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Stretching, adapting and negotiating

International business travel
and its influence on
work-family interactions

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

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Julkaisun nimike

Venymistä, sopeutumista ja neuvottelua. Kansainvälisen työmatkustuksen vaikutus työn ja perheen vuorovaikutukseen

Tiivistelmä

Väitöskirja koostuu neljästä itsenäisestä artikkelista, joissa tarkastellaan kansainvälisten työmatkustajien työn ja perheen yhteensovittamista. Tutkimusaineisto koostuu kymmenen pariskunnan puolistrukturoiduista haastatteluista sekä web-kyselyaineistosta (N=1366).

Väitöstutkimuksen tulokset osoittavat, että kansainvälisellä työmatkustamisella on haitallisia vaikutuksia matkustajien yksityiselämään. Matkustaminen vaikuttaa kaikkiin elämän osa-alueisiin ja vaikeuttaa arkielämän suunnittelua, usein matkustaminen vaikuttaa myös puolison ajankäyttöön sekä työelämässä että vapaa-ajalla. Kyky olla joustava ja sopeutua muuttuviin tilanteisiin vaikuttaa siihen, miten matkustaminen ja sen vaikutukset koetaan. Puolison asenteet vaikuttavat suuresti siihen, miten matkustamiseen asennoidutaan. Jos puoliso kokee matkustamisen ongelmalliseksi, matkustajan asenteet ovat negatiivisempia ja työn ja perheen välinen tasapaino huononee.

Sekä kvantitatiiviseen että kvalitatiiviseen aineistoon pohjautuvat tulokset osoittavat, että lapset ovat tärkein tekijä, joka vaikuttaa matkustajien perheen ja työn tasapainoon. Lasten syntymän jälkeen matkustaminen ja perhe-elämän yhteensovittaminen monimutkaistuvat. Tämän tutkimuksen tulosten mukaan matkustavan työn sekä perhe-elämän yhteensovittaminen edellyttää, että sekä matkustaja että puoliso hyväksyvät sen, että työmatkat ja niiden seuraukset ovat keskeinen osa heidän elämäänsä ja suhdettaan. Kansainvälistä työmatkustamista sisältävän työn ja perheen yhteensovittaminen vaatii kummaltakin puolisolta sopeutumista vaihtuviin tilanteisiin, joustamista sekä neuvottelua. Tutkimusaineiston perusteella voidaan sanoa, että matkustavan työn ja perheen menestyksekkäästi yhteen sovittavat ovat käyneet läpi sopeutumis- ja oppimisprosessin. He näkevät, että työmatkustaminen osana perheen arkea on heidän oma valintansa.

Title of publication

Stretching, adapting and negotiating. International business travel and its influence on work-family interactions

Abstract

This dissertation consists of four individual articles and focuses on the work-family interactions of international business travellers. Data from semi-structured interviews (10 couples) and from electronic surveys (N=1366) were collected and used in this study.

The present study confirms that travel has a malign influence on the personal life of travellers. Travel influences all the spheres of life and complicates everyday planning as well as the partner's time usage, both at work and outside working time. How travel and the subsequent effects on family life are experienced depends on, for example, the ability to be flexible and adapt to changing situations. The partner has a considerable influence on how the traveller experiences work related travel. If travel is a major issue for the partner, it produces increased negative attitudes towards work related travel for the traveller and negatively affects the work-family balance.

Both the quantitative and qualitative studies of this thesis confirm that the family setting is the major determinant of keeping a balance between work and family. After the birth of a child, combining travel and family becomes complicated, and tensions between work and family are more common for couples with children. According to the findings of this study, in order to combine successfully work with international travel and family, both the traveller and partner have to accept that the partner's trips have a central role in their everyday lives and relationship. Integrating international business travel and family demands the ability to adapt to changing situations with flexibility and negotiation between partners. Furthermore, the findings of this study show that those couples who have succeeded in combining travelling work and family have undergone an adjustment and learning process, and they see travel as a lifestyle choice for both partners.

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Writing a doctoral dissertation is a long process. I can look back on this adventure with joy. The journey has not always been easy but laborious and occasionally I have experienced the feelings of desperation. Now when this thesis is finished, I feel relief but also wistfulness for that this is now the end of an era of my life. I can honestly say that I enjoyed, not every but almost every minute of it.

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"If you can dream it, you can do it." - Walt Disney

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Abbreviations

IBT   International business traveler

WFC   Work-family conflict

COR   Conservation of resources theory

Part II: Articles

This dissertation is based on four appended articles:

[1]   Saarenpää, K. (2015). International Business Travel and Work-Family Balance: Research Review and Future Directions. In L. Mäkelä & V. Suutari (Eds.), *Work and Personal Life Interface in International Career Context* (pp. 159–180). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-17647-5_9

[2]   Mäkelä, L., Bergbom, B., Saarenpää, K., & Suutari, V. (2015). Work-family conflict faced by international business travelers Do gender and parental status make a difference? *Journal of Global Mobility*, 3, 155–168. https://doi.org/10.1108/JGM-07-2014-0030

[3]   Saarenpää, K. (2016). Stretching the borders: how international business travel affects the work–family balance. *Community, Work & Family*, 1–16. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2016.1170666

[4]   Saarenpää, K. (2016). Dyadic stress and coping: An investigation with international business travellers and their spouses. Paper under review. An earlier version of this paper was presented in 6th workshop on expatriation 2016, Catania, Italy.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The characteristics of business have changed in recent decades. The nature of a company's organization and conducting business has become geographically dispersed due to global management structures and the increase of project based work with suppliers and subcontractors (Beaverstock, Derudder, Faulconbridge & Witlox, 2009). Although sophisticated virtual communication possibilities allow communication without physical meetings, face-to-face business interaction and personal contact between key persons are still significant, for example, in marketing, sales and negotiating deals (Aguilera, 2008; Davidson & Cope, 2003; Faulconbridge, Beaverstock, Derudder & Witlox, 2009). Globalization requires global presence and, by implication, increases the need for global workers and international business travel (Nathan & Doyle, 2001).

Undertaking work outside of the regular workplace is not exceptional any longer, and mobility and internationalization of careers are almost an ordinary feature of working-life (Beaverstock et al., 2009). With the exception of economic recessions, which have temporarily reduced the amount of business trips, the number of those travelling abroad for work has constantly grown. In 2010, Finnish residents made 1.1 million business and professional trips abroad that involved overnighting in the destination country. During this same period, 154,000 work-related same-day trips were made abroad. In 2015, the number of overnight trips were 1.6 million and same-day trips 229,000. (Statistics Finland, 2016.) Internationally, the trend is similar, with the recent global survey undertaken by Cartus (2014) indicating that 50 % of companies expected to see the business travel volume increase over the next two years.

It is known that work involving international business travel can have positive outcomes to the traveller's personal and professional growth; it can be stimulating, and travel may promote travellers' careers (Dimitrova, Chia, Luk, Shaffer & Tay, 2012; Mayerhofer, Müller & Schmidt, 2010; Oddou, Mendenhall & Ritchie, 2000; Starr & Currie, 2009; Welch & Worm, 2006). Work involving international travel is also associated with 'downsides' such as the injurious effect on physical and psychological health (Jensen, 2013; Patel, 2011; Westman & Etzion, 2002) as well as effects on private and family life. Although employees are increasingly taking business trips abroad, the empirical research addressing international business travellers (IBTs) is still scarce and focuses on quite limited issues. So far, the

majority of research concerning IBTs has concentrated on the health risks of travellers. According to several authors, international business travel is considered to cause negative impacts on travellers' health and well-being such as travel-related illness and psychological disorders (Burkholder, Joines, Cunningham-Hill & Xu, 2010; Liese, Mundt, Dell, Nagy & Demure, 1997; Mäkelä, Bergbom, Kinnunen & Tanskanen, 2014; Patel, 2011). International business travel has also been studied from the perspective of the travel management of organizations, concentrating e.g. on travel policies, cost issues and travel service purchasing processes (Collings, Scullion & Morley, 2007; Faulconbridge et al., 2009; Holma, 2012). The first article of this study concentrates on reviewing the existing literature on the work-family interface of IBTs and, in so doing, identifies promising directions for future research that addresses significant gaps existing in the research of work-family experiences of IBTs.

Although research interest has increased, there is still relatively little academic research exploring the consequences of travel on the personal lives of travellers, domesticity, family members, and family dynamics. Likewise, we are at present rather ignorant about how travellers and family members cope with the consequences of absences. Studies (e.g. Espino, Sundstrom, Frick, Jacobs & Peters, 2002; Mäkelä, Kinnunen & Suutari, 2015; Nicholas & McDowall, 2012) have focused on the private life of travellers and have found travel to pose challenges on travellers' personal lives. In Finland, where this particular study was conducted, work plays an important role in the lives of many people, both women and men (e.g. Hearn et al., 2008). Moving back and forth between different roles, such as spouse, parent, friend, employee, colleague, may be difficult for almost anyone (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek & Rosenthal, 1964). And for those whose work includes frequent travel abroad, balancing between different roles may be a more complex matter. Gender and parenthood are individual characteristics that have been found to be related to higher levels of work-to-family conflict (WFC) (Eby et al., 2005; Westman & Etzion, 2005). The second article of this dissertation concentrates on examining the direct and moderating effects of gender and parental status on the relationship between international business travel days and work-to-family conflict (WFC) among international business travellers.

Travelling has also been found to have negative effects on the partners of travellers (Nicholas & McDowall, 2012; Stewart & Donald, 2006; Westman et al., 2008). The conflicting effects of international business travel have mostly been studied from the traveller's point of view. The partners' experiences or couple-level effects have been overlooked. Therefore, in this study, the point of view of couples has been investigated in detail by interviewing both the IBTs but also their partners.

It is known that the blurred boundaries between private and working life are typical for those whose work involves international business travel and easily leads to challenges to keep balance between work and family (Bergbom, Vesala, Leppänen, Sainio & Mukala, 2011; Mäkelä, Saarenpää, Suutari & Wurtz, 2012; Nicholas & McDowall, 2012). There is scarce research that concerns how travellers construct and manage the boundaries between work and family. The lack of research is quite surprising because work-family border management via the integration and segmentation of work and family domains (meaning the degree to which the aspects of work and family are kept separate) (Casper, Hauw & Wayne, 2013; Kreiner, 2006) has, for a long time, been considered to be an important factor affecting the work-family balance (Kreiner, 2006; Nippert-Eng, 1996). Although literature related to the border management of IBTs was not found, Nicholas and McDowall (2012) have touched on the subject and found that the irregular nature of business travel renders it impossible to establish a clear division between 'work-time' owned by an employer and 'leisure time' owned by a traveller. Travelling internationally for work affects the time use of travellers' and relates to the extent an individual can apply his/her preference segment or integrate different life spheres. When one family member travels frequently and is unable to participate fully in family life, there is a high risk that travel also effects the work-family border management of the partner who is at home taking care alone of family-related issues, especially if there are children in the family. Therefore, this study aims to examine the issue in more detail by examining how international business travel affects the work-family borders of travellers and their partners. Research on border management has mainly been quantitative. In the third article of this study, qualitative research methods are used to examine the border management of IBTs.

As can be seen from above, individuals may have different and multiple challenges when trying to combine work-related travel and family. However, there are people who manage to do it. When individuals encounter challenges, the effective use of coping strategies helps maintain physical and mental well-being (Lazarus, 1993). Considered in the context of work and family, coping is a way to maintain a balance between these two life domains. In the case of IBTs' travel and travel related stress, the impacts influence both partners and as well the family. This type of stress, affecting both partners, is defined as a dyadic stress and couples manage such stress through dyadic coping strategies (Bodenmann, 1997). IBT research has, to some extent, considered travel-related stress as a source of dyadic stress and identified the consequences of travel for personal life and partners (Nicholas & McDowall, 2012; Stewart & Donald, 2006; Westman, Etzion & Chen, 2008). However, there is no previous IBT research that uses the concept of dyadic stress or research conducted concerning how couples cope together with international

business travel related stress (Dimberg et al., 2002; Nicholas & McDowall, 2012). In the fourth article, the study aims to fill the above-mentioned gaps in the research.

In summary, this particular dissertation focuses on work-family interactions of international business travellers. It constitutes an attempt to fill gaps in the IBT literature, firstly, by gathering and reviewing the existing IBT research relating to work-family. Secondly, this study aims to show the role of gender and parental status on the relationship between international business travel days and work-to-family conflict. Further, this study seeks to understand how travellers and their partners construct, manage, and negotiate the borders between work and family in order to avoid imbalance between these domains. To compose an extensive overview of the work-family interaction and improve our knowledge on these issues, the final aim is to examine the dyadic coping of international business travellers and their partners.

1.2 Aim of the study and research questions

One of the principal stress factors associated with work-related trips abroad seems to be problems in balancing work-related trips and other areas of life (Bergbom et al., 2011). This dissertation aims to contribute to the current empirical knowledge of international business travel by enhancing the in-depth understanding about the demands of international business travel in the context of the work-family interface. This is accomplished through a careful review of current literature and through empirical investigations.

The overarching research question of the dissertation is as follows:

> *How does frequent international business travel of one family member impact on the interactions between work and family?*

More specifically, this dissertation addresses the following four research questions:

1. *What kind of work-family conflict do IBTs and their partners face due to frequent travel?*

2. *What are the roles of gender and parental status on the relationship between international business travel days and work-family conflict?*

3. *How do IBTs and their partners manage the boundaries between work and family in order to maintain a balance between different life spheres?*

4. *How do IBTs and their partners cope with work-family conflict arising from business travel?*

A summary of the four articles, including the research objectives, sample, methods of analysis, theoretical grounding and the research questions addressed is given in Table 1. The first, third, and fourth article are sole-authored by Saarenpää, and the second article is co-authored with Mäkelä, Bergbom, and Suutari.

Table 1.   Summary of the research objectives, sample, methods of analysis, theoretical grounding and the research questions addressed in the individual studies of the thesis

	Article 1:	**Article 2:**	**Article 3:**	**Article 4:**
Research objective	To review the existing literature on the work-family interface of international business travellers in order for to gather a comprehensive review and to define the status of research and identify gaps in current research	To study the direct and moderating effects of gender and parental status on the relationship between the intensity of international business travel and WFC among IBTs	To study how international business traveller couples use integration and segmentation of work and family in order to maintain the balance between these two spheres of life.	To study the dyadic stress related to international business travel and the dyadic coping strategies couples use to cope with such stress.
Research questions addressed	RQ 2. What kind of work-family conflict do IBTs and their partners face due to frequent travel?	RQ 1. What are the roles of gender and parental status on the relationship between international business travel days and work-family conflict?	RQ 2. What kind of work-family conflict do IBTs and their partners face due to frequent travel? RQ 3. How do IBTs and their partners manage the boundaries between work and family in order to maintain a balance between different life spheres?	RQ 2. What kind of work-family conflict do IBTs and their partners face due to frequent travel? RQ 4. How do IBTs and their partners cope with work-family conflict arising from business travel?
Sample	Literature	Survey for 1366 Finnish international business travellers	Semi-structured interviews with 10 international business travellers and their partners	Semi-structured interviews with 10 international business travellers and their partners

Methods of data analysis		Moderate hierarchical regression	Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA)	Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA)
Theoretical grounding		*Conservation of resources theory* (COR) (Hobfoll 1989, 2001, 2002, 2011)	*Segmentation-integration of work and family (Kreiner 2006; Nippert-Eng 1996)* *Work-family border theory* (Clark 2000, 2001, 2002)	*Dyadic stress and coping* (Bodenmann 1995, 1997, 2005)

1.3 Key concepts of the study

It is crucial to understand how the terms and concepts that are regularly used throughout the thesis are understood. In this section, the key concepts of this study are defined.

International business travellers

International business travellers (IBTs) have been defined as "one of whom business travel is an essential component of their work" (Welch & Worm, 2006, p. 284). In this study, IBTs are defined as employees whose jobs involve frequent short business trips (usually maximum a couple of weeks) to various locations abroad without accompanying family members (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001; Welch, Welch & Worm, 2007).

Work–family interaction

Work-family interaction is a multifaceted phenomenon that can be described through its direction, degree, and valence (Frone, Russel & Cooper, 1997; Kinnunen, Rantanen, Mauno & Peeters, 2014). Direction refers to the bidirectional nature of integration - work can affect the family and family can affect work. Degree refers to what extent work and family domains are segmented or integrated. Valence refers to the interaction between work and family domains and can be either positive or negative. There are a few studies that have examined the work-family interactions of IBTs, but they all indicate that travel increases the risk of work-family conflict (Jensen, 2013; Mäkelä, Bergbom, Kinnunen, et al., 2014; Mäkelä, Kinnunen, et al., 2015).

Work-family balance

Work-family balance can be defined "as a satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict" (Clark, 2001, p. 349). The

work-family balance is a subjective feeling; therefore, a balance between work and family is not necessarily achieved through equal time usage. Balance is not necessarily reached by spending more time with the family and less in the workplace. Instead, balance is experienced if an individual manages the different roles and fields of life (Clark, 2001; Greenblatt, 2002).

Work-family conflict

Work-family conflict (WFC) is defined as "a form in which the role pressure from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77). It is associated with a general feeling of well-being and satisfaction of both work and family life (e.g. Aryee, 1992; Frone et al., 1997; Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). The conflict between work and family domains can occur in two directions: family can interfere with work (family-to-work conflict) or work can interfere with family (work-to-family conflict) (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Coping- Dyadic coping

Coping can be described as "actions and thoughts that enable individuals to handle difficult situations" (Stone, Helder, & Schneider, 1988, p. 183). In other words, coping helps individuals to maintain physical and mental balance and well-being in conflict situations. When people encounter challenges or stressful situations, individual coping strategies are applied (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping is typically studied through coping strategies. The distinction between emotion-focused and problem-focused strategies is probably the most used way to study coping strategies at a broad level (Mauno, Kinnunen, Rantanen, Feldt & Rantanen, 2012; Stahl & Caligiuri, 2005).

Dyadic coping refers to dealing with stress within a couple (Bodenmann, 1997). Dyadic coping strategies are used when an individual has no access to sufficient or appropriate coping strategies for managing stress. This stress is likely to affect the well-being of both partners and family members (Revenson, Kayser & Bodenmann, 2005). In such situations, it is worthwhile for partners to use dyadic coping strategies to maintain their own well-being and as a functioning couple (Bodenmann, 1997; Chen, 2014). Dyadic coping is distinguished by four forms: positive supportive dyadic coping (one partner offers support to the other), delegated dyadic coping (one partner is asked to take over others tasks), common dyadic coping (coping efforts of both partners are symmetrical), and negative dyadic coping (superficial, ambivalent, hostile) (Meier, Bodenmann, Mörgeli & Jenewein, 2011).

1.4 Structure of the dissertation

The aim of this section is to explain how this thesis is organized. This dissertation is composed of two parts that are an introduction to the dissertation itself and to the research context, and the empirical research articles.

The first part consists of five chapters and aims to provide an understanding of work-family issues related to international business travel. The current introductory chapter presents the background to the dissertation, identifies the gaps in current research and presents the aim of the research and research questions as well as the key concepts of the thesis. The next chapter discusses the relevant literature for the topics of this thesis. The third chapter discusses methodological approaches adopted in this study, including the description of the research strategy, the philosophical foundation of the study, and the presentation of research methodologies used. Chapter four presents short summaries for each of the four individual articles. The fifth chapter discusses the findings of the thesis and presents the contributions of the study. It also describes the limitations of this thesis as well as some avenues for future research for studying international business travel and travellers.

The work-family issues discussed in the literature review in the first part of this dissertation will be discussed in more depth in the articles that follow in the second part. The reprints of the four individual articles, either published or under review process, that form an integral part of the dissertation's entirety.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this chapter is to underpin the study by presenting the theoretical background and thereby positioning it in the research tradition. This thesis is based on four independent articles that consider work-family interactions of international business travellers' from different points of view and using different frameworks. Therefore, there will be four main concepts that I discuss in the corresponding sub-chapters. The first part of the chapter concentrates on describing who international business travellers are, what kinds of tasks they undertake and why they are needed. The second sub-chapter introduces the concept of work-family conflict and presents the relevant previous literature on work-family interactions in IBT contexts. The third sub-chapter discusses how individuals aim to prevent conflict and create a balance between different life spheres by managing the borders between them. This chapter also focuses on coping. Since this study aims to examine the work-family interactions of IBTs, couple-level coping is investigated through the concept of dyadic coping.

Different theories and models were used in the individual studies of this dissertation (see table 1). This chapter introduces the theoretical approaches to work-family research and the theories utilized in the individual articles of this dissertation. The last sub-chapter provides also a summary of the theories used.

2.1 International business travellers: Flexible globetrotters

Today, employees spend more time than ever on travelling. Travelling or commuting for work is not a new phenomenon, but today it has many new aspects and features. Previously, work related to travel was found mainly in traditional old economy sectors such as transport, construction, extraction and the military. Today's business travellers are characterized by being quite highly educated professionals (Gustafson, 2012b; Nathan & Doyle, 2001) with international work travel becoming increasingly commonplace (Kraimer, Takeuchi & Frese, 2014; Shaffer, Kraimer, Chen & Bolino, 2012).

Although information technology allows virtual meetings, there is still a need for communication and interaction between people (Faulconbridge et al., 2009). Travelling and personal meetings are needed in order to buy, sell, and negotiate between people working in different locations.

International business travellers (IBTs) are called various names that characterize the phenomenon such as road warriors (DeFrank, Konopaske and Ivancevich

2000), flexpatriates (Mayerhofer, Hartmann & Herbert, 2004), and globe trotters or frequent flyers (FFs) (Welch et al., 2007). One of the most quoted definitions for international business travellers is that of Welch and Worm's (2006); according to their definition, international business travellers are persons whose work is characterized by numerous and regular trips abroad. More specifically, they define travellers as "one for whom (international) business travel is an essential component of their work" (2006, p. 284). Welch et al. (2007) later completed the definition that traveller's roles involve international visits to foreign markets, units, projects, and the like.

According to Welch et al. (2007, p. 181), international business travellers are "agents or carriers of articulated and tacit knowledge". During the trips, they acquire, collect, assimilate, record, and transfer information about foreign markets and operations. International business travel can also be seen as a strategy for facilitating proximity, where spatially distributed individuals are brought together (Boden & Molotch, 1994). Common to definitions is that an international business traveller is considered to be an employee, who travels regularly to an international location without relocation.

Millar and Salt (2008) add a temporal limitation to the definition. According to them, business travel is travel where presence in another office is for less than 30 days. Unlike expatriates, frequent flyers do not physically relocate to a new country; they are only passing through the foreign locations. The length and duration of their visit can change from days to weeks depending on the determination of the task they are given. For some business travellers, the frequency of business travels is so high that travel has evolved to the point that it can be seen as a career in itself (Welch et al., 2007).

Wickham and Vecchi (2009) have named five different types of travellers according to the number of their travel destinations. Commuters travel frequently from their home to a limit range of regular destinations. Explorers travel frequently to a broader range of destinations at least some of which are new. Nomads are almost continuously on the move and have no clear home. Missionaries travel to customers to disseminate knowledge and plumbers (visiting tradesmen) work on customers' sites. Travellers have been categorized also by travel frequency. In the study by Ivancevich, Konopaske and DeFrank (2003), segmentation is done according to travel frequencies between employees in a single organization. Frequent travellers take significantly more trips than the average traveller in their organization, moderate travellers are travellers who take a few more trips annually than average travellers, and travellers who annually take a limited number of trips are called light travellers. The discrepancy in the way of

life has been a starting point in a study of Mayerhofer et al. (2010). They have explored the dimensions of the lifestyles of employees in assignments with travelling work and found four types of travellers: tough travellers (efficient working, works everywhere and any time), enjoyers (a focus on comfortable equipment for their travelling and business stays), cosmopolitans (emphasizes the importance of the cultural dimensions of their international assignments and their multicultural interests), and contactors (a focus on maintaining their social contacts and relationships).

In this study, travellers are viewed in a similar way to the definition of Welch and Worm (2006) insofar as that travellers are seen as persons whose work is characterized by numerous and regular trips abroad. There are no limitations concerning the frequency of trips or number of days spent abroad.

2.2 Theoretical approaches to work-family research and research of international business travel used in this dissertation

This dissertation is based on several different theoretical approaches to work-family interaction. The following section briefly describes the theoretical approaches and models applied in this dissertation and a summary is presented in the table 2.

Table 2.   Summary of theoretical approaches to work-family research used in this dissertation

Theory or model applied in this dissertation	Core idea of the theory or model	Article of this dissertation where the theory is used?
Role-stress theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Kahn et al., 1964).	According role –stress theory managing multiple roles (e.g. spouse, parent, employee) is difficult and treats individual resources, and thus can result in a role overload and conflict between different roles.	Article 2, 3 and 4. (Role-stress theory guides each empirical studies of this dissertation)
Conservation of resources theory (COR) (Hobfoll 1989, 2001, 2002, 2011)	According to the COR –theory individuals seek to acquire and maintain resources that they value. Resources include personal characteristics, objects, conditions and energies. Threat of loss or actual loss of individuals' key resources may cause the experience of stress.	Article 2
Work-family conflict model (Frone & Rice, 1987; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985)	According to work-family conflict model work and home domains are incompatible. Work-family conflict (WFC) is defined as 'a form in which the role pressure from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect'	Article 2
Work-family border theory (Clark 2000, 2001, 2002)	Individuals construct both mental and physical boundaries between working life and personal life to help simplify and order their work and family environments.	Article 3
Segmentation-integration theories (Kreiner 2006; Nippert-Eng 1996)	Segmentation theory perceives work and family as a separate fields. Individuals manage boundaries between different domains through segmentation and integration of work and family.	Article 3

Travel stress model (DeFrank et al, 2000)	Travel-related stress is not limited only to the period when the traveler is on a trip, but has an affect both before and after it.	Article 3 and 4
Dyadic stress and coping (Bodenmann 1995, 1997, 2005)	Stress affecting both partners is defined as a dyadic stress. Couples manage such stress through dyadic coping strategies.	Article 4
Spillover theory	Assumes that the work and family spheres interact, and positive or negative experienced in one domain can spill over to another.	Article 4 (Stress of one partner can spill over and affect other partner and thus cause indirect dyadic stress)
Cross-over theory	Cross over is a dyadic transmission process between people where one person's experiences affect the experiences of another person in same social environment	Article 4

Travel stress model (DeFrank et al., 2000; Ivancevich et al. 2003) is central background model in the articles 3 and 4. Model assumes that stress related to travel is not limited on the actual travel time but appear in post, during and after trip, and that stress related to each step of the trip has its unique characteristics. Thus, the model is relevant in this dissertation because it supports the supposition that international business travel has an influence on other life spheres and family members. In this study, the model is extended to the spouses of IBTs, so that spouse's experiences of stress is examined in different phases of their partners' business trip.

Work-family research is commonly guided by the role-stress theory (Kahn et al., 1964). Similarly, in this dissertation, the role-stress theory builds the theoretical background. In each individual article, the interaction between individuals work-family interactions is based on the assumption that an individual has multiple roles and expectations, and demands relating to different roles (such as employee, partner and parent) that compete for the individual's resources.

