & Simsek, (2006), looks at the effects of a person telecommuting, or working from home. The various effects include conflict caused by family interference with work and also work interference with family. The research lists three salient contextual factors: job autonomy, scheduling flexibility, and household size. The research found that there are trade-offs involved in telecommuting. Additionally, it found that job autonomy and scheduling flexibility had a positive impact on work-to-family conflict and household size had a negative impact on family-to-work conflict.

**Research Methodology**

For this research, the authors controlled “organization differences in telecommuting practices and work-family supportiveness” (Golden, Veiga, & Simsek, 2006, p. 1340) by studying individuals from one large highly technological firm. The firm employs over 34,000 people, of which, 12,610 telecommute. The study chose a random sample of 10% of the telecommuting staff, 1,261 people.

The people studied were contacted via email by a senior executive asking for their participation in a web-based survey. The survey results were anonymous and confidential. The survey received 454 responses that were appropriate to use in the results, representing 36% of the people selected.

The survey included two sets of six statements that the participants could then select a number representing how much they agreed with the statement (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Each set included three questions focused on time and three questions focused

on the strain placed on telecommuters. There was one set for work-family conflict and one set for family-work conflict.

### **Analysis of the Design**

This research design includes the necessary considerations in order to answer the question of the impact of telecommuting on work-to-family conflicts and family-to-work conflicts. The hypotheses formed were extensive and bidirectional allowing for greater insight into the questions regarding telecommuting in the 21st century, looking at both conflict within families, caused by work and conflicts in work, caused by families. This is an important factor and helpful to the goal of this research because the question at hand is looking into an active relationship between the two entities, work, and family life. The largest missing piece of information from this study and the questions asked in the research survey would be information and data pertaining to pre-existing conflicts, both family-to-work, and work-to-family.

### **Description and Analysis of the Statistical Methods**

Once the survey of the study participants was conducted, the researchers used the collected answers to calculate a series of averages among the participants. The research uses “additional evidence of their discriminant validity by conducting a series of confirmatory factors analyses” (Golden, Veiga, & Simsek, 2006, p. 1343). The research also concluded that the work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict were best represented as separate constructs. The statistical research results captured were then represented in two tables: (Table 1) Descriptive Statistics and Correlations and (Table 2) Hierarchical Regression Analysis for all Moderators. The method of calculating these statistics is provided in the article; however, it is quite complex.

### **Analysis of the Results and Discussion**

The results of this article looked at each hypothesis presented and compared the results to the original hypothesis. There were eight hypotheses in total. The results found Hypothesis 1 to be supported, the more individuals telecommute, the lower their work-to-family conflict. Hypothesis 2 was also supported; the more individuals telecommute, the higher their family-to-work conflict. Hypothesis 3a was partially supported; lower levels of autonomy enhance the effects of extent of telecommuting of WFC, higher levels do not” (Golden, Veiga, & Simsek, 2006, p. 1345). Hypothesis 3b was not supported. Hypothesis 4a was supported; for telecommuters with high flexibility, there is less work-family-conflict. Hypothesis 4b was not supported. Hypothesis 5a was not supported, but hypothesis 5b was; when household size is large, family-to-work conflict increases at a faster rate. These results, as a whole, lend insight into the impact of telecommuting on an individual’s work and family dynamics. The majority of the hypotheses were submitted; however, both supported and unsupported information lends to the goal of this research.

The discussion portion of this article offers the most insight into the research findings. It notes that telecommuters might face a zero-sum trade-off, meaning that there are pros and cons of telecommuting and they might be equal in measure. It also makes it clear that the hypothesis and findings do not vary based on gender, as some might have predicted that there would be a greater strain on females in particular. Another interesting finding is the correlation between job autonomy and work-to-family conflict. The research shows that the less someone might be intrinsically driven to do his or her work, the less likely for work-to-family conflict to arise. The limitations found include that the study is unable to provide knowledge about whether or not any form of conflict is reduced through telecommuting. My final critique of this study and the discussion portion would be the outdated information regarding available technology to

telecommuters today. This data could be outdated because of the rate at which technology, specifically, within the telecommuting sphere, as developed and evolved.

### **How the Study's Findings Could Inform Evidence-based Practice**

The APA Presidential Task Force on Evidence-Based Practice (2005, p. 273) states that evidence-based practice is “the integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of patient characteristics, culture, and preferences.” The findings from this research could assist clinicians in treating telecommuters and family members of telecommuters. In order to continue the development of evidence-based practices for telecommuters, clinicians must identify the client’s characteristics, background, presenting issues, and preferences in light of this research (Heppner, Wampold, Owen, Thompson, & Wang, 2016). This research could inform the evidence-based practice of many clinicians working with remote workers, freelancers, and telecommuters alike. Today there are many online options for jobs, and options will continue to increase as technology develops. This research could aid clinicians in approaching some of the conflicts that may arise in a person’s home from working in a non-traditional way, with greater accessibility to his or her family or significant others. This research could contribute greater to evidence-based practice if it included data of other types of telecommuters in different career sectors as well as information pertaining to the reduction of conflict related to telecommuting as well as updated data pertaining to new forms of technology and telecommuting standards. Many companies today offer more flexible schedules to employees to work from home one to two days a week. This would also be an important thing to assess, as it could change the data found dramatically. For clinicians, there should be an understanding of the duality in this topic and research, allowing for multiple experiences and outcomes. This is not a one size fits all topic.

References

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