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# An Examination of Work–Family Conflict in NCAA Division III and NAIA Sports Information Professionals

Laura M. Hatfield

Jeffrey T. Johnson

## Abstract

Work–family conflict (WFC) is defined as “the discord that arises when the time devoted to or time spent fulfilling professional responsibilities interferes with or limits the amount of time available to perform family-related responsibilities” (Netemeyer, McMurrian, & Boles, 1996). A successful career in sports information requires long, demanding hours that can make finding balance between work and family difficult. The purpose of this study was to determine if NCAA Division III and NAIA sports information professionals (SIDs) experience WFC and to examine the impact of WFC on the related theories of life satisfaction (LS), job satisfaction (JS), job burnout (JB), and career commitment (CC). Results from the online survey indicated these professionals experience WFC. Correlation and regression analyses revealed significant statistical relationships between each scale and indicated WFC could successfully predict variations in LS, JS, JB, and CC.

**Keywords:** *Sports information, media relations, work–family conflict*

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Laura M. Hatfield is an assistant professor of Sport Management at the University of West Georgia in Carrollton, GA. Jeffrey T. Johnson is an associate professor of Sports Medicine at the University of West Georgia in Carrollton, GA.

Please send correspondence regarding this article to Laura Hatfield, University of West Georgia, 1601 Maple Street, Carrollton, GA, 30118-1100, telephone: 678.839.6191, lhatfiel@westga.edu

## Introduction

Sports information professionals (SIDs) produce content in electronic and print formats on a regular, timely basis designed to promote the teams they represent (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2001; Stoldt, Miller, & Comfort, 2001). Anecdotal evidence suggests in addition to these responsibilities, SIDs in Division III and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) member institutions are more likely than their counterparts in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I and II programs to have additional roles and responsibilities within the athletic department. Results presented later in this paper support this assertion. Although the media footprint at the smaller classifications is reduced, these SIDs work as a staff of one to cover a large number of sports. The additional roles, broad range of sports to cover, and other expectations make the role of the SID in these programs unique. Clearly the SID must put in long hours to build a successful career. This can make finding balance between work and family difficult; therefore, balancing work life and home life has become a topic of increasing interest for those working in NCAA Division III and NAIA member institutions.

The NCAA and NAIA have worked diligently to define, brand, and position each institutional classification ([www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org); [www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org)). Each classification has its own philosophy statement, tag line, and operating requirements. Therefore, it is interesting to note previous research indicates few differences among the characteristics of the organizations and the styles of administration in NCAA and NAIA athletic departments (Scott, 1999). Furthermore, Copeland and Kirsch (1995) found no significant difference in job stress for NCAA athletic directors regardless of institutional classification (Division I, Division II, or Division III). Additionally, these athletic directors reported they almost always experienced some level of job-related stress (Copeland & Kirsch, 1995). Given the similar organizational characteristics and administrative styles among the institutional classifications, including the similarly stressful nature of the role of the athletic director in intercollegiate athletics, the researchers questioned whether the stresses experienced by SIDs might further transcend institutional classification. Hatfield and Johnson (2012a) reported a majority of the NCAA Division I and II SID study participants experienced work–family conflict. This examination of NCAA Division III and NAIA SIDs builds on the previous research and provides a more complete picture of sports information as a profession.

Work–family conflict (WFC) is defined as “the discord that arises when the time devoted to or time spent fulfilling professional responsibilities interferes with or limits the amount of time available to perform family-related responsibilities” (Netemeyer, McMurrian, & Boles, 1996b). When the demands of one’s professional life interfere with the demands of one’s personal life, this type of conflict appears. Stated another way “participation in the work role/family role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family role/work role” (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). WFC has been examined thoroughly in the

corporate context of inquiry continues to develop in the sport context and has been supported by the NCAA. For example, the NCAA has created a work life task force to address these issues (Evans, 2006), and the topic has been prominent at NCAA national conventions ([www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)).

Previous studies examining WFC in sport have focused primarily on athletes, coaches, athletic trainers, and administrators at the NCAA Division I level (Dixon & Bruening, 2005; Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Dixon et al., 2006; Hatfield & Johnson, 2012a, 2012b; Inglis, Danylchuk, & Pastore, 2000; Mazerolle, Bruening, & Casa, 2008; Mazerolle, Bruening, Casa, & Burton, 2008; Pastore, 1991; Sagas & Cunningham, 2005). Male and female coaches have indicated they experience WFC (Sagas & Cunningham, 2005). WFC has been closely examined in NCAA Division I athletic trainers (Mazerolle, Bruening, & Casa, 2008; Mazerolle, Bruening, Casa, & Burton, 2008). Results from these studies identified long hours, required travel, overlapping responsibilities, drive to succeed, and commitment to the profession as qualities that contribute to the challenges sport professionals face in managing WFC (Dixon & Bruening, 2005; Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Dixon et al., 2006; Inglis et al., 2000; Mazerolle, Bruening, & Casa, 2008; Mazerolle, Bruening, Casa, & Burton, 2008; Pastore, 1991; Sagas & Cunningham, 2005). In addition to coaches and athletic trainers, SIDs are another group of athletic department staff members who work in similarly demanding positions. In two studies examining WFC and related theories in SIDs, Hatfield and Johnson (2012a, 2012b) found the majority of participating NCAA Division I and II SIDs reported experiencing WFC. These professionals identified “balancing work and family life, especially on the weekends”; “balancing work/family life and prioritizing the things that must get done and putting others aside to spend time with family”; “balancing what I physically, mentally and emotionally CAN do with what I WANT to do”; “the ever changing and growing list of responsibilities”; and “balancing travel/events with family... more is always added, nothing is ever taken away” as some of their greatest challenges in performing their job duties (Hatfield & Johnson, 2012a, 2012b).

