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Choosing Between Work and Family: Analyzing the Influences of Work, Family, and Personal Life Among College Coaches

Jeffrey A. Graham, Ph.D.
University of Tennessee at Knoxville

Allison B. Smith, Ph.D.
University of New Mexico

Marlene A. Dixon, Ph.D.
Texas A&M University

Understanding the ways coaches choose to allocate personal resources among their competing work and family demands has important implications for sport managers and employees. This study examined how the influences of work, family, and personal life influenced how college coaches made decisions about family or work when forced to do so. Experimental vignette methodology was utilized to present college coaches (N = 2,265) with scenarios about competing family and work activities, among which participants were asked to choose. Classification and regression tree analysis was utilized to evaluate the responses. Results suggested coaches were most likely to choose work when work pressure was high, family pressure was low, no children were in the home, and the coach worked more than 50 hours per week on average. Participants were most likely to choose family when work pressure was low, young children were present in the home, and they worked less than 50 hours per week on average. The level of work role salience, NCAA division, average hours spent in the family role, and the number of children in the home also were influential factors.

Keywords: college coaches, work-family conflict, work-family balance, work pressure, role management

College sport is a demanding atmosphere in which coaches, athletes, athletic trainers, and support staff experience high levels of pressure and stress (Altfeld, Mallett, & Kellman, 2015; McNeill, Durand-Bush, & Lemyre, 2018; Thelwell, Wagstaff, Champan, & Kentta, 2017). Attention has been given to the health and well-being of student-athletes, with the NCAA, scholars, athletic trainers, and doctors providing insight and solutions for improving athlete well-being (Jewett, Kerr, & Tamminen, 2018; Warehime, Dinkel, Bjornsen-Ramig, & Blount, 2017). Less attention, however, has been given to the mental and physical well-being of coaches who also operate in this demanding environment. Despite the benefits of being employed in the coaching profession (e.g., motivation, joy of influencing others, the love and dedication to the sport and players; Lumpkin & Anshel, 2012; Mclean & Mallett, 2012; Mclean, Mallett, & Newcombe, 2012) being a college coach has been associated with conflicting demands, stress, burnout, and depression (Altfeld et al., 2015; Busser & Carruthers, 2010; McNeill et al., 2018). Thus, there remains a strong need for greater understanding of how to support the well-being of college coaches.

More specifically, scholars suggest there is value in gaining insight into how college coaches make decisions about the work-family interface (Dabbs, Graham, & Dixon, 2016; Graham & Dixon, 2017; Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Schenewark & Dixon, 2012). Bruening and Dixon (2008) give insight into these challenges:

A demanding organizational culture, or what scholars term the “greedy workplace” (e.g., demanding of long hours, excessive travel, and “face time”) has, and continues to, characterize many sport environments. As a result, those who work long hours (particularly when those hours are visible to supervisors and co-workers) and travel constantly for competition and recruiting have been viewed as ideal workers. These work patterns have come to be seen as “normal” and expected in order to be successful. (p.11)

College coaches facing these conditions must sometimes choose between work and family; yet little is known about how work, family, and personal factors influence decisions. Many coaches champion a family first mentality; however, when these stated priorities are placed in opposition to the culture of sacrifice and the high demands of elite sport, stated priorities and actual priorities can conflict (Coakley, 2015; Dungy, 2011; Graham & Dixon, 2017).

By gaining insight into how work, family, and personal factors influence the choices of college coaches regarding the work-family interface, practitioners and scholars will have greater insight into how best to support the well-being of college coaches, specifically in regard to work-family balance. The following sections outline some ways work, family, and personal factors may influence how college coaches make decisions between work and family.

Work, Family, and Personal Factors: Navigating Tensions and Making Choices

Work and Family Factors

Role theory suggests at any given time, an individual may engage in familial, occupational, or leisure roles (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Kahn et al., 1964). Sport management scholars have examined these roles, specifically focusing on work-family conflict, which is a specific form of role conflict which involves the family role and the work role (Bruening & Dixon, 2007, 2008; Dixon & Bruening, 2005, 2007; Dixon & Sagas, 2007; Graham & Dixon, 2014, 2017; Mazerolle & Eason, 2016; Palmer & Leberman, 2009; Schenewark & Dixon, 2012). When examining the interplay of the work and family roles, tension emerges when demands or requests from one life role come at the expense of another life role (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003). However, this felt tension is not entirely externally imposed. Rather, an individual's choices influence the directionality of this tension. That is, it is not until an individual decides to accommodate the requests of one life role (e.g., work) the incompatibility is imposed on the other life role (e.g., family), resulting in tension between the two life roles. Role pressure, role support, and role salience are three elements which may influence these decisions (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003).

Role pressure and support. Within a given life role there are various relationships with role partners (e.g., family members, friends, coworkers, managers) (Kahn et al., 1964). These role partners seek to influence the behavior of others through formal and informal requests on time, energy, attention, and focus (i.e., role requests). As an individual interprets pressures associated with a request, they also evaluate the potential external rewards or sanctions of the request. The magnitude, specificity, and intensity of a request often determines the seriousness of a request (Bliese, Edwards, & Sonnentag, 2017; Russo, Shteigman, & Carmeli, 2016). Rewards or sanctions resulting from compliance or noncompliance for a given request also are important factors (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). These outcomes can be communicated in a direct verbal manner, or in an indirect manner through the use of nonverbal communication (e.g., body language, facial expression, tone of voice). These factors combine to create role pressure for the person receiving the role request (Bliese et al., 2017; Russo et al., 2016). Based on the evaluation of these variables, the individual will choose either to comply with or reject the request.

For example, suppose an assistant basketball coach, who also is a mother, usually comes home from basketball practice in time to help her children with homework and dinner before the children's bedtime. If the team's head coach asks the assistant coach to stay late after practice to scout an upcoming opponent, the potential tension between the work and family role is in a latent state, until the assistant coach is compelled to comply or reject this request from the head coach, at which point it can become actual, rather than latent tension.

Along with the original request there will likely be a set of factors which either increase or decrease its pressure. The head coach may have exerted strong role pressure by saying the assistant coach's help in scouting was extremely important and necessary (i.e., increased the magnitude), there was no one else who could perform this task and they must do it (i.e., increased the intensity), or by explaining the assistant coach would not be required to go on the next scouting trip because they went on this one (i.e., increase the rewards for compliance). By

increasing the magnitude, intensity, and/or rewards of the request, the assistant coach's experience of role pressure also increases.

Alternatively, the head coach may have exerted a weak level of role pressure by explaining the assistant coach's help in scouting was not very important and not necessarily needed (i.e., decreased the magnitude), there were a number of other people who could perform the task and she must not do it (i.e., decreased the intensity), or by explaining there were no expected personal benefits to the individual for helping out (i.e., decrease the rewards for compliance). By decreasing the magnitude, intensity, and/or the rewards of the request, the assistant coach's feelings of role pressure are reduced. This example highlights how role pressure from influential role partners can affect decisions (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003).