Also another theory applied in the context of the work-family interface; Conservation of Resources theory (COR) (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001, 2002, 2011) is applied in this dissertation in the article two. Conservation of resources theory

proposes that stress takes place in situations where an individual is threatened with resource loss. According to COR, resource loss is common when people try to attend to both work and family responsibilities (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). As commonly in the context of work and family, the COR theory is used as a theoretical basis for studying conflict between work and family (WFC) in the second article of this study.

Both resource loss and inability to manage multiple roles may result in experiences of work-family conflict (WFC) - a situation where the demands of work and family roles are conflicting and participation in both roles is difficult (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). WFC is the central theoretical position in the second article of this dissertation, but it is a focal approach to the whole dissertation. Examining the WFC in the context of IBTs is relevant because global mobility has been found to affect the private and the family live (Mäkelä & Suutari, 2011).

The whole dissertation bases on perception of work and family being two separate spheres. The third article of this dissertation uses work-family border theory (Clark 2000, 2001, 2002) as a framework to observe how international business travelers and partners manage the boundaries between work and family in order to maintain a balance. The starting point of the study was that business travelers need to reconstruct these boundaries more often because of their frequent travel, and thus the boundaries are not so clear and stable. According to border theory, individuals use integration and segmentation of domains to manage the borders between work and family, and thus try to keep a balance between different life spheres.

The models of spill- and crossover are central to the last article of this dissertation that takes a dyadic perspective to travel related stress experiences and uses dyadic stress and dyadic coping as the framework. The spillover and crossover models assume that stress and strain is carried over from work to private life (Bolger et al., 1989). Spillover is an intra-individual transmission of experiences of one domain to another and crossover is an inter-individual transmission of experiences from one member of a dyad to the other.

2.3 Travel related stress and its outcomes

Regardless of the work type, some form of stress presents itself at some point in time. This can be explained by the basic assumptions of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 2001; 2002) that is used as a framework theory in the second article of this dissertation. COR theory proposes that individuals have the basic motivation to preserve, protect and build resources that they value. Stress

occurs when individuals' key resources are threatened with loss or there is an actual loss of resources or lack of an expected gain in resources (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). Resources refer to personal characteristics (e.g. self-esteem), objects (e.g. home), conditions (e.g. parental role, a healthy relationship, a secure job), and energies (e.g. time, knowledge). According to the COR theory, loss of these valued resources leads to stress and diminished well-being (Hobfoll, 2001).

Work with international travel is irregular in nature and impossible to perform in standard working hours and includes mobility that may be physically and mentally demanding. The life of international business travellers can be considered as a circle in which the phases of leaving, absence and homecoming alternate (see Figure 1.). DeFrank, Konopaske, Ivancevich (2000) proposed in their business travel stress model that each step of the trip has unique stress. Travel stress presents itself as perceptual, emotional, behavioral, and physical reactions, and stress can be experienced in any phase, be it before, during or after travel (DeFrank et al., 2000).

Pre-trip stress arises from the need to prepare for the journey and make arrangements both at home and at work. Stress, which may appear *during the trip,* is related to problems that are more practical: crossing of multiple time zones and unexpected events like overbooked flights and unexplained delays. Worrying about family members, experiencing jet lag, health fears and concern about personal security during the trip can make travel more stressful. As work, thinking, and communication practices are culturally bound, acting in a multicultural environment itself can result in stress (Nurmi, 2010, 2011). The longer the trip has been, the more likely *post-trip stress* is experienced. Absence from the home office is likely to result in a heavy workload in the office after returning. It appears to be common that companies do not compensate travelling hours as working hours and travellers must work additional hours to keep up with the home office's working demands.
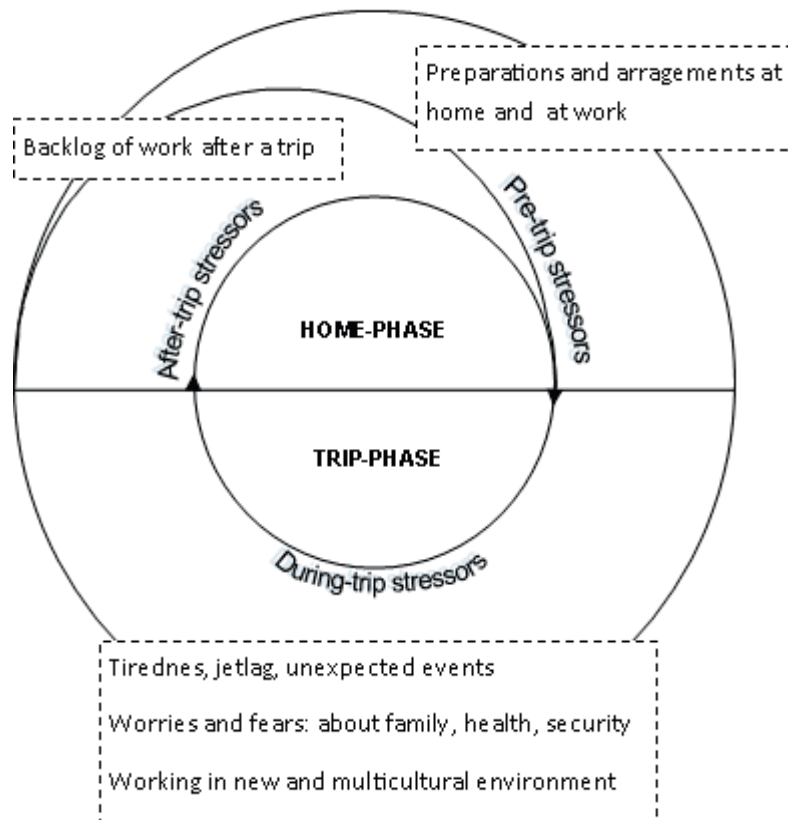
Figure 1.   The circle of business travel and travel stress

As described above, travel stress can be present when the traveller is at home. For international business travellers, travel itself is a source of stress, for example, travelling across time zones may cause extra stress through the physiological effects known as jet lag. Moreover, the need to work and adapt repeatedly in different cultures may create an extra strain for travellers (DeFrank et al., 2000). Travel has been found to induce a real threat to health; illness rates are higher and psychological problems occur more commonly among IBTs than non-travelling counterparts (Liese et al., 1997).

In addition, separation from home and family has been found to be one of the factors that produce psychological disorders for travellers (Liese et al., 1997). Travel interferes with everyday routines; scholars have shown that there is a connection between travelling and sleeping, eating and drinking problems, maintaining social connections, and an inability to maintain the pace of work (Burkholder et al., 2010; Demel & Mayrhofer, 2010; Harvey, 1986; Mäkelä, Bergbom, Tanskanen & Kinnunen, 2014). One of the most challenging and

stressful factor in work with mobility has been found to be the lack of control over one's own work (Vartiainen, Lönnblad, Balk & Jalonen, 2005). Trips at short notice, or if the traveller is not involved in the scheduling of the trips, places a strain on the traveller (Welch & Worm, 2006). How tiring and stressful travelling is for the traveller as well as the extent to which travel affects other life spheres, depends on the extent and intensity of travel (Hyrkkänen et al., 2011; Mäkelä, Bergbom, Saarenpää & Suutari, 2015; Mäkelä, Kinnunen, et al., 2015).

As discussed above, travel for work has consequences on an individual's health and well-being and previous research indicates that travel affects other life spheres. Although there are differences between countries and cultures, combining work and family is inevitable for the majority of people. In Finland, like other Nordic countries, the legislation in various forms, such as different kinds of family leave and child care systems, supports combining work and family lives (Haataja, 2007). However, work and family form independent environments, both of which apply certain rules, the scheme of things and code of the conduct and combining different spheres of life and maintaining a balance between them, is often complicated.

COR-theory described in the beginning of this chapter (Hobfoll, 1989; 2001; 2002) is suitable and often applied as a theoretical guide for work-family research, and it has also been previously applied in the IBT context (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Westman, Etzion & Chen, 2008). For example, in the IBT contexts, time for family can be seen as a resource that is likely to decrease when the intensity of travel increases. Thus, when a resource (time for family) depletes, it leads to increased WFC. COR theory was applied as a theoretical basis in the second article of this dissertation, and it provides a framework which can be useful also when interpreting the empirical research undertaken in the third and fourth articles. The theories and models of work-family interaction that relate closest to this study are discussed in detail in the following sections.

2.4 Implications of international business travel on family life

2.4.1 Concepts of work-family balance and conflict

The interaction between work and family is in many ways a complex matter. First of all, the interaction is bidirectional meaning that work and family can encounter each other, in either a negative or positive way (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Kinnunen et al., 2014). Work-family balance is a

positive way to consider the interaction between work and family spheres. Work-family balance can be defined *"as a satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict"* (Clark, 2001, p. 349). According to Clark's definition, the balance between work and family is not dependent on equal time usage; instead, balance is experienced if an individual manages the different roles and fields of life (Clark, 2001; Greenblatt, 2002).

The positive effects of interaction between work and family have been called facilitation (Grzywacz & Butler, 2005), positive spillover (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000), enhancement (Fisher, Bulger & Smith, 2009) or enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Wayne, 2009; Wayne, Randel & Stevens, 2006). Greenhaus and Powell's (2006, p. 73) definition of work-family enrichment is 'the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other role' and includes the perception of the bidirectional nature of the positive interaction between work and family. In this way, enrichment can occur from work to family and from family to work. Previous research on the positive effects of international business travel is scarce. There is research that has shown that if trips are frequent, the traveller has the possibility to control travel and if the traveller's attitude to travel is positive, there may be a positive relationship to traveller vigor (Westman, Etzion, & Chen, 2008).

The negative perspective on balancing the work and family relationship has dominated previous research, and the work-family interface has often been studied from the perspective of role stress theory (Kahn et al., 1964). Role stress theory postulates that managing and balancing between multiple roles, such as a spouse, a parent, a friend, an employee, a colleague, is difficult and can impose competing demands that result in a role overload and conflict between work and family (WFC) (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Kahn et al., 1964). The idea that work and family are different and that there are easily conflicting spheres of life is central for the whole dissertation. The article 2 focuses on and examines especially the WFC experienced by IBTs. There are several theories that have been central to the development of research in work-family conflict (Bellavia & Frone, 2005). In addition to role stress theory described previously, COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001, 2002), ecological systems theory that postulates that work and family are microsystems that entail patterns of activities and roles (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Voydanoff, 2002), and boundary (Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate, 2000) or border theory (Clark, 2002) described more in detail later are well known.

Work-family conflict has been considered a separate research subject because it has been associated with physical and mental well-being as well as general satisfaction and quality of work and family life (Aryee, 1992; Frone et al., 1997;

Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985:77) have defined work-family conflict (WFC) as *'a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect.'* Conflict arises when the demands of one domain are incompatible with the demands of the other domain.

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) present three major forms of work-family conflict that can arise: *time-, strain-,* and *behavior-based.* Time-based conflict occurs because multiple roles may compete for a person's time, and time devoted to one role makes it difficult to participate in another role. Time-based conflict may occur in two forms: (1) when the person is physically absent due to membership in one role, which makes it impossible to comply with expectations arising from another role; (2) the person is mentally absent because of absorption in another role even if one is physically attending. Strain-based conflict means that strain experienced in one role intrudes into and interferes with participation in another role. Strain can manifest itself in distress, suspense, tiredness and irritability. Behavior-based conflict occurs when specific behaviors required in one role are incompatible with behavioral expectations in another role. For example, a person is expected to possess assertiveness as an employee and tenderness as a parent.

Studies focusing on antecedents aim to explain the factors behind work-family interactions. Factors behind work-family conflict have typically been placed in three categories: work domain variables (working hours, flexibility, work schedules etc.), non-work domain variables (family situation, children's age etc.), and individual and demographic variables (gender, age, parenthood, career stage etc.) (Byron, 2005; Casper, Eby, Bordeaux & Lockwood, 2007). All three categories will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

When researching couple level issues such as this study does, it is relevant to discuss the crossover effect as well, that is, the dyadic transmission process of either positive or negative experiences and emotions between individuals (Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, Ronald & Wethington, 1989; Carlson, Ferguson, Kacmar, Grzywacz & Whitten, 2010; Westman, 2001). Three main mechanisms that affect the crossover process have been found. These mechanisms are common stress, which increase the strain on both partners and cause strain to crossover from one situation to another; empathetic reactions, based on the close relationship between partners who share their lives and care for one another; and indirect crossover, where the transmission is mediated by interpersonal exchanges (Westman, Etzion & Chen, 2008; Westman & Vinokur, 1998).

2.4.2 International business travel and other life spheres: conflict or balance?

International business travel, it has been noted, creates individual stress and health problems and, as discussed in previous sections, regular absences of one family member can be challenging for a family. Compared to expatriate assignments, where the employee and family move to the host country, frequent travel can be easier for the employee as they maintain family and personal life at the home-country location. However, previous studies all invariably indicate that work, which includes frequent travel abroad, has an influence on the private life of travellers (e.g. Mayerhofer, Muller & Schmidt 2010; Konopaske et al. 2009).

In particular, an increase in the frequency and duration of trips are work-related antecedents that produce stress, health problems and create challenges for family life (Bergbom et al., 2011; Espino et al., 2002). Previous research indicates a connection between the number of the trips and the strain experienced by both travellers and their families. The length of travel has been found to be positively related to IBTs' work-life-conflict (Mäkelä, Kinnunen, et al., 2015) and has been connected to the stress experienced by a spouse's psychological well-being and changes in the children's behavior (Dimberg et al., 2002; Espino et al., 2002). However, there is no consensus as to what is the amount of trips or travel days after which travel is detrimental to individual's own health or the work-family balance. Some sources indicate that spending more than 50 days travelling each year affects family life (Hyrkkänen et al., 2011). Although, it has been found that a high number of trips does not necessarily add to the strain experienced by the traveller if the traveller has the opportunity to prearrange the times and details of the trips. In contrast, the lack of control over one's own work has been shown to add to the strain (Jensen, 2013; Wickham & Vecchi, 2009.)

In addition to the frequency and duration of trips, last-minute changes to schedules and the inability to establish routines has been found to have negative effects on the families of travellers (Espino et al., 2002; Fisher & Cooper, 1990). In many companies, the principal aim of travel policies is a strict control of travel costs (Gustafson, 2012a; Mason, 2002) that, for example, may limit the travelling staffs' ability to organize the travel schedules and, in that way, influence negatively the traveller's personal life. As described previously (see the travel stress model, Figure 1.), travel-related stress is not limited to the actual travel time but the different phases of the trip (during-, after-, pre-trip). The experienced level of stress varies also according to the trip-phase so that it is highest before the trip and lowest after the return home (Westman & Etzion, 2002).

In addition to work-related factors that add to WFC, the family situation has been found to be a non-work related antecedent that also has a major effect on WFC. Having family increases social and emotional burdens for the travellers and, in that way, also conflict. The traveller may, for example, be stressed over how travel and the absence from home impacts the family and how the other partner manages everyday tasks (Nicholas & McDowall, 2012; Striker et al., 1999). Family separation is a major source of negative effects on the work-family balance of IBTs (DeFrank et al., 2000; Welch & Worm, 2006). A traveller's absence from home adds to the stress of the traveller's partner, mainly through the increased workload. Due to the physical distance when on a trip, the traveller is unable to take care of home responsibilities and partners are often needed to be flexible with their own work. Forced flexibility may be a source of family work conflict for partners if they, for example, need to stay at home with a sick child (Nicholas & McDowall, 2012). Therefore, parental status may be a factor that increases the stress and imbalance between work and family. When a person has children, the number of roles increases, the more competing roles a person has, and the greater is the risk of role overload and WFC (Roehling & Bultman, 2002). Having children decreases the willingness of both genders to travel, especially mothers with small children who are unwilling to spend the night away from home when travelling (Gustafson, 2006).

Gender as a demographic variable behind WFC experiences has been found to have an effect on the range of experiences of work-family conflict. It has been found that females overall travel less and may have more problems with integrating work involving travel with family than males (Frone, 2003). However, there is no clear consensus how gender affects the experiences of WFC among IBTs. Some findings indicate that it may be dependent on gender (Westman, Etzion & Gattenio, 2008), whereas others suggest that gender does not affect the conflicting experiences between work and other life spheres (Jensen, 2013; Mäkelä, Bergbom, Kinnunen, et al., 2014). Instead, we know that men spend more time at work (Statistics Sweden., 2007). Previous research focusing on the WFC of IBTs has reported that WFC appears more commonly among female travellers (Westman, Etzion & Chen, 2008). However, one study conducted in Finland (Mäkelä, Kinnunen & Suutari, 2015) did not find any difference amongst men and women IBT's work-to-personal life conflict (WLC) - a concept very close to WFC. In addition, in a study utilizing the same data as used in this particular dissertation (article 2), gender was included as a control variable and a direct relationship between gender and the level of WFC was not found (Mäkelä, Bergbom, Kinnunen, et al., 2014).

2.5 Stretched and blurred boundaries: The effects of travel on borders between work and family

In today's world, work is not only undertaken in conventional work places but also increasingly people are working in environments such as homes, transportation vehicles, and places such as restaurants and cafés (Hyrkkänen & Vartiainen, 2005). In addition, the timing of paid work has also changed so that nonstandard and flexible work arrangements are more and more usual. It has been commented that for global professionals, such as IBTs, the boundaries between work and non-work/family have become more permeable (Caligiuri, Hyland & Joshi, 1998; Shaffer et al., 2015). For IBTs, the fading of these boundaries may be common because their work is not done conventionally in the home office or in standard office hours.

According to boundary and border theories, different life spheres are separated by a border that is of high importance in order to avoid conflict and strike a balance between different domains (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996). Of these theories, Clark's (2000) work/family border theory is devoted only to work and family domains. Work/family border theory was developed to clarify and explain the complicated interaction between work and family. Clark calls working people as border-crossers because they move back and forth between the border dividing these two different spheres, and the border between domains can be seen as a point where the domain specific behavior ends.

Clark's (2000) work/family border theory is used as the framework in the third article of this dissertation. I have adopted work/family border theory in this dissertation, because it considers specifically work and family borders. It also considers borders more widely than other theories. Whereas many other views (e.g. Desrochers & Sargent, 2004) consider mainly psychological factors associated with combining work and family, Clark believes that the border between work and family can be more concrete. Clark divides borders as either physical, temporal or mental. Physical borders refer to spatial markers such as gates, walls and doors, for example, concrete areas where the domain-relevant behavior takes place (workplaces and homes). Temporal borders relate to working hours and divide the time available for work and family. Mental borders refer to the rules individuals create and relate to thinking and behavioral patterns at work and at home. This means that certain behavior patterns, thinking patterns or emotions are appropriate only for one domain (Clark, 2002).

Borders between work and family can be analyzed through how flexible and permeable they are. Flexibility refers to the pliability of borders between work and

family, that is, the degree to which the spatial and temporal boundaries are pliable (Hall & Richter, 1988). For example, a border is flexible if individuals are free to choose the hours they work or can work in any location they choose (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000, 2002). Permeability refers to the degree to which a boundary allows psychological or behavioral aspects from other domains to enter the other. A border is permeable, for instance, if an individual is contacted by a family member while at work, or by, for example, in answering work calls or e-mails outside of working hours (Ashforth et al., 2000; Bulger, Matthews & Hoffman, 2007; Clark, 2000, 2002). The work-family border can also be considered in terms of how strong or weak it is. The more inflexible and impenetrable the border is, the stronger it is. Similarly, the weaker the border, the more flexible and penetrable it is. A strong border does not allow blending between domains, the border is impermeable and inflexible, and work and family constitute two different worlds. In contrast, if the border is open to influence, it is weak and different worlds (work and family) are able to blend together (Clark, 2000; Kreiner, Hollensbe & Sheep, 2009).

According to Clark's border theory, people manage borders between work and family through the integration and segmentation of work and family roles (Nippert-Eng, 1996). To some degree, individuals can influence the permeability of the boundaries, with people roughly divided into either segmenters or integrators. This is according to the degree that aspects of the work and family are kept separate (Casper et al., 2013; Kreiner, 2006). People who create physical, cognitive or behavioral boundaries to keep work and family as separate as possible are called segmenters (Casper et al., 2013; Nippert-Eng, 1996). Integrators are people whohave no clear boundaries between work and home as boundaries are either non-existent or very permeable and elements of work and family are integrated (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kreiner, 2006).

It is unclear whether either segmentation or integration benefits work-family balance more. In some sense, segmentation may help maintain a clarity and balance between the different domains (Ashforth et al., 2000). Integration may be harmful if the roles of different domains are so highly integrated that one has difficulties in distinguishing one's work from one's family roles (Desrochers & Sargent, 2004). Both integration and segmentation have their advantages and an individual can create synergy between work and family life (Clark, 2000; Rothbard, Phillips & Dumas, 2005).

2.6 The concept of coping: coping with the stresses of travel

Next, I will present the most appropriate approaches and studies concerning coping in the context of IBTs. After that, I will move on to dyadic coping that is of central interest in the fourth article. Coping, in the context of work-family conflict, refers to individuals aware of efforts to get through stressful situations or "actions and thoughts that enable individuals to handle difficult situations" (Stone et al., 1988, p. 183). In other words, when individuals encounter challenges or negative events, the effective use of coping can help them to maintain physical and mental balance and well-being. The aim of coping is, therefore, to help manage, reduce and put up with the demands and conflicts that arise between them (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Coping is usually studied through emotion-focused and problem-focused coping strategies (Mauno et al., 2012; Stahl & Caligiuri, 2005). Problem-focused strategies attempt to solve, conceptualize or minimize the effects of stressful situations and emotion-focused strategies refer more to the regulation of emotions that result from the stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Stahl & Caligiuri, 2005). Emotional coping is likely to occur if it seems that nothing can be done to modify the harmful, threatening or challenging environmental condition. The problem-focused forms of coping are used when something can be done to modify the situation. In some sense, it is possible to learn to cope with stressful situations in an efficient way by managing through experience (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). When a person enters a new stressful situation for the first time, the stress can be high, but when the same situation is encountered again, the person already has experience on how to cope and the stress level may be lower. Lazarus and Folkman (1984, p. 130) discuss the difference between coping and automatized adaptive behavior, they state that the "more quickly people can apply these skills automatically, the more effectively and efficiently they can manage their relationships with the environment."

Sometimes the stress is so high that individual coping efforts are not enough (Bodenmann, 1995, 1997). In such situations, when an individual has no access to sufficient or appropriate coping strategies for managing it, the challenge is likely to affect both partners and next of kin (Revenson et al., 2005). Such stressful events or encounters that concerns both partners are defined as a dyadic stress (Bodenmann, 2005). Since the stress of one partner may have an effect on the other (Revenson et al., 2005), it is worthwhile for partners to cope together, that is, use dyadic coping strategies to maintain their own well-being and the quality of their relationship during stress episodes (Chen, 2014).

2.6.1 Coping in couples: managing work and family with dyadic coping strategies

Dyadic coping in couples has been found to be positively and significantly related to better relationship quality (Bodenmann et al. 2006), better communication in the relationship, higher well-being, and less psychological problems. In contrast, the absence of dyadic coping has been found to be the main predictor of separation and divorce. Bodenmann (2008:108) describes dyadic coping as a process in which three factors operate and interact: the stress signals of one partner, the perception of these signals by the other partner, and the reaction of this partner to the stress signals. For instance, when coping as a dyad, partners can tackle their work stress collectively and aid each other to alleviate the negative emotions caused by work stressors (Chen, 2014).

Partners can respond to stress signals with either positive or negative dyadic coping strategies (Revenson et al., 2005). Positive dyadic coping is distinguished into three forms: supportive dyadic coping, common dyadic coping, and delegated dyadic coping (Meier et al., 2011). Negative is divided into three forms: dyadic coping can be superficial, ambivalent or hostile (see Figure 2) (Bodenmann, 1997).

Supportive and common coping can be either emotional- or problem-focus. Supportive coping refers to situations when only one partner is concerned by the stressful event and the other partner supports the other. Assistance can be, for example, in helping with domestic chores, offering help and advice (problem-focused) or empathic understanding such as expressing solidarity with a partner etc. (emotion-focused) (Bodenmann & Randall, 2012). Common coping refers to coping efforts by both partners, in the situation when both are exposed to a stressful encounter. Common coping can be, for example, joint problem solving or information seeking (problem-focused) or sharing feelings, mutual commitment and relaxing together (emotion-focused). In delegated dyadic coping, one partner tries to decrease the stress of the other partner by taking charge over his/her responsibilities.

As mentioned, negative dyadic coping can be hostile, ambivalent or superficial coping. Hostile coping refers to giving support in a negative way, for example, displaying open disinterest, sarcasm, insulting or minimizing the seriousness of the partner's stress. In ambivalent dyadic coping, one partner supports the other unwillingly with the attitude that the contribution is unnecessary. When superficial dyadic coping occurs, the other partner gives support but the support provision is hypocritical, meaning, for example, that partner is asking questions without being listening to (Bodenmann, 2005, 2008; Bodenmann, Pihet & Kayser, 2006).

What kind of coping strategies couples use depends on whether the stressor is internal or external. If the stressor is outside the relationship (external), one can more easily understand the situation and support the other partner (Randall & Bodenmann, 2009). Couples can also develop their coping skills; if the same stress repeatedly affects the couple, they can get used to it and can learn to cope with it more effectively on the grounds of past coping experiences.

DYADIC COPING				
POSITIVE DYADIC COPING			NEGATIVE DYADIC	
Problem-focused supportive dyadic coping	Emotional focused supportive dyadic coping	Delegated dyadic coping	Hostile dyadic coping	
			Ambivalent dyadic coping	
Problem-focused common dyadic coping	Emotional focused common dyadic coping		Superficial dyadic coping	
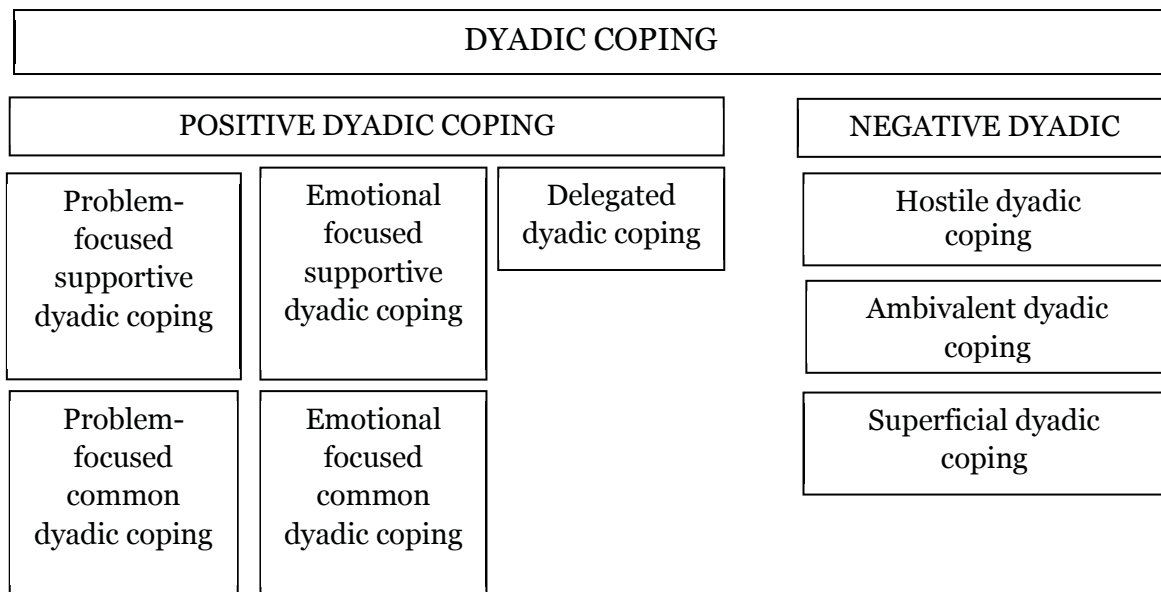
Figure 2. Differentiation of dyadic coping

The majority of studies on dyadic coping are quantitative and have been conducted within the field of psychology, focusing on the dyadic coping process of couples dealing with chronic illness (e.g. Berg & Upchurch, 2007; Gustavsson-Lilius, 2010; Schulz et al., 2004). Furthermore, studies concerning dyadic coping and marital satisfaction and quality has also been conducted (Bodenmann et al., 2006; Falconier et al., 2012; Herzberg, 2013; Randall & Bodenmann, 2009). No previous research on the dyadic coping of IBTs or research on what kind of coping strategies IBTs use to reduce stress caused by travel-related work challenges could be found. The scant research concerning the coping of IBTs is discussed in the next section.