WFC influences other job-related constructs. Increases in WFC have been found to negatively impact life satisfaction and job satisfaction in athletic department personnel (Hatfield & Johnson, 2012a, 2012b; Mazerolle, Bruening, Casa, & Burton, 2008) and have been positively correlated with job burnout and intent to leave the profession (Hatfield & Johnson, 2012a, 2012b; Netemeyer, McMurrian, & Boles, 1996b). The long, often inflexible hours that characterize jobs in athletics have been linked to job dissatisfaction and burnout in athletic department employees (Hatfield & Johnson, 2012a, 2012b; Mazerolle, Bruening, & Casa, 2008). Time is a limited resource; therefore, time spent on one activity—work—is time not spent on another activity—family. Attempts to balance work and family and the influence on other constructs, including life satisfaction, job satisfaction, job burnout, and career commitment, warrant examination.

In summary, previous research has shown NCAA Division I and II athletic department personnel, including SIDs, experience WFC, and the WFC they experience is related to increased job burnout and decreased job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and career commitment (Hatfield & Johnson, 2012a, 2012b). Although the similarities in organizational characteristics and administrative styles across institutional classifications support the assertions that SIDs in NCAA Division III and NAIA athletic departments may, like their colleagues in NCAA Division I and Division II member institutions, experience WFC, it is important to formally explore these assertions. The perception exists there are reduced demands at lower institutional classifications; however, the job of the SID at smaller institutions has a broad scope and requires long, inflexible hours. These SIDs are not facing high levels of media coverage or profile that may accompany programs at other institutional classifications, but they are responsible for generating the content for the only consistent source of information about their programs with fewer available resources. The philosophy of athletics as extracurricular activities at Division III and as enrollment drivers at NAIA can lead to increases in the number of teams and participants that require coverage. NCAA Division III and NAIA SIDs are more likely than SIDs in NCAA Division I and II to have additional titles and responsibilities, such as coach, event manager, and others, making it difficult to balance the various aspects of their personal and professional lives.

Therefore, their perceptions of WFC and related theories may be different than those of SIDs at other institutional classifications. The purpose of this study was threefold:

1. to examine WFC in NCAA Division III and NAIA SIDs;
2. to investigate the correlation(s) between WFC and life satisfaction (LS), job satisfaction (JS), job burnout (JB), and career commitment (CC) for NCAA Division III and NAIA SIDs; and
3. to determine the ability of WFC to predict LS, JS, JB, and CC in NCAA Division III and NAIA SIDs.

## Methods

### Participants

Participants in this study were the highest ranking SIDs in their respective NCAA Division III or NAIA athletic departments. Titles for these professionals might include but are not limited to any of the following: sports information director, assistant athletic director for media relations, or associate athletic director for sport communications. Many of the SIDs also had additional titles and responsibilities including coaching, game management, marketing, and other administrative duties.

## Procedures

The NCAA and NAIA portals were used to provide access to the website for each institution (www.ncaa.org; www.naia.org). Based on the website, the highest ranking communications professional in the athletic department was identified and an e-mail inviting that individual to participate in the study was sent. A link to the survey was provided in the e-mail. Informed consent was obtained prior to obtaining access to the survey. Following the initial invitation to participate, two additional reminders were sent. The surveys were open for 5 weeks.

## Instrumentation

An online survey was assembled to include five scales that had previously been tested for validity and reliability (Fields, 2002) and included a section for demographic information and open-ended items to address the positive facets and challenging aspects associated with performing the duties of a SID. The following five scales were used:

- **Work-family conflict.** WFC was assessed using the five-item scale (Netemeyer, R. G., McMurrian, R., & Boles, J. S., 1996a as cited in Fields, 2002) that included a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* or *low WFC* to 7 = *strongly agree* or *high WFC*) for responses.
- **Life satisfaction.** LS was assessed using the five-item Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) that included a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly agree* or *high life satisfaction* to 7 = *strongly disagree* or *low life satisfaction*) for responses.
- **Job satisfaction.** JS was assessed using the six-item Agho, Price, and Mueller (1992) scale that included a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly agree* or *low job satisfaction* to 5 = *strongly disagree* or *high job satisfaction*) for responses.
- **Job burnout.** JB was assessed using the 21-item Pines and Aronson (1988) Burnout Measure that included a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *never* or *low job burnout* to 7 = *always* or *high job burnout*) for responses.
- **Career commitment.** CC was assessed using the 7-item Blau (1985?) scale that included a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly agree* or *high career commitment* to 5 = *strongly disagree* or *low career commitment*) for responses.