In addition to role pressure, the support given by role partners also is important to consider when discussing the factors which influence decisions. Role support includes the help and assistance given in the work (family) role in order to help an individual improve the family (work) role. Work role support can be formal or informal, including workplace policies regarding flexible work schedules, childcare referrals, on-site childcare, leaves of absence, and other policies aimed at improving family life (Clark, Rudolph, Zhdanova, Michel, & Baltes, 2017). Informally, workplace support can be a manager who is able to relate to, understand, and generally empathize with the needs and responsibilities of the family role (Bruening et al., 2008). Research suggests a combination of policies and managerial support may help to create a culture in which the family role is valued and respected (Bruening & Dixon, 2007; Bruening et al., 2008). Research suggests individuals are more likely to take advantage of formal workplace policies in a family supportive culture (Clark et al., 2017), which then helps reduce employee absenteeism, work-family conflict, and turnover (Yuile, Chang, Gudmundsson, & Sawang, 2012). Family role support also is influential in this process (Bruening & Dixon, 2007; Pattusamy & Jacob, 2016). Family support is characterized by family members providing both emotional support (e.g., listening, understanding, and providing empathy) and instrumental support (e.g., assisting with responsibilities, discussing issues, etc.) for the work role and home role (Graham & Dixon, 2017; Pattusamy & Jacob, 2016).

Although we know in aggregate the relationships between role pressures, support, and various outcomes, we know little about how these pressures and supports manifest in daily decision-making, especially when people are in a situation in which they must choose between work and family. Naturally, in the normal scope of activities, college coaches are not always forced to place work above family or family above work. However, when these circumstances arise, it is expected role support and role pressure will influence the decision. Therefore, this study examined how role pressure and role support influenced how college coaches make decisions when asked to choose between competing work and family demands.

Role salience. In addition to external factors (e.g. role support and role pressure) influencing the decisions of college coaches, internal dynamics also are important to consider. According to role theory, individuals act as self-senders, governing and evaluating their own personal role behaviors (Kahn et al., 1964). As an individual's attitudes and beliefs about a given role intersect with their goals, values, and long-term self-interests, certain life roles gain and lose prominence in the hierarchy of role salience. This may be especially true when a given life role closely conforms to an individual's sense of identity.

Role identity suggests social roles in an individual's life form the basis for a person's concept of self (Stryker, 1987; Stryker & Serpe, 1994). The fit between a given life role and a

person's own conception of identity results in strong or weak levels of role salience (Callero, 1985; Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). Consequently, when an individual's identity closely matches with a life role, the individual will be motivated to act in ways which will strengthen and reinforce the characteristics of the person's identity (Hogg et al., 1995; Stryker & Serpe, 1994; Thoits, 1991). That is, a salient life role will likely increase the strength of the existing identity and intensify the self-sender message, resulting in an individual spending more resources (e.g., time, attention, emotion, energy) in the given life role (Greenhaus, Peng, & Allen, 2012; Stryker & Serpe, 1994). In contrast, if a person is forced to expend personal resources in a role which conflicts with their sense of identity, a certain level of internal strain will emerge as the required behaviors of the life role and the internal values and identity of the individual become increasingly discordant.

With the presence and importance of work in people's lives, it is not surprising work role salience and identity are closely linked. Research suggests identity formation is strongly associated with stability in career choices and satisfaction at work (Kidd & Green, 2006; Perrone, Ægisdóttir, Webb, & Blalock, 2006). Furthermore, research has found self-realization (or reaching one's potential), and self-exploration are likely to occur when an individual has a career based on their abilities, interests, talents, and personality, and when career identity is integrated into one's sense of self (Kunnen, Sappa, van Geert, & Bonica, 2008; Vondracek, 1995).

However, when role salience in work and identity are closely linked without taking other identities and areas of an individual's life into account, role engulfment and identity constriction can occur. Role engulfment happens when a single life role consumes an individual's personal resources, leaving little time for other activities or even behaviors which were associated with the person previously (Eifert, Adams, Dudley, & Perko, 2015). Particularly, this process of role engulfment and identity constriction can cause distress. For example, research in transition out of sport for student-athletes has found their athletic role engulfment causes immense amounts of distress, emotional turmoil, and anxiety when they finish their formal sport career (Adler & Adler, 1991; Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993; Lally, 2007; Smith & Hardin, 2018; Smith, Taylor, & Hardin, 2018).

Furthermore, previous studies suggest a high level of role salience in the work role is not only related to problems with role engulfment and identity constriction, but also higher levels of work to family conflict (Byron, 2005; Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997; Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark, & Baltes, 2011; Shockley & Singla, 2011). Less is understood, however, about how the salience of competing life roles may influence individuals' decision-making. This may be especially instructive in the context of sport, which is a vocation often associated with an ethic embodying high levels of dedication, sacrifice, and commitment to the team (Dixon & Bruening, 2005; Lumpkin & Anshel, 2012). In this setting, a high level of work role salience is expected (Lumpkin & Anshel, 2012).

In contrast, however, the family is used as a metaphor to evoke one's willingness to sacrifice for the team (e.g., the team is your family). Coaches even discuss their families as a way of modeling behavior for developing young people (Graham & Dixon, 2017). In fact, for many coaches, their stated priority is their faith and family come first (Dungy, 2011; Graham & Dixon, 2017; Holtz, 2006; Singletary & Carty, 2005). Thus, one might expect the family role also would have high levels of salience. However, the role conflict which occurs among college coaches demonstrates how emphasizing faith or family before coaching may be false or unrealistic. For example, Urban Meyer, former head football coach at the University of Florida

and at The Ohio State University, broadcasts a family first approach; however, he also was noted for spending time away from his family, working long and late hours, and missing much of his daughter's high school volleyball career, despite this "family" focus (Thompson, 2012).

When the coaching and family roles are set in opposition to each other, the effects of role salience are likely to be more clearly exhibited. Therefore, this study also examined how levels of salience for work and family roles can influence how college coaches make decisions about work and family.

Personal Factors

Sociocultural norms, gender norms, and the general culture of the sport industry shape and influence work-family conflict felt by coaches and administrators (i.e., Dixon & Bruening, 2005; 2007; Eberman & Kahanov, 2013; Mazerolle & Bruening, 2006; Mazerolle, Bruening, & Casa, 2008; Mazerolle, Bruening, Casa, & Burton, 2008; Pitney, Mazerolle, & Pagnotta, 2011; Taylor, Smith, & Hardin, 2017). Although working mothers feel a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment from their family and work roles, they also experience feelings of guilt, anxiety, and stress surrounding time away from their children (Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Palmer & Leberman, 2009). Taylor et al. (2017) found in their study of women in collegiate athletics that early in their careers, women report evaluating the value of starting a family and consider exiting collegiate athletic administration to pursue family life. In addition, emerging research suggests fathers are beginning to experience tension in the work-family interface as societal expectations for good fathering begins to include activities traditionally reserved only for mothers (Harrington, Van Deusen, Fraone, & Eddy, 2014). Specifically in sport, both qualitative and quantitative studies suggest male coaches, especially in the early career, are experiencing tension as they attempt to fulfill parenting and coaching responsibilities much in the same way female coaches have experienced (Dabbs et al., 2016; Graham & Dixon, 2017; Schenewark & Dixon, 2012). Despite the evolving role of the father at home, the societal expectations of men in the workplace have been less responsive to these changes (Clarksberg & Moen, 2001; Dixon & Bruening, 2005; Harrington et al., 2014; Lumpkin & Anshel, 2012), although research documenting these challenges in a specific sport context is still lacking. Clearly, balancing work and family roles impacts both male and female coaches (Allen & Finkelstein, 2014).