2.6.2 Coping of IBTs

Although the focus of this study is on the dyadic coping efforts of IBTs, an overview of research of the individual coping of IBTs is worthwhile because dyadic coping is

applied when an individual's own coping efforts are not appropriate or ineffectual. The coping research of IBTs has largely concentrated on how the traveller can ease the physical toughness and cope with the physical consequences of work-related travel. The research that concentrates on the coping of the family or couple is almost non-existent. Moreover, there is a lack of research concentrating on partners coping with travel related issues. Only a few previous studies have investigated how spouses cope with work travel in terms of managing family relations and the home (Espino et al., 2002; Stewart & Donald, 2006).

The study of Espino et al. (2002) did not find very concrete coping efforts. Instead, the coping of spouses was aimed primarily on keeping the traveller "psychologically present" by maintaining contact with the traveller so that they are aware as to what is going on at home. Since Espino and colleagues' study did not focus on clear coping efforts that may help the partners of travellers to manage every day and did not investigate how partners cope with their own demands, there is definitely a lack of research concerning how partners cope. Stewarts and Donald's (2006) study concentrated on how partners cope with their partners' absence. According to them, the majority of the partners' strategies employed were targeted at dealing with role overload and with the expectations and needs of children and of colleagues. Social support and work flexibility appeared to be the most important resources when spouses tried to manage family and work commitments during their partners' absence. Additionally, partners had to make special arrangements to manage work commitments and their family's demands simultaneously and that involved negotiating with their employers.

If we consider coping that travellers use with the general stress due to travel, there is more research. According to Westman (2004) travellers use different coping strategies in each phase of the trip (pre-trip, journey and stay, post-trip). Coping can be proactive via acquiring resources, proactive via preventing resource loss, reactive via acquiring resources and reactive via preventing resource loss. In the pre-trip phase, proactive individuals and organizational coping strategies based on acquiring resources and preventing the loss of resources were used. In the other phases, a combination of proactive and reactive coping strategies were applied.

There is also research that indicates that the coping strategies of IBTs are in some sense organized by gender. Whereas men cope with physical activity or spending time with their children, female travellers prefer mental exercises and social interaction in order to cope with the consequences of travel (Kollinger-Santer & Fischlmayr, 2013). Some studies also indicate that female travellers are more willing to travel even long distances to come home for the night and, thereby, overcome the negative feelings related to travel and being absent from home

(Bergström, 2010; Gustafson, 2006). Male travellers instead more often choose to stay the night away or come home for the night and maybe thus acquire more time to recover before re-entering the family life and its obligations.

Relevant literature concerning dyadic coping of IBTs was not found. In Figure 3, the structure of dyadic stress and coping of IBTs is presented. The model views that both partners in a marital dyad experience individual (work) stress. This stress can cross over to the other partner and take characteristics of dyadic stress if the individual coping efforts do not work. In order to maintain balance, dyadic coping efforts are taken into use.
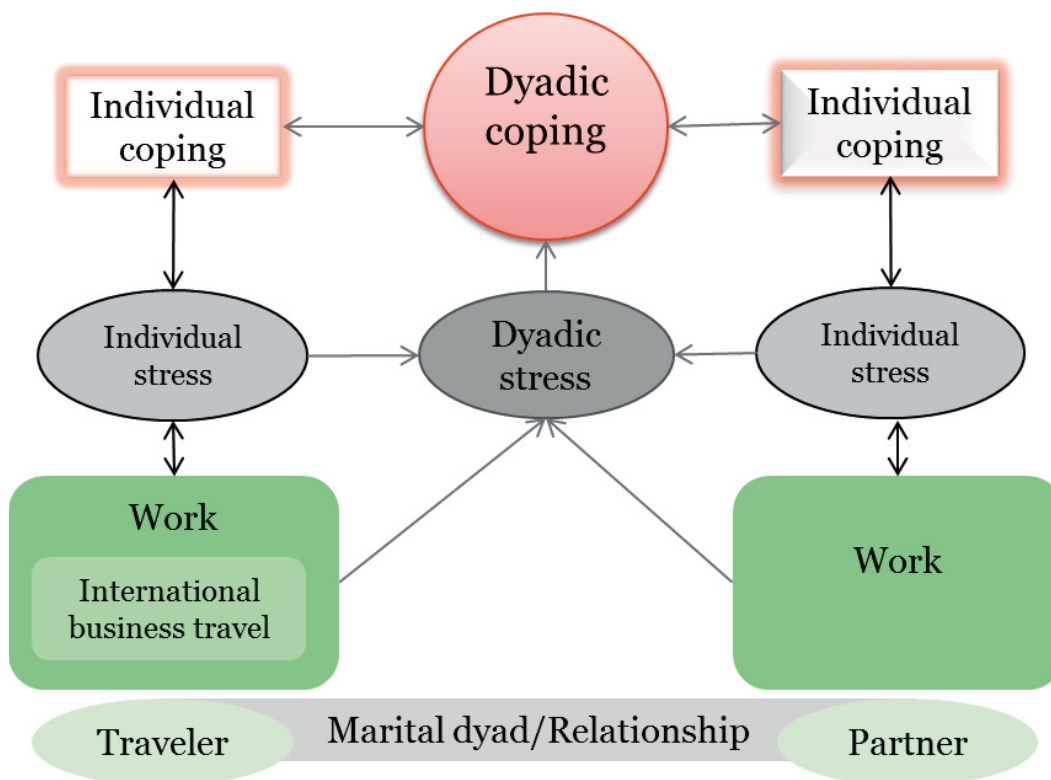
Figure 3.   The structure of dyadic stress and coping of IBTs

This chapter presented the existing literature on IBTs in the context of work and family, including the description of international business travellers, theoretical approaches to work-family research used in this dissertation, the outcomes of travel-related stress at the individual and family level, and definitions of work-family conflict. Secondly, this chapter concentrated on work-family border management, traditionally used as a theoretical framework in work-family

research, but not applied in an IBT-context as far as is known. This chapter also focused on individual and dyadic forms of coping. The following chapter 3 presents the methodological choices done in the four empirical articles.

3 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this chapter, I discuss the methodological choices and the research setting of this study. Before describing the methodology of the articles of this thesis, the ontological and epistemological assumptions behind them are discussed. After that, the analysis of the data in the articles and the evaluation of research quality are discussed. Since I have used quantitative and qualitative methods and data, both are discussed in detail.

3.1 Philosophical foundations

Philosophical and methodological premises guide the whole research. The basic philosophical and methodological decisions are revealed in the formation of the aim of the study and in the methods chosen. Methodology refers to how the researcher can come to know (i.e. methodology) a theory about data acquisition. Ontology denotes how reality is formed, and how it can be interpreted (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). According to Guba and Lincoln (1985), ontology refers to *what is the form and nature of reality and what can be known about it*. Ontological reasoning evaluates if the research issue can be investigated through scientific tools and if the investigation gives a truthful representation of it (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Epistemology can be referred to as philosophy of knowledge; for example, answering the questions of what we can know and how is the true knowledge like? It illustrates *what is the nature of the relationship between the knower and what can be known* (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Laverty, 2008; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

This study aims to describe and understand how IBTs themselves and their partners experience the effects of international business travel. Each of the four individual articles observe the issue from a slightly different perspective. Different research methods are used. Two of the empirical articles of this dissertation are qualitative and one is quantitative. Therefore, the multiple methodologies that are used in this thesis, including varying epistemological emphases, are discussed next.

Ontological and epistemological positions of quantitative study

Through expanded research methods, the nature of the research problem can be handled more effectively (Ivankova, Creswell & Stick, 2006; Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2013), and, therefore, in this thesis both qualitative (phenomenological) and quantitative research methods have been adopted. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods thus broadens the perspective on the

research subject. In this study, a quantitative method (article 2) provides knowledge on how travel intensity and certain individual characteristics (gender and parental status) are related to IBT's WFC. This type of research is based on large survey data, which allows generalization of the findings to a certain extent and aids in the understanding of how these issues are related to each other. Furthermore, a qualitative approach and phenomenology can help generate the structures of lived experiences and allows the identification of which phenomenon is the most relevant to an individual or group of individuals (Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). Therefore, the role of quantitative research in this thesis can be seen as an overview of some of the topics identified as important in the theoretical article (article 1), and the qualitative research serves to complement by providing more in-depth understanding of the phenomena.

The quantitative study of this dissertation is described on objectivist ontological assumptions and positivist epistemological assumptions; hence, it differs considerably from the other studies of this dissertation that are strongly, as described later, phenomenological and lay in that interpretation. An interpretative phenomenological approach emphases the role of the researcher as an interpreter, whereas the positivist view, underlines the objectivity of the researcher and uses objective research methods (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Positivism implies the existence of objective reality and can be studied and understood through the direct observations or measurement of phenomena. The focus of positivist research is of description and explanation (Carson, Gilmore, Perry & Gronhaug, 2001; Krauss, 2005). The positivist researcher remains detached from the participants of the research (Carson et al., 2001) so that the "object of study is independent of phenomena; facts are established by taking apart a phenomenon to examine its component parts" (Krauss, 2005, p. 759). The researcher tries to be emotionally neutral and makes a distinction between science and personal experiences (Carson et al., 2001). Research methods used by positivist researchers are typically formalized with statistical and mathematical methods.

In addition to the theoretical justification to adopt both quantitative and qualitative research methods, the choice to use both was very practical, originating from the early stages of the research process of this dissertation. In the autumn of 2011, I started to work on a project that studied international business travel and well-being. When I entered the project, the researchers of the project had already conducted a survey and produced quantitative data for the research. The aim of the research project was also to produce results with a qualitative approach. I, as a researcher, was interested in using qualitative research methods for my PhD project; therefore, it was logical that I took over the qualitative part of the project. The participants of the survey were asked if they were willing to participate in the

interview study (see Chapter 3.3.1). The qualitative data (interviews of 10 couples) of this thesis were gathered amongst those who had responded that "yes, I'm willing to participate in the interview study" when prompted.

The idea of closely examining how gender and parental status as individual characteristics and the intensity of travel (international business travel days) affect the experiences of negative work-family interactions arose as a consequence of two separate studies that highlight the special importance that parenthood and gender have with respect to IBT and area needing further research. The above-mentioned studies are co-authored book chapter that addressed the issues of coping with work-family conflict in international career context (Mäkelä et al., 2012) and the first article, which I included in this particular dissertation, the theoretical article that concentrates on the literature written on IBT (Saarenpää, 2015).

The survey data, collected by our research group in 2011, did not include the measurement scale for WFC. Fortunately, researchers in my team had established co-operation with the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH). FIOH had conducted a project on "International work-related travel and its effects on the health and well-being of workers." This project had produced extensive and rich data suitable for examining the relationships between the above-mentioned factors. FIOH was interested in cooperating with us, and we conducted this study together.

Thus, the original idea of the quantitative article of this thesis was based on my theoretical article and on the findings of the above-mentioned empirical studies. The idea behind the study design was further developed by the author team: myself, Barbara Bergbom, Vesa Suutari, and Liisa Mäkelä who, as the first author, had the main responsibility for the writing and who conducted the statistical analyses.

Ontological and epistemological positions of qualitative studies

Studies three and four were based on qualitative semi-structured interviews and the epistemological position shifted from positivist to interpretatism. Interpretivist researchers, contrary to positivist researcher who believe in objective knowledge, seek to understand through perceived knowledge and make sense of what is perceived as reality (Carson et al., 2001).

The qualitative part of this thesis studies and interprets the experiences of international business travellers and their partners. I wanted to give voice to my respondents, and I tried to understand *how international business travellers and their partners experience travel.* Hence, my research is based predominantly on

the interpretation of the experiences of my informants, the travellers, and their partners'. Because the aim was to gather an understanding of the travellers partners' experiences, I decided to use the partners themselves as the informants. Previous studies that have investigated the experiences have, with a few exceptions (Stewart & Donald, 2006), been survey-based (Espino et al., 2002), using other external sources of data (Dimberg et al., 2002) or have used the travellers as the sole source of information concerning partner experience. This study adopts a qualitative research design based on guided, semi-structured interviews of the partners of the travellers.

I use the interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) as an analysis method in articles three and four. IPA is connected with the hermeneutics and theories of interpretation. It is said that 'IPA researcher is engaged in a double hermeneutic because the researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to them' (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p. 3). Hermeneutic phenomenology is concerned with the live world or human experience as it is lived in order to create meaning and sense of understanding (Laverty, 2008). Studying experience (i.e. phenomenology) means that the researcher tries to reconstruct the lived experiences of the informants as they themselves have experienced (Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2013). The aim is to reach the experience of another human being as authentic and un-reflected as possible by examining experiences in the way that they occur and on their own terms (Smith et al., 2009).

Phenomenology originates largely in the ideas of Edmund Husserl (1970) first proposed in 1920s and 30s. Husserl's thinking, based on 'phenomenological reduction', means that as a researcher we have to "return to the things themselves" ("Zu den Sachen selbst"), take a new approach to concrete phenomena that we have experienced, and see it with "new eyes" (Schmitt, 1959). "New eyes" are important because we all have our experiences, preconceptions, and prejudices that have an influence on how we interpret things. In phenomenological research, the researcher has to pay attention and ponder his/her relationship to the research subject and try to segregate his/her own experiences from the experiences of the informant's (Virtanen, 2006).

Hermeneutics can be simplified as a theory of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). The hermeneutic approach emphasizes the dialogue between the speaker (interviewee) and listener (interviewer). The empathetic listening and sensitivity to understand other people's individual experiences is important; therefore, hermeneutics is a capability or skill to listen and understand the meaning of what you hear. The hermeneutic circle is one of the main ideas behind hermeneutics. In

this study, hermeneutic circle refers to the dynamic interpretation process. In order to understand the data as a whole, the researcher has to have an understanding about each individual part and with reference to the whole (Smith et al., 2009, pp. 21–29).

Ontological and epistemological position of this dissertation

Since the current dissertation uses both quantitative and qualitative studies and, hence, cannot be positioned purely as either positivism nor interpretativism, I place the research more ontologically and epistemologically within interpretivism. Whereas, positivists believe that there is only one true, single objective reality and the object of study is independent of the researcher, interpretivists see reality as multiple and relative and seeks to understand the research phenomenon in a specific context (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Krauss, 2005). Understanding about international work-travel and it consequences on individual lives have been central to this study. Therefore, interpretativism, which avoids strict structural frameworks and concentrates on understanding and interpretation, illustrates this particular work better. Phenomenology is considered the most suitable method for experiential work within an interpretative paradigm (Mayoh & Onwuegbuzie, 2013) and, therefore, I position my thesis along that as an interpretivist phenomenology.

3.2 Quantitative research material and its analysis

3.2.1 Data collection of quantitative article

The sample size used in the quantitative article consists of 1366 Finnish people in jobs demanding international business travel. This data was collected between 2008 and 2009 as part of a larger research project "International work-related travel and its effects on the health and well-being of workers" conducted by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. The data was collected through electronic surveys of employees in five organizations operating internationally. Four of the organizations operated in the ICT, automation, developing, and consulting business sectors. The fifth organization was a public organization operating internationally.

In three of the five organizations, 1,333 (56 per cent) employees answered a survey sent to 2,382 employees. In one of those three organizations, the questionnaire was sent to all employees who had logged at least one day of international travel in the preceding year and to a smaller number of employees who had not travelled

during that time. In two of the three organizations, the questionnaire was sent to employees chosen at random from amongst those who had spent at least one-day travelling in the preceding year or six months. In addition, the questionnaire was sent to a smaller number of employees in both organizations who had not logged any travel days during the past year. In the remaining two organizations of the five, 192 people agreed to participate and eventually 183 of those (95 per cent) completed the survey. Therefore, 1,516 employees completed the survey in total. For this particular study, we excluded those employees who reported no travel days from the sample in order to focus only on the experiences of IBTs. In addition, three employees were excluded from the sample as outliers because they reported too many travel days (300-365 per year). Taking these issues into account, the final sample of the study consisted of 1,366 employees.

Description of the informants' quantitative articles

The data of the quantitative sample was male dominated with 72 per cent of the informants being male. The participants' mean age was 42.3 years; they had been working in their organization for an average 11.4 years; and they occupied a position requiring international travel for 5.8 years. The 87 per cent of the male participants were married or cohabiting whilst among female participants, the number of married or cohabiting was only 68 per cent. Of the male informants, 63 per cent had children, whereas only 50 per cent of female travellers had children. On average, informants had two children living at home.

3.2.2 Measures of quantitative data

The intensity of international business travel, that is the number of travel days during the previous 12 months, was measured through the following question: "Can you estimate how many days you have spent on international business trips in the past 12 months?" This measure reflects the total duration of travel per year. The number of travel days reported during the previous 12 months varied between one and 250.

Gender was measured as a binary variable, where 0=male and 1=female. Parental responsibility was measured by asking whether the employee had children living at home (a binary variable, where 1=yes and 0=no).

Work-family conflict was measured by three items (e.g. my work keeps me from my family activities more than I would like). The items were adopted from the scale of Carlson et al. (2000) and were rated on a five-point Likert scale anchored with

completely disagree (1) and completely agree (5). The Cronbach α for the WFC scale (range 1-5) was 0.88.

Controls: age and marital status (a binary variable, where 1=married or cohabiting and 0=single) were also controlled since those also may affect WFC.

Moderated linear hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the research hypotheses using IBM SPSS Statistics 20. The analysis procedure was the following: first, the control variables were entered in step one to control for their effects; second, gender, parental status, and the number of international business travel days were entered in step two; third, the two-way interaction terms of the study variables were entered in step three; and then, the three-way interaction term of the study variables was entered in step four.

3.2.3 Evaluating the research quality of quantitative methods

Validity refers to how accurately the findings reflect the data; for instance, whether the measurements of the study are measuring what they are intended to measure (Saunders et al., 2009). Reliability refers to the consistency of the analysis and repeatability of the study. High reliability is reached if the data collection techniques or analysis procedures produce the same results in another context, similar observations are reached by other observers, and the researchers have explained in-depth how they have handled the raw data (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Saunders et al., 2009). The validity and reliability of this study are evaluated according to Casper et al. (2007), who have suggested that work-family research should be evaluated according to sample, research design, data collection, the analysis of methods, and measurement of validity.

According to Caspar et al. (2007), it is important to report the sample characteristics in work-family research so that it is possible to evaluate whether the findings can be generalized. In this study, the characteristics of the sample (age, gender, marital status, parental status, work position and travel days during the previous 12 months) were described in detail. When generalizing the results of this study, two different matters need to be considered. First, the generalizability of this study is limited by the sample that was quite homogenous in that way that it was dominated by IBTs with long experience travelling. Secondly, the sample was collected in Finland, which affects also the generalizability of the findings. The present results are generalizable in such countries like Finland, which have quite similar economic situations and are highly globalized.

The cross-sectional design of this particular study precludes causal conclusions on the associations found. Longitudinal design would be beneficial in this kind of research to understand causal relations between international business travel and work-family conflict. Due to the cross-sectional design, reverse causality cannot be demonstrated (Casper et al., 2007; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). The data collection is based on self-reports, therefore, common method variance may have affected the findings. In future, the research should use several sources of data such as the partners of the travellers.

The questions comprising the scales used were kept simple and concise and different scale endpoints were used in order to reduce common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). It has also been argued that it is an over simplification to assume that common method variance automatically affects variables measured with the same method (Spector, 2006). The validity of the study was ensured by using well-established scales that had already been validated and adopted in earlier studies.

In this study, several control variables were used to ensure the reliability of the study, covering demographics such as age and relationship status. Additionally, moderate linear hierarchical regression analysis was used to test hypotheses. The explanation rate was 19% of the variance and is explained by the model. The relatively low explained variance can be related to the low number of factors used. Only three factors, travel, gender and parental status, were examined, in addition to the control variables (age and marital status). The explained variance would have been higher if other contributors, such as the work position, general job demands or some aspects of IBTs' personality traits, would have been added to the model.

3.3 Qualitative research material and its analysis

3.3.1 Data collection of qualitative articles

The data from two qualitative articles was conducted in the form of semi-structured in-depth interviews (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The actual data collection was initiated during Autumn 2011 and the beginning of 2012. To qualify for inclusion, the participants had to meet certain criteria. They had to be working in a type of position that included frequent international business travel. They had to be within a family, meaning in this particular study, that they were in a long-

term partnership (i.e. living together with a partner in marriage or cohabitation without marriage).

The data was collected in the course of a larger research project entitled "International work-related travel and its effects on the well-being and work-family balance of workers". The project started with survey that was undertaken in May and August 2011 using a web-based questionnaire. The data was obtained from two different sources: (1) three multinational companies that operated in the energy sector (two manufacturing companies and one a supplier company), and (2) members of a Finnish trade union (Finnish Association of Graduates in Economics and Business). The members of the Finnish trade union (Finnish Association of Graduates in Economics and Business) were invited to take part in the survey via its newsletter, an announcement on its website, and in social media channels (LinkedIn and Facebook). The companies sent a survey invitation to their most frequent travellers via e-mail.

Participants of the survey were asked if they were willing to participate in the interview study concerning similar themes as in the previous survey. If they had answered 'yes', they were sent an e-mail where the travellers were invited for an interview study. In this email, they were also asked for the contact details of their partner and if s(he) would be willing to participate in the interview research directed at the partners of travellers. If the travellers replied to the email and were still compliant with interviewing, they were sent the interview outline so that they could become acquainted with the study content, and a hyperlink to an online meeting scheduler where they could choose the most appropriate time for an interview. The partners were contacted in the same way by sending an email, the interview outline, and a hyperlink to an online meeting scheduler.

The interviews of this study were made by telephone since the respondents were located in various locations and far from each other. It was also easier to fit interviews over telephone into respondents' schedules. Face-to-face interviews have been seen as the most suitable data collection method for qualitative research. However, there is evidence that telephone interviews can be as useful and comparable method to collect data as face-to-face interviews (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004; Holt, 2010). Interviewing over telephone may also be even more useful method when doing sensitive research because telephone interviews may increase respondents' perceptions of anonymity (Greenfield, Midanik & Rogers, 2000; Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004).

The total number of travellers who were interviewed was 23, of which 21 were male-travellers and only two were female. The selection criterion for informants was that they were either married or cohabiting; therefore, three single travellers

(one female and two males) were excluded immediately from the sample. Twelve of the interviewed travellers sent the contact information of their partners, but finally, only ten of the partners were reached and interviewed, thus, the sample comprised ten couples. Interviews were conducted via telephone and the partners were interviewed separately to enable each respondent to reflect on the issue freely.

The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed word by word. The interviews were conducted in late Autumn 2011 and the beginning of 2012. The interviews with the travellers lasted between 33 and 126 minutes and with partners between 19 and 50 minutes.

Description of the informants of qualitative articles

All the travellers interviewed were male. This is mainly because the industrial nature of the companies where the recruiting was done, but also because international work and the positions that require travel are still gendered and male dominant (Collins & Tisdell, 2002; Gripenberg, Niemistö & Alapeteri, 2013; Hearn et al., 2008). Within the traditional gender roles, all the partners of the travellers were women. Table 3 presents the background characteristics of the participants. The age of the traveller participants varied between 28 and 52, with the average age of 37 years. The ages of the partners ranged between 29 and 43. Nine of the interviewed couples were married and one cohabited at the time of the interviews. Six of the couples had children who lived at home. One couple had children who already lived independently and three of the couples had no children. At the time of the interviews, three of the partners were on maternity leave and the remainder were working full-time.

The frequency of travel varied between 6 and 50 trips a year, and the total duration of days spent on business trips ranged between 30 days and 150 days. Half of the interviewed travellers travelled mainly intercontinental trips, the other half travelled mainly within Europe. The respondents included employees in different positions.

Table 3.   Participants of the interview study

	Traveller				Partner		
	Age	**Type of job**	**Trips/ year**	**Travel days/yea r**	**Ag e**	**Occupational position**	**Number of children**
Couple 1.	42	Leading position	75	150	37	working full-time	3 (2 together)
Couple 2.	37	Team manager	10	30	31	on maternity leave	2
Couple 3.	52	Leading position	30	100	39	working full-time	2 (adults)
Couple 4.	32	Engineer	10	150	30	working full-time	0
Couple 5.	35	Project manager	50	70	36	on maternity leave	2
Couple 6.	28	Operative manager	12	80	29	working full-time	1
Couple 7.	44	Engineer	25	75	43	working full-time	0
Couple 8.	32	Team manager	15	45	30	working full-time	0
Couple 9.	30	Engineer	6	70	29	on maternity leave	2
Couple 10.	33	Engineer	6	120	34	working full-time	1

3.3.2 Getting close to participants' personal world: IPA as an analysis method

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is a qualitative methodology developed originally for psychology. Although IPA is traditionally used in health psychology, it is appropriate for other kinds of topics as well (Smith, 2004). IPA was selected as the method of analysis of the data because the technique not only describes but interprets the subject through an understanding of the participants' world and describe what it is like (2006, p. 3). Using IPA in two of the articles of this study was reasonable because my intention was to investigate the travellers' and partners' actual experiences about the international business traveller.

The first aim of IPA is to understand the individual's personal experience and relationship with a particular event, the process or phenomenon (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). In addition to understanding, IPA aims to interpret what the subject at issue means for the participant. In other words, the aim is interpretative analysis, by developing in-depth descriptions of human experience, by 'giving voice' to the concerns of participants and 'making sense' of their experiences (Fade, 2004; Larkin et al., 2006).

It has been argued that the aim of the qualitative research is to produce intense analysis of each case rather than generalizations (Silverman, 2015). IPA is a suitable way to produce rich and meaningful data around a rather small number of interviews (Smith et al., 2009). Five or six interviews has sometimes been recommended as a suitable size for the sample when using IPA, but even smaller samples have been used (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Because the sample is relatively small when using IPA as an analysis method, it is suggested that the sample should be purposively selected, carefully situated, and relatively homogenous and, thereby, sample convergence and divergence can be examined (Smith et al., 2009).