## Data Analysis

The quantitative data were calculated using SPSS version 19. Demographic data were collected for gender, age, equal employment opportunity commission (EEOC) status, educational background, number of children under age 18 living in the household, and number of years in the field. Each scale was totaled and percentages for the *agree* (*agree, somewhat agree, strongly agree*), *neutral*, and *disagree* (*disagree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree*) responses were calculated for each

scale. Cross tabulations between demographic categories and the WFC scale were run to determine if any of these factors had an impact on WFC. Finally, correlation and regression analyses were run to examine the relationships between the scales and to determine the predictive ability of WFC on each of the other scales. Qualitative data from the open-ended items were used to support the results from the quantitative analyses.

## Results and Discussion

There were 444 NCAA Division III member institutions, the largest classification in the NCAA, listed on the NCAA website ([www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)). E-mail addresses were provided for 423 of the Division III SIDs. Each of these SIDs was contacted by e-mail and invited to participate in the survey; 169 SIDs responded to the survey, for a response rate of 40.0%. Eighty-six percent of the Division III respondents were male ( $n = 145$ ) and 12% were female ( $n = 20$ ) with 2% ( $n = 4$ ) not reporting their gender. With regard to family status, 31.4% were single ( $n = 53$ ), 58.6% were married ( $n = 99$ ), 1% were widowed ( $n = 1$ ), 2.4% were divorced ( $n = 4$ ), 1.2% were in a domestic partnership ( $n = 2$ ), and 2.4% ( $n = 4$ ) did not indicate a family status. Regarding race, 95.2% of the sample were Caucasian ( $n = 161$ ), 1.2% were African American ( $n = 2$ ), 0.6% were Hispanic ( $n = 1$ ), 2% were of mixed heritage ( $n = 2$ ), and 3% did not respond to EEOC status ( $n = 5$ ). With regard to job title, approximately 25% of these respondents indicated sports information was only part of their job responsibilities. Some of these individuals also had coaching, marketing, and game management responsibilities. Most of the respondents indicated at least one of their titles was sports information director (75.7%,  $n = 128$ ), with a few indicating they were assistant or associate athletic directors (20.7%,  $n = 35$ ). Four percent of the participants did not indicate a title (2.4%,  $n = 4$ ).

There were 289 NAIA member institutions listed on the NAIA website ([www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org)). E-mail addresses were provided for 236 of the NAIA SIDs. Each of these SIDs were contacted by e-mail and invited to participate in the survey; 118 SIDs responded to the survey, for a response rate of 50.0%. Eighty-one percent of the NAIA respondents were male ( $n = 95$ ) and 15% were female ( $n = 18$ ) with 4% ( $n = 5$ ) not reporting their gender. With regard to family status, 36% were single ( $n = 43$ ), 56% were married ( $n = 66$ ), 3% were widowed ( $n = 3$ ), 1% was divorced ( $n = 1$ ), and 4% ( $n = 5$ ) did not indicate a family status. Eighty-seven point three percent of the sample were Caucasian ( $n = 103$ ), 3.5% were African American ( $n = 4$ ), 2.5% were Hispanic ( $n = 3$ ), 0.8% were of mixed heritage ( $n = 1$ ), and 5.1% did not respond to EEOC status ( $n = 6$ ). Most of the respondents indicated at least one of their titles was sports information director (76.3%,  $n = 90$ ), with a few indicating they were assistant or associate athletic directors (14.4%,  $n = 17$ ). Six of the participants (5.1%) reported *other* as their title, and 4.2% did not indicate a title ( $n = 5$ ). The most common of the other category was coach. As with the Division III participants, many of these individuals reported sports information was only part

of their responsibilities. Some had coaching responsibilities, and others had duties in compliance, administration, sports medicine, and events.

The results clearly show both Division III and NAIA SIDs experience high levels of WFC. Ninety-two percent of the Division III and 85% of the NAIA participants responded they had high levels of WFC, and only 4% of the Division III and 8% of the NAIA subjects indicated they did not feel their work conflicted with their personal lives. Responses from the open-ended items also support this finding. Responses included the following: “The greatest challenge, as I’m sure has been echoed, is balancing your duties as a husband and family man while also still maintaining a successful working relationship as an SID. The time and dedication this career requires is not for the faint of heart”; “That [is] funny there is no balance”; and “Too many people have failing personal relationships as a result of this. I am a Canadian SID in a one-person shop, and often we need to sacrifice the quality of our work to achieve personal balance, or sacrifice personal balance if it’s an important work requirement. This is the challenge that faces our industry.”

