Profiling Public Relations Practitioners' Work-Life Conflict:

From A Diversity Lens

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Abstract

Work-life conflict -- defined as the incompatibility between expectations to perform one role versus another -- can be categorized as time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based. Using a broad diversity perspective, we examined understudied diversity categories as influencers of work-life conflict, namely, age, family dependent care responsibility, and professional specialty. Surveying a nationally representative sample of PRSA membership (N=820), we found that Generation Xers are more stressed out than are other age groups; those who need to care for an older adult experience significantly higher levels of time-based conflict; and employee relations specialists have to deal with significantly more strain-based work-life conflict than do others.

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The relevance of diversity to public relations has been primarily associated with Weick's (1979) principle of requisite variety, or having as much variety inside an organization as there is outside it (e.g., L. Grunig, J. Grunig, & Dozier, 2002; Hon & Brunner, 2000). Increased attention has also been given to diversity issues (e.g., Brunner & Brown, 2009; Ki & Khang, 2008; Pompper, 2004, 2012; Sha, 2008; Sha & Ford, 2007; Sha & Toth, 2005). Nevertheless, diversity has been mostly studied as differences in gender, race, ethnicity, and occasionally cultural background. Hon and Brunner (2000) advocated for a broader perspective of diversity and suggested diversity as a social responsibility.

Diversity is inclusiveness and representation of differences (Bhawuk & Triandis, 1996; R. Johnson & Rivera, 2007). It is comprised of differences in primary dimensions such as race, gender, age, and ethnicity; secondary dimensions of religion, class, education, and living arrangements; as well as work dimensions including professional specialty (Sha & Ford, 2007). Notably, important aspects of diversity such as age, living arrangements (similar to dependent care responsibility), and professional specialty have been largely missing from scholarly conversations (Sha & Ford, 2007). In this study, therefore, we argue that a diversity lens involves looking beyond race and gender. Such a broad diversity perspective to research in the workplace suggests accounting for different opinions, integrating various experiences, and providing voices to individual concerns. In order words, these under-examined diversity dimensions should be addressed.

Meanwhile, the CareerCast.com's 2011 report on America's most stressful jobs ranked public relations as the second most stressful profession (Toscano, 2011). This finding points to a unique phenomenon that public relations practitioners are confronted with on a daily basis, yet little is done to examine it. That is, how do public relations practitioners perceive themselves between work and life? More importantly, what contributes to their work-life conflict?

Using a broad diversity perspective, we examine equally important yet understudied diversity categories as influencers of work-life conflict, namely, age, family dependent care responsibility, and professional specialty. Specifically, exploring how each generation (i.e., age) experiences work-life conflict could enhance our understanding of practitioners' career management, teamwork, leadership, communication, job satisfaction, child bearing, child rearing, and marital and family satisfaction (Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008; Heraty et al., 2008; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Voyandoff, 2005). A look into practitioners' family care responsibilities will also help us better contextualize their experienced conflict and stress at work and understand their career choices (Duke, 1992; Furstenburg & Brooks-Gunn, 1989). In addition, investigating professional specialty will shed light on the nuanced work-life conflict experienced by practitioners who all assume the title "public relations practitioners." It may illuminate why certain practitioners choose to work in or exit from certain specialty areas.

Findings will help bring attention to lesser known and under-examined diversity aspects, expanding our conceptualization of diversity research in public relations. Practically speaking, results will help organizations determine ways to remove barriers and bring about changes in the workplace, enhance diversity management, and ultimately yield positive impacts on the organization's bottom line.

Review of Literature

Scholars have long identified the importance of examining the interface between work and life[2]. The obligations from individuals' work and the responsibilities from their nonwork life can be competing and thus create what is known as work-life conflict (Bond, Galinsky, & Swansberg, 1998; Friedman, Christensen, & DeGroot, 1998). Work-life conflict is defined as the incompatibility between expectations to perform one role versus another (Grant-Vallonea & Ensherb, 2001; Wadsworth &

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[2] Scholars have discussed the directionality involved in work life conflict issues (Hochschild, 1997), i.e., work interfering with personal issues (work-life conflict) and personal issues interfering with work (life-work conflict). Work-life conflict comes into being when the responsibilities from the work domain are incompatible with those from the non-work domain. This incompatibility negatively impacts an employee's life quality. Life-work conflict arises when the role demands from the non-work arena are overabundant and thus exert a negative influence upon an employee's job performance (Carlson & Frone, 2003; Reynolds, 2005). In this study, we focus on work-life conflict.