Semi-structured interviews as a method of collected data for IPA study

Though there are many suitable ways, such as personal accounts and diaries, semi-structured interviews are recommended to be the most suitable way to collect data for IPA study (Smith & Osborn, 2003). This is because the data collected through semi-structured interviews is flexible enough to analyze how participants perceive and make sense of things that are happening to them. Because of the importance of flexibility, the research questions are broadly and openly framed (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

The extent to which the researcher has access to the experiences of the participants is dependent on what the interviewees 'open up' about with their own experiences. A major advantage in using semi-structured interviews is that the interviewer is present in the interview; hence, the researcher and participant can engage in a dialogue if interesting and important areas and themes outside the interview schedule occur (Smith & Osborn, 2003). However, the researcher has to follow quite closely to the interview schedule and, for example, ask questions in the identical order specified in the schedule so that there is not too much variation between individual interviews.

The analysis process

An ideographic approach suggested by Smith and Osborn (2003) was used for analysis. This means that the analysis is done by one case at a time, and the final connections and categorization is done in the end. The analysis process proceeds from specific observations to non-specifics, from the concrete to the more abstract, and gradually from a descriptive level to a more interpretative level. The first stage of the analysis focuses on finding themes. First, each transcript was read and re-read a number of times and notes made in one margin of the transcript of anything of interest. The following stage involved revising the notes to form expressions encapsulating the essential content of the text in the other margin of the transcript (Smith & Osborn, 2003). After analyzing all the interviews in detail separately, the

themes emerging and the connections and differences between them were extracted for observation. Finally, the findings were examined in the light of previous research and existing theories (Smith, 2004, 2011; Smith et al., 2009).

3.3.3 Evaluating the research quality of qualitative methods

Validity (in which the findings accurately reflect the data) and reliability (the consistency of the analysis) are commonly used in quantitative research but, because they are rooted in positivist perspective, they are not the most suitable for evaluating qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003). Lincoln and Cuba (1985) have proposed that the researcher should satisfy the following four criteria in order to assure the quality of the qualitative research: dependability, transferability, credibility, and conformability.

Dependability refers to evidence that the process of research has been logical, traceable, and properly documented (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In this study, each stage has strived to report in detail so that an external researcher is able to understand the methods and the study process.

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results can be generalized or transferred to another context. There should be some degree of similarity with previous research, and this does not mean the replication of the study but in support of findings. It is typical for qualitative research that the amount of participants is small. In addition, in this study, the number of participants is relatively small which reduces the generalizability of the results. It cannot be claimed that the experiences of all interviewed couples would be the same. Therefore, this study does not offer broad generalizations but captures the interpretations of 20 individual interviewees. I have described my informants and the context in which the work was undertaken as detailed as possible within the limits of confidentiality.

Credibility can be seen as a preference to internal validity and refers to the researcher ensuring that the findings are believable and congruent with reality (Shenton, 2004). Triangulation has been suggested as a technique to ensure credibility and limit the mistakes that can emerge when using only one method, researcher or theory (Perttula & Latomaa, 2008). One way to use triangulation is to collect data on the same topic using more than one method. In this study, the data was collected mainly through interviews but also questionnaire data was used. Using multiple researchers is also one form of triangulation, and, in this study, the qualitative data was analyzed by myself but the preliminary findings were peer debriefed by colleagues and my supervisors. The findings were discussed and

modified according to these discussions. Furthermore, all articles were also double blind reviewed by journals before publishing.

Conformability refers to findings that are supported by the collected data, researcher's objectivity, and the degree that others could corroborate the results. The aim of the qualitative analysis of this study was to obtain the experiences of the respondents as they were experienced. Research that is based on hermeneutic phenomenology offers a 'lens' for seeing the world, and it does not aim to exact or to create the objective truth but a reflection of it (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In this study, the reflection of the truth appears as a "subjective truth" of interviewees' experiences of international business travel. In other words, how they see and experience travel and the consequences of travel emerge from their individual experiences and the context they live in.

Qualitative analysis is often criticized for its subjectivity. Therefore, when examining experiences, the researcher aims to understand the experience 'as it is' and also describe it 'as it is' experienced by the informants. In other words, the researcher has to consciously strive to be objective in the analysis. Also in this study, it can be questioned how true is the subjective truth that I have found. The interpretation that I have made relies on what my informants have disclosed, and we cannot be sure they have been truthful about their experiences. Secondly, is my interpretation as a researcher about what interviewees have told me been truthful? Although, as a researcher, I have striven for objectivity, the interpretation that I have done is based on my interpretation and through my own experiences. In that sense, the researcher is always somewhat a prisoner of his/her own past and looks and interprets the data within his/her own experiences. When conducting qualitative research, the researcher has to continuously ponder the decisions and the reliability of analysis s/he has made (Eskola & Suoranta, 2001).

4 SUMMARY OF THE ARTICLES

In this chapter, I present a summary of each article of this dissertation. The aim of these summaries is to briefly introduce the reader to the content of the separate articles by describing the aim, methods, and main findings, and how the single article takes its place in the thesis. Three of the four articles are single-authored and one co-authored. Fourth of the articles is under review for a journal, and the rest have been published.

4.1 International business travel and work-family balance: research review and future directions

The first article reviews the existing literature on the work-family interface of international business travellers. Thus, this article aims to answer the first research question and overarching research question of the dissertation by providing a comprehensive review of the literature and defining the current status of research in this area. In addition, based on the identified gaps in current research, some new research avenues were proposed. The article is organized into two sections. The first part concentrates on presenting an overview of the basic concepts in the area of work-family interaction and the latter part reviews the existing literature relating to the work-family interface of international business travellers.

When evaluating the existing IBT research, it was noted that international business travel has been found to place a strain on the travellers themselves, but also on family life and family members (Espino et al., 2002; Mayerhofer, Hartmann, Michelitsch-Riedl & Kollinger, 2004). Such work, that includes frequent travel, requires a high degree of flexibility, understanding, and cooperation from the whole family. It was also obvious that there are several research paths that have not yet been adequately explored.

The integration of work and family is a multifaceted phenomena and the interplay between these two spheres of life is bidirectional as family affects work and work affects family. Additionally, it is known that the degree to which individuals integrate or segment work and family roles affects greatly the work-family balance of individuals (Kreiner, 2006; Nippert-Eng, 1996). Therefore, it is logical to open the investigation of work-family interactions by giving attention to how individuals manage work and family roles (Clark, 2000). When reviewing the literature, it became evident that our knowledge about work-family integration and segmentation of IBTs is virtually non-existent, albeit some studies provide support to the high integration (DeFrank et al., 2000).

Next, the drawback of work and family interface was discussed. As mentioned previously, it was noticed that experiences of stress caused by work travel are certainly not unusual for international business travellers. Previous research also indicates negative outcomes for spouses (Dimberg et al., 2002; Nicholas & McDowall, 2012; Orthner & Roderick, 2009; Stewart & Donald, 2006). There has also been some research on the potential damage to marriages caused by work-related travel (Briscoe, Schuler, & Claus, 2009; Roehling & Bultman, 2002). Having family and especially having young children seems to add to stressful experiences (Espino et al., 2002). Dual-career couples are today, at least in the Nordic countries, the rule rather than the exception. Therefore, partners of international business travellers may face issues combining work and family demands.

After discussing the negative effects of travel, I examined the literature concerning the coping of IBTs. Research on how travellers manage with special challenges that international travel creates in integrating work and family is scant. Nicholas and McDowall (2012) identified adaptability, negotiating and compromising with significant others, and flexibility as the main coping strategies travellers apply to cope with the negative consequences of travel. Furthermore, temporal strategies as an 'intensification' of time, meaning minimizing travel time, using working time effectively, and allocating 'quality time' for family and friends have also been investigated (Gustafson, 2013). The family situation has been found to be a significant factor in the choice of coping strategies (Lassen, 2010). Research addressing the differences between male and female travellers is rare but some studies have found gender-related differences in coping. Women, for example, are found to avoid overnight trips to overcome the negative feelings related to travel and may be willing to travel long distances to come home for the night, whereas men are more likely to opt for an overnight stay away (Bergström, 2010; Gustafson, 2006).

The research of the negative consequences of international business travel is dominant throughout. There are a few studies that have concentrated on the outcomes of work-family enrichment among IBTs, mainly from the travellers perspective, albeit Westman et al. (2008; 2008) noticed that positive work-related feelings and attitudes, specifically vigor at work, crossover from business traveller to the spouse. In addition, it has been noticed that the travelling partner's absence can increase the spouse's independence and space, encourage career advancement and enable spouses to concentrate on other relationships and interests (Stewart & Donald, 2006).

The review of IBT-literature continued by observing the reasons for negative and positive work-family interactions. It is evident that there is a connection between the number of trips and strain experienced by travellers and their families (e.g. Welch & Worm, 2006). However, there is no consensus over whether it is the length of trip, the number of trips or their frequency that is the most detrimental to the work-family balance. Long separation periods have been found to effect children and add to the spouses' stress (Dimberg et al., 2002; Espino et al., 2002), and the length of travel has been found to be positively related to WLC (Mäkelä, Bergbom, Kinnunen, et al., 2014). Also, a positive relationship between business travel frequency and WFC has been found (Jensen, 2013). Other factors that add to the stress for travelling employees and indirectly the stress of their families are, for example, the lack of control over their own work and travel (Vartiainen et al., 2005), family separation, and need to work outside regular office hours. This is typical for those in international assignments.

After reviewing the literature, the last section of the article concentrated on giving proposals for interesting future research. According to the reviewed literature, several proposals for future research were made and some of them were raised in the following articles of this dissertation. The level and form of the necessary integration of work and family for IBTs were suggested as an important underreported research area that merits more attention. The phenomenon of spillover, in both negative and positive forms deserves more attention. Similarly, the question of a connection between recovery and work-family conflict among IBTs would be an interesting new research avenue. In addition, future research on the positive consequences of international business travel for both the traveller and their family would be welcomed. Existing research has to some extent considered the experiences of the spouse, but information on how children are affected by having a parent who travels extensively for work is almost non-existent. Additionally, various individual and demographical antecedents of work-family conflict experiences, such as gender, age, and marital status, offer many interesting opportunities for future research. Finally, an important proposal for future investigation would be to focus on possible differences between female and male travellers. This research would be targeted at WFC and would be revealing at both an individual and from a family coping strategy perspective.

4.2 Work-family conflict faced by international business travellers: does gender and parental status make a difference?

The second article of this thesis, is quantitative and examines the effects of international business travel by concentrating on gender, marital status, and trip duration as influencing factors as to how international business travel is experienced. The specific aim of the article is to study the direct and moderating effects of gender and parental status on the relationship between the intensity of international business travel and work-family conflict amongst international business travellers. The COR-theory was used as a basis for the study and moderate hierarchical regression was used as an analysis method.

The data (n= 1366) was collected between 2008 and 2009 in the course of a larger research project entitled "International work-related travel and its effects on the health and well-being of workers" conducted by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH). The actual collection was made through electronic surveys of employees in five organizations operating internationally. The article was co-authored by Mäkelä, Bergbom, Saarenpää and Suutari. The idea of the study was established by Saarenpää. The study design was further developed by Saarenpää, Suutari, and Mäkelä who, as the first author, had the main responsibility for the writing and who conducted the statistical analyses. Bergbom from the FIOH provided the dataset and also commented on the manuscript.

It was found that an increased number of international travel days as well as being a parent had a positive relationship with work-family conflict (i.e. the work-family conflict was higher amongst those who had a higher number of international travel days and children). A significant interaction effect between international business travel days, parental status, and gender was also found. Amongst those women who had children, the increased number of travel days increased WFC in comparison to women without children.

In addition, for men, the increased number of travel days as well as having children raised the level of WFC, but there is no interaction between travel days and parental status among men travellers. The increase in the number of travel days was less significant for WFC amongst those women who did not have children and the most significant for women with children. Additionally, it was found that women with dependent children were able to travel to a considerable extent before the levels of WFC exceeded the level of WFC of men with dependent children.

4.3 Stretching the borders: How international business travel affects the work-family balance

In the first article, the segmentation-integration continuum (i.e. how international business travellers manage borders between work and family) was identified as an unexplored area of research. This third article of the dissertation focuses attention on how international business traveller couples use integration and segmentation of work and family in order to maintain the balance between these two spheres of life. In addition, particular attention is paid to travellers and also to the partners of travellers.

The framework of this article is based on Clark's (2001) border theory. Clark assumes that integration and segmentation are means in which individuals manage the borders between work and family and in that way aim to maintain the work-family balance. Borders between working life and personal life can be physical, temporal or psychological (Clark, 2000). Physical borders mean concrete areas where the domain-relevant behavior takes place, that is, in individuals' workplaces and their homes. Temporal borders relate to working hours and divide the time available for work and family. Psychological borders refer to the rules individuals create related to thinking and behavioral patterns at work and at home.

Maintaining a balance between work and family does not necessarily mean equal time spent on each, but a healthy balance will vary for each individual. The feeling of balance will depend on how individuals manage to divide time and resources between work and family and separate or integrate work and family in a way specifically suitable for themselves (Clark, 2002). People's preferences to integrate or separate work and family differ. Some people desire to keep the different areas of life as separate as possible and boundaries are very strong (Clark, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996). For others, the boundaries are not so strong and different areas of life are more integrated with each other. Neither segmentation nor integration can be considered to contribute to the work–family balance more than the other does. Segmenting work and family may help maintain a clarity and balance between the different domains (Ashforth et al., 2000), but both integration and segmentation have their advantages and an individual can create synergy between work and family life (Clark, 2000; Rothbard et al., 2005).

The rationale behind the article was that because of the irregular nature of international business travel, it is impossible for travellers to establish a clear division between 'work-time' owned by an employer and 'leisure time' owned by a traveller (Nicholas & McDowall, 2012). It was also assumed that because the

traveller is absent from home for a considerable amount of time, then work travel inevitably affects the border management of travellers' spouses.

The article's data comprises interviews with ten Finnish couples. The selection criteria was that one of the partners frequently travel abroad as a part of his/her job. The final sample comprised of ten male travellers and ten female partners. The couples were interviewed separately. The analysis of the data gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews was done with interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), which was selected as the method of analysis because it seeks to understand the individual's personal experience and relationship with a particular event, process or phenomenon (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

It was found that international business travel has several characteristics and challenges that may have a harmful effect on the balance between work and family. Travel was noticed to produce negative outcomes such as feelings of uncertainty, guilt, and inadequacy, arguments between couples, a lack of personal time, and difficulty with managing the demands of the job. Travel interrupts the family's routine and forces travellers and their family members to live a more or less cyclical existence (based on its on-trip or at-home phases).

The aim of border management is to avoid the imbalance between work and family domains and influences how traveller and partner construct, manage and negotiate borders. In order to keep a balance, the couple is compelled to adjust their border management again and again according to the current situation (i.e. is the traveller at home or on a trip). To some extent, the reproduction of borders is connected to an individual preference to either segment or integrate work and family. However, the current situation had a considerable effect on the possibility of the travellers and spouses to apply their own preference. Sometimes, they needed to adopt the opposite boundary management tactic that they would prefer (i.e. integrate instead of segmentation and the other way round). Therefore, the examination of the borders between work and the family of IBTs must consider two different situations: when the traveller is at home and when he or she is on a trip.

During the on-trip phase, the segmentation is inevitable for travellers because of the physical absence, and the border between work and family is strong in both directions for the traveller. When the traveller is at home, individual preferences dictate more border management, and weaker borders in both directions are possible. Amongst spouses, the variations between border strength were not so notable. Spouses with dependent children had to modify borders more than spouses without children did although childless spouses also needed to recreate borders, for example, to accommodate owning pets but this was not to the same

extent. Spouses' borders are weaker in both directions when the traveller is absent; spouses with dependent children had to modify and reduce working hours and work at home in the evenings in order to manage work and home commitments.

The findings of this study confirm the negative effect that integration can have on the work–family balance. For some of the respondents, work had intruded on family life in the form of work undertaken in the evenings and during holidays, which had given rise to problems in some families. The feeling of balance is greatly dependent on how much the couple is able to influence and control their use of time and resources.

4.4 Dyadic stress and coping: An investigation with international business travelers and their spouses

The fourth article is devoted to providing answers to how it is possible to combine work with frequent travel and family life. The first aim of this article is to examine and understand the experiences of dyadic stress related to international travel. Secondly this article aims to examine how couples manage the situation (i.e. cope as dyad with the side effects of work-related travel of one partner). The data of the fourth article consists of interviews with the same ten couples that were analyzed in the second article of this dissertation. In this article, the behaviour of the couples is viewed as dyadic coping. The analysis of the data gathered through the interviews was undertaken in a similar manner as, in the third article, with interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

Coping is a way to handle stressful situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Sometimes the stress is so high that the individual coping efforts are not enough (Bodenmann, 1995; 1997). In a situation when an individual has no access to sufficient or appropriate coping strategies to manage it, the challenge is likely to affect both partners and next of kin (Revenson et al., 2005). Such stressful events or encounters that concerns both partners are defined as a dyadic stress (Bodenmann, 2005). Because the stress of one partner may have an effect on another (Revenson et al., 2005), it is worthwhile for partners to cope together, that is, to use dyadic coping strategies in order to maintain one's own well-being and the quality of their relationship during stressful episodes (Chen, 2014).

Partners can respond to stress signals with either positive or negative dyadic coping strategies (Revenson et al., 2005). Positive dyadic coping is distinguished into three forms: supportive dyadic coping, common dyadic coping, and delegated dyadic coping (Meier et al., 2011). Negative dyadic coping is also divided into three forms: superficial, ambivalent or hostile (Bodenmann, 1997). Supportive and

common coping can be either emotional or problem focused. Supportive coping refers to the situation when only one partner is concerned by the stressful event and the other partner supports the other. Common coping refers to coping efforts by both partners in the situation when both are exposed to a stressful encounter. In delegated dyadic coping, one partner tries to decrease the stress of the other partner by taking charge over his/her responsibilities.

The findings were discussed separately with regard to dyadic stress experiences and dyadic coping. Three superordinate themes, that illustrate dyadic stress experiences were found, these being; irregularity of life, inability to control own life and experiences of role-overload. Correspondingly, the superordinate themes of dyadic coping that were found are; adaptation, empathy, compensation, flexibility, active problem solving and negative forms of support.

Work related travelling was found to be a source of dyadic and chronic stress for all the interviewed couples. Travel, in many ways, complicates the everyday structure for the families of travellers, and it makes life cyclical and impedes developing and maintaining routines. Travelling impinges even when the traveller is at home because s(he) either returned home or is about to go on a trip. Furthermore, the work of travelers is often not restricted only to normal office hours. For spouses, the absence of the partner is straining since being alone also means being solely responsible for home and family.

For those couples who seem to manage a well-balanced family life, frequent travel was not seen as a major problem. The travel was somewhat part of their family life, and they had adapted to it and accepted and/or got used to it and the consequences of travel. They proactively try to find solutions to make life easier, for example, by negotiating with their partners, thinking optimistically and making compromises in order to make each day go smoothly. Moreover, they tried to organize their work schedules so that the travel of the other partner disturbs the family life as little as possible. Sometimes the disturbance, however, was inevitable and the emotional support that the partners offered to each other was especially significant.

According to the findings, the impact of international business travel is not only limited to the traveller's personal well-being but also the effect that frequent work-related travel has on the families of travelling staff. The effects of work related travel abroad, at the couple level, are related to the family's situation. This is different for each couple. Therefore, every traveller should be considered and treated as an individual. Dyadic coping could be seen as the simple support and empathy of giving or doing domestic chores on behalf of the other or significantly in the more complex support involved in the life choices such as changing job or starting a family.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In this concluding chapter, I discuss the main findings of my study, the theoretical and practical contributions, the limitations of the study, and directions for future research. The starting point of this study was that research in the area of international business travel and work-family interactions has been limited. This is surprising since international, work-related travel is not a new phenomenon and the importance of travellers' work-family interactions was recognized as early as the 1970s (Culbert & Renshaw, 1972).

This doctoral thesis has explored the work-family integration of international business travellers. It thus aimed to make a contribution to the empirical knowledge of international business travel by producing an in-depth understanding of the demands of international business travel in the context of the work-family interface. The principal aim of this study was to examine the following question: *How does frequent international business travel of one family member impact on the interactions between work and family*? As a concluding answer to the main research question of this dissertation can be stated that international business travel of one partner challenges both partners, and affects their abilities to combine multiple roles. The family setting is one of the major determinant of keeping a balance between work and family for IBTs and their partners. For childless couples travel of one partner is not an issue even if it impinges upon couples' lives. After the birth of a child, combining travel and family becomes complicated. Travel challenges the relationship but it also sets additional challenges for partners to manage their own work demands. Flexibility, adjustment, and effective coping skills are needed from both partners to keep work and family domains in balance.

To address the main aim, the following four research questions were established: (1) *What kind of work-family conflict do IBTs and their partners face due to frequent travel?* (2) *What are the roles of gender and parental status on the relationship between international business travel days and work-to-family conflict?* (3) *How do IBTs and their partners manage the boundaries between work and family in order to maintain the balance between different life spheres*? (4) *How do IBTs and their partners cope with work-family conflict arising from business travel*? The next section discusses the findings of the four individual studies and the deductions made on the grounds of them related to the research questions.

We have long been aware that working in an international environment challenges individuals and families (Forster, 2000). Previous research has explicitly come to the conclusion that, although international business travellers do not face similar challenges as, for example, expatriates with their relocation process, international business travel has consequences on family-life (Konopaske, Robie & Ivancevich, 2009; Mayerhofer et al., 2010). The interviews of this study include very private stories of couples' everyday lives. I interviewed partners separately and heard two stories and two truths. When analyzing the interviews, I have tried to gain an overall picture of how frequent work-related travel impacts the travellers' partners and the whole family life.

The findings of the studies of this dissertation confirm that travel has a malign influence on the personal life of the travellers and their partners. Travel influences different spheres of life and complicates everyday planning; however, integrating travel for work and family life is possible. Life continues at home while the traveller is absent, and the practicalities and responsibilities at home is with the partner who stays at home, and the partner, may in practice, live a life of a single parent.

How travel and its influence on family life are experienced depends considerably on individual characteristics and, for example, the ability to be flexible and adapt to the changing situations. There are also differences between organizations and their travel policies that may affect the integration of travel and family life. Some organizations may pay more attention to the well-being of travellers and allow flexibility, for example, self-schedule travel that makes it easier to organize family life. Other organizations that are more inflexible may strictly control their employee travellers. Naturally, to what extent travellers are allowed to schedule their travel depends on their position. For example, an engineer who serves cruisers in the Caribbean Sea supposedly needs to travel at short notice, whereas a salesman can pre-arrange trips.

Work that includes international travel largely affects a partner's time usage, both at work and outside working time. There is little previous research that has given voice to the partners of international business travellers and their experiences of travel (Espino et al., 2002; Stewart & Donald, 2006). Neither is there research on how a partner's attitude to travel affects the traveller's experiences of travel. Based on interviews with ten couples in this study, it can be said that the partner has considerable influence on how a traveller experiences work related travel. If travel is a major issue for a partner, it enhances the more negative attitudes towards work related travel and reduces the work-family balance of traveller.

Children and parenthood were issues that arose in every single interview of this study. In line with this, the effects of gender and being a parent on work-family

conflict were studied also with quantitative methods in one of the articles. Previous research indicates that being female is a factor that is related to higher levels of work-to-family conflict (Eby et al., 2005; Westman & Etzion, 2005). It is also supposed that women are less willing to do such jobs that require travelling because it is more difficult for a female to combine travel and family than for their male counterparts (e.g. Collings et al., 2007; Harvey, 1986; Westman, Etzion, & Gattenio, 2008). According to the findings of this study, being a woman does not necessarily mean a higher risk for work-family conflict. It was found that women with dependent children experience a lower level of WFC than men with dependent children. It is notable that women without dependent children were at the lowest risk of WFC. Remarkable is also that women with dependent children were able to travel quite extensively before their level of WFC overtook that of men with dependent children. These findings show that being a woman at work that involves international travel is not necessarily harder for female travellers compared with their male counter partners.

Work that includes travel seems to include various factors that complicate maintaining a balance between work and family. The irregular nature of business travel makes it difficult for travellers to establish a clear division between "work" and "family" time (Nicholas & McDowall, 2012). This PhD study used Clark's (2000) border theory to explore how travellers and partners construct and manage borders between work and family. Based on the interviews with travellers and their respective partners, it can be said that the borders between work and family are shaped in two distinct situations: when the traveller is at home and when they are on a trip. The boundaries between work and family were not stable but a dynamic process. The borders are re-created every time when travellers set off on a trip and then return home. Similarly varied are the levels of separation and integration of these two life spheres. Work with frequent travel had a considerable effect on the possibility of the IBTs and partners applying his or her segmentation or integration preferences. In IBT families, integration is more or less inevitable, which may be harmful to the work–family balance.

Both the quantitative and qualitative studies of this thesis confirm that the family setting is the major determinant of keeping a balance between work and family. International business traveller couples who do not have children appear to manage the consequences of travel of the other partner. It seems that if there are two adults in the family, travel is often the interesting part of one's work and can be a breath of fresh air compared to the grind of everyday routine. Additionally, the partner can enjoy being alone when the traveller is away from home. After the birth of a child, combining travel and family becomes complicated with tensions between work and family more common for the traveller couples with children. In

dual-career couples, travel of the other partner starts to become an issue and even more so when the couple has children. The findings of qualitative articles are specific to couples where the traveller is male and the partner female. Therefore, the question that arises is the following: to what degree does gender and adopted gender roles affect the experiences of the interviewed couples? The interviewed couples had adapted quite a traditional gender order that may have influenced their experiences. As earlier mentioned in the second article, it was found that men IBTs with dependent children experience a higher level of WFC than women IBTs with dependent children. This study does not answer the question whether these findings can be generalized to those women who have sought work with international travel. Neither does it address the question of whether their partner's non-traditional gender roles affect their experiences of WFC.

Integrating family and work involving international travel may challenge a marriage or a relationship. The findings of this study clearly evidence that international business travel of one partner impacts the relationship of the couple. In my data, there were three travellers who had divorced once before their current relationship. All three divorced travellers told that work travel had been one major reason behind their divorces. It was also noted that a number of travellers had been eager to change jobs to one that has minimal travel demand when they became parents, due to the difficulty to integrate travel and family life. That may incur extra costs for employers who need to recruit and train new employees because the positions that involve travel are often demanding.

Becoming a parent inevitably affects individual's time distribution. Parenthood has been found to affect the preferences for segmentation or integration of work and family domains (e.g. Nippert-Eng, 2008). This appeared also in the findings of this study, parenthood clearly affected travellers' willingness to travel as well as partners opinions about traveling. However, for the informants of this study it is perhaps more a question of ability or inability to integrate or segment than of preference. This dissertation considered work-family interactions of IBTs' and partners in the framework of border theory (Clark 2000). Work with travel rarely, if ever, permits travellers or their partners to separate or integrate borders according their personal preferences. Instead, construction, managing and negotiating borders between work and family are done to the extent it is possible. Thus, the border management of IBT-couples is a dynamic process; borders are re-created each time when travelers set off on a business trip and return home.

Integration, either according individual own preferences or compulsory requirements, may ease the shift from one role to another (Clark, 2000; Desrochers & Sargent, 2004). However, integration bears a risk of role blurring

and thus getting exposed to unbalance between work and family. Also a negative effect of integration on the work-family balance was proved in this study. Overall, this study has shown that international business travel challenges both partners, and affects their abilities to combine multiple roles. Flexibility, adjustment and effective coping skills are needed from both partners to keep the work and family domains in balance.