With regard to the LS subscale, 61% of the Division III and 65% of the NAIA respondents indicated they were happy with their current life situation, and 25% and 20% of the Division III and NAIA professionals indicated they were not happy with their current life situation. Thirteen percent of Division III and 14% of the NAIA participants responded neutral with regard to the LS scale (Remaining 1% for each were missing data; individuals did not answer that question). It is encouraging about 75% of the Division III and 80% of the NAIA participants felt good about their current life situation, but the dissatisfaction of 20% or more participants gives credence that WFC could be having an impact on SIDs. Some respondents indicated the following: “My life and work are based on EVERYONE else’s schedules” and “As much as my job may demand a lot of me, ultimately I won’t allow my job to take a toll on family. It requires work integrating my family into my work sometimes, whether it be at events or traveling.”

Results related to the JS subscale indicate overall these professionals are somewhat satisfied with their current job situation, as 81% of the Division III and 75% of the NAIA professionals responded positively when asked if they were satisfied with their current job situations. Eight percent of Division III SIDs and 12% of NAIA SIDs reported being somewhat unsatisfied at this point. Only 24% and 16% of the Division III and NAIA respondents reported being very satisfied, so even though most were satisfied there was trepidation in the responses. This certainly indicates although there are issues in this profession, the gross majority are pleased with their careers at this point in their professional lives. Responses that indicated a lack of JS included the following: “The additional duties which keep being added to our workloads”; “Lack of respect administratively and financially which prohibits fulfilling the true potential of the office”; “Handling 19 sports as the only SID on the staff means there is ALWAYS (24/7) work that needs to be done”; and “Spread too thin.”



Fifty-four percent of the Division III participants and 51% of the NAIA group did not indicate high levels of JB on a frequent basis, and 43% and 45% respectively indicated some level of JB on a frequent basis, according to results from the JB subscale (Remaining % were non-responses). Again, even though the majority of the participants did not report experiencing high levels of JB frequently, over 40% from both groups suffer from some level of JB fairly frequently, which is an important finding and one indication these individuals may experience more JB as they progress through their professional careers as most of these individuals are less than 10 years into the profession. One respondent's frustration is clear in the following statement:

There are too many sports with too many demands for one person to adequately cover. Without people actually understanding what the job of a SID actually is it is hard for others to relate and understand how rundown one person can become in a short time. As I explain it to others, a coach has a season and an off-season. SID's have one season and it lasts from August to May.

Results from the CC scale were interesting as well, as 55% and 57% of the Division III and NAIA participants indicated they were happy with their career choice, and 43% of the Division III and 38% of the NAIA respondents had some level of uncertainty about their career choice (Remaining % were non-responses). This, again, further illustrates most of these professionals enjoy what they do; although, some might choose a different focus if they could "do it over again." When asked to identify the greatest challenge in performing their job duties, participants' responses related to CC included:

I feel as if I have no time to try and have a social life. The pressure to always have things updated and correct on the website or to be at every event is overwhelming and is driving me to want to leave the profession very soon. If I have to keep this break-neck pace up for much longer, I do not know how long I will last as a SID. The profession in this day and age is not designed for anyone who has or wants to have a family.

To further disaggregate the data, cross tabulations were run to determine if the responses on the work-family scale were different based on gender, EEOC status, years of experience in the field, and number of children under age 18 in the home. When compared on gender, 94.7% of the Division III female respondents indicated they felt at least some degree of WFC with the remaining 5.3% being neutral as it relates to WFC, meaning none of these respondents reported having little to no conflict (see Table 1). Results related to males were similar to the females as 97.3% had some level of WFC, 2.7% were neutral, and none indicated

little or no WFC. Results from the NAIA group were slightly different as 88.8% of the females reported high degrees of conflict, but 5.6% reported lower levels of conflict with the remaining 5.6% being neutral. Male NAIA results indicated 92.4% had high conflict, 6.5% were neutral, and 1.1% had low levels of WFC (see Table 2).

**Table 1**

*Cross Tabulation of WFC by Gender for Division III*

| Response          | Gender |        |
|-------------------|--------|--------|
|                   | Male   | Female |
| Strongly Disagree | 0      | 0      |
| Disagree          | 0      | 0      |
| Somewhat Disagree | 0      | 0      |
| Neutral           | 2.8    | 5.3    |
| Somewhat Agree    | 15.2   | 15.8   |
| Agree             | 38.6   | 52.6   |
| Strongly Agree    | 43.5   | 26.3   |

**Table 2**

*Cross Tabulation of WFC by Gender for NAIA*

| Response          | Gender |        |
|-------------------|--------|--------|
|                   | Male   | Female |
| Strongly Disagree | 0      | 0      |
| Disagree          | 0      | 5.6    |
| Somewhat Disagree | 1.1    | 0      |
| Neutral           | 6.5    | 5.6    |
| Somewhat Agree    | 20.4   | 16.7   |
| Agree             | 37.6   | 50     |
| Strongly Agree    | 34.4   | 22.2   |

Comparison on EEOC status revealed similar results across the different categories as most respondents from both groups felt a fair degree of WFC and few respondents indicated little or no conflict (see Tables 3 and 4).