In addition to gender, other personal factors also have been linked to men and women trying to balance work and family demands, such as family life cycle, age, and job tenure. Psychologists have divided the family life cycle into five stages including transition to parenthood, preschool child, school-age child, adolescent child, and empty nest life stages (Erickson, Martinengo, & Hill, 2010); different tasks arise in each stage based on the needs and changes to the family structure which perpetuate varying degrees of role stress, thus creating an ebb and flow of work-family conflict (Allen & Finkelstein, 2014; Erickson et al., 2010). For example, Allen and Finkelstein (2014) found family life cycles were influential in work-life conflict in their study of 690 married/partnered employees. Specifically, the highest amount of work-family conflict occurred in early life stages when children in the home were under the age of five. In contrast, when employees entered the empty nester stage they experienced the lowest amount of work-life conflict (Allen & Finkelstein, 2014). Research also has found as the age of the youngest child in the family home increases, work-family conflict decreases as children become less dependent on the care of their parents (Bryon, 2005; Demerouti, Peeters, & van der Heijden, 2012). Consequently, examining how the presence and age of children in the home

might influence the decision making of college coaches may provide important insight into this aspect of the work-family interface.

Beyond family life cycles, it is important to understand how age impacts work-life conflict as the demographics of the workforce continually change with individuals remaining in the workforce longer than generations past (Allen & Finkelstein, 2014). Older workers are less likely to report negative spillover from family to work and negative spillover from work to family (Roundtree, 2004). Similarly, young professionals without children also experience less work-family conflict than those with children (Bryon, 2005). Furthermore, for women in coaching, age can be extremely salient. As women encounter their child bearing “clock” or years, this typically coincides with key years of their work role cycle or career advancement, causing more serious role conflict or even dropout (Bruening & Dixon, 2007, 2008; Dixon & Bruening, 2005, 2007).

Job tenure also can contribute to work-family conflict. First, individuals with longer organizational tenure (or seniority) typically have greater flexibility and are less likely to be required to work nights or weekends (Taylor, Siegele, Smith, & Hardin, 2018). This flexibility extends beyond just work hours to generally higher levels of job autonomy, which is associated with lower work-life conflict (Michel et al., 2011). Although in sport working nights and weekends continues to be status quo and part of the job, recent research on female conference commissioners demonstrates new findings of flexibility in this area. This research suggests female conference commissioners integrate their professional, family, and friend roles in ways those without positional power would be unable, benefiting their work and family roles (Taylor et al., 2018). However, these same conference commissioners expressed high levels of stress related to the responsibilities of the senior position, which increased work-family conflict (Taylor et al., 2018). The personal factors discussed above suggest gender, age, being a head or assistant coach, the average hours spent in the home, and the average hours spent at work per week may all come together to influence the work-family decisions of college coaches.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gain greater insight into how college coaches make decisions about the work-family interface. More specifically, this study sought to understand which of the various work, family, and personal factors discussed above influence college coaches when they are asked to make a decision between work and family, especially in a competing time allocation situation. The above background literature highlights how work, family, and personal factors come together and interact in ways which can potentially create tension for college coaches. In addition, it is clear in everyday life college coaches are not necessarily forced to choose only between family and work. There are a myriad of factors which cause tension and challenges for both the work and family role. However, at the heart of many studies examining work-family balance is this tension specifically between work and family. By simulating a situation in which college coaches were asked to choose either family or work, then measuring the various work, family, and personal factors involved, this study provides insight into the hierarchy of influences college coaches face when making a decision between work and family. With the above in mind, the following research questions guided this study:

1. In what ways do work-related factors influence how college coaches make decisions about work and family?

2. In what ways do family-related factors influence how college coaches make decisions about work and family?
3. In what ways do personal factors influence how college coaches make decisions about work and family?
4. In what ways do work, family, and personal factors interact to influence how college coaches make decisions about work and family?

By increasing our understanding of how individuals evaluate the factors influencing work-life decisions, and the ways in which these factors interact, scholars and practitioners will have a greater understanding of the precursors to other work-family outcomes (e.g., conflict, enrichment, balance). The findings also will provide insight into how certain factors may be more influential than others. This in turn will result in a greater understanding of potential strategies to support college coaches' well-being, especially in the context of balancing work and family.

Method

Modelled after Greenhaus and Powell's (2003) influential study in organizational behavior, this study utilized an experimental vignette methodology (EVM). EVM consists of giving study participants a vignette with the intention of measuring dependent variables. The vignette is meant to be realistic and gather insight into participants' intentions, attitudes, and behaviors after being exposed to the vignette. EVM has been used in multiple studies including questions regarding leadership (Sauer, 2011), business ethics (Hyman & Steiner, 1996), and entrepreneurial decision-making (McKelvie, Haynie, & Gustavsson, 2011), among others. Scholars favor EVM as a way to examine relationships among participants in a semi-experimental setting with increased levels of control which may not be possible in an actual real-life setting (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). Therefore, EVM is fitting for this study in particular because it provided participants with some level of experimental realism, while also allowing the researcher to manipulate and control independent variables (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). Furthermore, the EVM allowed the researchers to place college coaches in a competing time allocation situation in a consistent and controlled scenario in which responses could be measured and analyzed, which fit the goals of the study.

At the start of the questionnaire, college coaches were presented with a vignette outlining a situation in which they were planning to attend a family outing, but then their athletic director asked them to attend an unplanned meeting with an athletic department donor. It was not possible for them to participate in both activities. After reading the scenario, participants were asked to choose the activities they would allocate their time to (i.e., the family or the work activity). Naturally, in a true-life scenario college coaches are not often forced to choose only between work and family. However, by asking college coaches to make a decision in a competitive resource allocation scenario (i.e., one in which they must choose between only two options), we were able to simplify the decision making process, ultimately providing insight into decision making influences. To enhance transparency of the study, a full version of the vignette is provided in Appendix A.

During the creation of the scenarios, the research team was informed by their previous personal experiences and previous research (Hughes & Huby, 2004). The vignettes were then vetted by an expert panel of eight sport management scholars. Scholars were chosen based on

their familiarity with collegiate athletics, college coaching, and work-family balance literature. This vetting process was used to be sure the vignette was structured in a way that was realistic and relatable for as many participants as possible (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Gould, 1996; Hughes & Huby, 2004).

One weakness of this style of vignette (i.e., a paper people study) is it can lack immersive realism (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). In some EVM studies, realism is enhanced with technology such as videos, slideshows, or virtual reality. For the purposes of this study, the researchers decided against deeper levels of immersive realism to make the questionnaire as simple, streamlined, and to have a short completion time for college coaches, with the goal of decreasing the time demands of the questionnaire and increasing participation in the study (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Gould, 1996; Hughes & Huby, 2004).