By considering coping of IBTs, this dissertation approached the topic by examining how IBT couples use dyadic coping strategies in order to cope with the side effects of work-related travel of one partner. Furthermore, this particular study concentrated on coping and confirms that the effects travel have at the couple level are related to the family's situation. Having children makes combining travel and family life complicated, compared to childless travellers, and the ways in which couples cope with the side effects of travel are also different. Therefore, every traveller and couple should be considered and treated as an individual. According to this study, it is common for those couples who seem to manage a well-balanced family life with frequent travel did not see travel as a major problem. It also seems that in order to successfully combine work with international travel and family, both the traveller and partner have to accept that travel forms an essential part of their everyday lives and relationship. In that sense, international business travel can be seen as a lifestyle choice for both partners. This finding is supported by Nicholas and McDowall (2012) as they point out that for IBTs finding a comfortable work/life balance is possible if travel is seen as a self-chosen lifestyle.

Even with all its downsides, travel has its benefits; it can be stimulating both career-wise but also from relationship's point of view. For the interviewed travellers of this study, the mobility of their work was not the reason why they had chosen such a career or their position at the time of the interview. However, most of them saw travelling and working in different cultural environments and collaborating with people from diverse cultures as a positive and enriching part of their work. Except for one traveller, all the others hoped that international mobility in some form would be part of their work also in the future.

Work with international travel offers opportunities that may make such positions more attractive to employees than work with regular working hours at the home office. International business travel can be energizing for work, provide opportunities to get to know new people, new cultures and increases linguistic abilities. One of my informants had visited over 40 countries and was grateful that he had been given that opportunity. Moreover, the majority of my informants emphasized that because of work travel, their language skills have improved. A few of them had even been inspired to learn new languages because of travel.

Lassen (2010) discusses cosmopolitan identity in relation to travellers work identity. According to Lassen, it is not only about earning money instead it has a symbolic value and business trips offer a material and symbolic contribution to the traveller's cosmopolitan identity. This study offers support to Lassen's study as a number of the interviewed travellers working in international and diverse cultural environments was an important aspect of their work, the source of career and personal development and a way to life. Furthermore, most of the interviewed partners of travellers supposed that their husbands at heart consider travel as a positive part of their work that provides enriching experiences to the normal working routines at the office.

5.1 Contributions to the current empirical research

The contributions of this study can be considered from various different perspectives. The contribution the dissertation makes is via providing new perspectives and knowledge for IBT and global mobility research as well as for work-family research.

Firstly, the empirical findings of this study confirm that work with international travel has specific characteristics and challenges, which may have a harmful effect on the balance between work and family for both traveller and partner. Secondly, this research contributes to the IBT research by giving the travellers' partners' perspective that has been mainly lacking thus far.

The study shows that travel of one family member has a significant effect on a partner's well-being, time management, and management of work and family responsibilities. The results of this study also implicate that the partner's attitude to the travel has an influence on how the traveller experiences the work travel.

Moreover, this study contributes to the IBT research by being the first study focusing on work-family conflict of IBTs that simultaneously takes into account how the intensity of business travel and both gender and parenthood are related to it. This study also contributes to the WFC research by showing that functioning in a complex international work environment (typified in this particular by international business travel days) increases the risk of WFC in line with COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001, 2002). In addition, the findings implicate that parenthood is related to the experiences of work-family conflict so that being a parent increases conflict. It was found differences between genders when the number of travel days increased. It was also found that there is no interaction between travel days and parental status among men. Instead, the results implicate that a high intensity of international business travel days and being a woman with dependent children will

have the greatest impact on WFC for IBTs. Furthermore, the results of this study also showed that women with dependent children were able to travel considerable amounts before they experienced WFC as high as their male counterparts with dependent children. Therefore, this study also contributes to the literature concerning gender and international mobility by showing that being a woman does not mean being unable to do international jobs.

In addition, this study contributes to existing research on global mobility by providing evidence that is in line with COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001, 2002). It was found that being at risk of losing a considerable volume of their available resources might increase WFC among IBTs. Also, this study contributes to the COR theory by testing it in an occupational context that has been very rarely studied.

Furthermore, this study contributes to both IBT-research and work-family research by being the first study investigating the dyadic coping of IBTs. Dyadic coping has previously been applied mainly in research concerning how couples cope with chronic illness or other stressful life events (Schulz & Schwarzer, 2004). Unlike most former studies, this dissertation considers work as a source of dyadic stress. Using the dyadic perspective offers a novel way to acquire an understanding of how IBTs cope with the undesirable effects of frequent travel. The findings reveal that frequent international business travel produces chronic dyadic stress for couples and creates a need to cope both individually and as a couple. The analysis of the empirical data of this study revealed several factors that either directly or through crossover influence produce dyadic stress. Parenthood (having children) was found to be the most determinant factor of experiences of dyadic stress. This finding is consistent through the second study of this dissertation (Mäkelä et al. 2015). The other significant factors found are the intensity of work travel and the ability to control work travel. Also in previous research, the lack of control over own work has been found to be associated with personal stress also in business travel context (Vartiainen et al., 2005; Jensen, 2013). Coping strategies couples used to minimize negative effects of work related travel were various. The main predictor for managing travel-intensive work and family seems to be a certain kind learning process that in this study is named adaptation. Adaptation means that a couple accepts travel as a part of their family life and relationship. Another key form of dyadic coping was flexibility.

Dyadic coping was applied to rather mundane issues such as sharing domestic chores but also applied to significant life choices such as changing jobs or decisions about having children. In addition, this study contributes to work-family research by adopting a qualitative approach to the study of dyadic coping instead of using quantitative methods that have almost solely been used in previous research.

Finally, this present study contributes to *work–family border theory* by showing the evidence that in the IBTs case shaping of borders between work and family is a dynamic process. Work-related travel has an impact on how travellers and their spouses construct, manage, and negotiate borders between work and family in order to avoid an imbalance between these domains. Furthermore, this study provides a contribution to the research of *segmentation-integration preferences,* which have been neglected in IBT research. The empirical results of this study show that the selection of either integration or segmentation is dependent on individual preference but equally on work-related factors such as how much flexibility is required to support an individual's family life (Clark, 2000, 2001). International business travel of one partner induces need to more often reconstruct boundaries between work and family, for travelers themselves as well as for their partners. The work-family borders seem to be permeable in work-to-family direction so that elements of work domain enter home.

5.2 Practical implications of the study

The findings discussed in this study have several implications for organizational practice, for the travellers themselves and for their partners. The examination of the consequences of international business trips shows that work-related travel abroad set challenges to the traveller and to the partner. Though the direct detrimental consequences fall on the travellers and their next of kin, the organization will also suffer the consequences if the traveller has difficulties with coping with the demands of travelling for work. International business travel is often exhausting both psychologically and emotionally, and it has unavoidable effects on well-being and private life of travellers such as family life, social relations and activity.

It is argued that although organizations offer assistance with travel arrangements (e.g. organizing travel and accommodation), IBTs do not normally get assistance for the problems and stresses that travelling causes to combining frequent travel with personal life (Collings et al., 2007; Mayerhofer, Hartmann, Michelitsch-Riedl, et al., 2004). The challenges in balancing between work and family can be different during different phases of life, as well, the gender may still effect on work-life experiences, albeit genders are more equal than ever. For instance, parental status has found to affect the intensity of travel; travellers with young children travel less than those with children, as well, parenthood increases the risk of work-family conflict among travellers (Gustafson, 2006; Jensen, 2013). The varying situations of travelling people at different life stages should be a part of the equation when planning work that includes traveling. For example, parenthood

affects experiences of international business travel. Probably even more if the traveller is the mother, because family responsibilities are still often gendered; mothers are still doing significantly more housework and childcare than men (e.g. Bianchi, Sayer, Milkie & Robinson, 2012). Manifestation of traditional gender roles may have an impact on how tensions between work and family are experienced.

It is crucial that organizations with travelling staff understand that the interaction between work and family is inevitable and should be taken into consideration by HRM. Travellers with physical ailments caused by travel, such as gastric disorders and problems with the human musculoskeletal system, probably get help quite easily via the occupational health system, whereas getting help for family issues may prove difficult. Gaining important cultural and professional experience through travel should not damage anyone's personal life, and employees should not have to choose between work and family well-being. When monitoring the physical health of travellers, occupational health care should also monitor travellers' mental health and as well as inquire about work-family issues. For employers, the well-being of travelling staff is of crucial importance for if their employees feel well, they are more committed to their job and less likely to change job or employer. Understanding the consequences and coping processes may prove to be beneficial for organizations as they can try to mitigate the harmful effects of international business travel and increase the well-being of travelling staff and their families, thereby, reducing costly staff turnover.

On a practical level, organizations can improve their HRM practices and travel policies related to international business travel so that changes in the family situation of individual travellers can be taken into account. Overall, the ability to self-control one's own work and travel was found to reduce work-family conflict experienced by travellers (Jensen, 2013; Vartiainen et al., 2005). Employers should consider every traveller as an individual. Particularly during challenging life situations, opportunities for more flexible scheduling of business trips and/or reducing the number of trips during the demanding time can be offered. Examples of these opportunities could be when there are young children in the family, sickness or the need to take care of an ageing parent. Furthermore, the possibility to replace trips with information and communication technology should be taken into consideration.

Increased frequency and duration of trips have been noticed to produce an imbalance in family life (Bergbom et al., 2011; Espino et al., 2002). In order to help travelling staff to keep a balance between different life spheres, organizations should monitor the length, duration, and frequency of the international trips and set a crtical number after which the possible risks would be checked by

occupational health. Employers should as well monitor that the home office workload does not increase excessively during trips so that travellers have to work overtime when returning home. When recruiting staff that needs to travel frequently, employers should inform the applicant of the amount of trips and ensure that the applicant is willing to travel.

As a practical implication for travellers, it can be suggested that they should self-monitor the physical and psychological strain caused by travel. Especially if workload continuously during or/and between trips rises too high and effects the traveller's own health or other life spheres. If so, the traveller should make contact with occupational health and negotiate with the employer about flexible work arrangements. Additionally, the traveller should pay attention to the impact of travel on family life. In families with children, partner's effort to maintain everyday life during absences is essential, and the traveller should remember that travel affects a partner's time use and adds to responsibilities at home. Pre-arranged trips so that the partner's schedule is taken into account is often out of the question but recommended when possible. This is especially the case for those interviewed travellers who travelled with high intensity and missed family occasions, events and the important events of children lives. Both travellers and partners told that separation causes emotional separation between partners, therefore, taking care of relationship by maintaining contact with partner and children members during trips is important.

As previously mentioned, it was found that the inability to accept travel, as part of the current life situation, was one main reason for the negative experiences related to international business travel. Also, certain characteristics and factors, such as the ability to be flexible, helps to improve the balance between work and family domains in IBT-families. The previously discussed characteristics that improve and reduce the balance of work and family are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.　　　Characteristic and factors that improve or reduce work-family balance in IBT-families

CHARACTERISTICS THAT IMPROVE THE BALANCE OF WORK AND FAMILY:
- Organization's travel policies that allow for individual needs
- Successful border management:
    o ability to segment or integrate according to individual preference/needs
- Effective coping as a couple:
    o ability to be flexible
    o ability to negotiate with partner
    o accepting travel as a part of life
    o learning to live with travel as a part of one's life
- Seeing travel as a chosen lifestyle

CHARACTERISTICS THAT REDUCE THE BALANCE OF WORK AND FAMILY:

- Strict travel policies that do not allow flexibility
- Family status: parenthood
- Unsuccessful border management:
    o inability to segment or integrate according to individual preference/needs
- Ineffective coping as a couple:
    o coping efforts inadequate
    o travel is an issue
    o inflexibility

5.3 Limitations of the study and directions for future research

Like virtually every study, mine is not without limitations. Next, the evaluation and critique concerning research quality is presented concerning both the quantitative and qualitative studies of this dissertation.

First of all, the sample of the quantitative article was based on self-reports, that may have affected the findings, and in the future, the research should use several sources of data such as the partners of the travellers. Other limitations of the quantitative part are that the cross-sectional design of the study precludes causal conclusions on the associations found. Reversed causality can thus not be excluded. It is unclear if those that experienced more WFC were taking more business trips.

A noteworthy limitation of this thesis is that the data of this study, both in qualitative and quantitative articles, was collected from Finland. This means that international business travel in this study means exiting Finland. In other regions, such as USA, Russian or Australia, same distance could be labelled domestic travel. Due to these limitations, the findings are not generalizable necessarily to other countries and cultural contexts.

In the qualitative articles, the data was supplied by a limited number of interviewees, consisting of 20 single interviews. In addition, the findings of qualitative articles of this study are specific to families in which the traveller is male and the partner is female with the majority of the couples in their thirties and in the child-rearing life phase.

The qualitative data and the interviews I have made were used for helping to meet the research aim and answer the research objectives. They gave answers but also raise many new questions, and during the research process, there uncovered several unexplored areas that provided an opportunity to make a number of proposals for interesting future research. First, it is known that intensity of travel affects experienced WFC, and yet, it is not known whether it is the length of trips or the amount of trips that exposes travellers to WFC. In the future, research should also concentrate on how different kinds of travelling affect WFC.

The gender-related limitation of the qualitative studies in this dissertation and the results of the quantitative study show that parenthood has a different effect on the WFC experiences of males and females. Previous research shows that women in responsible jobs more often have a careeroriented partner compared to their male conterparts (Heikkinen, Lämsä & Hiillos, 2014). Future research could concentrate on gender differences and add to our understanding of how this affects the experiences of international business travel and how organizations could alter their travel policies to be more family friendly. Future studies should also focus on whether gender affects the coping strategies of IBTs at different-age and in different life phases.

The majority of the couples interviewed in this study were in the child-rearing life phase. Future studies should focus on the experiences of couples in different phases of life and couples who have different family setups. Interesting new avenues for research would be to compare experiences and coping of couples with or without dependent children and same-sex couples. In addition, future research should study the experiences of single parent travellers. Another interesting research subject might also be dual-travel couples, that is, couples where both partners' jobs require international business travel.

This study is also in line with previous work-family research that has mainly concentrated on the negative interactions between work and family. The positive outcome of travel has been recognized on the individual level (Mayerhofer et al., 2010; Oddou et al., 2000; Shaffer et al., 2012; Starr & Currie, 2009; Welch & Worm, 2006) but research on the positive and enriching effect of international business travel lacks within the family or partner levels (Mäkelä, Kinnunen, et al., 2015; Westman, Etzion, & Chen, 2008). Because there are findings that indicate that travel can also have positive outcomes, future research should focus on the positive and enriching effects of travel.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Travelers' interview announcement

Hyvä X:n työntekijä,

Vastasit viime kesänä ulkomaan työmatkustamista ja työhyvinvointia koskevaan lomakekyselyymme.
Suurkiitos! Tässä sähköpostin liitteenä on Sinun organisaatiotasi koskeva raportti lomakekyselyn tuloksista.

Lomakkeella kysyimme myös mahdollisuutta haastatella Sinua puhelimitse tutkimuksen teemoihin liittyen. Olisi hienoa, jos Sinulla olisi mahdollisuus osallistua n. 45-60 min. kestävään haastatteluun 17.10 – 2.11. 2011 välisenä aikana. Voimme haastatella Sinua myös erikseen sovittavana ajankohtana, mikäli em. ajat eivät Sinulle sovi.

Olemme tutkimushankkeessa kiinnostuneita myös työkseen paljon matkustavien henkilöiden puolisoista ja heidän kokemuksistaan edellä mainittuihin aiheisiin liittyen. Pariskuntien molempia osapuolia haastattelemalla pyrimme tuottamaan mahdollisimman monipuolista ymmärrystä ulkomaan työmatkailun vaikutuksista myös perheen tasolla.

Koska tämä tutkimus on osa laajempaa tutkimusohjelmaa, jossa olemme kiinnostuneita erilaisista kansainvälisen työn liikkuvuuden muodoista (esim. ulkomainen työmatkailu, ekspatriaatit) ja työhyvinvoinnista, olisimme erittäin kiitollisia, jos voisitte molemmat puolisosi kanssa osallistua tutkimukseemme. Näin saisimme kerrytettyä mahdollisimman monipuolista tutkimusaineistoa ja pystyisimme sen avulla tuottamaan uutta, hyödynnettävää tietoa niin organisaatioiden päätöksentekijöille kuin itse kansainvälistä työtä tekeville sekä heidän perheilleen kokonaisvaltaisen hyvinvoinnin tukemisen näkökulmasta.

Mikäli Sinua on mahdollisuus haastatella em. ajankohtana, ilmoitathan siitä meille, niin lähetämme Sinulle linkin www-pohjaiseen ajanvarausohjelmaan, josta voit valita itsellesi sopivan haastatteluajan. Jos em. Ajankohdat eivät Sinulle sovi, ehdottaisitko Sinulle paremmin soveltuvaa aikaa sähköpostissa. Ajankohdan vahvistuttua, lähetämme Sinulle sähköpostitse haastattelurungon, johon voit halutessasi tutustua etukäteen.

Myös puolisoiden haastattelut toteutetaan puhelimitse 17.10-2.11. välisenä aikana (tai erikseen sovittavana ajankohtana) ja niiden kesto on noin 30-60 min. Mikäli voimme pyytää myös puolisoasi osallistumaan tutkimukseen, lähettäisitkö hänen sähköpostiosoitteensa tai puhelinnumeronsa, jotta voimme ottaa häneen yhteyttä ja sopia haastatteluajankohdasta.

Kiitos yhteistyöstä!

Terveisin,

Projektitutkija

Kati Saarenpää

Appendix 2. Partners' interview announcement

Hei,

Sain yhteystietosi puolisoltasi, jonka mukaan olisit suostuvainen osallistumaan haastattelututkimukseemme.

Teemme Vaasan yliopiston Johtamisen yksikössä tutkimusta liittyen ulkomaan työmatkustamiseen, työhyvinvointiin sekä työ- ja yksityiselämän yhteensovittamiseen.

Olemme tutkimushankkeessa kiinnostuneita myös työkseen paljon matkustavien henkilöiden puolisoista ja heidän kokemuksistaan edellä mainittuihin aiheisiin liittyen. Pariskuntien molempia osapuolia haastattelemalla pyrimme tuottamaan mahdollisimman monipuolista ymmärrystä ulkomaan työmatkustamisen vaikutuksista myös perheen tasolla.

Haastattelu toteutetaan loka-marraskuun aikana. Lähetän sinulle linkin www-pohjaiseen ajanvarausohjelmaan, josta voit valita itsellesi sopivan haastatteluajan. Jos et löydä tarjotuista ajoista sopivaa, ehdottaisitko sinulle sopivampaa aikaa sähköpostitse.

Liitteenä saat alustavan haastattelurungon, johon voit halutessasi tutustua etukäteen.

Linkki ajanvaraukseen: http://www.doodle.com/rc43g5r8q8t4c76p

Kiitos yhteistyöstä!

Projektitutkija, Kati Saarenpää

kati.saarenpaa@uwasa.fi

Appendix 3. Travellers' interview schedule

Kiitos osallistumisestasi kyselytutkimukseen ja mahdollisuudesta syventää teemoja haastattelemalla!

Tässä alustava runko haastattelulle. Olemme tutkimuksessa kiinnostuneita kansainvälisesti liikkuvasta työstä, työn ja muun elämän yhteensovittamisesta ja työhyvinvoinnista.

Taustatiedot, työhistoria

Työn arki

– Kertoisitko esimerkin sinulle normaalista työviikosta.
– Mitä mieltä olet työhösi kuuluvasta matkustamisesta?
    Mitkä asiat koet negatiivisina?
    Mitkä asiat koet positiivisina?

– Onko kotimaahan ja ulkomaille suuntautuvissa työmatkoissa eroja? Suhtaudutko niihin eri tavoin?
– Onko asennoitumisesi kansainväliseen työmatkustamiseen muuttunut työurasi aikana? Miten ja miksi?
– Pystytkö vaikuttamaan riittävästi työhösi? Esimerkiksi suunnittelemaan etukäteen matkustamista tai ja kieltäytymään matkasta perhesyyn takia?
– Koetko kansainvälisen työmatkustamisen stressaavaksi? Miksi?
– Miten stressi ilmenee? Onko se sitä usein?
– Millaiset asiat koet aiheuttavan stressiä ulkomaan työmatkoillasi? Tunnetko että voit itse vaikuttaa näihin stressaaviin tilanteisiin?
– Millaisia keinoja käytät stressin vähentämiseksi?
– Onko stressi mielestäsi osa työnkuvaasi? Kuuluuko stressi mielestäsi työhösi?

– Minkälaisia ongelmatilanteita koet ulkomaille suuntautuvilla työmatkoillasi? Kertoisitko esimerkin ongelmasta ja miten ratkaisit ongelman?
– Tuleeko sinulle usein vastaan ongelmia työmatkustamiseesi liittyen joihin et koe löytäväsi ratkaisua tai että ratkaistaksesi ongelman sen eteen tulisi nähdä kohtuuttomasti vaivaa? Olisiko sinulla esimerkki tällaisesta tilanteesta? Miltä se tuntui?
– Onko joitain tiettyjä ongelmia työmatkoihisi liittyen, jotka toistuvat lähes joka kerta?
– Onko sinun mielestäsi helppo sulkea pois mielestäsi pois työmatkoihisi liittyviä epämiellyttäviä asioita tai oletko kehittänyt joitain keinoja välttää ongelmatilanteita? Millaisia?
– Saatko organisaatioltasi tukea tai apua työmatkalla tapahtuvassa ongelmatilanteessa

Työstä palkitseminen

– Saatko mielestäsi riittävän korvauksen/arvostusta työstäsi ajatellen työn kokonaisuutta?
– Haluaisitko tehdä matkustamista vaativaa työtä myös tulevaisuudessa? Onko sinulla erityisiä tavoitteita seuraavien vuosien varalle nykyistä työtäsi ajatellen. Onko sinulla vielä urakehitysmahdollisuuksia ja mihin suuntaan ne menisivät?
– Koetko, että sinua palkitaan matkustavasta työstä? Miten?
– Koetko, että kansainvälisestä matkustamista on hyötyä urasi jatkoa ajatellen. Onko se kehittänyt sinua työntekijänä

Palautuminen ja vapaa-aika

Palautumisella tarkoitetaan henkistä ja fyysistä elpymistä työn aiheuttamasta kuormituksesta. Palautumista voi tapahtua niin työajan sisällä kuin sen ulkopuolella.

– Yleisesti ajatellen, mikä on sinulle paras tapa palautua työstä?
– Onko sinulla työpäivän aikana mahdollisuus palautumiseen? (Esim. taukojen pitämiseen tai työn organisointiin)
– Pystytkö irrottautumaan työasioista vapaa-ajalla? (mietitkö työasioita työajan ulkopuolella, katsotko illalla työsähköpostin jne,)
– Miten palaudut työmatkalla ollessa?
– Miten palaudut työmatkalta kotiin tullessa? Miten kauan palautuminen kestää, mitä teet?
– Kuinka paljon sinulla on päivässä keskimäärin vapaa-aikaa? Miten käytät sen? Onko sitä riittävästi?
– Onko sinulla työmatkoilla ollessasi vapaa-aikaa? Miten käytät sen?

Työ ja yksityiselämän yhteensovittaminen

– Koetko, että työelämäsi ja muu elämä ovat tasapainossa keskenään?
– Miten arki kotona sujuu, kun olet matkalla?
– Onko puolisollasi jotain toiveita, mitä hän haluaisi itse tehdä tai sinun tekevän, kun tulet kotiin työmatkalta? Esim. halu lähteä omiin harrastuksiin, viettää aikaa kanssasi tms.
– Mitkä tekijät mahdollistavat arjen sujumisen matkustelun aikana?
– Minkälaisia käytännön ratkaisuja olet/olette (perheessänne) tehnyt työn ja yksityiselämän yhteensovittamiseksi?
– Onko työhösi kuuluva matkustaminen vaikuttanut perheen sisäiseen työnjakoon?

– Kuka perheessänne hoitaa mahdollisiin lapsiin liittyvät asiat?
– Kuka tekee kotityöt?

– Onko yksityiselämässänne tapahtunut sellaisia asioita/muutoksia, jotka ovat helpottaneet/ vaikeuttaneet matkustavaa työtä?
– Onko työn ulkopuolinen elämä (yksityiselämä, perhe) asettanut haasteita työllesi?
– Onko työn ulkopuolisella elämällä (yksityiselämä, perhe) ollut myönteisiä vaikutuksia työtäsi ajatellen?
– Mitä työnantajasi on tehnyt sinun työsi ja yksityiselämäsi yhteensovittamiseksi? Onko työnantajalla jotain etuja tai tukitoimia?
– Mikä elämän vaihe olisi mielestäsi paras yhdistettynä matkustavaan työhön?

Appendix 4. Partners' interview schedule

Kiitos osallistumisestasi tutkimukseen. Olemme tässä tutkimuksessa kiinnostuneita kansainvälisesti liikkuvasta työstä sekä työn ja muun elämän yhteensovittamisesta. Tässä alustava runko haastattelulle.

Taustatiedot

Arjen sujuminen, työn ja perhe-elämän yhteensovittaminen

– Mitä mieltä olet puolisosi matkustavasta työstä? (kotimaahan/ ulkomaille suuntautuvasta)
– Miten arki sujuu, kun puolisosi matkustaa?
– Mitkä tekijät mahdollistavat arjen sujumisen matkustelun aikana?
– Mitä haasteita puolison matkustava työ tuo arkeen?
– Minkälaisia käytännön ratkaisuja olet/olette tehnyt työn ja yksityiselämän yhteensovittamiseksi?
– Onko puolison matkustaminen vaikuttanut perheen sisäiseen työnjakoon?
– Onko yksityiselämässänne tapahtunut sellaisia asioita/muutoksia, jotka ovat helpottaneet/ vaikeuttaneet matkustavaa työtä? (tai vaikuttaneet puolison haluun tehdä matkustavaa työtä)
– Onko jommankumman uraa priorisoitu?
– Onko puolison matkustava työ vaikuttanut parisuhteeseenne? Miten?
– Miten puolison matkustava työ on vaikuttanut perheeseen/lapsiin?
– Kokeeko puolisosi työhön liittyvän (kansainvälisen) matkustamisen positiivisena vai negatiivisena asiana?
– Onko puolisosi työ- ja muu elämä tasapainossa keskenään?
– Onko puolisolla tarpeeksi aikaa parisuhteelle ja perheelle? Onko tämä muuttunut työuran aikana (kansainvälisen työmatkustelun alettua)?

Palautuminen työstä

– Miten puolisosi palautuu työstään?
– Miten hän pääsee työstä eroon vapaa-ajalla?
– Pystyykö puolisosi mielestäsi vaikuttamaan tarpeeksi omaan työhönsä? Esim. kieltäytymään ulkomaantyömatkasta perhesyyn takia?
– Kun puolisosi tulee kotiin ulkomaan työmatkalta, kuinka hän "palaa arkeen"? Mitä hän haluaa ensimmäiseksi tehdä?
– Mitä sinä itse haluat tehdä, kun puolisosi palaa?
– Onko puolisosi työnantajalla etuja tai tukitoimia, joiden koet tuovan positiivisia vaikutuksia yksityiselämäänne?
– Millaisia etuja tai tukitoimia puolisosi työnantaja voisi tarjota?
– Mikä elämän vaihe olisi mielestäsi paras yhdistettynä puolison matkustavaan työhön?