**Table 3***Cross Tabulation of WFC by EEOC for Division III*

| Response          | EEOC      |                  |          |                |
|-------------------|-----------|------------------|----------|----------------|
|                   | Caucasian | African American | Hispanic | Mixed Heritage |
| Strongly Disagree | 0         | 0                | 0        | 0              |
| Disagree          | 0         | 0                | 0        | 0              |
| Somewhat Disagree | 0         | 0                | 0        | 0              |
| Neutral           | 2.5       | 50               | 0        | 0              |
| Somewhat Agree    | 15.6      | 0                | 0        | 0              |
| Agree             | 40        | 0                | 100      | 0              |
| Strongly Agree    | 41.9      | 50               | 0        | 0              |

**Table 4***Cross Tabulation of WFC by EEOC for NAIA*

| Response          | EEOC      |                  |          |       |
|-------------------|-----------|------------------|----------|-------|
|                   | Caucasian | African American | Hispanic | Asian |
| Strongly Disagree | 0         | 0                | 0        | 0     |
| Disagree          | 1         | 0                | 0        | 0     |
| Somewhat Disagree | 1         | 0                | 0        | 0     |
| Neutral           | 5         | 25               | 0        | 50    |
| Somewhat Agree    | 20.8      | 0                | 33.3     | 0     |
| Agree             | 43.6      | 0                | 0        | 0     |
| Strongly Agree    | 28.7      | 75               | 66.7     | 50    |

Data for years of experience as related to WFC also showed few differences across categories. Only a few (2.4%) of the NAIA participants with 10 or fewer years of experience reported low levels of WFC. All other groups reported neutral or high levels of conflict with the gross majority reporting high levels of WFC regardless of number of years of experience (see Tables 5 and 6).

The most significant of the cross tabulation results were associated with the number of children under age 18 in the home (see Tables 7 and 8). Participants with three or more children under age 18 in the home all reported high levels of WFC, and some of those with fewer than three children under age 18 in the home reported lower levels of conflict. Another interesting finding is approximately 56% of the Division III and 52% of the NAIA participants in the study reported not having children under age 18 living in the household. There could be several ex-

planations for this result. Because many of these individuals are less than 10 years into their careers, they may not be at a point in their life where they want to start a family, but it may also indicate their work schedules are interfering with the ability to start a family.

**Table 5**

*Cross Tabulation of WFC by Years of Experience for Division III*

| Response          | Years of Experience |           |           |         |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|
|                   | 0–10 yrs            | 11–20 yrs | 21–30 yrs | 31+ yrs |
| Strongly Disagree | 0                   | 0         | 0         | 0       |
| Disagree          | 0                   | 0         | 0         | 0       |
| Somewhat Disagree | 0                   | 0         | 0         | 0       |
| Neutral           | 3.5                 | 1.9       | 5.6       | 0       |
| Somewhat Agree    | 19.5                | 9.3       | 11.1      | 33.3    |
| Agree             | 40.2                | 44.4      | 33.3      | 0       |
| Strongly Agree    | 36.8                | 44.4      | 50        | 66.7    |

**Table 6**

*Cross Tabulation of WFC by Years of Experience for NAIA*

| Response          | Years of Experience |           |           |         |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|
|                   | 0–10 yrs            | 11–20 yrs | 21–30 yrs | 31+ yrs |
| Strongly Disagree | 0                   | 0         | 0         | 0       |
| Disagree          | 1.2                 | 0         | 0         | 0       |
| Somewhat Disagree | 1.2                 | 0         | 0         | 0       |
| Neutral           | 8.5                 | 0         | 0         | 0       |
| Somewhat Agree    | 20.7                | 8         | 100       | 100     |
| Agree             | 41.5                | 40        | 0         | 0       |
| Strongly Agree    | 26.8                | 52        | 0         | 0       |

**Table 7**

*Cross Tabulation of WFC by Number of Children Under Age 18 in the Home for Division III*

| Response          | Number of children under 18 in home |         |            |            |             |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|------------|------------|-------------|
|                   | 0 children                          | 1 child | 2 children | 3 children | 4+ children |
| Strongly Disagree | 0                                   | 0       | 0          | 0          | 0           |
| Disagree          | 0                                   | 0       | 0          | 0          | 0           |
| Somewhat Disagree | 0                                   | 0       | 0          | 0          | 0           |
| Neutral           | 3.4                                 | 5.4     | 0          | 0          | 0           |
| Somewhat Agree    | 16.9                                | 13.5    | 8          | 0          | 0           |
| Agree             | 37.1                                | 35.1    | 56         | 75         | 50          |
| Strongly Agree    | 42.7                                | 46      | 36         | 25         | 50          |

**Table 8**

*Cross Tabulation of WFC by Number of Children Under Age 18 in the Home for NAIA*

| Response          | Number of children under 18 in home |         |            |            |             |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|---------|------------|------------|-------------|
|                   | 0 children                          | 1 child | 2 children | 3 children | 4+ children |
| Strongly Disagree | 0                                   | 0       | 0          | 0          | 0           |
| Disagree          | 1.8                                 | 0       | 0          | 0          | 0           |
| Somewhat Disagree | 0                                   | 4.2     | 0          | 0          | 0           |
| Neutral           | 5.4                                 | 4.2     | 5.6        | 0          | 0           |
| Somewhat Agree    | 25                                  | 12.5    | 16.7       | 20         | 0           |
| Agree             | 41.1                                | 33.3    | 50         | 20         | 100         |
| Strongly Agree    | 26.8                                | 45.8    | 27.7       | 60         | 0           |

With regard to family status, the greatest percentage from each family status group reported high levels of WFC. Therefore, family status was not a mediating factor as it relates to WFC for this sample (see Tables 9 and 10).

