

**Interested in Being an Athletic Director: Do Self-Efficacy and Work-Family Conflict Matter?**

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Although gender inequalities in occupations have declined, several professions remain segregated (Tomaskovic-Devey, Zimmer, Stainback, Robinson, Taylor, & McTague, 2006). Predominantly in sport, leadership diversification remains a salient endeavor (Brooks & Althouse, 2007; Cunningham, 2007) as women continue to be underrepresented (Acosta & Carpenter, 2010; DeHass, 2007). Historically, sport has been a field led by males (Anderson, 2002; Edwards, 1973; Sage, 1998) especially at the NCAA Division I Athletic Director (AD) position (Lapchick, 2009) with 89% led by males (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012). Several explanations, such as homologous reproduction, (Kanter, 1977, 1993; Lovett & Lowry, 1994; Stangl & Kane, 1991), family work balance (Inglis, Danylchuk, & Pastore, 2000), combining of athletic departments (Grappendorf & Lough, 2006; Sagas & Cunningham, 2004), gender role stereotypes and attitudes of leaders (Burton, Barr, Fink, & Bruening, 2009; Grappendorf, Pent, Burton, & Henderson, 2008; Kellerman & Rhode, 2007), and gender biases in mentoring and evaluations (Kellerman & Rhode, 2007), have attempted to explain the disparity between males and females in sport leadership position. Hence, the purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between work-family conflict (WFC), self-efficacy, and vocational interest. In particular, this study aimed to investigate the mediation effect of self-efficacy on the relationship between WFC and the vocational interest of senior athletic administrators (e.g., deputy AD, senior woman administrator (SWA), executive associate AD, senior associate AD, associate AD, and assistant AD) to become an NCAA Division I AD.

Work-family conflict refers to a type of interrole conflict wherein work and family responsibilities are not compatible (Boles, Howard, & Donofrio, 2001; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The conflict may stem from family responsibilities interfering with work duties or vice versa, causing strains on an individual's role or those around her or him (e.g., partner/spouse, children, or coworkers). While WFC literature has revealed positive outcomes such as family and job satisfaction, as well as negative outcomes such as stress, lower satisfaction, poor health, higher turnover rates, and lack of advancement (Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002; Boles, et al., 2001; Cutler & Jackson, 2002; Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Dixon & Sagas, 2007; Greenhaus, Parasuraman, Granrose, Rabinowitz, & Beutell, 1989; Hammer, Bauer, & Grandey, 2003; Hewlett & Luce, 2005; Wilson, 2003), it may be useful to examine how self-efficacy influences the relationship between WFC and vocational interest.

Using an extension of Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, social cognitive career theory (SCCT; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) was used to examine the self-efficacy and vocational interests of senior athletic administrators. Specifically in sport, SCCT has been used to observe women assistant coaches' intentions of becoming head coaches (Cunningham et al., 2007), student-athletes' intentions of entering the coaching profession (Cunningham & Singer, 2010), as well as undergraduate students' interest in entering the leisure and sport industry (Cunningham et al., 2005).

An individual's occupational pattern of likes and dislikes is known as vocational interest (Brown, 2002). These vocational interests are created when individuals are first exposed to activities as early as childhood. The likelihood an individual will pursue a given occupation is contingent on their vocation interest (Lent et al., 1994). If an individual is unable to apply their interest, they may select an occupational path that is less interesting and easier for them to perform (Brown, 2002). Accordingly, SCCT declares that vocational interests form when individuals believe they are competent and can produce valued outcomes (Bandura; 1986; Lent, Larkin, & Brown, 1989).

As such, an individual's self-efficacy predicts their ability to set goals, be persistent in their pursuit, and attain expected outcomes (Bandura, 1986). With a strong set of competent skills and sense of self-efficacy, scholars have revealed an association with various leadership outcomes, such as managerial ambitions (Cunningham, Sagas, & Ashley, 2003; Van Vianen, 1999), head coaching intentions (Cunningham et al., 2003; Cunningham et al., 2007), and managerial performance (Robertson & Sadri, 1993). Self-efficacy is known as one's conviction about their ability "to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391).

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Thus, we believe regardless of the influence of social interactions, task difficulty, and environmental factors, that WFC will work through one's self-efficacy and lead to a vocational interest in becoming a NCAA Division I AD.

Data from 167 NCAA Division I senior athletic administrators were collected through online SCCT questionnaires (Bandura, 1986; Cunningham et al., 2007; Doherty & Johnson, 2001). The measures for WFC, self-efficacy, and vocational interest were based on established scales and were measured on 7-item Likert-type scales. Cronbach's alpha for each of the scales were greater than .85, suggesting reliable measures of the construct.

After controlling for age and gender, results confirmed a significant bivariate relationship between all variables in the predicted relationship ( $p < .01$  for all). Using a strategy suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) to test for mediation, regression was used, and WFC ( $\beta = -.19, p < .05$ ) was significant in predicting vocational interest when controlling for age and gender ( $R^2 = 26.1\%$ ). However, when WFC and self-efficacy were used to predict vocational interest, the mediator, self-efficacy ( $\beta = .23, p < .01$ ), maintained its significance in predicting vocational interest. However, WFC was not significant ( $\beta = -.11, ns$ ), supporting the predicted mediated relationship ( $R^2 = 30.3\%$ ).

Significantly this suggests that when controlling for age and gender, WFC has a direct effect on vocational interest, self-efficacy is one significant process through which WFC will negatively impact an individual's vocational interest. Several implications may emerge from the findings presented above. From a theoretical perspective, this study supports SCCT literature that asserts vocational interests are formed when individuals believe they are competent (Bandura, 1986; Lent et al., 1989) and extends the literature by revealing social influences, such as WFC, may not hinder one's vocational interest when they have self-efficacy. As such, from a practical perspective, hiring managers should note the importance of one's self-efficacy, and thus should focus on increasing their successful experiences as athletic administrators. Additionally, while most suggestions for dealing with WFC have focused on reducing pressure or providing time or stress support, these findings suggest that reinforcement and/or development of an administrator's competence to be a successful leader may be a way to alleviate some of the negative outcomes of WFC.