Kiitos!

Chapter 9
International Business Travel and Work-Family Balance: Research Review and Future Directions

Kati Saarenpää

Abstract The aim of this chapter is to review the existing studies on the work-family interface of international business travelers (IBTs), chart the under-reported research avenues, and offer some proposals for further studies. According to reviewed literature work with travel abroad makes unusual demands of both travellers and their family members, and requires a high degree of flexibility, understanding, and cooperation from the whole family. Understanding the impact of travel at the family level is important in order to enhance the traveller's well-being and efficiency. The volume of research on IBTs has grown considerably over the last few decades, but compared to the literature on the work-family interface in general, the research in the context of the work-family interface of IBTs remains focused on quite limited issues, and uses restricted research methods. Several proposals for interesting future research are provided, such as positive enriching effect of travel, how children are affected by the absence of other parent. Also age, gender and marital status as an influencing factor in how international travel is experiences should be taken into consideration in future research.

Keywords International business travel • Work-family interface • Work-family balance • Work-family conflict • Research review • Research agenda

Introduction

Mobility and the internationalisation of careers is a major feature of working life today. The number of people who travel abroad for work continues to rise. Although technical advances such as video conferences allow communication without physical meetings, face-to-face encounters between individuals who are working far apart from one another are important to the transfer of tacit information, the coordination of activities, the negotiation of agreements and creation of relationships of trust among key staff (Davidson and Cope 2003; Faulconbridge and Beaverstock 2008).

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Work including frequent travelling may pose both psychological and physical challenges (Patel 2011), as well as difficulties in integrating work and family life (e.g. Shaffer and Harrison 2005; Welch et al. 2007).

The rise of mobile workers has increased the research interest in international business travelling and its consequences. The majority of business traveller research has been conducted within the field of travel medicine, and has concentrated on physical disorders, such as travel-related illness (Liese et al. 1997; Patel 2011), on psychological disorders, such as sleeping, eating and drinking problems (Burkholder et al. 2010; DeFrank et al. 2000), psychological stress (Striker et al. 2000) and burnout (Westman and Etzion 2004). Moreover, existing research on international business travellers (IBTs) has covered themes such as their roles and the activities (Welch et al. 2007), and lifestyle and identity issues (Lassen 2010). Business travel has also been studied from the perspective of the organisation; for example from the perspective of business travel management (Holma 2010, 2012; Jenkins 1993).

Because an international business traveller's job involves frequent short business trips abroad without their families (Shaffer and Harrison 2005), the families of travellers do not experience identical problems to the likes of expatriate families struggling with a relocation process. However, regular departures and absences, and the necessity to work extended hours even when in the home country do affect the well-being of the whole family (Espino et al. 2002; Gustafson 2012; Striker et al. 2000; Welch et al. 2007; Welch and Worm 2006). Blurred boundaries between private and work time and are typical aspects of both international assignments and international business travel (Mayerhofer et al. 2010). Just as a stable and supportive family environment can diminish the effects of travel stress (DeFrank et al. 2000), so its absence can increase such stress.

Although work and family are clearly closely related, research related to IBTs has primarily focused on the traveller, and paid little attention to the consequences of travel for the family (Gustafson 2013). Those studies that have examined the effects of travel on the family have focused on a rather limited set of issues and there are ample research gaps about how and why international business travel affects domesticity, family members, and family dynamics. To obtain a broader understanding it is worthwhile reviewing the kind of aspects covered in the general research on combining work and family.

Work and family are closely linked (Kinnunen et al. 2014), and there is a connection between experiences at the work-life interface (also referred to as an interplay or interaction) and personal well-being (Hildebrandt and Littig 2006). (Work-life can be interpreted as a broader definition than work-family, i.e. work-life includes experiences in all life domains (e.g. Kirchmeyer 2000)). Working people with families can be seen as members of both a work and a family system; both of which demand time and effort, therefore work and family can be considered concurrent systems.

The concept of the family cannot be determined precisely. In some cultures the family is restricted to the nuclear family; parents (mother and father) and the children. In other cultures the concept of family is extended, also grandparents,

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uncles, aunts and cousins are considered to belong to the family. Nowadays the concept of family builds on various forms of relationships than before; the increase of unmarried families, divorced or reconstituted family, as well as legally acknowledged of same-sex couples have changed the definitions of family.

The interest in the issues of work and family originally arose following the entry of women into the job market. Recently, research interest has expanded to encompass issues like dual-career couples and the heightened need for flexibility at work (Bergström Casinowsky 2013). Early research on work-family interaction focused on negative interactions between work and family, while today interaction between these domains is seen as a bidirectional and double-layered phenomenon (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985; Kinnunen et al. 2014). Work can interfere with family and family with work, and the relationship between work and family can be either negative or positive.

The interface between work and family has been analysed from different points of view, such as the integration and segmentation of work and family (Frone 2003), the work-family balance (Frone 2003), or work-family conflict referring to negative work-family interactions, and work-family enrichment, referring to positive interactions (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985). Models commonly used to explain both negative and positive work-family interactions are antecedent and outcome models, and spillover-crossover models (Kinnunen et al. 2014). Research on how people manage with work and family demands is conducted within coping-research (Lazarus and Folkman 1984; Mauno et al. 2012). Some of these perspectives have already been applied in the context of international business travelling, at least to some extent, but there remains a limited number of studies on how frequent international business travel affects the integration of work and family concerns (Bergbom et al. 2011; Mäkelä et al. 2012; Nicholas and McDowall 2012).

Given the above, the aims of this chapter are to review existing studies on the work-family interface of IBTs, chart the under-reported research avenues, and offer some proposals for further studies. The chapter is organised as follows. First, an overview of the basic concepts in the area of work-family interaction is offered. Next, the existing literature relating to the work-family interface of IBTs is reviewed. Finally, a summary and directions for future research is provided.

The Research Perspectives on Work-Family Interactions

We now know that the integration of work and family is a bidirectional phenomena: work can affect the family, and family can affect work. There have been several attempts to understand the multi-faceted phenomenon of integrating work and family (Eby et al. 2005). As early as the 1970s (see, Kinnunen et al. 2006) it was reported that the interference between work and family can be either negative or positive (Frone et al. 1997b; Kinnunen et al. 2014). Nonetheless, the research on work and family to a large extent relies on the conflict orientation, meaning that the competing demands between work and family often result in conflict.

Segmentation and Integration of Work and Family

Maintaining a balance between work and other spheres of life is important to psychological well-being (Clark 2000). The work-family balance has been defined in various ways: Some researchers consider it simply an absence of work-family conflict (Duxbury and Higgins 2001) or a scarcity of conflict; 'satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict' (Clark 2001). According to Frone (2003) there is balance between work and family when work-family conflict is low and work-family enrichment is high. Greenblatt (2002, p. 179) has described work-life balance, concept close connected to work-family balance, as satisfying the needs of both oneself and those one is committed to support. Balance between work and family does not mean equal time spent on each; instead, balance is experienced when successfully managing different fields of life.

An important factor affecting the work-family balance is the degree to which individuals integrate or segment work and family roles (Kreiner 2006; Nippert-Eng 1996). Segmentation of work and family can be defined as the degree to which aspects of each domain are kept separate from one another (Kreiner 2006). 'Segmenters' choose to keep work and family as separate as possible, and rarely bring elements of one domain into the other. Segmentation can involve creating physical, cognitive or behavioural boundaries (Casper et al. 2013). Other people instead integrate elements of work and family. For these *integrators*, boundaries between work and family domains are either non-existent or very permeable (Ashforth et al. 2000; Kreiner 2006). Besides individual differences workplaces also create a different kind of environment affecting the segmentation or integration of work and family (Kirchmeyer 1995; Kreiner 2006). Either segmentation or integration cannot prefer better than other, both have advantages, through which an individual can facilitate the reconciliation of work and family.

Negative Sides of the Work and Family Interface

Early research on negative work-family interactions focused on role stress theory and the scarcity perspective (Casper et al. 2013; Kinnunen et al. 2014). Role stress theory holds that having multiple roles (e.g. spouse, parent, employee) can generate expectations and pressures that can create psychological conflict and role overload (Kahn et al. 1964). The scarcity perspective suggests that because individuals' resources are limited, work and family compete for scare resources (Goode 1960; Marks 1977). Competing for scarce resources fuels work-family conflict.

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985, 77) defined work-family conflict (WFC) as 'a form in which the role pressure from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect'. The conflict element has been classified in three different forms (1985). *Time-based* conflict occurs because multiple roles may compete for a person's time, and time devoted to one role makes it difficult to perform another

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role (shortage of time). *Strain-based* conflict occurs when strain experienced in one role intrudes into and interferes with the performance of another role (spillover of strain from work to family/family-to-work). *Behaviour-based* conflict occurs when specific behaviours required in one role are incompatible with behavioural expectations in another role.

Work-family conflict has been proved to be associated with general well-being, and satisfaction with both work and family life (Aryee 1992; Frone et al. 1997a; Kinnunen and Mauno 1998; Kossek and Ozeki 1998). According to the conceptual model of the work-family interface, the predictors of WFC are job and family stressors, and job and family involvement (Frone et al. 1992). Frone and colleagues also propose that job stressors are directly and positively related to WFC, and family stressors are directly and positively related to family-work conflict (FWC). Conflict between family and work can occur in two directions: family can interfere with work resulting in FWC or work can interfere with family (producing WFC) (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985).

As indicated above individuals may face multiple challenges when combining work and family. Use of coping has been posited as a way to maintain balance and resolve conflicting situations between these two life domains.

Coping with Negative Work-Family Interaction

When an individual encounters challenges or negative events, effective use of coping strategies can help maintain physical and mental well-being. The concept of coping began to take shape in the 1960s and 1970s, when stress became a popular research target (Lazarus 1993). Coping in the context of WFC can be summarised as the conscious efforts made to get through stressful situations, or 'actions and thoughts that enable individuals to handle difficult situations' (Stone et al. 1988: 183).

Coping is often studied via coping strategies (Mauno et al. 2012). The distinction between emotion-focused and problem-focused strategies is probably that most often used to categorise coping strategies on a broad level (e.g. Stahl and Caligiuri 2005). Emotional coping is likely to occur if it seems that nothing can be done to modify the harmful, threatening, or challenging environmental condition. The problem-focused forms of coping are appropriate when something can be done about the situation (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). In addition, research on family coping has carried on. Work-family coping strategies are the coping efforts and behaviours employed when the aim is to improve or maintain the balance between work and family commitments. Mauno and colleagues (2012) suggest three work-family coping strategies to maintain the balance between work and family commitments; delegating at home/work, 'being super' at home/work, and being 'good enough' at home/work.

Although the main focus of research has been on the negative sides of the work and family interface; positive sides have also increasingly attracted research.

Positive Sides of the Work and Family Interface

Early conceptions underlined the negative interactions between work and family, but later research noted that work and family can benefit each other. However, there is still limited evidence on such positive sides of the work-family interface, and the roots of that research are in the enhancement or expansion hypothesis, which asserts that multiple roles can be beneficial because they can offer greater access to resources and improve the likelihood of achieving role balance (Marks 1977; Sieber 1974). For example Barnett and Hyde's (2001) research indicates that multiple roles improve both men's and women's psychological, physical, and relationship health.

The research on positive relationships between work and family has employed different concepts, such as enrichment (Wayne et al. 2006; Wayne 2009), facilitation (Grzywacz and Butler 2005), positive spillover (Grzywacz and Marks 2000), and enhancement (Fisher et al. 2009). Greenhaus and Powell (2006) combined all the positive constructs mentioned under a single construct: work-family enrichment, which is 'the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other role'. To generalise, work-family enrichment is the opposite experience to WFC (Mauno et al. 2012).

Besides studying the negative and positive interactions, prior research has concentrated on antecedents and outcomes of these interactions. In the next section, the concepts of antecedents and outcomes are briefly reviewed.

Antecedents and Outcomes of Negative and Positive Work-Family Interactions

Antecedent and outcome models aim to explain the factors behind the experiences of negative and positive work-family interactions. Antecedents have typically been placed in three categories: work domain variables, non-work domain variables, and individual and demographic variables (Byron 2005; Casper et al. 2007). Work domain antecedents include total working hours, flexibility of work schedules, organisational culture, and support (Byron 2005).

Non-work domain antecedents refer to families, and choices of leisure time activities; they also vary according to the family situation (single/parent, children's age etc.) (Guest 2002). One approach to the issue of researching non-work domain antecedents is the crossover effect. Crossover can be described as a dyadic, transmission process between people where one person's experiences affect the experience of another person in the same social environment (Bolger et al. 1989). Both positive and negative experiences can crossover (Carlson et al. 2010), but existing research has mainly concentrated on the crossover of negative experiences and emotions (Carlson et al. 2010; Westman 2001). Research has detected three main mechanisms behind the crossover process; (1) common stressors, which increase the strain on both partners, and cause strain to cross over from one

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situation to another, (2) empathetic reactions, based on the close relationship between partners who share their lives and care for one another, and (3) indirect crossover, where the transmission is mediated by interpersonal exchanges. Increased stress produces negative interaction styles that can create additional stress for a spouse (Westman et al. 2008b; Westman and Vinokur 1998). The definition of the mechanisms of crossover was originally developed for negative crossover, but was later also extended to embrace positive events (Westman et al. 2008b). Individual and demographic variables of antecedent and outcome models comprise factors such as age, gender, personality career stage, and incomes (Kinnunen and Mauno 2001).

The interaction between work and family has various outcomes for individuals and also for families and work (Voydanoff 2002). According to Voydanoff individual outcomes include psychological and physical well-being; work outcomes comprise job performance, absenteeism, turnover, involvement, and job satisfaction. Family outcomes include marital and family involvement and satisfaction, marital conflict and stability, family cohesion, and developmental outcomes for children.

There is a strong tradition of work and family research, and many of its perspectives are useful in order to understand the work-life balance issues of IBTs. The rest of this chapter focuses on reviewing the existing research on the work-family interactions of IBTs using the same structure as used previously to review the general research perspectives on work-family interactions.

Work-Family Interactions Among International Business Travellers

International business traveller are persons for whom a significant part of their work involves international visits to foreign countries (Welch et al. 2007). Similarly to general work-family research, research focusing on the work and family issues of IBTs has also mainly concentrated on negative aspects. The importance of the work-family interactions of IBTs was recognised as early as the 1970s (Culbert and Renshaw 1972), but since the late 1990s the research has diversified, meaning the consequences of business travel have been considered from different research perspectives (Dimberg et al. 2002; Espino et al. 2002; Liese et al. 1997; Striker et al. 1999, 2000). The findings of such research highlight the negative effects on both travellers and their families (Dimberg et al. 2002; Espino et al. 2002).

Although the empirical research has not focused on the issue of integration and segmentation of work and family for IBTs, it seems that the integration of work and family among IBTs is rather high. Presumably, the business travel stress model (DeFrank et al. 2000) would provide support to the supposed high integration. In the model, international business travel is considered as a circle in which the phases of leaving, absence, and homecoming alternate. The travel process is divided into three stages (pre-, during-, post-trip), each of which has its unique stressors that create personal stress reactions. It can be assumed that work involving travelling

influences life outside work quite extensively, and it is quite possible that the high integration of work and family exposes the negative interactions between these two domains.

In this section, the existing research on negative interactions is first discussed. Then research on coping, positive work-family interactions, and finally research on the antecedents of negative and positive interactions is reviewed.

Negative Work-Family Interactions Due to Work-Related Travel

International business travel has been found to place a strain on travellers themselves, but also on family life, and family members. Experience of stress caused by work travel is common among travellers, and research also indicates negative outcomes for spouses (Dimberg et al. 2002; Espino et al. 2002; Mayerhofer et al. 2004; Nicholas and McDowall 2012; Orthner and Roderick 2009; Stewart and Donald 2006; Westman et al. 2008b). Business travel was also found to be more stressful for travellers with families, and especially those with young children (Espino et al. 2002). However, having children in the household may also have an attenuating effect on the stress levels of travellers (Striker et al. 1999), perhaps because having a family with children provides an important source of social support to reduce stress.

To some extent, the consequences of business travel are unavoidable and such travel demands extra flexibility from the family (Bergbom et al. 2011). The absence from home due to work-related travel of a parent or partner complicates family life and affects such things as attendance at family events (Espino et al. 2002). Other issues reported include role strain on the part of spouses, lack of security and support, and loneliness (Stewart and Donald 2006). In dual-career families, spouses may find it difficult to manage all the home and childcare commitments without their partner. Spouses of IBTs also face issues combining work and family demands and Nicholas and McDowall (2012) refer to the family-to-work conflicts of spouses, because it will often be the IBT's work routine that is prioritised, if, for example, one parent has to stay home with a sick child.

Previous medical studies indicate that there is relationship between business travel and travellers psychological issues, such as depression, anxiety, and drinking problems (Patel 2011). The stress caused by frequent travel can also spill over and affect the psychological and physical health of travellers' spouses (Dimberg et al. 2002). Spouses have also been reported to experience feelings of stress, anger and resentment, due to their partners' work-related travelling (Espino et al. 2002). Spouses who more frequently experience work-related separations have been found to be at greater risk of psychological ill-being (Orthner and Roderick 2009).

In addition to the discussion on the psychological influences of travel, there has also been some research on the potential damage to marriages caused by work-related travel of both international and domestic types. Commuters for example, and especially international business commuters, can be compared to IBTs. International

business commuters are people who cross international borders when they commute from home to work (Briscoe et al. 2009), and in consequence are separated from their families in a similar way to IBTs. Studies among commuters have illustrated negative psychological and emotional impacts on the spouses of absent husbands (Cooper and Sloan 1985; Isay 1968; Morrice et al. 1985; Rigg and Cosgrove 1994), and studies on IBTs indicate negative outcomes resulting from marital separation. Absence from home has for example been noted to result in marital problems and gradual emotional distancing between spouses (Espino et al. 2002; Stewart and Donald 2006; Striker et al. 1999).

Roehling and Bultman (2002) studied the relationship between work-related travel and marital satisfaction and found that gender role attitudes affect marital satisfaction, especially among couples with children at home. Marital satisfaction in travellers' marriages is highest when gender role attitudes and gender role behaviours are congruent. If a husband travels, traditional gender roles contribute to marital satisfaction. When a wife travels and the couple have traditional gender role attitudes, marital satisfaction is reduced. If a couple is non-traditional, they are generally less happy if either of the partners travels.

There is little information on how a parent's international business travel affects their children, but Espino et al. (2002) reported changes in children's behaviour as a result of the absence of a parent, and Stewart and Donald (2006) also reported detecting strain on children in such circumstances.

Coping with Negative Work to Family Interactions

As discussed, international travel creates special challenges in integrating work and family. The multiple roles of IBTs mean they need to develop coping strategies if they are to find a work-family balance, and to prevent stress, dissatisfaction and marital difficulties (Nicholas and McDowall 2012). The coping strategies the family applies are specific to the family and will be negotiated within the family system.

There is little research on the coping strategies of IBTs, but there is some on the coping strategies of travellers. Nicholas and McDowall (2012) identified adaptability, negotiating and compromising with significant others, and flexibility as the main coping strategies travellers apply to cope with the negative consequences of travel. Adaptability means both travellers and their families adapting to and accepting the chosen lifestyle. The key factor in adaptability is learning, which enables successful adaptation to multiple roles. Negotiation in turn refers to the need to negotiate with family, friends, and employers to find the balance between work and family. The irregular nature of the travelling for work adds the need to negotiate, particularly over childcare arrangements and domestic responsibilities. Compromise may be important, for example, when arranging to spend quality time with the family; and flexibility mainly refers to the flexibility afforded by the employer.

Gustafson (2013) has discussed how travellers apply different kinds of strategies to cope with the impacts of travel and meet both family and work commitments.

Gustafson describes temporal strategies as an 'intensification' of time, meaning that travellers try to minimise travel time, use their working time effectively, and allocate 'quality time' for their family and friends.

In addition, other studies recognise family as a factor crucial to the choice of coping strategies. Lassen (2010) notes how personal circumstances such as the family situation have an impact on the selection of coping strategies. Lassen identified three different coping strategies that can help IBTs cope with work demanding considerable travel; those are career, juggling, and family strategies. Travellers who adopt a *career strategy* consider a high level of work mobility and an international orientation as a core element of their self-conception and identity. Work and travel is a lifestyle choice for career strategists. They are typically single or have a supportive partner. *Juggling strategists* try to combine work with travel and family demands. For them, family and work are equally important, and either work or family is chosen over the other as the situation demands. *Family strategists* prioritise their family, for example, planning business trips to take account of the needs of the family.

Research addressing the differences between male and female travellers is rare, though some studies indicate that strategies to cope with the problems caused by travel are related to gender (Bergström 2010; Gustafson 2006). Women might avoid overnight trips to overcome the negative feelings related to travel, and may be willing to travel long distances to come home for the night, whereas men are more likely to opt for an overnight stay away.

Stewart and McDonald (2006) focused on how spouses cope with their partners absence. They found the majority of the strategies employed to be targeted at dealing with role overload and with the expectations and needs of children and of colleagues. Spouses used both problem and emotion-focused strategies. Social support and work flexibility appeared to be the most important resources when spouses tried to manage family and work commitments during their partners' absence. Furthermore, Nicholas and McDowall (2012) report that spouses staying home had to make special arrangements to manage work commitments and their family's demands simultaneously, and that involved negotiating with their employers.

While there is no empirical evidence on how international business travel affects children, it can be assumed that frequent separation from one parent may have some effect. Maintaining the connection with a regularly absent parent can be seen as a kind of coping. Although daily (video) calls home, and e-mails cannot replace the personal contact with an absent parent, they are practices that may make separation easier for children (Mayerhofer et al. 2004).

Positive Work-Family Interactions Due to Work-Related Travel

Only a few studies have concentrated on outcomes of work-family enrichment among IBTs. Instead, the positive outcomes of work-related travel have mainly been observed from the traveller's perspective, and in particular from the perspective

of his/her career outcomes. Several studies refer to positive outcomes from work involving travel, such as variation and novelty, new experiences, and international opportunities, and social networks that contribute to the employee's personal and professional growth, and promote travellers' careers (Mayerhofer et al. 2010; Oddou et al. 2000; Shaffer et al. 2012; Starr and Currie 2009; Welch and Worm 2006). Positive and enriching experiences, like social and professional status, career advancement, and a cosmopolitan identity have also been associated with work-related travel (Gustafson 2013).

A recent study found WLC and enrichment to be almost equally common among IBTs (Mäkelä et al. 2014). Moreover, Westman et al. (2008a, b) noticed that positive work-related feelings and attitudes, specifically, vigour at work, cross over from business traveller to spouse. The vigour of travellers crossed over to influence their spouses' vigour as a result of a process of empathy. In addition, Stewart and Donald (2006) refer to positive outcomes of work-related travel for the spouse. The travelling partner's absence increased the spouse's independence and space, encouraged career advancement, and enabled spouses to concentrate on other relationships and interests. It was also shown that if the parent staying home is male, the relationship with the children is enriched, as during the spouse's absence their contact time with children increased. More detailed research would be necessary to fully understand the enriching outcomes that may be by-products of international business travel.

Antecedents and Outcomes of Negative and Positive Interactions

The antecedents of work-family interactions are also often classified in the international context as belonging to the work domain, the non-work domain, the individual, and the demographic domains. Several researchers have suggested reasons for travel disturbing the work-family balance, and placing stress on family members (Espino et al. 2002; Jensen 2013; Striker et al. 2000).

Because there is little research on the positive interactions, very little research has been done on the antecedents of positive work-family interactions, and only one study concentrating on the antecedent of work-life enrichment of IBTs was found (Mäkelä et al. 2014). The research on antecedents of negative and positive work-family interactions will be reviewed below using the work-, non-work, individual, and demographic domain classifications.

Work Domain Antecedents of Negative and Positive Work-Family Interactions

Previous research emphasises the connection between the number of the trips and the strain experienced by both travellers and their families. However, there is no

consensus over whether it is the length of trip, the number of trips, or their frequency that is the most detrimental to the work-family balance. Spending more than 50 days travelling each year has been shown to affect family life through the build up of work that must be addressed by sacrificing what should have been family time (Hyrkkänen et al. 2011). The length of travel has been found to be positively related to WLC (Mäkelä et al. 2014). Dimberg et al. (2002) see the length of absences to be a critical factor for spouses, and found those spouses whose partners spent longer periods travelling to more often experience symptoms associated with negative psychological well-being, than those who were separated from partners for shorter periods. Espino et al.'s (2002) study establishes a connection between the number of travel days and the stress experienced by spouse, as well as changes to children's behaviour. Welch and Worm (2006) suggest that the frequency of the trips exposes family problems more than infrequent but longer absences which allow more continuity. Furthermore, Jensen's (2013) study establishes a positive relationship between business travel frequency and WFC.

One of the factors most strongly associated with stress for people whose work involves a great deal of travelling is the lack of control over their own work (Vartiainen et al. 2005). Adjusting to having to travel at short notice places more strain on the traveller and their family than long-planned trips do (Welch and Worm 2006). Furthermore, both Espino et al. (2002) and Wickham and Vecchi (2009) emphasised that a large number of trips does not necessarily add travel-related strain, if the traveller can prearrange the times and details of the trips. Jensen's (2013) findings support the previous finding and the study adds that the reduction of travel frequency alone does not diminish the conflict, and the more important factor is the extent to which the traveller has control over their trips, which contributes to the reduction in WFC. Many international companies have tightened their travel policies in pursuit of cost savings (Mason 2002), and have restricted travellers' autonomy to arrange their business trips. Such strict travel policies may expose travellers to travel stress, and consequently affect their families (DeFrank et al. 2000).

People also become distressed in the face of frequent changes to schedules and not being able to establish routines (Fisher and Cooper 1990). In the study by Espino and colleagues (2002), spouses of travellers reported behavioural changes among their children that they associated with the work-related travel of a parent. They found that there was a correlation between the reported behavioural changes and the number and duration of trips, last minute changes to travel schedules, the interference of last minute changes with family plans, and the number of occasions when the absent parent missed family celebrations or events.

Several studies refer to family separation, which in this context means absence because of work-related travel, as an antecedent of negative work-family inter-actions. The combination of travel and family separation may for example place time-based strain on the work-family interface if the traveller lacks time to devote to the family (Shaffer et al. 2012). Another significant factor affecting the general quality of working life and the balance between work and family among IBTs is family separation and the need to work outside regular office hours (Welch and

Worm 2006). Similarly, DeFrank et al. (2000) point to family separation, travel stress and health issues as a source of negative effects on the work-family balance of IBTs.

Some researchers have detected that how people experience travel-related stress varies in different stages of a trip. The level of stress level has been identified as highest before the trip and lowest after the return home (Westman and Etzion 2002). Even if the stress level reduces when the traveller returns home, the travel-related stress does not disappear completely. Travel takes its toll, and the traveller needs time for physical and emotional recovery after a trip. The longer the trip, the more likely the traveller is to experience post-trip stress (DeFrank et al. 2000). The absence from work is likely to have resulted in a build up of tasks that increase the normal workload upon return, and once home the IBT may experience stress as a consequence of not having met their familial responsibilities (Ivancevich et al. 2003). For all these reasons, it is possible that stress experienced as a result of work-related travel causes work-family conflicts.