Correlations were run to examine the degree of relationship between each of the subscales. The correlations are presented in Tables 11 and 12 and show significant correlations between each of the scales for both groups used in the study. Approximately half of the correlations were moderate (0.4 to 0.7), and the other half were low (0.2 to 0.4), but still all correlations were statistically significant at the 0.05 alpha level. These data clearly show a relationship between WFC and each of the other scales, as well as each of the other scales with each other.

**Table 9**

*Cross Tabulation of WFC by Family Status for Division III*

| Response          | Single | Married | Divorced | Domestic Partner | Other |
|-------------------|--------|---------|----------|------------------|-------|
| Strongly Disagree | 0      | 0       | 0        | 0                | 0     |
| Disagree          | 0      | 0       | 0        | 0                | 0     |
| Somewhat Disagree | 0      | 0       | 0        | 0                | 0     |
| Neutral           | 1.9    | 4.0     | 0        | 0                | 0     |
| Somewhat Agree    | 23.1   | 12.1    | 0        | 0                | 14.3  |
| Agree             | 38.5   | 40.4    | 50       | 25               | 57.1  |
| Strongly Agree    | 36.5   | 43.4    | 50       | 75               | 28.6  |

**Table 10**

*Cross Tabulation of WFC by Family Status for NAIA*

| Response          | Single | Married | Divorced | Domestic Partner | Other |
|-------------------|--------|---------|----------|------------------|-------|
| Strongly Disagree | 0      | 0       | 0        | 0                | 0     |
| Disagree          | 2.3    | 0       | 0        | 0                | 0     |
| Somewhat Disagree | 0      | 1.6     | 0        | 0                | 0     |
| Neutral           | 2.3    | 7.8     | 33       | 0                | 0     |
| Somewhat Agree    | 25.6   | 15.6    | 33       | 0                | 0     |
| Agree             | 46.5   | 34.4    | 33       | 100              | 0     |
| Strongly Agree    | 23.3   | 40.6    | 0        | 0                | 0     |

**Table 11**

*Correlations (Actual Correlation Coefficients) Between Subscales for Division III*

| Scales | Work–Family Conflict (WFC) | Life Satisfaction (LS) | Job Satisfaction (JS) | Job Burnout (JB) | Career Commitment (CC) |
|--------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| WFC    | ----                       | 0.231*                 | 0.387*                | 0.334*           | 0.198*                 |
| LS     | 0.231*                     | ----                   | 0.579*                | 0.396*           | 0.434*                 |
| JS     | 0.387*                     | 0.579*                 | ----                  | 0.342*           | 0.449*                 |
| JB     | 0.334*                     | 0.396*                 | 0.342*                | ----             | 0.682*                 |
| CC     | 0.198*                     | 0.434*                 | 0.449*                | 0.682*           | ----                   |

\* $p < .05$ .

**Table 12***Correlations (Actual Correlation Coefficients) Between Subscales for NAIA*

| Scales | Work–Family<br>Conflict<br>(WFC) | Life<br>Satisfaction<br>(LS) | Job<br>Satisfaction<br>(JS) | Job<br>Burnout<br>(JB) | Career<br>Commitment<br>(CC) |
|--------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| WFC    | ----                             | 0.372*                       | 0.348*                      | 0.479*                 | 0.364*                       |
| LS     | 0.372*                           | ----                         | 0.624*                      | 0.533*                 | 0.516*                       |
| JS     | 0.348*                           | 0.624*                       | ----                        | 0.589*                 | 0.682*                       |
| JB     | 0.479*                           | 0.533*                       | 0.589*                      | ----                   | 0.468*                       |
| CC     | 0.364*                           | 0.516*                       | 0.682*                      | 0.468*                 | ----                         |

\* $p < .05$ .

After determining a significant relationship existed between the subscales, regression analyses were run between the work–family scale and each of the other scales to determine if WFC could successfully predict the variations in the scores on the other scales. Tables 13 and 14 show the results of the regressions. The WFC scale was able to predict each of the other scales effectively for both groups, indicating WFC is significantly related to LS, JB, CC, and JS for this group of Division III and NAIA SIDs. Although WFC was able to predict each of the other scales, the regression between WFC and JB was substantially higher than the others for both groups, indicating those experiencing WFC also seem to be experiencing a fair degree of JB. The regression between WFC and JS was also strong for the Division III group, further indicating a strong relationship between WFC and job-related factors for SIDs.