That being said, the researchers wanted to ensure the activities in the vignette were important for college coaches, thus, presenting a realistic scenario from which to make a decision. To check this level of importance, once participants finished making a decision about which activity they would participate in, they were asked to rate how important the family activity and the work meeting would be in a real-life scenario. To check the family activity importance, we asked participants, "How important within your own family role do you think it would be to attend a family recreational outing, as described in the vignette?" The importance of the work meeting was measured in similar fashion in which participants were asked, "How important within your own work role would it be to meet with an influential athletic department donor, as described in the vignette?" Both questions were accompanied with a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) not at all important to (5) very important. The importance ratings provided by the participants indicated the recreational family outing ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.94$) and the athletic department donor meeting ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.05$) were both perceived to be important to the coaches in the sample.

Vignette Manipulations

In the vignette scenario, following a protocol outlined by Greenhaus and Powell (2003), each participant was presented with identical vignette language, only the level of support and pressure from work and family were adjusted to be either strong or weak. Strong work support was worded, "Your athletic director, who has generally been supportive of your need to meet your family responsibilities..." In the weak work support manipulation, "supportive" was adjusted to read "unsupportive." In the strong family support scenario, the wording read, "Your family, who has been generally supportive of your need to meet your work responsibilities ..." In the weak family support manipulation, "supportive" was replaced with "unsupportive."

We also adjusted the level of work pressure in each vignette to be either strong or weak. In the strong work pressure scenario, the wording read, "Your athletic director ... insists that your meeting with this donor is critical to the department." In the weak work pressure scenario, the wording was adjusted to read, "Your athletic director ... has indicated that your meeting with this donor is desirable, but not critical." In a similar fashion, the family pressure was adjusted. In the strong family pressure scenario, the wording read, "Your family ... insists that your presence at the family recreational outing is critical." In the weak family pressure scenario, the wording was adjusted to read, "Your family ... has indicated that your presence at this family recreational outing is desirable, but not critical." Adjusting the pressure from work, pressure from family, support from work, and support from family to be either strong or weak resulted in a total of 16

variations of the vignette. As a result, 16 different versions of the survey were created. In this way, differences in work support, family support, work pressure, and family pressure could be isolated and measured. Survey software ensured respondents were randomly assigned one of the 16 potential scenarios. Participation in each scenario ranged from 129 participants to 152 participants.

Additional Measures

Work support, family support, work pressure, and family pressure measures.

After reading the vignette, respondents were instructed to choose which activity they would attend with the following wording, "Given the situation described previously, and assuming neither activity can be rescheduled, which activity would you choose to participate in?" Respondents then selected either the meeting with the donor or the family recreational outing.

The effectiveness of the manipulations was checked by asking respondents about the supportiveness of work and family and the pressure from work and family (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003). To measure work support, participants responded to the question, "In the incident, how supportive was your athletic director of your need to meet your family responsibilities?" We instructed respondents to mark their perceived level of supportiveness with a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) not at all supportive to (5) very supportive.

The comparison of means test suggested the role support manipulations in the vignettes were effective ($p < 0.001$ in each case). Those who were presented with a strong work support vignette reported higher levels of athletic director supportiveness ($M = 3.32, SD = 1.06$) than those presented with a weak athletic director support vignette ($M = 2.67, SD = 1.25$). Family supportiveness was measured in a similar fashion, in which participants responded to the question, "In the incident, how supportive was your family of your need to meet your work responsibilities?" with a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) not at all supportive to (5) very supportive. Those who were presented with a vignette with strong family support reported higher levels of family supportiveness ($M = 3.79, SD = 0.99$) than those presented with a vignette with weak family support ($M = 3.16, SD = 1.16$).

The comparison of means suggests the role pressure manipulations in the vignettes were effective ($p < 0.001$ in each case). Pressure from work was checked with the following question, "In the incident, how much pressure is your athletic director placing on you to participate in the meeting with the athletic department donor?" We instructed respondents to mark their perceived level of pressure with a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) no pressure at all to (5) a great deal of pressure. Those who were presented with a strong work pressure vignette reported higher levels of athletic director pressure ($M = 3.84, SD = 1.08$) than those presented with a vignette with weak athletic director pressure ($M = 3.09, SD = 1.007$). Family pressure was measured in the same manner, only replacing "athletic director" with "family" and "meeting with the athletic department donor" with "recreational outing with the family." To measure responses, the same five-item Likert scale from work pressure was used. Those who were presented with a vignette with strong family pressure reported higher levels of family pressure ($M = 3.62, SD = 1.14$) than those presented with a weak family pressure vignette ($M = 2.94, SD = 1.04$).

Role salience measure. In addition to capturing which event they would participate in, the survey also asked respondents to self-report their work and family role salience. Work role salience was characterized as the psychological importance of engaging with the work role

(Greenhaus et al., 2012). Therefore, work role salience was measured with an adapted job involvement scale developed by Lodahl and Kejner (1965). The original scale has three-items, which was adapted by replacing “job” with “work.” The three items were: “I am very much personally involved with my work”; “The major satisfaction in my life comes from work”; and “The most important things that happen to me involve my work.” We instructed respondents to mark their level of agreement with each item using a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. After computing the reliability coefficient for the scale with all three items included, it was determined reliability was too low ($\alpha = 0.65$). However, after removing item one from the scale (i.e., I am very much personally involved with my work), the two-item scale reliability improved to an acceptable level ($\alpha = 0.74$). Therefore, the two-item scale was utilized.

Family role salience was measured with the same three item scale as was utilized above. However, “family” replaced “work” in the wording for each of the items. The reliability for the three-item scale was at an acceptable level ($\alpha = 0.85$). However, we removed the first item to be consistent with the scale used for work role salience, resulting in a modified scale reliability still at satisfactory levels ($\alpha = 0.89$).

Work, family, and personal measures. Finally, participants provided personal and work-related information about their coaching, family, and personal roles. These questions asked the participants to report their age, gender, race, marital status, presence of children, ages of children, average hours spent at home per week, which NCAA division they coach in, coaching position (i.e., head coach, assistant coach), sport coached, total years coaching, and average hours spent at work per week via continuous and categorical options.