Owens, 2007). *Life* refers to both family (traditional family experience) and personal life (other nonwork aspects such as leisure time and community services) (Barnett, 1998; Reynolds, 2005). Work-life conflict can be categorized as time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based (Dennis & Kunkel, 2004; Netenmeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996).

Time-based work-life conflict arises when the amount of time a public relations practitioner devotes to work leaves him or her too little time to be spent on family and social responsibilities (see Rotondo, Carlson, & Kincaid, 2003). For instance, an individual's busy work schedule may prevent him or her from joining a family vacation (Carlson & Frone, 2003).

Strain-based work-life conflict comes into being when the stress, such as fatigue, anxiety, depression, apathy, irritability, tension, and psychological preoccupation that a practitioner experiences at work spills over into his or her nonwork life (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). For example, a public relations manager who handles a client's crisis may return home feeling stressed out and frustrated (see Lambert, Pasupuleti, Cluse-Tolar, Jennings, & Baker, 2006).

Behavior-based work-life conflict describes circumstances where work behaviors in the field of public relations may be incompatible with behavioral routines that practitioners' nonwork role prescribes (see Anderson, Lievens, van Dam, & Born, 2006; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Ryan & Haslam, 2007). At home, spouse and children expect a public affairs specialist to be nurturing, emotional, and accommodating when he or she is actually supposed to be aggressive, objective, and affirmative at work (see Sczesny, 2003; Sczesny & Stahlberg, 2002).

Managing work-life conflict has become a highly salient challenge for public relations practitioners and their employers in the 21st century (Aldoory, Jiang, Toth, & Sha, 2008; Ellin, 2003). Public relations practitioners are consumers of their own organizations' family-supportive policies and charged with planning and implementing internal communication about organizational policies and values (Aldoory et al., p. 2). To enable them to become excellent internal communicators, we need to understand public relations practitioners' experiences in negotiating their own conflicting

responsibilities from work and life outside of work, which is an integral part of strategic relationship management of organizations (see Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 2000; J. Grunig & Huang, 2000; L. Grunig et al., 2002; Kim, 2007; McCown, 2007).

To address this challenge, a diversity lens to research on work-life conflict is crucial. The diversity lens represents an intersectional approach that captures the changing structures and differential experiences of the workforce specifically (Özbilgin, Beauregard, Tatli, & Bell, 2011, p. 177). For instance, management studies have explored the dynamic of work-life conflict in contexts such as race and ethnicity (DelCampo, Rogers, & Hinrichs, 2011), gender, culture, and industry type (Adya, 2008; Lingard & Lin, 2004; Mortazavi, Pedhiwala, Shafiro, & Hammer, 2009; Werbel & Danes, 2010). Yet, the extant critical work-life scholarship in public relations has largely overlooked other aspects of diversity than gender (Aldoory et al., 2008; L. Grunig, 2006). The present study extends the body of knowledge in public relations by examining work-life conflict from a *diversity* perspective and *quantitatively* investigating how time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based work-life conflict can be related to several strands of diversity: age, dependent care responsibility, and professional specialty.

Work-Life Conflict and Age

The scholarship on work-life conflict continues to expand and develop. Nevertheless, very few empirical studies have examined work-life conflict specifically for different generational groups: maturers (sometimes called the silent generation), Baby Boomers (hereinafter Boomers), Generation X (hereinafter Xers), and the Millennials (Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008; Heraty, Morley, & Cleveland, 2008). Investigating how each generation experiences work-life conflict has significant implications for employers and employees to better understand and handle important issues including career management, teamwork, leadership, communication, job satisfaction, child bearing, child rearing, and marital and family satisfaction (Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008; Heraty et al., 2008; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Voyandoff, 2005).

Boomers, Xers, and the Millennials represent the three largest cohorts in the U.S. workforce (Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008; Smith, 2010). Boomers were a cohort born between 1946 and 1964 and shaped by a series of assassinations (John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King), social turmoil, the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the women's movement. They are characterized as idealistic, self-conscious, dedicated, competitive, and workaholic *(Chao, 2005)*. Xers were born between 1965 and 1982, and they witnessed key social events such as the Challenger disaster, the Iran-Contra affair, the Gulf War, social unrest, acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), and the blossoming of single-parent and blended families (Coupland, 1991; O'Bannon, 2001). Xers tend to be financially independent, entrepreneurial, supportive of experimentation and informality, self-reliant, skeptical, and adaptable to change; and they strive to be emotionally secure (Glass, 2007; Howe & Strauss, 2007). Moreover, Xers value work-life balance, career development opportunities, and nurturing workplace environments more highly than do Boomers (Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008; Chao, 2005). Finally, the Millennials, born between 1983 and 1994, were affected by historical events including the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the September 11 attacks, the Columbine High School massacre, environmental changes, and the appearance and popularity of technological advancements such as iPods and YouTube (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). They are characterized as cyber-savvy, sociable, goal-oriented, self-confident, and accepting of diversity (Sago, 2010).