**Table 13***Regressions Between WFC and Each Scale for Division III*

| Regression                                 | $R^2$ | $F$ ratio | $P$ value |
|--|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Work–Family Conflict vs. Life Satisfaction | 0.054 | 9.282     | 0.003     |
| Work–Family Conflict vs. Job Satisfaction  | 0.150 | 26.897    | < 0.001   |
| Work–Family Conflict vs. Job Burnout       | 0.112 | 20.212    | < 0.001   |
| Work–Family Conflict vs. Career Commitment | 0.039 | 6.649     | 0.011     |

**Table 14***Regressions Between WFC and Each Scale for NAIA*

| Regression                                 | $R^2$ | $F$ ratio | $P$ value |
|--|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Work–Family Conflict vs. Life Satisfaction | 0.139 | 18.042    | < 0.001   |
| Work–Family Conflict vs. Job Satisfaction  | 0.121 | 15.184    | < 0.001   |
| Work–Family Conflict vs. Job Burnout       | 0.229 | 30.941    | < 0.001   |
| Work–Family Conflict vs. Career Commitment | 0.133 | 16.368    | < 0.001   |

### Conclusions

A successful career in intercollegiate athletics requires a high level of commitment. Research has shown those who are highly committed to their professions often experience WFC (Adams, 1996). For many, including SIDs, this high level of commitment often translates into long, demanding hours that make finding the balance between work and family difficult (Netemeyer, McMurrian, & Boles, 1996b).

This study examined WFC and the related theories of LS, JS, JB, and CC in NCAA Division III and NAIA SIDs. The results indicate the vast majority of SIDs (92% in Division III and 85% in NAIA) are having difficulty finding the balance between work life and family life, and this lack of balance is leading to increased JB and decreased LS, JS, and CC. These findings are consistent with previous research in intercollegiate athletics that examined these concepts as they relate to SIDs and other athletic department personnel, and it is alarming almost all of the participants are facing these challenges (Dixon & Bruening, 2005; Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Dixon et al., 2006; Hatfield & Johnson, 2012a, 2012b; Inglis et al., 2000; Mazerolle, Bruening, & Casa, 2008; Mazerolle, Bruening, Casa, & Burton, 2008; Pastore, 1991; Sagas & Cunningham, 2005). Furthermore, the results clearly indicate the struggles to balance work and family impact JS, LS, and CC. The predictive nature of the statistical analysis indicates reducing WFC could lead to decreased JB and increased LS, JS, and CC. Therefore, it is important to note reductions in WFC would lead to more positive outcomes in these other areas.

Although it is no surprise that SIDs in NCAA Division III and NAIA institutions experience WFC, the statistical evidence that clearly establishes the relationship between WFC and JB is valuable information for those working with SIDs, including other administrators and coaches. SIDs identified coworker support for using schedule flexibility, understanding the dynamic nature of sport communications, and expressions of appreciation for their contributions to the athletic department as ways to combat the challenges they face. If SIDs can work with their colleagues to implement these and other strategies for balancing work and family, positive outcomes in WFC and the other areas might be seen. These re-



sults are consistent with previous research examining SIDs in NCAA Division I programs (Hatfield & Johnson, 2012a, 2012b). The consistent occurrence of these issues across institutional classifications indicates the profession needs to address this issue.

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## Management Whitepaper

# **An Examination of Work–Family Conflict in NCAA Division III and NAIA Sports Information Professionals**

Laura M. Hatfield and Jeffrey T. Johnson

## **I. Research Problem**

As interest in college sports continues to rise, the demand for information from fans, media outlets, and other interested parties about teams, players, and coaches is growing. This increased demand for information coupled with the immediacy of the Internet, including websites and social media, has expanded the workload for sports information professionals (SIDs). In response to the ever-increasing internal and external demands, SIDs are working longer and harder than ever. These long, demanding work hours make balancing work life and family life difficult. Failure to balance work and family can lead to feelings of burnout as well as a lack of job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and career commitment. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to better understand the work–life balance and its consequences on NCAA Division III and NAIA SIDs.

## **II. Issues**

Athletic departments play important roles on NCAA Division III and NAIA campuses. They serve as extracurricular activities for students and student-athletes, drivers of enrollment, and points of identification and involvement for the community. SIDs produce and distribute the vast majority of print and electronic information that is available to promote their institution's athletic programs. Because of the essential role of the SID in an athletic department, it is critical that more is understood about the realities of a career in sports information to better support these important staff members.

The work of SIDs clearly requires long, demanding hours, but it is unknown what kind of toll this schedule is taking on these professionals and what actions can be taken to support them in managing the stress. When time spent on work life is time not spent on family life, work life and family life can seem to be in conflict with each other. Research has shown those who are committed to their jobs experience high levels of work–family conflict. Although the philosophies and expectations surrounding intercollegiate athletics differ based upon institutional classification, a successful career in college athletics at any level requires a high level of commitment, and NCAA Division III and NAIA SIDs are no different. Most of the work–family conflict research in intercollegiate athletics has

studied those working in NCAA Division I institutions. These studies have shown that coaches, athletic trainers, and SIDs have difficulty balancing work and family and often experience work–family conflict. SIDs have indicated finding balance between work and family is one of the greatest challenges they face in their jobs. This study focused on work–family conflict and its impact on job burnout, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and career commitment in NCAA Division III and NAIA SIDs.