Procedure and Sample

Once the survey instrument was completed and received Institutional Review Board approval, the survey was distributed among college coaches. We invited Division I, II, and III head and assistant coaches in the United States to participate in the study via publicly available email addresses. The email addresses were obtained by recording the email of head and assistant coaches listed in each school’s athletic department directory webpage. Initially, we invited 27,254 coaches to participate in the study. We sent two reminder emails in four-week intervals. In total, 3,181 individuals responded to the survey for a response rate of 11.67%. Once surveys with missing values were removed, 2,265 responses remained for a response rate of 8.31%. Although we sought a larger response rate, and took proactive steps to boost responses (e.g., sending multiple reminders, making the survey easy to access, explaining how research would be used, extending survey availability, assuring anonymity of responses), the response rate is notably low. This may not be entirely surprising given that online surveys historically have lower response rates than paper surveys (Baruch & Holtom, 2008; Shih & Fan, 2008; Turner, Jordan, & Sagas, 2006). With the above in mind, the response rate does achieve the guidelines suggested by Nulty (2008), who recommends a response rate of 3% or higher with a sample size of at least 1,000 participants. With total responses being over 2,000 and response rate over 8%, this helps offset some concerns and supports the application of the findings to the general population (Nulty, 2008). Demographic information on the respondents can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Participant Demographic Summary Information

Variable	Frequency (N=2,265)	Percentage
Age		
18 –35	1111	49.05
36 –50	765	33.78
51 +	389	17.17
Gender		
Female	832	36.73
Male	1433	63.27
Race		
White/Caucasian	2005	88.52
Black/African American	157	6.93
Hispanic/Latino	54	2.39
Native American	5	0.22
Asian/Pacific Islander	44	1.94
Marital Status		
Married	1380	60.92
Widowed	4	0.18
Divorced	79	3.49
Single/Not Married	802	35.41
Children in Home		
No Children	1093	48.26
1 Child	309	13.64
2 Children	507	22.38
3 Children	262	11.57
4 + Children	94	4.15
Age of Children		
No Children	1093	48.26
0-10	703	31.04
11-20	266	11.74
21+	203	8.96
Coaching Position		
Head Coach	1162	51.30
Assistant Coach	1103	48.70
NCAA Division		
Division I	799	35.27
Division II	525	23.18
Division III	941	41.55
Total Years Coaching		
0-10	1045	46.13
11-20	674	29.76
21+	546	24.11

Analysis

Classification and regression tree (CART) analysis was used to examine interactions in the data (Breiman, Friedman, Olshen, & Stone, 1984). To date, CART analysis has not been widely used among work-family scholars but has been utilized in a number of other fields including medicine (Patel et al., 2014), fitness (Riedel et al., 2014), agriculture (Elliott & Owens, 2015), and others. A CART analysis partitions data via a binary recursive algorithm developed by Breiman et al. (1984). As an alternative to logistic regression, CART analysis requires no pre-analysis data preparation, such as data normalization or checking for normalization assumptions. In addition, CART analysis is able to process categorical and numerical data, identifying interaction terms automatically. This feature of a CART analysis was specifically attractive to this study as multiple different types of variables were entered into the full model. In addition, CART analysis results are displayed graphically, which makes the findings accessible even for those with less experience in quantitative methods (Muller & Mockel, 2008). As a result, we felt the use of a CART analysis was a fitting statistical method to examine the data.

Upon application of the CART analysis, the original data were examined at each node for all possible splitting variables and all possible cut-off values. The decision tree begins with the initial split, which is determined based on the variable generating the highest level of differentiation for the outcome measure. That is, the initial split variable captures the highest level of distinction in respect to the outcome measure which can be had with the collection of variables entered into the model. Once a split variable is identified (i.e., parent node), two subgroups that are most different with respect to the outcome are chosen as the most appropriate variable as secondary nodes (i.e., child nodes) and are used in the decision tree (Breiman et al., 1984). The process of identifying variables and splitting the tree at these points is continued until no further splits can be made and thus, a maximum sized decision tree is created. When a variable is not selected for the decision tree it indicates the variable does not offer a high level of differentiation in respect to the outcome measure. However, a maximum sized tree often produces a model which over-fits the data (i.e., contains more variables than are likely meaningful; Breiman et al., 1984). Consequently, the CART regression tree in this study was restricted to four levels. For the purposes of this study, whether the coaches chose the family activity or the work meeting was used for the dichotomous splitting criteria.

Results and Discussion

The variables discussed above were simultaneously entered into the CART analysis. The graphical representation of the final CART illustrates these findings most clearly. The two figures below represent the final model depicting how the variables entered into the CART influenced the decisions of the collegiate coaches. Again, it should be noted how there are many external and internal factors influencing a college coach's decision outside of work and family which could not be accounted for in this study. However, by asking college coaches to make a decision in a competing resource allocation scenario, we are able to isolate and highlight the hierarchy of factors influencing college coaches as they negotiate work and family demands. With that in mind, work pressure proved to be the dominant factor for college coaches as they chose between the work meeting and family activity. Displaying the entire decision tree in a single figure was too cumbersome, however, so the final figure is represented in two figures.

Figure 1 shows the strong work pressure half of the regression tree and Figure 2 displays the weak work pressure line of the tree.