Boomers, Xers, and the Millennials have been experiencing very different expectations in their work and nonwork domains. Boomers were raised in an era with a shift away from the traditional family with a relatively well-defined separation of work and family roles, to a new social structure where sex roles changed, with women entering the workforce and men sharing more nonwork responsibilities (Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008, p. 509). In addition, Boomers appear to be the first generation with both children and aging parents as dependents primarily taken care of by them (Kohl

& McAllister, 1995). Based on the role conflict theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), Boomers are expected to experience a high level of work-life conflict.

Scholars suggested that Xers experience an even higher level of work-life conflict than do Boomers (Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008; Glass, 2007; Howe & Strauss, 2007). First, Xers are the first generation with a large number of single-parent families (Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008). Second, Xers suffered through corporate downsizing and struggle to manage the conflict between work and nonwork sides because family-supportive workplace initiatives are still not available in many organizations (Howe & Strauss, 2007). In addition, their personal lives could be largely consumed by work given the fact that new technologies have made work possible anytime from anywhere (Glass, 2007). All these situations are expected to heighten the level of work-life conflict that Xers would perceive. Using data obtained from participants in the 1997 and 2002 *National Study of the Changing Workforce*, Beutell and Wittig-Berman (2008) found that Xers perceived a significantly higher level of work-life conflict than was perceived Boomers in both the 1997 and 2002 samples.

Millennials place greater attention on work-life balance than do Boomers and Xers, and they experience a relatively lower level of work-life conflict (Smith, 2010). Smith examined the work-life balance perspectives of Millennial job candidates in professional services firms and found that this particular generational cohort strives harder than previous generations to achieve a healthy work-life balance (p. 434). Based on a national survey of Millennial undergraduate university students in Canada, Ng, Schweitzer, and Lyons (2010) found that Millennials placed the greatest importance on developing new job skills and ensuring a satisfying life outside of work among many individualistic attributes of a job, such as quality of work, job performance, decision-making, and long-term job satisfaction (p. 281). In general, Millennials are more family-centric than are Boomers and Xers, and they value their personal life and leisure time highly (Barkin, Heerman, Warren, & Rennhoff, 2010;

Deal, Altman, & Rogelberg, 2010; De Hauw & De Vos, 2010; Kowske, Rasch, & Wiley, 2010; Twenge, 2010).

Extending all these findings to the public relations profession, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: There will be significant differences in work-life conflict for Boomers, Xers, and Millennials in the public relations workforce, with Xers experiencing the highest level of work-life conflict.

Work-Life Conflict and Dependent Care Responsibility

Another important predictor of work-life conflict is employees' dependent care responsibility (e.g., Baer, 1996; Rhode, 1997; Stivers, 1993). Competing demands from work and dependent care create stress for employees who have to choose between the two (Johnson & Duerst-Lahti, 1992; Newman & Matthews, 1999). Specifically, career-enhancing training and education opportunities, long unpredictable working hours, and travel and relocation assignments limit the amount of time that individuals can devote to taking care of children and elderly adults, and thus lead to high levels of work-life conflict, especially for employees who are primary caregivers of their families (Duke, 1992; Furstenburg & Brooks-Gunn, 1989). Based on a sample of employees in Alabama, Purcell and Baldwin (2003) identified the number of weekly hours for dependent care as a significant cause of work-life conflict.

Applying this to the public relations profession, we hypothesize the following:

H2: Public relations professionals who bear primary responsibility for dependent care experience a higher level of work-life conflict than those who do not.