### III. Summary

The highest ranking sports communication professional from each NCAA Division III and NAIA member institution was contacted by e-mail and invited to participate in an online survey that contained scaled and open-ended items. Responses were received from 40% of the Division III SIDs and 50% of the NAIA SIDs. Both groups of SIDs reported they experience work–family conflict. Furthermore, the difficulty in finding balance between work and family produced higher levels of job burnout and lower levels of job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and career commitment. Responses to the open-ended items supported the survey results and provided the opportunity for the SIDs to articulate their experiences in their own words. These findings come as no surprise given the previous research examining the professional demands of a career in sports information.

### IV. Analysis

The study results support the initial assertions that the time demanded of SIDs to successfully complete their jobs makes finding balance between work and family difficult. Specifically, the majority of NCAA Division III SIDs (91.8%) and NAIA SIDs (85.4%) reported experiencing some level of work–family conflict. The respondents reported the demands of their work interfere with their home/family life, make it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities, produce strain, prevent things from getting done at home, and force changes in plans to family activities. In addition to the work–family conflict items, SIDs were asked to provide feedback related to life satisfaction, job satisfaction, job burnout, and career commitment. More than 60% of the participating SIDs indicated they were satisfied with their lives, and more than 75% of the participating SIDs indicated they were satisfied with their jobs. In contrast, approximately half of the respondents indicated they experience job burnout and only slightly more than half remain committed to continued pursuit of a career in sports information. See Table 1 for complete results.

**Table 1***Results for Work–Family Conflict and Related Theories*

|                            | <b>NCAA Division III SIDs (<i>n</i> = 169)</b>                        | <b>NAIA SIDs (<i>n</i> = 118)</b>                                     |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Work–Family Conflict (WFC) | 91.8% experience WFC  | 85.4% experience WFC  |
| Life Satisfaction (LS)     | 60.8% are satisfied   | 65.4% are satisfied   |
| Job Satisfaction (JS)      | 81.1% are satisfied   | 75.4% are satisfied   |
| Job Burnout (JB)           | 54.2% experience burnout  | 50.8% experience burnout  |
| Career Commitment (CC)     | 54.6% are committed to continuing their careers in sports information | 57.0% are committed to continuing their careers in sports information |

The responses to the open-ended items showed a clear shift in the tone of the responses from the item addressing SIDs' greatest challenges to the item addressing the positive aspects of their work on campus. The feelings of stress and being overwhelmed were clearly articulated as were the feelings of enjoyment about building relationships with student-athletes, being part of a campus community, and having a "rooting interest" in games. The dual nature of these responses further reinforced the researchers' perception that SIDs are under a great deal of pressure, but they do love their jobs. SIDs indicated because of the demands of their work and their commitment to their profession, they experience difficulty initiating and maintaining personal relationships. For some SIDs, this means they have been unable to build a relationship with a significant other; for another SID, the long work hours were identified as a contributing factor to his or her marriage ending in divorce. Other SIDs pointed to the challenge of fostering spousal and parental relationships. Finally, one SID remarked a career in sports information is not for a person who would like to have a family.

As stated previously, work–family conflict does not exist in isolation. Although the results indicate that, overall, SIDs are satisfied with their lives and their jobs, increased work–family conflict can lead to decreased levels of life and job satisfaction. The SIDs who are struggling to balance work and family are also experiencing job burnout and reduced career commitment, and furthermore, work–family conflict was shown to be a contributing factor in increased job burnout and decreased career commitment. The career commitment results show that just over half of the respondents are committed to continuing their careers in sports information.

## V. Discussion/Implications

A career in intercollegiate athletics is demanding, regardless of the position. This study examined just one of the groups of professionals who love their jobs but are challenged in finding balance between work and family. Another important finding is the impact work–family conflict has on other work-related factors. Of additional importance is the impact work–family conflict has on other work-related factors. SIDs are finding it difficult to balance work and family, which is leading to increased job burnout and decreased job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and career commitment. These findings serve as another step in understanding SIDs and the work realities that impact their careers. In discussing the challenges that SIDs face in their careers, these professionals identified ways their colleagues could support them in meeting the challenge of balancing work and family. Coworkers can support SIDs in using flexible work hours when event schedules permit so that they can work toward some semblance of balance between work life and family life. SIDs want those with whom they work to understand the ever-changing nature and demands of their work, particularly the impact of technology, including websites and social media, which have made the work of sports information 24/7 work. They want to be seen as valuable contributors to the overall goals and objectives of the athletic department, not just relegated to statistics and stories. They want coworkers to express appreciation for their contributions.

The findings of this study clearly articulate the difficulties SIDs are having in combating work–family conflict. Furthermore, work–family conflict does not exist in isolation and is impacting the levels of job burnout, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and career commitment for these professionals. SIDs pointed to balancing work and life as one of the greatest challenges they face in their jobs, and they also provided strategies, such as those presented above, that would support their desire to bring these two important areas of life into greater harmony and would contribute to greater life and career satisfaction. In summary, these findings give a clearer picture of the work of SIDs and what can be done to support them.