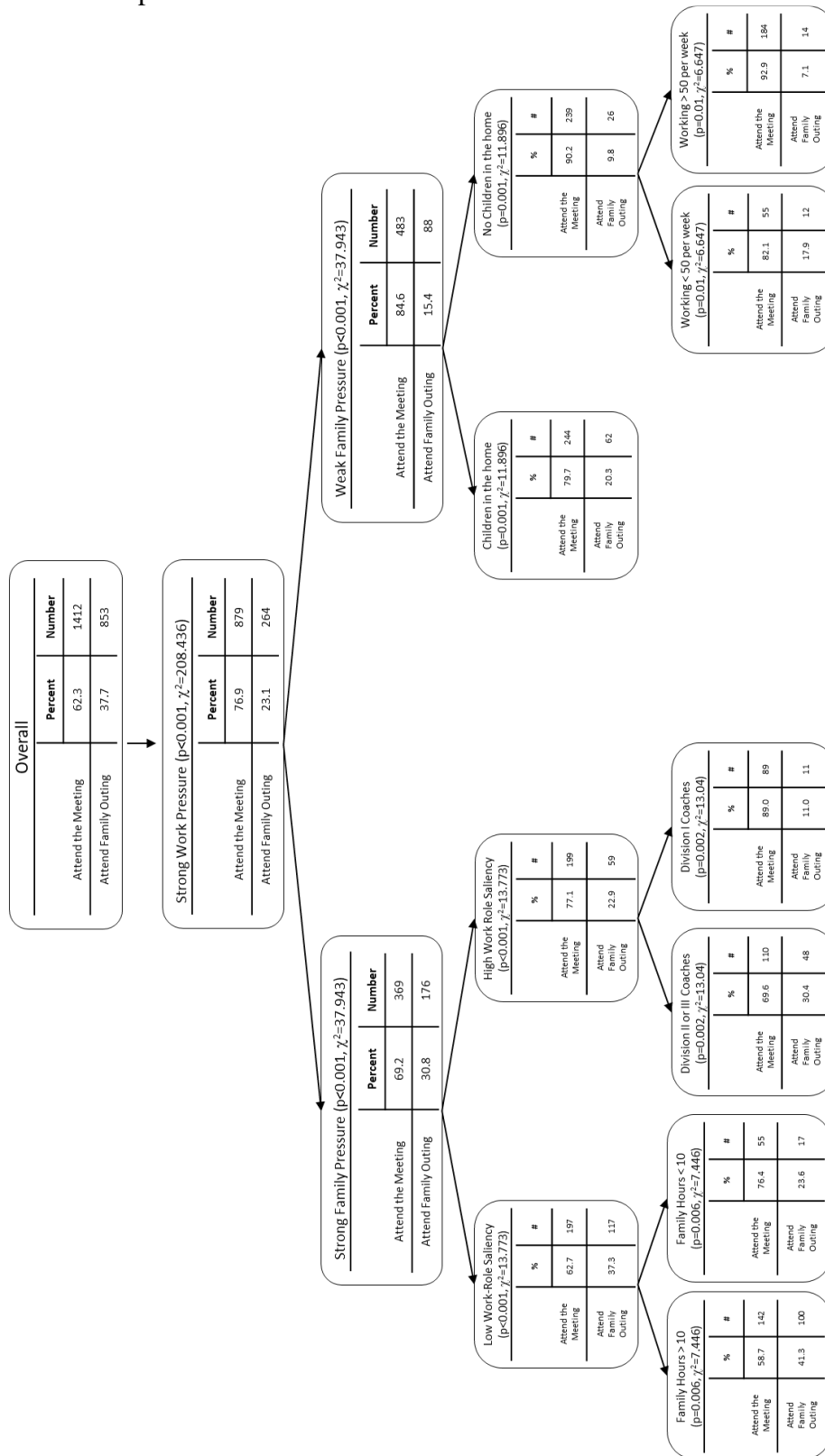


Figure 1. CART Model showing the strong work pressure split.

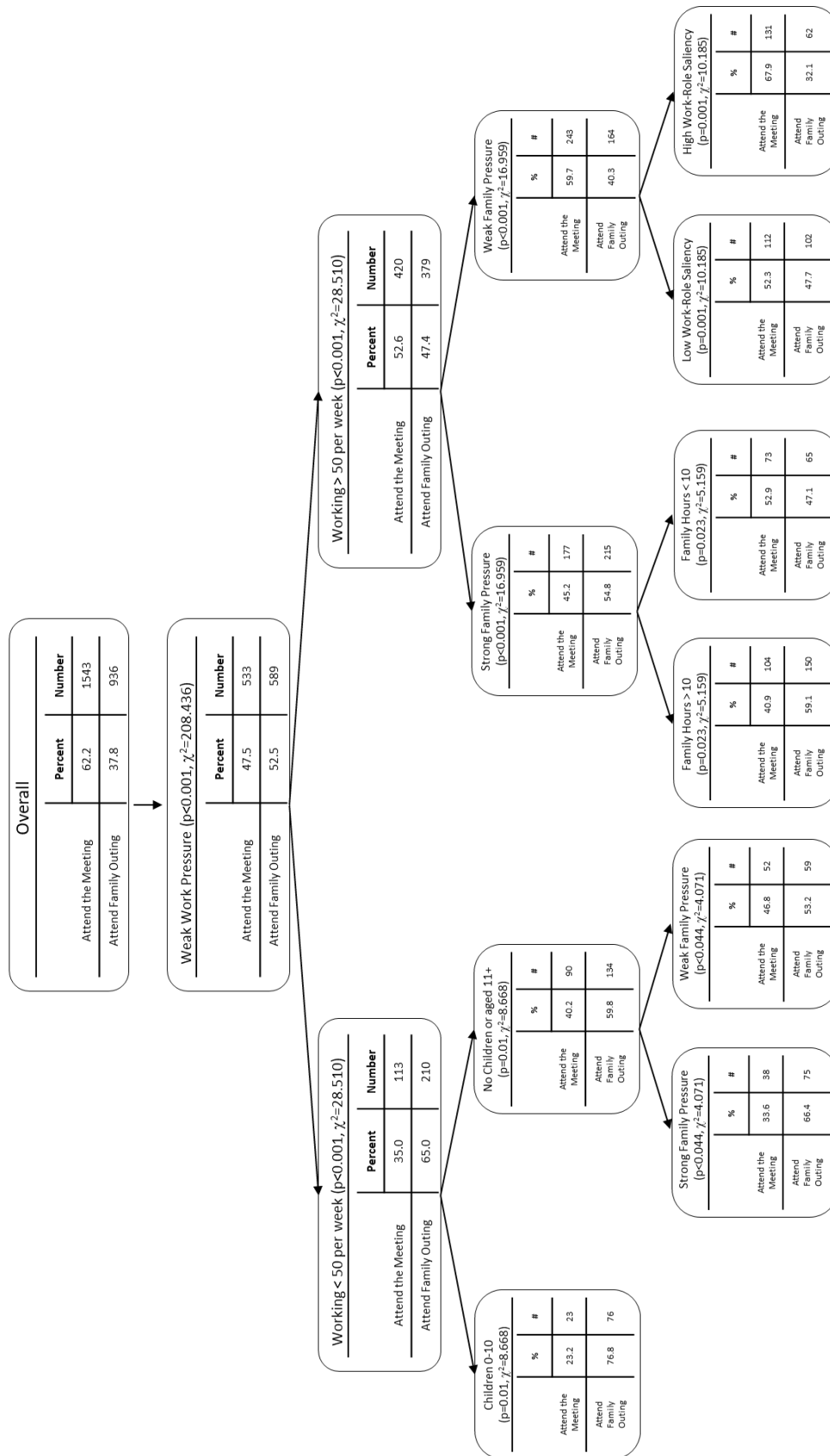


Figure 2. CART Model showing the weak work pressure split.

The results provide data on how coaches presented with a hypothetical vignette made decisions on whether to attend a work meeting or a family function. These findings provide insight into the complex set of factors that influence the decisions of college coaches. The nature of the CART analysis is to identify the strongest variables which influenced the decision split. The results are discussed in the following sections in order of the strongest to weakest influence, with accompanying analysis of both theoretical and practical implications for each level.

Level One: Strong Work Pressure

This study supports the important influence of role pressure on decision-making regarding the work-family interface. Previous studies have suggested that pressure stemming from various life roles may have a strong pull on the decisions individuals make about participating in family or work activities (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003). The CART analysis highlighted how pressure from work was the most influential factor among college coaches. More specifically, before any variables were entered into the model, 62.3% of the respondents chose to attend the work meeting. However, once strong work pressure entered the model, the number who chose the work meeting increased to 76.9%. In addition, when only weak pressure from work was present, the number choosing to attend the work meeting decreased to 47.5%.

These results are consistent with those in previous studies from industries outside of sport (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003). This suggests there is significant pressure for coaches to conform to the demands of their superiors and to the norms of the coaching culture, even when those demands are unplanned (Clarksberg & Moen, 2001; Dixon & Bruening, 2005). Although it seems employees in sport “understand” the non-traditional nature of the work hours, it is unclear from these findings if the role pressure from work was communicated explicitly or implicitly or if it was the result of felt rewards or pressures (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Level Two: Family Pressure and Hours Coached per Week

At the second level, family pressure and average hours coached per week were influential in determining if individuals would choose the family outing or the work meeting. It is important to remember at this second level the influence of work pressure is still being considered. In other words, these variables examine how in the face of strong or weak work pressure, family pressure or the average hours spent working per week influenced decisions.

Family pressure. The results indicate the influence of family pressure. When work pressure was strong, the next most influential variable was family pressure. That is, after a college coach considered the strong pressure from work to attend the unscheduled meeting, the family pressure was the next most important influence. This result is instructive in that it suggests for many college coaches, pressure from work has a stronger influence on work-family decisions than pressure from family.