Work-Life Conflict and Professional Specialty

Career fields are the social context where employees maintain and advance their status in a given network of job positions through their accumulated work experience, field-specific career capital, and a prescribed set of professional practices (Mayrhofer, Meyer, Schiffinger, & Schmidt,

2008). Previous literature has studied employees' work-life conflict experiences in different career fields, including individuals working at higher education institutions (Karkoulian & Halawi, 2007), front-line service employees (Kinman, 2009), construction workers (Lingard, Brown, Bradley, Bailey, & Townsend, 2007), doctors (Malik, Zaheer, Khan, & Ahmed, 2010), and information technology workers (Messersmith, 2007; Saonee Sarker, Suprateek Sarker, & Jana, 2010). Based on a sample of 305 business school graduates, Mayrhofer et al. (2008) yielded empirical evidence demonstrating the contextual factors (e.g., earnings/wages, mobility, and the configuration of relationships among subordinates, supervisors, and peers) in career fields as significant predictors of work-life conflict and career success, suggesting the need to further examine the differential work-life conflict levels that employees in various career fields perceive.

Meanwhile, public relations researchers have tied different professional specialties (e.g., employee relations, media relations, investor relations, community relations, and government relations) with various positive program outcomes, such as conflict avoidance, positive change in relationships, goal achievement, positive media coverage, accurate message delivery, and sales increase (L. Grunig et al., 2002). They further pointed out the differences between functions such as government relations and others. These findings highlight the variation between work specialties under the public relations umbrella, including their work-life conflict experiences. Yet little formal research in public relations has examined the connection between work-life conflict and professional specialty. To fill the gap, we pose the following research question:

RQ1: What are the differences, if any, between work-life conflict experiences of professionals working in different public relations professional fields?

Method

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) membership was surveyed using an online questionnaire[3]. The researchers followed standard human subjects review procedures. Members with

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[3] The authors thank the Public Relations Society of America for its support of this research, conducted under the auspices of the PRSA National Committee on Work, Life, & Gender. Committee members include David M. Dozier, Vincent

correct email addresses on file with the PRSA and who had opted-in to participate in research (N=4,714) were solicited, 876 of whom responded. The study obtained 820 usable responses, or an 18.6% response rate[4].

Participants consisted of 53.9% (n=442) females and 14.1% (n=116) males, with 262 practitioners' gender unidentified. In terms of race composition, the sample included 60.5% Caucasian (n=494), 2.6% African American (n=21), 1.2% Asian (n=10), 0.6% American Indian (n=5), 1.8% multiracial (n=15), and 0.9% others (n=7). Except for 32% participants (n=262) who chose not to report their educational level, 34.4% had a Bachelor's degree (n=282), 21.3% a Master's degree (n=175), 1.5% some college without a degree (n=12), 0.2% an associate's degree (n=2), 9.3% some graduate work without a degree (n=76), 1.2% a doctorate (n=10), and 0.1% other (n=1).

Measurement

A seven-point Likert-type scale was used, with 1 indicating "strongly disagree" and 7 "strongly agree." We modified nine items from Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams (2000) to assess three types of *work-life conflict*. An example item was "When I get off work, I am often too frazzled to participate in non-work activities/responsibilities." All measures had high Cronbach's α values (.93 for time-based work-life conflict, .90 for strain-based work-life conflict, and .81 for behavior-based work-life conflict). Next, to measure *generational groups*, we asked participants to report their age. Boomers included those aged 46 to 64 (n=193), Xers 28 to 45 (n=294), and Millennials 16 to 27 (n=60). In addition, *primary care responsibility* was measured with a Yes/No question, asking if participants bear

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Hazleton, Hua Jiang, Yan Jin, Bey-Ling Sha, Hongmei Shen, Hilary Fussell Sisco, Natalie Tindall, and Elizabeth L. Toth in alphabetical order by scholar last name.

[4] Baruch and Brooks (2008) examined the survey response rates in 490 organizational studies published in 17 top-tier refereed academic journals in the years between 2000 and 2005. They reported a wide range of acceptable response rates including both high (e.g., 94.0%, 93.0%, 92.2%, and 91.2%) and low ones (e.g., 3.0%, 10.0%, 12.7%, and 13.6%). Numerous factors may contribute to high or low response rates, for example, the length of the questionnaire, the presence and effectiveness of promotion, access to population, whether the questionnaire reached the target audience, other unique circumstances beyond researchers' control, etc. (Baruch & Brooks, p. 1155). Various response rates have been reported in previous survey studies of PRSA membership, for instance, 24.0% in a 2007 survey (Dozier, Sha, & Okura, 2007), 20% in 1998 and 32.9% in 2006 (DiStaso, Stacks, & Botan, 2009). While realizing this, we also acknowledge that the response rate of 18.6% may be seen as a limitation of the present study. We caution readers that findings in this study should not be generalized to the whole public relations industry.

responsibility for an older adult or not. Lastly, *professional specialty* included the following categories: community relations, media relations, internal/employee, government/public affairs, financial/investor relations, crisis management, reputation management, and other.