Non-work Domain Antecedents of Negative and Positive Work-Family Interactions

Gustafson (2006) examined how the family situation influences work-related travel, and found it seemed to be the major factor behind experiences of conflict between work and family. Travellers with a partner and those with children are more reluctant to travel than those who live alone (Gustafson 2006; Roehling and Bultman 2002). It seems that one main reason behind WFC arising due to travel is that having a family increases social and emotional burdens. Concern over the impact of travel on the family has been proven one of the most important causes of travel-related stress experienced by travellers (Striker et al. 1999). Conflict may arise for example due to unforeseen events during the traveller's absence, for instance if a child suddenly falls ill (Nicholas and McDowall 2012).

Individual and Demographic Domain Antecedents of Negative and Positive Work-Family Interactions

Although both male and female travellers struggle with similar issues, it can be even more challenging for women to integrate work involving travel with their family responsibilities (Frone et al. 1992). Gender, and the different gender roles, affects how women and men experience interactions between work and family. Having young children seems to reduce the willingness to travel, but gender affects work-related travel more than family obligations (Gustafson 2006). Men travel more than women, notwithstanding their family situation. Although both genders are less

likely to travel when children are young, men with young children do not reduce their travel more than men with older children. In addition, Bergström's (2008) findings indicate gender affects the willingness to travel; mothers of small children reduce the amount they travel for work, and avoid spending nights away from home when travelling.

Having children increases the number of roles a person assumes, and the more competing roles a person has, the greater is the risk of role overload and WFC (Roehling and Bultman 2002). Role pressure is increased for IBTs by the need to perform both in the domestic and the international work context (Welch et al. 2007). Travelling involving regular absences causes issues around managing parental roles at home, exposing both partners (but especially female travellers) to higher levels of WFC (Duxbury et al. 1994). Stewart and Donald (2006) also support the assumption that business travel gives rise to a risk of role overload. The study also reports effects on family members due to work-related travel and concludes that travel exacerbates role strain and overload among travellers' spouses.

There does not appear to be any direct research on the antecedents of positive work-family interactions, but according to Mäkelä and colleagues (2014) an international career orientation increases work-life enrichment, which is similar to the concept of work-family enrichment. The same study finds the age of the traveller to affect enrichment with enrichment being greater the older the traveller is.

Outcomes of Negative and Positive Work-Family Interactions

The research on outcomes of WFC among IBTs is limited. Only a few studies have focused on the issue: Jensen (2013) found WFC to be a mediator in the business travel–emotional exhaustion relationship. In addition, other health outcomes of WFC have been identified. Mäkelä and colleagues (2013) found that high number of travel days leads to sleeping problems and this relationship was mediated by WFC.

Bergström (2010) asserts that travel-related absences from home cause feelings of guilt, especially for women. Women also experience feelings of loneliness, vulnerability and insecurity staying overnight alone at a hotel. Male travellers' experiences are less negative and they also report positive aspects of being away from home.

After this review of existing research on international business travel in relation to the work-family context, the chapter moves on to identify proposals for further research.

Conclusions and Future Research

The aim of this chapter was to review and bring together the research on the work-family interface of IBTs, and in light of existing work-life balance research to make

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proposals for future studies. According to the literature reviewed on international business travel, work requiring frequent travel abroad makes unusual demands of both travellers and their families. Such work requires a high degree of flexibility, understanding, and cooperation from the whole family. As the review indicates, the volume of research on IBTs has grown considerably over the last few decades, but compared to the literature on the work-family interface in general, the research in the context of the work-family interface of IBTs remains focused on quite limited issues, and uses restricted research methods. This does provide an opportunity to make several proposals for interesting future research.

Today the line between work and family has become blurred. Keeping work and family domains separate is rarely possible, and businesspeople must almost inevitably deal with integrating these domains. The integration or segmentation of work and family in the lives of IBTs has not been studied, although several elements of the reviewed literature suggest that the integration of work and family domains in IBTs lives is probably essential. The level and form of the necessary integration for IBTs certainly merits more attention, as does the phenomenon of spillover, in both negative and positive forms.

The existing literature strongly indicates work involving frequent travel poses both psychological and physical challenges for travellers. Those challenges seem likely to affect the balance between work and family. As travel is time-consuming, it reduces the time available for rest and recovery from work demands. An individual who is insufficiently recovered will lack the energy to participate in family life, which may presumably spawn conflicts between work and family. Recovery research addressing the work-family interface indicates that conflict between work and family increases the need for recovery time (Demerouti et al. 2007), while reducing the opportunity to recover (Taris et al. 2006). The question of a connection between recovery and WFC among IBTs would be an interesting new research avenue.

General work-family research has mainly adopted a conflict orientation; similarly the research on the work-family interactions of IBTs has concentrated almost exclusively on the negative consequences of travel. Research has already recognised the positive outcomes of travel at the individual level (Mayerhofer et al. 2010; Oddou et al. 2000; Shaffer et al. 2012; Starr and Currie 2009; Welch and Worm 2006), while there remains very little research on positive enriching effects (notable exceptions being Mäkelä et al. 2014; and Westman et al. 2008a). It follows that future research on the positive consequences of international business travel for both the traveller and their family would be welcome.

Existing research has to some extent considered the experiences of the spouse, but information on how children are affected by having a parent who travels extensively for work is almost non-existent. Only two studies (Espino et al. 2002; Stewart and Donald 2006) have taken children into consideration, and both indicate negative consequences arising from a parent's travelling.

Various individual and demographic antecedents of work-family conflict experiences, such as gender, age, and marital status, offer many interesting opportunities for future research. The work-family literature has addressed whether genders differ

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in how they experience WFC (e.g. Duxbury et al. 1994; Frone et al. 1992). However, the findings are contradictory: some studies identifying differences between genders (Duxbury et al. 1994), while others do not acknowledge that gender affects the experiences of WFC (Greenhaus et al. 1989). A few studies report gender-based differences in how international business travel is experienced, and in how female and male travellers cope with negative work-family interactions (Gustafson 2006; Kollinger-Santer and Fischlmayr 2013; Westman et al. 2008b). Several studies also suggest that international business travel can be more challenging for women (Frone et al. 1992). One reason for this may be that while dual-career couples are more or less a fact of life, at least in western countries, the traditional roles may still affect how home tasks are shared. Traditional roles at home would make it easier for male travellers to pass the burden of domestic tasks to their wives around periods of travel. In contrast, female travellers are more likely to retain responsibility for organising their traditional tasks even when they are travelling (Kollinger-Santer and Fischlmayr 2013). Future research should extend its focus to possible differences between female and male travellers. The research should be targeted at WFC, for example, as well as at revealing individual and family coping strategies.

As international business travel is increasingly common, it can be assumed that there are dual-career couples where both parties' jobs include international travelling. Such couples and their families are likely to experience a different set of issues than families with only one traveller. Accordingly, it would be interesting to explore the kinds of difficulties these couples encounter in combining frequent work-related absences and family demands, and how they cope with conflicts arising from work-related travel. Furthermore, single parent travellers are an unexplored group, and it would be worthwhile studying how they cope with the challenges of work involving international business travel, and how the strains related to travel differ from those experienced by a traveller with a spouse.

More over there is lack of attention to same-sex couples and their experiences. Same sex couples may experience similar conflict between work and family, but they also face challenges associated to their sexual orientation. Therefore further research should paid attention on IBTs in same-sex relationships.

The varying strengths and weaknesses of people at different ages should be part of the equation when work with travelling is planned. Different age groups might experience travel differently. For example, younger travellers may struggle with childcare issues while senior travellers might need to take care of elderly parents. The enriching experiences might also be different among people of different ages. Therefore, age as an influencing factor should be taken into consideration in future research.

Travellers do not usually get much assistance from their employers, instead they are often left quite alone to manage the negative effects of travel (Mayerhofer et al. 2004). Research on the connection between workplace factors and WFC would be welcome, as would research reviewing work-life balance policies and practices, and organisational support. The last research area might encompass suggesting policies management might enact to support travelling staff in adjusting to travelling, to

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maintaining the balance between work and family, to reducing WFC, and coping with the expectations of work and family.

The quantitative research tradition is strong in IBT studies (Demel and Mayrhofer 2010; Mayerhofer et al. 2010; Mayerhofer et al. 2011). The quantitative perspective has often concentrated on the consequences of travel stress (e.g. DeFrank et al. 2000) or medical claims (Dimberg et al. 2002; Liese et al. 1997). More qualitative research could increase our understanding of individuals' experiences and discover underlying reasons for international business travel causing conflicts between work and family. Further research could also examine how the families of international business travellers are affected by the absence of the IBT.

It might be beneficial if other forms of research, such as longitudinal research designs, were employed to examine the international business travel context. A longitudinal study could, for instance, focus on the question of the influence of international business travel at the family level before, during and after a business trip (Westman et al. 2008a). It would also be interesting and worthwhile to study the influence of the career stage of the traveller on the experience of the work-family interaction. The experience may well change as a career progresses, and it would be interesting to study the differing perceptions of travellers in the early stages of their careers and those of experienced business travellers.

The reviewed literature confirms international business travel affects not only the traveller but also the families of IBTs. Understanding the impact of travel at the family level is important in order to enhance the traveller's well-being and efficiency, but there remains a lack of systematic theoretical and empirical research on the issue. It is hoped that this review clarifies the current state of the knowledge on the work-family interface of IBTs, and also serves to direct scholars towards new avenues of research.

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Work-family conflict faced by international business travelers: Do gender and parental status make a difference?

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to examine the direct and moderating effect of gender and parental status on the relationship between international business travel days and work-to-family conflict (WFC) among international business travellers (IBTs) on the basis of the conservation of resources theory.

Design/methodology/approach – The study was conducted among 1,366 Finnish people in jobs demanding international business travel and a moderated hierarchical regression was utilised in data analysis.

Findings – An increase in the number of international business travel days and being a parent is positively related to WFC. Women with dependent children experience a lower level of WFC than do men with dependent children. However, a significant interaction effect between international business travel days, parental status and gender was found that indicates that the volume of travel days increases the level of WFC for those women who have children more than it does for women who do not have children. For men, increased numbers of travel days raises levels of WFC, as does having children, but there is no interaction between travel days and parental status among men. An increased number of travel days was least critical for WFC among women without dependent children and most critical for WFC among women with dependent children However, women with dependent children were able to travel to a considerable extent before their levels of WFC overtook those of men with dependent children.

Practical implications – The findings indicate that organisations should pay particular attention to developing policies and practices that take account of the family status of the traveller. In addition, to assist IBTs to cope with their WFC, attention should be paid to the intensity of work-related travel. However, gender seemed not to play a particularly important role in WFC, indicating that organisations need not be wary of recruiting both men and women into roles involving international business travel.

Originality/value – This is the first study focusing on IBTs WFC that simultaneously takes account of how the intensity of business travel and both gender and parenthood are related to it.

Keywords Gender, Work-family conflict, International business travellers, Parenthood

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

International work is an important aspect of the majority of professional positions in companies, and that requires a global mobility of employees that takes many forms in modern organisations. In addition to being a feature of traditional long-term expatriation, mobility is necessary to many shorter-term assignments such as virtual, commuter and project assignments, and also to international business travel (Suutari et al., 2013; Tahvanainen et al., 2005). International business travel is obviously the most common form of international mobility, albeit expatriation assignments have clearly received far more research attention than it has. The importance of international travel is increasing further (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2010) as transportation and communication systems enable employees to keep in touch and work more easily around the world, making longer-term relocation less necessary. At the same time, increased integration aims within MNCs increase the use of international teams, projects and management groups that in turn require international travel. Similarly, markets and customers are increasingly global, which increases the need for international marketing efforts that often involve international travel. Despite such developments, research focusing on international business travellers (IBTs) remains very limited.

To date, most research on IBTs has emerged from the field of travel medicine (Patel, 2011) or has focused on the psychological health of the target group (Jensen, 2013; Westman and Etzion, 2002; Westman et al., 2004). Several health-related problems (e.g. infections) are reported to be common among international workers (Patel, 2011) and earlier studies have shown that travel for work may cause psychological stress, strain and related outcomes, for instance, burnout (Jensen, 2013; Westman and Etzion, 2002; Westman et al., 2004) and sleep problems, the last relationship mediated by work-to-family conflict (WFC) (Mäkelä et al., 2014). In addition, travelling can have effects other than heightening stress for the employee, as it may also provide respite from daily routines (Westman et al., 2008).

Existing research on international employees in general and IBTs specifically (Mäkelä and Suutari, 2011), has shown that jobs involving global mobility affect

their private and family lives. To the best of our knowledge, there is little empirical research on the conflict between IBTs' work and family/private life (Jensen, 2013; Mäkelä et al., 2014, 2015; Westman et al., 2008). These issues are however very important in the context of the globalised work environment and work involving irregular working hours and long absences from home (Meurs et al., 2008; Schütter and Boerner, 2013).

Despite the scarcity of research focusing on the interface of IBTs' work and family life, these issues have been widely studied in domestic career settings. Research focusing on negative work-family interactions has mainly been based on role stress theory and the scarcity approach to multiple roles (see for a review Kinnunen et al., 2014). In essence, the various roles people have in modern societies, for instance as employees, parents or spouses, have been found to cause conflicting role expectations and pressures that can generate psychological conflict. In addition, time and energy are limited individual resources and the competing demands of the work and family spheres, may diminish those resources and create strain and stress for the individual (Eby et al., 2005). The interaction between the two life spheres is bi-directional (i.e. working life can affect family and family can affect working life) and the effect can be either positive or negative (Kinnunen et al., 2014). However, earlier studies have reported that effects flowing from the work domain to the family domain are more commonly reported than conflict spreading from the family to the work domain (e.g. Frone, 2003; Kinnunen and Mauno, 1998).

Studies have provided mixed evidence on how the interface between work and family differs between women and men (e.g. Duxbury et al., 1994; Frone et al., 1992). For instance, there is evidence that WFC has become more common especially among men and parents (Nomaguchi, 2009) and that parenthood is related to a higher level of WFC especially among women (Duxbury et al., 1994). When studying WFC in the context of international work, gender and parenthood are relevant because earlier literature has described international work as a male dominated and highly gendered phenomenon (Gripenberg et al., 2013; Hearn et al., 2008). There are only a few studies focusing on the interface between IBTs' work and private lives, but they do offer evidence that highly intensive travelling increases the risk of WFC (Jensen, 2013; Mäkelä et al., 2014, 2015). It has also been reported that experiences of WFC may be dependent on gender (Westman et al., 2008) but there are also findings suggesting gender does not predict WFC (Jensen, 2013), or more general work-life conflict among IBTs (Mäkelä et al., 2014b). Furthermore, parental responsibility may increase the risk of WFC among business travellers in general (Jensen, 2013), a group that includes domestic travellers and commuters alongside IBTs. However, there is a scarcity of research studying how parental status and gender (fathers, mothers and non-parent

females and males) are related to WFC among IBTs and therefore more research is warranted.

In light of the above, the aim of this study is to examine the direct and moderating effect of gender and parental status on the relationship between the intensity of international business travel and WFC among IBTs. Therefore, this study contributes by providing new knowledge concerning how the level of WFC is affected by the number of travel days, together with care responsibilities, and how this relationship differs between men and women. We have selected the essential variables for this study based mainly on the earlier literature concerning WFC in the international work context and theoretically our study is based on the conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 2001, 2002). COR theory has been shown to suit the study of WFC (Demerouti et al., 2004) and is also applied in the context of international business travel (Westman et al., 2008). However, this study contribute to COR theory by testing it in an occupational context in which it has been very rarely studied.

According to COR theory, individuals aim to gain, maintain and protect that which they value. These valued things are called resources and the actual or threatened loss of those resources leads to diminished well-being. Resources can include for instance, energy or time, or can be linked to personal characteristics (e.g. self-esteem) (Hobfoll, 2001). People possessing fewer resources will be more vulnerable to resource loss than those with greater resources. In addition, it has been shown that the more resources are available, the greater will be the opportunities to acquire new resources (Hobfoll, 2001).

The paper begins with by reviewing the literature on WFC in the context of international business travel, with a particular focus on the gender and parenthood perspectives. The methodology of the study is then explained and its empirical findings reported. We close our study with discussion and conclusions sections.

WFC, intensity of international business travel, gender and parenthood

WFC has been defined as: "a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect" (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). Earlier research has identified various antecedents for WFC and, for instance, found a demanding job to increase WFC (Kinnunen et al., 2014). In the present study, we focus on the intensity of business travel as a situation likely to decrease the time (resource) available for family life, and thus, in the line with COR theory, deplete resources and lead to increased WFC.

Work involving international travel means the traveller is frequently absent from home and this may generate family problems associated with the parent and/or spouse role (Mayerhofer et al., 2004; Mäkelä et al., 2012; Welch and Worm, 2006). People absent from home because they are travelling cannot fully participate in the everyday routines of the household and share family responsibilities. Being separated from one's family is likely to have negative effects on the work-family balance of IBTs (DeFrank et al., 2000).

In addition to the time IBTs spend away from home, their WFCs are typically related to irregular working hours and the requirement to be available around the clock even when they are not travelling (Mäkelä et al., 2012). Work tasks involving frequent travel typically absorb a great deal of the time and energy of IBTs, and therefore it may be an issue for the traveller to spend enough time with their family or to participate in social activities (Shaffer et al., 2012). Strain, such as fatigue caused by frequent travel may generate considerable stress, and therefore negatively affect the family life of IBTs.

Although it is obvious that IBTs' work is likely to affect their personal lives, there are only a few quantitative studies that have focused on WFC (or the closely related concept of WLC) and they have reported that the intensity of business travel increases the risk of WFC (Jensen, 2013; Mäkelä et al., 2014b).

Based on the above, we hypothesise:

> *H1*. An increase in the number of international business travel days logged over the previous 12 months will be positively related to WFC.

Next, we next turn our attention to those studies documenting instances of WFC from the gender perspective that are relevant in the context of international business travel.

WFC and gender

Earlier literature examined the role of gender on WFC in studies conducted in domestic career settings, but the findings are not unanimous. In the context of COR theory, it is likely that WFC is at a higher level among men than it is among women because men typically spend more time at work (see e.g. Statistics Sweden, 2007), resulting in a loss of resources. It has also been shown that men experience WFC slightly more than women (Byron, 2005 meta-analysis), but there are also recent studies that support the view that women are more vulnerable to WFC than men (Leineweber et al., 2013). In addition, some research reports no differences between the WFC experience of men and women (Kinnunen et al., 2004). Others indicate that the cultural context and the related concept of gender equality does affect how men and women experience WFC in different ways: greater gender

equality has been found to lead either to a situation in which experiences do not differ between the sexes or to men experiencing greater WFC than women (Ruppanner and Huffman, 2013).

Earlier studies focusing on the interface between IBTs' work and private lives and involving a gender perspective have reported that WFC appeared to be slightly more common among women than among men (Westman et al., 2008). When work-to- personal life conflict among IBTs was studied (Mäkelä et al., 2014b), it was found that gender was not a significant predictor of WLC. In light of these mixed conclusions, more research is needed to verify the impact of gender on the level of WCF experienced by IBTs, and to analyse which factors might explain the diversity of the findings. As the review indicates, there are many conflicting empirical findings on the impacts of gender on the WFC experience both in domestic and international career settings. Owing to the inconsistent previous empirical findings we did not pose a hypothesis, but instead set the following research question:

> *RQ1.* Is there a difference in the level of WFC among male IBTs and female IBTs?

Apart from the direct impact of gender, we argue next that parenthood may affect the experience of WFC among IBTs.

WFC and parenthood

Having multiple roles can to some extent be beneficial, but having too many roles or roles that are too demanding may also make a person vulnerable to role overload or role conflict (Barnett and Hyde, 2001). Parental status, and in particular, having children living at home is likely to mean loss of resources (see, COR theory) such as time and energy and accordingly to increased WFC (Demerouti et al., 2004). Research has shown that demands related to family roles generally contribute to WFC (Beutell, 2010), and in particular that being a parent is related to higher levels of WFC (Duxbury et al., 1994; see for a review Eby et al., 2005; Frone, 2003; Winslow, 2005). It follows that besides looking at gender differences in general, it may be important to take into account the situation of travellers to determine if parenthood and the family can alter their experiences of WLC.

In the context of international business travel, parenthood affects the intensity of travel, in that business travellers with young children travel less than those without children (Gustafson, 2006). In that way, travellers and/or organisations seem to consider the family situation when planning work-related travel. It has also been found that being a parent increases the risk of WFC among travellers (Jensen, 2013; Nicholas and McDowall, 2012) while no such relationship was identified

between parental status and general work-life conflict (a term embracing parts of the personal life other than family) among IBTs (Mäkelä et al., 2014b). In addition, it has been found that one important reason behind the travel stress experienced by IBTs is that they worry how their travelling affects their family (Striker et al., 1999), and it is likely that this finding may also support the view that parenthood increases WFC among IBTs. Therefore, the following hypothesis was formed:

H2. WFC will be greater among parents than among non-parents.

WFC and interaction between the intensity of travel, gender and parental status

Although earlier studies focusing on IBTs have not yet provided empirical evidence on how experiences of WFC vary if the intensity of business travel and both gender and parental status are considered at the same time (i.e. the three-way interaction: intensity of travelling × gender × parental status), some findings from earlier research on other travellers may be relevant. Earlier studies have shown that men typically travel more than women (Bergström Casinowsky, 2013; Roehling and Bultman, 2002) and are quick to delegate their share of the domestic tasks to their wives when they travel. However, female travellers are found to take an active role in organising the "traditional female tasks" even as they travel (Kollinger-Santer and Fischlmayr, 2013). In line with this, the relative share of domestic responsibility is very similar among women who travel for work and non-travelling women, despite female travellers having less time available at home (Bergström Casinowsky, 2013). When considering the intensity of travel and gender, we may assume that increased travelling days is a more critical factor for women than for men because the basic assumption of COR theory is that if losses of resources accumulate, there is an increased risk of stress. It would seem therefore that for women the loss of resources, along with the time and energy spent on travel and on domestic work, puts them at greater risk of WFC compared to men, who are quicker to delegate their domestic tasks when they travel.

Again following the COR theory, it is likely that for people who have children living at home, any increase in travelling days is more critical, because of the increased loss of resources, than it would be for those who do not have dependent children. Furthermore, when considering WFC among men and women with and without dependent children, we have earlier studies showing that mothers and fathers experience WFCs differently. For instance, it has been found that mothers more often report conflicts between their family life and their working life than fathers do (Dilworth, 2004; Toivanen and Bergbom, 2013) and men's WFC is not significantly associated with paternal involvement with children (Jacobs and Gerson, 2004). This leads us to conclude that women with dependent children may be more vulnerable to WFC than men with children, or indeed men and women without children living at home.

Intensity of travelling may also affect WFC differently when gender and parental status are taken into account even though earlier empirical studies have not apparently focused on that question. So far it has only been shown that the intensity of travel may vary among men and women, and that parental status is one of the elements affecting it. Mothers are found to travel less than childless women do, but being a father has not been found to make a difference in the intensity of travel among men (Gustafson, 2006; Roehling and Bultman, 2002). Therefore, we assume that particularly for women with dependent children who travel frequently are at greater risk of enhanced WFC.

These findings suggest that gender and parental status may moderate the relationship between travel intensity and WFC, and we therefore hypothesise:

> *H3*. An increase in the intensity of travel (the number of travel days in the previous 12 months) shows a stronger positive association with WFC among women who have children living at home compared to other IBTs (men with dependent children/women and men without dependent children).

Methodology

Sample

Procedure and respondents. The data (n ¼ 1,366) were collected in the course of a larger research project entitled "International work-related travel and its effects on the health and well-being of workers" conducted by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. The data were collected between 2008 and 2009 through electronic surveys of employees in five organisations operating internationally. The four private organisations operated in the ICT, automation, developing and consulting business sectors. The fifth organisation was a public organisation operating internationally. In three of the five organisations, 1,333 (56 per cent) employees answered a survey sent to 2,382 employees. In one of those three organisations, the questionnaire was sent to all employees who had logged at least one day of international travel in the preceding year, and also to a smaller number of employees who had not travelled during that time. In two of the three organisations, the questionnaire was sent to employees chosen at random from among those who had spent at least one day travelling in the preceding year or half year. In addition, the questionnaire was sent to a smaller number of employees in both organisations who had not logged any travel days during the past year. In the remaining two organisations of the five, 192 people agreed to participate and eventually 183 of those (95 per cent) completed the survey. Therefore, 1,516 employees completed the survey in total. For this particular study, we excluded

those employees who reported no travel days from the sample in order to focus only on the experiences of IBTs. In addition, three employees were excluded from the sample as outliers because they reported too many travel days (300-365 per year). Taking these issues into account, the final sample of the study consists of 1,366 employees.

The sample was male dominated (72 per cent). Of our participants, 87 per cent of the men and 68 per cent of the women were married or cohabiting. On average they had 2.0 children living at home (SD ¼ 0.86). Of the males, 63 per cent had children, whereas only 50 per cent of female travellers had children (statistically significant difference, p00.001). The participants' mean age was 42.3 years (SD ¼ 8.74). They had been working in their organisation for an average of 11.4 years (SD ¼ 8.04) and in their current job requiring international travel for 5.8 years (SD ¼ 5.98). The participants included 29 per cent who held a supervisory position.

Measures

Intensity of international business travel, that is, the number of travel days during the previous 12 months, was measured through the question: "Estimate how many days you have spent on international business trips in the past 12 months". This measure reflects the total duration of travel per year. The number of travel days reported during the previous 12 months varied between one and 250.

Gender was measured as a binary variable, where 0 ¼ male and 1 ¼ female.

Parental responsibility was measured by asking whether the employee had children living at home (a binary variable, where 1 ¼ yes and 0 ¼ no).

WFC was measured by three items (e.g. My work keeps me from my family activities more than I would like). The items were adopted from the scale of Carlson et al. (2000) and were rated on a five-point Likert scale anchored with completely disagree (1) and completely agree (5). The Cronbach α for the WFC scale (range 1-5) was 0.88.

Controls: age and marital status (a binary variable, where 1 ¼ married or cohabiting and 0 ¼ single) were also controlled for since those may affect WFC.

Results

Descriptive results

Means, standard deviations and correlations between study variables are presented in Table I. Overall, the level of WFC was moderate, averaging 2.9. The intercorrelations showed, first, that the number of travel days during the previous

12 months (on average 42 days) was positively related to WFC. Gender was also related to WFC, that is, being a female related negatively to WFC. Similarly, not being a parent related negatively to WFC. Our control variables were not significantly related to WFC. In addition, men travelled for significantly (p ¼ 0.000) more days (mean ¼ 46.7; SD ¼ 39.8) than women did (mean ¼ 31.4, SD ¼ 30.0) within a year. They also made more trips within a year (mean ¼ 10.3, SD ¼ 9.3 for men and for women ¼ 7.9, SD ¼ 7.0, p ¼ 0.000).