In addition to the order at which work role pressure and family role pressure emerged in the model, the change in percentages in the chosen activity also is instructive to examine. When work pressure was strong, 76.9% attended the work meeting. However, when work pressure and family pressure were strong the number of college coaches choosing the work meeting decreased to 69.2%. In comparison, when work pressure was strong and family pressure weak, those choosing to attend the work meeting increased to 84.6%. This indicates that when the family role

does not pressure the coach to participate in a family activity, coaches are even more likely to choose the work meeting.

Work-family theorists suggest that within this tension between work and family pressures is where conflict between work and family are most likely to be seen (Dixon & Bruening, 2005). This study adds to the understanding of the complex dynamic between work and family conflict by indicating how influential work pressure among collegiate coaches can be. This study also highlights the influential role of family pressure, especially in a competing time allocation scenario. Clearly if the balance between work and family is to be maintained, the first place to begin is with examining the origins and management of strong work role pressure.

Number of hours worked per week. The findings also point to the potential influence of average working hours among collegiate coaches. In the presence of weak pressure from work, less than half the coaches chose to attend the work meeting (47.5%). This figure alone stands out as role theory would suggest when the pressure from work is weak only very few people would still choose to accommodate it (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Kahn et al., 1964). In this sample, however, nearly half still chose to attend the work meeting. The second most influential variable along this path gives additional insight into why this might be. When work pressure was low, 52.6% of college coaches who reported working on average 50 or more hours per week chose to attend the work meeting. Conversely, 35.0% of coaches who reported working between 20 and 49 hours per week chose the work meeting.

This result perhaps illustrates the influence of a person being used to working a certain number of hours per week when making decisions between work and family. This result suggests when coaches are used to working high volume hours (i.e., 49+ hours per week), they also are more likely to choose an additional work meeting, even if that meeting conflicts with existing family plans. However, when a coach is accustomed to working 20-49 hours per week, they are more likely to choose family in a competing time allocation situation. From a practical standpoint, this suggests that if a balance between work and family is to be maintained, college coaches must guard against the gradual spillover of the work role into the family role as unplanned work requirements emerge. Even though coaches, and often their families, are accustomed to long and non-traditional hours, they must negotiate the expectations around the boundary systems between work and family so that work does not encroach into the family role. Research suggests unplanned spillover of this kind has been linked with negative outcomes for an individual's health and relationships (Grzywacz, 2000).

In addition, this finding also may be explained through the lens of role engulfment. As discussed in the literature review, role engulfment happens when a single life role leaves little time or personal resources for other life roles (Eifert et al., 2015). Although in the current study role engulfment was not measured specifically, this finding may suggest there are certain college coaches who are experiencing high levels of role engulfment. Because the average number of hours worked per week was so highly associated with college coaches who would also choose the work meeting in a competing resource scenario, this may be an indication how some college coaches may be in a state of imbalance, in which the coaching role is leaving little room for other roles in their life. Research consistently indicates prolonged periods of imbalance have negative outcomes for individuals and the organizations they work for (Frone et al., 1992).

Level Three: Work Role Salience, Number of Children, Ages of Children, and Family Pressure

At the third level, three new variables influenced the final decisions, including work role salience, the number of children in the home, and the ages of those children. In addition, at this third level of influence, family pressure again influenced the decisions.

Work role salience. In this third level, work role salience emerged as the strongest predictor of choosing work or family in the presence of strong work pressure and strong family pressure. That is, when pressure from work and family were both strong, the level of work role salience was the strongest influence of how a college coach would choose between the work meeting or family activity. In the presence of strong work and family pressure, 69.2% chose the work meeting. When work role salience was high, the percentage choosing the work meeting increased to 77.1%. However, if work role salience was low, the number who chose to attend the work meeting decreased to 62.7%. This suggests after the pressure from family and work are factored into a decision, the coach's personal role salience with the work role had the strongest influence on whether they chose work or family.

This result is consistent with Greenhaus and Powell (2003) who suggested an individual's role salience can influence role behavior beyond messages perceived from role senders such as employers or spouses. That is, those with high work salience will act in accordance with that role more frequently because it is connected with their role identity (Thoits, 1991). Moreover, an individual who enacts a role satisfactorily based upon self-perception not only confirms and validates their status as a role member, but also may experience enhanced feelings of self-esteem and become more entrenched in the given role identity (Hogg et al., 1995; Stryker & Serpe, 1994; Thoits, 1991). Therefore, the coaches with high work salience who chose the work meeting likely incurred positive feelings of self-esteem by deciding to engage in their work role. These feelings of high self-esteem and satisfaction with their work role may also have been informed by their perceptions of the closeness and bonding within their co-workers as well as the further development of their work role identity. In turn, they may more frequently interact with their co-workers and diminish their social relations with others, including family, which is similar behavior described by role engulfment theorists and may be connected with the findings above discussing the influence of average hours worked per week (Eifert et al., 2015).

Number of children in the home. Some studies have reported having children can increase the felt tension between work and family (Bryon, 2005; Graham & Dixon, 2017; Palmer & Leberman, 2009). Although the number of children in the home acted as an influential variable in the context of strong work pressure and weak family pressure, it is important to note in this study the influence was only modest. This variable was divided between those who had one or more children in the home, and those with no children in the home. When pressure from work was strong and pressure from family was weak, 84.6% of the coaches attended the work meeting. This number increased to 90.2% when the coach also had no children in the home. However, when at least one child was present in the home, the percentage of coaches attending the work meeting decreased slightly to 79.7%.

Not only was the change in percentage from attending the work meeting to attending the family outing lacking in magnitude, this variable only became influential in the third level, indicating its lesser level of importance. This finding is somewhat surprising as it goes against

previous findings in which collegiate coaches have discussed the influence their parenting responsibilities have on them and how much they enjoy being with their families (Bruening & Dixon, 2007; Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Graham & Dixon, 2017). The current study suggests when collegiate coaches are forced to choose between work and family, work pressure and family pressure influence a coach's decision more strongly than having children in the home.

This result also is surprising as dominant gender ideologies often depict females as the only people concerned with issues of work-family balance. However, it is important to note although the presence of children in the home influenced the decisions of college coaches, this influence was independent of gender. This finding then does not support historical narratives of work-family balance only being a women's issue, and suggests these challenges are influencing both men and women in college coaching.

Ages of children in the home. Previous work has suggested not only the presence of children in the home can increase the tension between work and family, but also the ages of children can be influential (Allen & Finkelstein, 2014; Graham & Dixon, 2017; Palmer & Leberman, 2009). This study highlighted the ages of children in the home does influence the decision to choose work or family in a competing time allocation scenario. The age of children became influential in the third level, in the context of coaches facing weak work pressure and working an average of 20-49 hours per week. When coaches were faced with weak work pressure and reported working between 20-49 hours per week, they chose the work meeting 35.0% of the time. However, when these coaches also reported having children aged newborn to 10 years old, the percentage decreased to 23.2%, while 40.2% of coaches with either no children, or with children older than 10 years old, chose to attend the work meeting.