Results

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to examine the hypotheses and research question. H1 predicted differential work-life conflict for the Boomers, Xers, and Millennials, with the Xers experiencing the highest level of conflict. Results lent partial support for H1 regarding behavior-based work-life conflict. A significant curvilinear relationship was identified: $F(1, 533) = 5.17, p < .05, \eta^2 = .01$. Post-hoc Tukey test showed that Xers reported moderately more work-life conflict than did the Millennials (M = 2.80, SD =1. 37 for Xers, M = 2.36, SD = 1.15 for Millennials, p = .06). No significant main effects were found for time-based ($F(1, 538) = .84, p = .43$) and strain-based work-life conflicts ($F(1, 538) = .16, p = .85$).

H2 anticipated higher levels of work-life conflict for public relations practitioners with primary dependent care responsibility as opposed to those without. ANOVA results substantiated the hypothesis only for time-based work-life conflict: $F(1, 516) = 4.00, p < .05, \eta^2 = .01$. Main effects for strain-based ($F(1, 514) = .96, p = .33$) and behavior-based ($F(1, 512) = 1. 06, p = .31$) types of work-life conflict were not significant. Therefore, H2 was partially supported.

RQ1 explored the impact of professional specialty on practitioners' perceived work-life conflict. ANOVA results only identified significant main effects for strain-based work-life conflict — time-based conflict: $F(7, 540) = 1.69, p = .11$; strain-based conflict: $F(7, 539) = 3.32, p < .01, \eta^2 = .04$; behavior-based conflict: $F(7, 535) = .99, p = .44$. Follow-up post-hoc Tukey test further revealed that professionals who worked in employee relations had to deal with significantly more strain-based work-life conflict (M = 4.78, SD = 1.57) than did those in media relations (M = 3.77, SD = 1.67, p < .01), community relations (M = 3.60, SD = 1.67, p < .01), and government relations (M = 3.68, SD = 1.62, p <.05).

Discussion

This study provides the first profile of public relations practitioners' work-life conflict experiences from a diversity lens, representing the voices of professionals from different age groups and professional specialties and with different dependent care responsibilities. We identified the most stressed out group of public relations practitioners: *the Xers who take care of an older adult and work in employee relations*. In the following sections, we discuss our findings, as well as their theoretical and practical implications for both work-life conflict and diversity research.

Xers: Most Stressed Out

Our results revealed that Xers found it harder than did Millennials to separate their work behaviors from nonwork routines, even when they were incompatible (behavior-based work-life conflict). The results seem to substantiate what the non-public relations literature suggests: the Millennials are better at keeping their work and life intact than are the Xers. This is understandable, as the Xers (aged 28 to 45) may have more family responsibilities to attend to than do the Millennials (aged 16 to 27), on top of the fact that family-supportive workplace initiatives are not in place yet in many organizations (Howe & Strauss, 2007). The Xers' dilemma is further complicated with the advent of social media and the expectation of being on call 24/7 (see Wright & Hinson, 2008, 2009).

On the individual level, this finding calls for the Xers to take charge of their own life, avoiding enacting work roles at home. On the organizational level, this revelation also lends credence to prior research in other fields, such as human resources, that encourages organizations to endorse and promote behavioral norms transcending the boundaries of work and home (Allen, 2001; Friedman & Galinsky, 1992). Public relations professionals as the change agents inside an organization also need to effect positive changes in their own employers' family-supportive policies that not only benefit other employees, but also themselves.

Family Care: Another Stressor

Public relations professionals who needed to care for an older adult reportedly experienced significantly higher levels of time-based conflict compared to those without these caregiving duties. Professionals who were the primary caregivers at home had considerably more to juggle than did their colleagues. As research in non-public relations fields indicates, employees in such situations probably more often than not request flexible work schedules or sometimes even interrupt their careers for their dependent care responsibility, which then may affect their salary and professional growth overall (Boden, 1999; Reitman & Schneer, 2005; Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007). Similar to the foregoing discussion of the Xers, this finding necessitates the public relations professionals initiating incremental and visible changes in their organizations' internal policies. Otherwise, they may find themselves leaving the organization or even exiting from work altogether.

Employee Relations: The Toughest Job

An additional intriguing finding was that public relations professionals who worked in employee relations had to deal with significantly more strain-based work-life conflict than did practitioners in media relations, community relations, or government relations, even though they represented the minority group in the sample (n=43, 5.2%), in contrast to the largest group — media relations specialists (n=209, 25.5%), or community relations specialists (n=80, 9.8%), or government relations officers (n = 63, 7.7%). Just as the proportion of media relations specialists in the sample indicates, the job of public relations is often seen as image management, involving "giving presentations and making speeches, often in front of large crowds… [and] interact[ing] with potentially hostile members of the media" (Toscano, 2011). Contrary to the popular belief in the stress resultant from dealing with the media, public relations professionals experienced more stress between work and life while handling internal publics. As one of the first to examine the relationship between work-life conflict and professional specialties in public relations, our study calls for further interrogation of this phenomenon.

Public Relations and Diversity: Integrated Culture and Social Responsibility

Diversity in public relations has been predominantly examined as differences in gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical abilities/qualities, cultural background, religion, social class, educational level, language, income, marital status, geography, military experience, etc. (e.g., Brunner & Brown, 2009; Ki & Khang, 2008; Pompper, 2004, 2012; Sha, 2008; Sha & Ford, 2007; Sha & Toth, 2005). Through a broader lens of diversity, this study investigated how age, family dependent care responsibility, and professional specialty accounted for practitioners' differential work-life conflict experiences. Although we share the umbrella label as "public relations professionals," marked variations exist in how we experience conflict between work and life due to individual differences in age, family dependent care responsibility, and professional specialty. Diversity is not just about gender, race, and ethnicity. It is also about which age group and what kind of families we are born into, as well as which professional specialty we choose. We hope our study can encourage more discussion and research to broaden our understanding and inspire alternative conceptualizations of diversity in public relations.

We continue to position diversity as a social responsibility and as a professional competence for public relations practitioners. As strategic communicators and decision makers, practitioners help build relationships with an organization's diverse publics locally and globally, attract and retain diverse talents, and develop management's and employees' personal attributes and communication skills for a diverse workplace environment (Brunner & Brown, 2009; Toth, 2009). In particular, practitioners are called upon to manage diversity issues on behalf of their employers—fostering greater external diversity and building relationships with culturally diverse internal publics (Fry, 1992; Hon & Brunner, 2000; Kotcher, 1995; Strenski, 1994; Woods, 1996). They are expected to advocate for an *integrated diversity policy* (Bhawuk & Triandis, 1996) that well addresses their own and other internal publics' individualistic needs, concerns, and expectations. As forceful advocates, public relations practitioners can help organizations achieve requisite variety through (1) integrating

diversity as an indispensable part of the organizational culture and (2) assuming diversity management as their unique internal social responsibility (Hon & Brunner, 2000).

Public relations practitioners can persuade top management to allocate necessary organizational resources, both *tangible* (e.g., family-supportive organizational initiatives such as childcare and alternative job arrangements) and *intangible* (e.g., social support and supportive organizational climate), to alleviate the work-life conflicts of employees, promote their occupational well-being, and ultimately enhance the achievement of organizational goals. The establishment and development of such an integrated organizational culture can be accomplished via both "top down" and "bottom up" means (Hon & Brunner, 2000, p. 334). Specially, public relations practitioners can coach CEOs and top managers to be accountable diversity champions and mentor employee advocacy groups to proactively plead for appreciation of diversity and its inclusion in organizational values systems.

Public relations scholars have called for more studies on diversity integration as public relations' unique strategic planning goal (see Hon & Brunner, 2000). By speaking up for the interests of internal publics, public relations practitioners undertake their social responsibility to diversity *above and beyond* solely representing the interests of their employing organizations – organizations need to move beyond obtaining short-term organizational aims and valuing the long-term trusting relationships with its strategic internal publics built upon respect for diversity and mutual understanding (J. Grunig & Hunt, 1984)

Conclusion

This study substantiates previous scholarship on requisite variety with evidence indicating the significance of variation in public relations practitioners' work-life conflict experiences. It focuses on other strands of diversity than gender and race, two predominantly researched topics in previous scholarship. Age groups, professional specialties within the field, and dependent care responsibilities are examined in this study as new diversity angles through which scholars and practitioners can

better understand the highly valued inclusiveness and representation of differences (Bhawuk & Triandis, 1996; Hon & Brunner, 2000). Enhancing practitioners' self-awareness of work-life conflict can ultimately provide voices to all stakeholder groups and legitimize their individual concerns.

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