The presence of young children causing work-life conflict also has been found in the psychology literature. Allen and Finkelstein (2014) found during the early life stages when children in the home were under the age of five, individuals experience the highest amount of work-life conflict. This is important, especially because this was the scenario in which the lowest percent of coaches attended the work meeting. This result indicates when coaches have younger children in the home, typically work between 20 and 49 hours, and are not being pressured strongly from work to attend an unscheduled work event, they are more likely to attend a planned family event. This result fits with literature outside of sport suggesting mothers and fathers with young children, often via systems of co-parenting, are spending more time at home (Galinsky, Aumann, & Bond, 2011).

However, there were still 23.2% who chose the work meeting, even though they had young children, were facing weak work pressure, and typically worked 20-49 hours per week. This result extends our current understanding of the work-family interface by giving insight into the power work expectations and work culture have on the decisions of collegiate coaches. Even in a scenario which created a "clear path" to spending time with family, many coaches still chose work.

Family role pressure. At this level, the findings suggest family pressure is influencing decision-making among coaches who typically work 50 or more hours per week on average. When work pressure is weak, but coaches work 50 hours or more on average, they are likely to choose the work meeting 52.6% of the time. This number decreases to 45.2%, however, when faced with strong pressure from family to attend the family outing. But, when family pressure is low in this scenario, the number of coaches attending the work meeting increases to 59.7%. This

result suggests when the family role does not exert pressure to spend time with family, coaches who work 50 or more hours per week on average are more likely to choose a work meeting, even though work also has in essence “given permission” to attend the family outing. This finding also indicates the importance of families communicating and setting clear expectations about the appropriate level of boundaries between work and family (Zody, Sprenkle, MacDermid, & Schrank, 2006). If the boundary systems regulating the overlap between work and family are not explicit and held consistent, becoming either too diffuse or too rigid, conflict and dissatisfaction between the coaching and family role are likely to occur (Zody et al., 2006).

Additional Factors

As seen in Figure 1 and Figure 2, in the fourth level of the model hours spent in the family role and NCAA division had a small influence on the decisions of college coaches. These factors, however, only come into consideration after job and family pressures, role salience, hours worked per week, presence of children, and number of children in the home were considered. And, their impact on the decisions was modest.

It also is important to consider the variables which had no apparent influence on the decisions of college coaches. Two variables which were expected to influence the decisions of college coaches included support from work and support from family. Previous studies suggest support from either the work or family role may lead to a confounding effect (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003), which also may be present in this study. In some, experiencing support from family may lead an individual to choose work more often because they know their family has encouraged them positively in that role, alleviating the person’s feelings of guilt over dedicating personal resources (e.g., time, attention, energy) to the work role. For others, however, support from the family role for the work role may lead them to choose to reciprocate the level of support by becoming more involved with the family role. The same also may be true for work support, in which high levels of workplace support and understanding for the family role may lead college coaches to choose family, as one would expect. Alternatively, it also may be college coaches who experience high levels of workplace support for the family role choose to work more often in an effort to show appreciation for the support the workplace is providing. Naturally, questions remain about how support from the work role to the family role influences employee levels of commitment, productivity, and worker hours in the sport context. Consequently, understanding how different types and levels of work-family and family-work support influence intentions toward choosing work or choosing family will be important for gaining greater insight into the work-family interface.

Although work role salience strongly influenced the model, family role salience was not an influential factor. It is important to note this does not necessarily reflect an overall lack of family salience on the behalf of respondents, as a distinctive trend among respondents would have emerged in the results. Instead, this finding likely suggests the level of family salience was widely dispersed amongst those who chose the family outing as well as among those who chose the work meeting—clearly, there is not a strong family culture in coaching despite what some coaches report (Graham & Dixon, 2014). This is likely why it is common for both men and women in coaching to report high levels of work-family conflict (Dabbs et al., 2016; Schenewark & Dixon, 2012) and may be leading coaches to consider whether a career in coaching and a family will align long term (Taylor et al., 2017). Although coaches are willing and accustomed to responding to unscheduled work requirements, these requirements still pull them away from their

families, causing tension between the work and family roles. The commonality of work spilling over into the family role again must be clearly discussed among families so those in the family system understand the expectations regarding the coaching role.

In addition, demographic variables have been linked to stereotypical images of those who supposedly experience work-family conflict (i.e., the mother with young children) did not hold true among the college coaches in the study. The CART analysis did not find meaningful differences among college coaches who chose the family activity and the work activity with regard to participant age, gender, race, or marital status. Other studies in the work-family literature in sport also have suggested the tension generated from balancing work and family cannot be singled out to only mothers with young children (Dabbs et al., 2016). This study supports past findings and suggests demographic factors such as age, gender, race, and marital status are not the only variables for understanding who will choose the work or family role more frequently. As sport managers understand balancing work and family is a challenge broadly experienced by college coaches, they will be able to target efforts and improve support for employees.

Some of the variables related to the specific coaching role also did not produce significant splits in the decision tree. The coach's current position (i.e., head coach, assistant coach), sport coached, and total years coaching were not influential in explaining who chose the work or family activity. One might expect those in more visible sports (e.g., basketball or football) or in higher positions within a coaching staff (e.g., head coaches) might more naturally choose work or family more often in a competing resource scenario. This study shows this is not an accurate assumption. The elements influencing the decisions college coaches to choose the family or work role seem to be felt across all positions, tenures, and sports. Therefore, as sport practitioners consider the work-family interface and possibly make decisions which might impact work-family outcomes, these discussions should be mindful of all coaches within a department.

Conclusion

Previous research in sport management has documented the tension between the coaching profession and family systems (Bruening & Dixon, 2007; Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Graham & Dixon, 2017; Palmer & Leberman, 2009; Schenewark & Dixon, 2012). This study contributes to this body of work by examining how work, family, and personal life factors interact to influence the ways college coaches make decisions about the work-family interface. In particular, the results highlight the influence of role pressure stemming from the work role. In addition, findings suggest family factors (e.g., hours spent in the home, presence of children, age of children, family pressure) and personal factors (e.g., role saliency) also are impactful, but to a lesser degree. In combination, these results point to the need for managers in sport organizations to be sensitive to college coaches working in their departments and their abilities to balance work and family effectively. The work-family literature is clear long-term imbalance for employees leads to a number of undesirable outcomes for organizations and individuals (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Therefore, athletic departments will likely benefit in the long term by cultivating a work environment in which employees feel safe to find a balance between work and family, even if it means choosing family over work. Additional research is needed in this field to continue to understand these complex relationships, and how they will result in beneficial outcomes on the personal and organizational level.

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Appendix A

“You have been planning and looking forward to a family recreational outing this Saturday for some time. However, you have just been asked to come back into work this Saturday to meet with an influential athletic department donor. Unfortunately, you cannot participate in both activities. Your athletic director, who has generally been supportive of your need to meet your family responsibilities, insists that your meeting with this donor is critical to the department. Your family, who has been generally supportive of your need to meet your work responsibilities, insists that your presence at the family recreational outing is critical.”

The above vignette represents one variation of the vignette distributed to college coaches. This variation shows the strong work pressure, strong family pressure, strong work support, strong family support conditions. Those conditions were isolated and adjusted for each of the 16 variations in the vignette to be either strong or weak.