Table I. Means, standard deviations and correlations of the study variables

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Age	42.3	8.7					
2. Marital status	–	–	0.58*				
3. Travel days in past 12 months	42.4	37.9	0.041	−0.00			
4. Gender (1 = *f*)	–	–	−0.08*	−0.22**	−0.18**		
5. Parental status	–	–	0.06*	0.36**	0.08*	−0.12**	
6. Work-family conflict	2.9	1.1	−00	0.04	0.38**	−0.15**	14**

Notes: $n = 1{,}146\text{-}1{,}366$. *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$

Testing the research hypotheses

A moderated linear hierarchical regression analysis was used to test research and RQ1 with the following procedure: first, control variables were entered in step one to control for their effects; second, gender, parental status and number of international business travel days were entered in step two; third, the two-way interaction terms of the study variables were entered in step three; and then, the three-way interaction term of the study variables was entered in step four.

The intensity of travelling (travel days during the previous 12 months) was significantly related to WFC (see Table II). Thus, H1 was supported, because the longer the trips lasted the higher the level of WFC. The answer to our RQ1 was that there was no difference in the level of WFC among male and female IBTs as we did not find a significant relationship between gender and WFC. WFC was, however, explained by parental status; those with children having a higher level of WFC than those without children, thus supporting H2. The interaction term between gender and parental status made a significant contribution to the explained variance (p ¼ 0.004) and showed that mothers experienced a lower level (β ¼ −0.180) of WFC than fathers. The three-way interaction term (β ¼ 0.099) made a significant contribution to the explained variance (p ¼ 0.049) and indicated that travel days had a significant impact on the level of WFC for women with children, supporting H3.

Table II. Results of hierarchical regression analyses for WFC

	WFC ($n = 1{,}253$) β	ΔR^2	R^2
Step 1: controls		0.001	0.00
Intercept	2.397***		
Age	−0.021		
Spouse (yes)	−0.008		
Step 2: study variables		0.181***	0.18
Gender (female)	0.069		
Children (Yes)	0.181***		
Travel days	0.374***		
Step 3: two-way interactions of study variables		0.005*	0.19
Gender × children	−0.180**		
Gender × travel days	−0.089		
Children × travel days	0.030		
Step 4: three-way interactions of study variables		0.003*	0.19
Gender × children × travel days	0.099*		

Notes: β, standardised β-coefficient from the final step; ΔR^2, change in explanation rate in each step; R^2, explanation rate
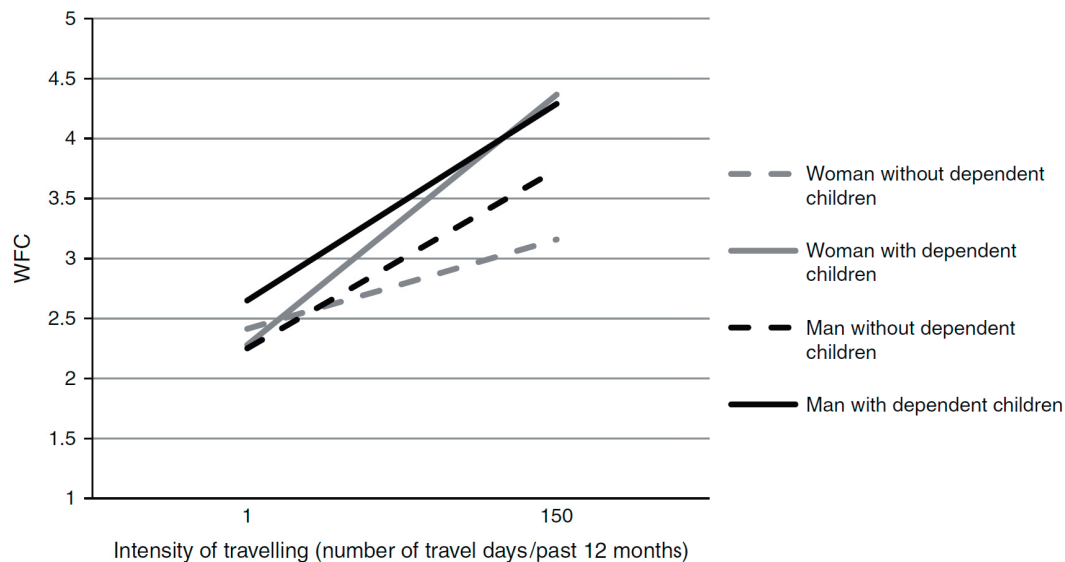
Notes: Control variables in the model are evaluated at the following values: age = 42.3 (mean age), marital status = married or cohabiting

Figure 1. The effects of intensity of travelling, gender and parental status on WFC

Figure 1 illustrates the interaction effect of gender, parental status and intensity of travel on WFC (fewer than 2 per cent of participants logged more than 150 travel days and were consequently omitted from the figure). It is evident that the increase in intensity of travel was most critical for those women with dependent children, and the effect was weakest for those women without dependent children. Increases in the number of travel days increased the level of WFC in a similar way both for men with children and those without children; however, men with dependent children had higher levels of WFC.

We also controlled for the effects of age and marital status among IBTs, and found neither to be related to WFC. This model explained 19 per cent of the variance in WFC.

Discussion and conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine the direct and moderating effect of gender and parental status in the relationship between international business travel days and WFC among IBTs. By studying all three variables and their interaction effects, the current research contributes to the field of global mobility by not only looking for the differences in WFC between gender or the effects of care responsibilities but also in that it provides new knowledge concerning how the level of WFC is affected by the number of travel days, together with care responsibilities, and how this relationship differs between men and women. We have conducted our study with the help of COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001, 2002) and we also contribute to COR theory by testing it in a new occupational context. Specifically, this study contributes to existing literature on global mobility, first, by providing evidence that in line with COR theory being at risk of losing a considerable volume of their available resources might increase WFC among IBTs. Furthermore, our study shows that a high intensity of international business travel days, and being a woman with dependent children, have the greatest impact on WFC for IBTs. However, it is worth mentioning that women without dependent children were at the lowest risk of WFC. Women with dependent children were able to travel quite extensively before their level of WFC overtook that of men with dependent children (see Figure 1). Therefore, our study challenges the myths and stereotypes related to women's ability to do international jobs.

Second, our study adds to the knowledge of WFC by showing that functioning in the complex international work environment (typified here by international business travel days) increases the risk of WFC in line with COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001, 2002). However, the factors responsible for consuming work-related resources might work differently for different people, and therefore individual level risk factors merit attention. In sum, our main hypothesis (H3) proposing that

an increase in the intensity of travel shows a stronger positive association with WFC among women who have dependent children than for other IBTs was supported.

Furthermore, our first hypothesis (H1), suggesting that an increase in the intensity of international business travel would be positively related to WFC was supported. This finding is in line with previous studies (Jensen, 2013; Mäkelä et al., 2014, 2015; Westman et al., 2008) and confirms that time spent away from home and family constitutes the loss of important resources that has negative outcomes; among IBTs one such outcome is an increase in WFC. In this study, the intensity of business travel was approached as a continuum of travel days, but future studies should also focus specifically on how different kinds of travelling affect WFC. For instance, is there a difference in WFC if one is travelling five times per year but staying away for 14 days or travelling twice a month but staying away for three days?

We also posed one research question in this study (RQ1) focusing on whether the gender of the IBT is related to WFC and we did not find gender to be related to WFC. This finding may have been affected by the Finnish cultural context in which this study was conducted. According to the Gender Inequality Index (United Nations Development Programme, 2014) gender equality is at a very high level in Finland, and earlier studies have shown that greater gender equality leads either to a situation in which experiences do not differ between the sexes, or indicates that men experience greater WFC than women (Ruppanner and Huffman, 2013). In the context of international business travel, it has been suggested that men might experience higher levels of WFC than women because the intensity of travel for men is typically higher than for women (Gustafson, 2006). In our study, the interaction term between travel days and gender did not significantly contribute to WFC, indicating that this proposition may be accurate. However, it is worth mentioning that in our sample, men travelled significantly more than women did. This finding may reflect gender differences in travellers' willingness to accept frequent travel and those choices may in turn affect their WFC experiences. However, in the face of so many conflicting findings on the impact of gender on WFC experiences, future research should aim to elicit the reasons, and to control for other possible intervening factors such as the travellers' personalities, job situations or the industries they work in, to account for the fact some jobs and industries are more male dominated and others more female dominated.

Consistent with our second hypothesis (H2), parents experienced higher levels of WFC than those travellers who did not have children living at home. This finding is line with earlier literature (Duxbury et al., 1994; Frone, 2003; Winslow, 2005; see for a review Eby et al., 2005) with the focus on domestic career settings and on

the international career context (Jensen, 2013; Nicholas and McDowall, 2012) and supports the view that undertaking several roles brings psychological pressures, and in the IBT context, increases the risk of WFC, a finding supporting COR theory.

Moreover, the interaction term between gender and parental status showed that mothers experienced lower levels (β ¼ −0.180) of WFC than fathers, but as shown above, taking into account the number of travel days (the three-way interaction) revealed that WFC was highest among women with dependent children compared to other IBTs. This finding indicates that parenthood appears to have a different effect on the WFC experiences of male and female IBTs required to undertake high or low intensity business travel. The results show that for women without dependent children, an increase in travel days does not exert as strong an effect on their WFC as is the case for other types of traveller. This finding may reflect the social expectations of an IBT's partner. Literature has shown that women in responsible jobs more often have a career- oriented partner than their male counterparts do (Heikkinen et al., 2014), and this may lead to the women having less responsibility for the care of children, and the career- oriented partner of the female IBT having a reduced expectation that she will be at home, which may considerably reduce the WFC experienced. On the other hand, male IBTs may accordingly more often have a partner who is more family than career oriented, and therefore report their female partners as reacting more negatively to the absence of the male partner, leading to the men experiencing higher levels of WFC when they cannot meet the expectations of their partner. To better capture this phenomenon, future studies should take account of the employment situation of the partners of IBTs. Example indicators might include weekly working hours, organisational position and his/her commitment to the job.

It is important to note some limitations of the current study. First, our sample was based on self-reports, so common method variance may have affected our findings. It has also been argued that it is an oversimplification to assume that common method variance automatically affects variables measured with the same method (Spector, 2006). Nevertheless, future studies might use several sources of data, perhaps including the family of IBTs. Second, the cross-sectional design of our study precludes causal conclusions on the associations found. Reversed causality can thus not be excluded. For instance, it could be that those experiencing more WFC were taking more business trips. Thus longitudinal studies that could shed light on the causal relations are needed. Moreover studies, utilising different methodologies, such as diaries, would be worthwhile in the future.

We can also derive some practical implications from our research findings. The results of this study support the view that intensive international travel is associated with WFCs, in particular when the length of the trips increases. Such

implications should be taken into account in travel planning in order to avoid both personal and family-level negative impacts to whatever extent is possible. Moreover, even though women with dependent children experience more WFC than other travellers when the intensity of travel is high, organisations apparently need not be so wary of appointing women to positions requiring business travel unless the intensity of travel is extremely high. In addition, it is important to develop general HR practices and policies that offer the opportunity to balance working and family lives, and especially those taking account of the family status of the traveller.

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Stretching the borders: how international business travel affects the work–family balance

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the consequences of international business travel for the balance between work–family domains by exploring how international business travellers and travellers' partners manage the boundaries between work and family in order to maintain the balance. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was used in analysing the semi-structured interviews of 10 male travellers and 10 partners. Because of its irregular nature, international business travel affects the personal life and the family of business travellers. Work-related travel also has an impact on how travellers and their partners construct, manage and negotiate borders between work and family in order to avoid an imbalance between these domains. Integration of work and family is usually inevitable in international business traveler families. Integration may lead to role blurring and thus lead to imbalance.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude examine les conséquences de voyages d'affaires internationaux sur l'équilibre entre les sphères professionnelles et familiales en étudiant comment les voyageurs d'affaires et leurs conjoints gèrent les frontières entre travail et famille afin de maintenir un équilibre. Une analyse interprétative phénoménologique a été utilisée pour analyser des entretiens semi-directifs de dix voyageurs masculins et de dix conjoints. En raison de leur nature irrégulière, les voyages d'affaires internationaux affectent la vie personnelle et la famille des voyageurs d'affaires. Les voyages liés au travail ont aussi un impact sur la façon dont les voyageurs et leurs conjoints bâtissent, gèrent et négocient les frontières entre travail et famille afin d'éviter un déséquilibre entre ces sphères. L'intégration entre travail et famille est en général inévitable pour les familles de voyageurs d'affaires. L'intégration peut mener à un brouillement des rôles et ainsi à du déséquilibre.

Introduction

As the world globalizes the number of people who travel abroad for work continues to rise. These people who operate in functions such as sales, control, performance monitoring and knowledge transfer play an important role in making processes more efficient when

companies are internationalizing (Welch, Welch, & Worm, 2007). Blurred boundaries between private and working life are typical aspects of international assignments (Harris, 2004; Harvey, 1986), and can indicate issues with maintaining a healthy balance between work and family life (Harris, 2004; Mäkelä & Suutari, 2011; Shaffer & Harrison, 2001). A related issue that can lead to similar challenges to the balance between work and family lives appears when careers involve international business travel (Bergbom, Vesala, Leppänen, Sainio, & Mukala, 2011; Mäkelä, Saarenpää, Suutari, & Wurtz, 2012; Nicholas & McDowall, 2012; Shaffer & Harrison, 2005; Welch et al., 2007). The irregular nature of work that involves international business travel leads to an imbalance, and creates a need to negotiate about domestic responsibilities, especially among couples with children at home. Work intrudes on the family lives of travellers, and it is this intrusion that often complicates maintaining a balance between family life and work with travel. Maintaining a balance between work and family does not necessarily mean equal time spent on each. Instead, balance is experienced when an individual manages to satisfy the needs of both oneself and those one is committed to support, which involves managing different roles and fields of life (Clark, 2001; Greenblatt, 2002).

The general work–family literature has long considered the degree to which individuals integrate work and family domains or segment work and family domains (i.e. keep work at work) as an important factor affecting the work–family balance (Kreiner, 2006; Nippert-Eng, 1996). Integration refers to weak boundaries between work and family, and a blurring of work and family roles, whereas the segmentation of work and family refers to weak boundaries and a separation of roles (Kossek, Noe, & DeMarr, 1999). According to Clark's (2000) border theory, integration and segmentation are means in which individuals manage the borders between work and family. Individuals can to some extent control the borders between work and family, and the aim of the managing the work and family spheres and negotiating the borders between them is to attain balance (Clark, 2000, p. 750). The healthy balance between work and family will vary for each individual, and the feeling of balance will depend on how individuals manage to divide time and resources between work and family, and separate or integrate work and family in a way specifically suitable to themselves (Clark, 2002).

Only one study on international business travelers (IBTs) utilizing border theory was found. That study suggests that the irregular nature of business travel renders it impossible to establish a clear division between 'work-time' owned by an employer and 'leisure time' owned by a traveller (Nicholas & McDowall, 2012). Work with international business travel is time consuming, travelling might often be irregular but frequent and the traveller might have either just returned from, or just about to be embarking upon a trip. Health and safety concerns as well as jet lag are other fairly typical and stressful factors related to international business travel (Gustafson, 2013). Therefore, it can be considered that IBT's work–family borders are shaped in two distinct situations: when the traveller is at home (not travelling) and when he/she is on a business trip.

Because being on a business trip means being absent from home, travel presumably has an influence on the traveller's partner, and therefore a traveller's whereabouts affects how travellers and partners segment or integrate their work and their family, and how work–family borders are constructed so as to maintain a balance between work and family life. Nicholas and McDowall (2012) refer to work/family border theory when they argue that work involving travel necessitates crossing the borders between

work and family, and both travellers and their spouses need to compromise to maintain a balance between work and family. However, in their study only travellers were interviewed and the important perspective given by IBTs spouses were lacking.

It is acknowledged that work and family are interconnected (Clark, 2000), and that work with international travel complicates the maintenance of a balance between work and family life (Bergbom et al., 2011). Surprisingly, with the exception of Nicholas and McDowall's (2012) study that takes borders between life spheres into account, research on the integration or segmentation of work and family in the case of IBTs is non-existent. The same can be said for research on how IBTs' manage the boundaries between work and family. In light of the above, the present study aims to increase our understanding of what kind of consequences international business travel has for work–family balance, and to explore how international business travellers and their partners manage the boundaries between work and family in order to maintain a work–family balance.

Borders between work and family

Segmentation and integration are seen as ways through which individuals manage boundaries between work and family (Bulger, Matthews, & Hoffman, 2007). The segmentation–integration perspective is based on the boundary (Nippert-Eng, 1996) and work–family border theories (Clark, 2000), according to which people construct both mental and physical boundaries between working life and personal life to help simplify and order their work and family environments. Borders constructed between work and family can be physical, temporal or psychological (Clark, 2000). Physical borders mean concrete areas where the domain-relevant behaviour takes place, that is, in individuals' workplaces and homes. Temporal borders relate to working hours and divide the time available for work and family. Psychological borders refer to the rules individuals create that relate to thinking and behavioural patterns at work and at home.

Borders between work and family can be analysed through how flexible and permeable those are (Clark, 2000). *Flexibility* denotes the pliability of borders between domains, i.e. the degree to which the spatial and temporal boundaries are pliable (Hall & Richter, 1988). *Permeability* refers to the degree to which a boundary allows psychological or behavioural elements from other domains to enter the other (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Clark, 2000). For example, a border is *flexible* if individuals are free to choose hours they work or can work in any location they choose (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000, 2002). A border is *permeable*, for instance, if an individual is contacted by a family member while at work, or by, for example, the supervisor outside of working hours (Bulger et al., 2007; Clark, 2000, 2002).

Some people desire to keep the different areas of life as separate as possible, and boundaries are very strong (Clark, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996). For others, the boundaries are not so strong, and different areas of life are more integrated with each other. The amount of permeability and flexibility in the work and family domains determine how strong the border is. The border is strong if it is inflexible and impenetrable, and does not allow the domains to blend into each other. In contrast, if there is a great deal of blending, and the border is open to influence, it is weak (Clark, 2000; Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009). The strength of the border can vary by direction, that is to say, the border can be weaker from the work-to-family side, or the family-to-work side. For example, a person

might work extra hours but be unable to allocate some working hours to address family affairs. Border strength has been found to be related to work and personal life balance (Clark, 2000).

Furthermore, people can roughly be divided into *segmenters* or *integrators* according to the degree to which aspects of work and family are kept separate (Casper, De Hauw, & Wayne, 2013; Kreiner, 2006). Segmenters are people who create physical, cognitive or behavioural boundaries to keep work and family as separate as possible (Casper et al., 2013; Nippert-Eng, 1996), whereas integrators work to integrate elements of work and family. For them, there are no clear boundaries between work and home, and boundaries are either non-existent or very permeable (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kreiner, 2006). Neither segmentation nor integration can be considered to contribute to the work–family balance more than the other does. Segmenting work and family may help maintain a clarity and balance between the different domains (Ashforth et al., 2000), but both integration and segmentation have their advantages, and an individual can create synergy between work and family life (Clark, 2000; Rothbard, Phillips, & Dumas, 2005).

The segmentation–integration continuum in the context of international business travellers has not been thoroughly explored, although some research has touched on the subject (Nicholas & McDowall, 2012) or expressed the need for studies on it (Westman, Etzion, & Gattenio, 2008). In the following section the relevant literature on the consequences of international business travel is briefly reviewed.

Previous literature concerning international business travellers

Work requiring international business travel places a strain on the travellers, and also presents a challenge for travellers in terms of maintaining a balance between work and other areas of life (Dimberg et al., 2002; Mayerhofer, Hartmann, & Herbert, 2004; Nicholas & McDowall, 2012). The family situation of travellers seems to be one major reason behind work–family conflict experiences (Gustafson, 2006). Business travel is more stressful for travellers with families, especially for those with young children (Espino, Sundstrom, Frick, Jacobs, & Peters, 2002). Factors which create stress and conflict for travellers with families may be the advent of competing roles (parent, spouse, employee) (Roehling & Bultman, 2002; Stewart & Donald, 2006); role blurring (Glavin & Schieman, 2012); and also role confusion associated with separations and reunions which forces family members to make continual realignments (Orthner & Roderick, 2009). Moreover, a traveller with a family is likely to be less willing to travel than a traveller living alone (Gustafson, 2006; Roehling & Bultman, 2002).

While there is no agreement on the ideal number, length or frequency of business trips, it has been found that the length of travel is positively related to work–life conflict (Mäkelä, Kinnunen, & Suutari, 2015). It has been suggested that more than 50 travel days per year has a considerable effect on family life (Hyrkkänen et al., 2011). Experiencing work–family conflict due to an increasing number of travel days is related to gender, and being a parent; a high intensity of travel days has been found to be positively related to work–family conflict for women with dependent children (Mäkelä, Bergbom, Saarenpää, & Suutari, 2015). Moreover, it has been shown that reducing the number of travel days does not in itself diminish work–family conflict. Instead, the extent to which travellers have control over their trips is one of the primary factors associated with stress for

people who travel frequently on business, and contributes to the reduction in work–family conflict (Jensen, 2013; Vartiainen, Lönnblad, Balk, & Jalonen, 2005). The flipside of career options offering freedom, and the possibility of modifying work–family borders, is that they may provoke more role blending (Glavin & Schieman, 2012).

As stated above, work-related travel is typically both stressful and time consuming for the traveller (Dimberg et al., 2002). People often work under considerable pressure and find it impossible to meet their responsibilities in standard working hours. The result is increased boundary permeability, and consequently a blurring of work and family roles (Glavin & Schieman, 2012). Travel-related stress is not limited only to the period when the traveller is on a trip, but has an affect both before and after it (DeFrank, Konopaske, & Ivancevich, 2000). There is also evidence that experiences of work–family conflict differ to some extent according to the traveller's gender (Westman, Etzion, & Gortler, 2004), in that male IBTs work–family conflict is not dependent on the phase of the trip. Female IBTs' work–family conflict is lowest when on the trip and higher in the pre-trip and post-trip phases.

It has been shown that business travel has negative consequences for the partners of travellers. The absence from home due to travel challenges both IBTs and their spouses to manage work commitments and family demands (Stewart & Donald, 2006). In addition, the spill-over of travel-related stress from traveller to partner affects the partner's psychological and physical health (Dimberg et al., 2002). There is also evidence that spouses who experience frequent travel-related separation are at greater risk of poor psychological well-being than spouses generally (Orthner & Roderick, 2009). On the whole, business travel demands extra flexibility from the traveller's partner, especially in dual-career families (Bergbom et al., 2011). Previous research has identified that prioritizing travellers' work can predispose spouses to experience family-to-work conflict (Nicholas & McDowall, 2012).

Although there is evidence that experience of work–family balance may vary depending on the phase of the trip or the traveller's gender (Westman & Etzion, 2002; Westman et al., 2004), and that individuals aim to secure balance through the management and negotiation of borders between work and family spheres, no studies were found exploring this phenomena in depth.

Methodology and analysis

The current research adopts a qualitative research design based on semi-structured interviews. The sample comprised 20 interviews conducted with 10 Finnish employees of 3 large Finnish industrial companies who frequently travel abroad as a part of their jobs. In addition, 10 interviews were conducted with their spouses. The couples were interviewed separately. Mainly due to the nature of the companies, all the travellers interviewed were male. All the spouses of the travellers were women. The frequency of travel varied between 6 and 50 trips a year, and the total duration of days spent on business trips ranged between 30 days and 150 days. Half of the interviewed travellers went on mainly intercontinental trips, the other half travelled mainly within Europe. The respondents included engineers in different fields, managers and team leaders, a chief executive officer, a vice president of finance, and HR-IT experts.

The age of the travellers varied between 28 and 52, and the average age was 37. Nine of the interviewed couples were married, and one cohabited at the time of the interviews. Regardless of the marital status from this point onwards husband refers to male traveller and spouse to the partner of traveller. Six of the couples had children living at home. One had children who were already living independently, and three couples had no children. The ages of the spouses ranged between 29 and 43. None of the spouses were traditional housewives. At the time of the interviews three of them were on maternity leave and the remainder were working.

The travellers were first asked to supply background information, and about their family situations, and also about their travelling. Then they were asked about effects on their family related to travel, and their time management regarding the distribution of working time and family time. The spouses were interviewed about their experience of their partners' business travel. The interviews looked into spouses practices during the days when their partner was absent on a business trip, how they managed their work and family demands. The interviews with the business travellers lasted between 33 and 126 minutes and with their spouses between 19 and 50 minutes. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was selected as the method of analysis because it seeks to understand the individual's personal experience and relationship with a particular event, process or phenomenon (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The analysis process proceeds from specific observations to non-specifics, from the concrete to the more abstract, and gradually from a descriptive level to a more interpretative level. The first stage of the analysis focuses on finding themes. First, each transcript was read and re-read number of times and notes made in one margin of the transcript of anything of interest. The following stage involved revising the notes to form expressions encapsulating the essential content of the text in the other margin of the transcript (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

After analysing all the interviews in detail separately, the themes emerging and the connections and differences between them were extracted for observation. Finally the findings were examined in the light of previous research and existing theories (Smith, 2004, 2011; Smith et al., 2009). IPA does not strictly control the researcher; it can be seen as a flexible methodological framework offering guidelines for research (Smith & Osborn, 2003). The methodology fits in this current study because the aim is to investigate the actual experiences of international business travellers and their spouses of how business travel affects border management and the work–family balance. The results of analysis are provided next.

Results

Consequences of international business travel for work–family balance

In general, the need to stretch the boundaries between work and family life due to international business travel was found to influence maintaining a balance between work and family. There was an imbalance both when a traveller was on a business trip, and when traveller was at home, therefore it seems that an IBT's work has unbalancing characteristics. An imbalance between work and family produces negative outcomes that can be

divided into the mental and the practical. The former would include feelings of uncertainty, guilt or inadequacy; and the latter arguments between couples, a lack of personal time, difficulty with managing the demands of the job et cetera. It appeared that the negative interactions reported by spouses were more practical, whereas travellers experienced more mental interactions. Feelings of balance or imbalance between work and family were both individual and dependent on whether the traveller was on a trip or at home. The feeling of balance seemed to depend greatly on how much a traveller or spouse could manage her/his time and resources.

> It (the work–family balance) depends … every now and then you have it, and sometimes you don't. If I have a lot of travelling, there is of course more imbalance. When I have fewer trips there is more time to do things at home. (Traveller 33 years, one child)

Although while at home IBTs have more opportunity to participate in domestic life, they reported that frequent but irregularly occurring work-related absences made it difficult to follow everyday routines and look to the future. The awareness that a forthcoming trip would again interrupt the family's routine prompted feelings of uncertainty. Such uncertainty often necessitated impromptu childcare arrangements and often also interfered with the spouses' work. As regular travel forces travellers and their family members to live a more or less cyclical existence (based around its on-trip or at-home phases), travellers and spouses are forced to adjust their border management again and again according to the current situation. The interviewees reported the times when the borders were reformed (i.e. when the traveller leaves or returns) to be the most unbalancing, and the degree of imbalance peaked when the need to adjust borders arose suddenly, typically when there was little opportunity to schedule the business trip some time in advance.

> Particularly in those kinds of situations, when we have made plans with the family, and then the trip comes at short notice, and you have to cancel all those plans. You have to leave for a week and you had already made plans. It's extremely hard mentally, and in addition it causes practical difficulties. We have to arrange childcare, and all kinds of other things. It's not always so easy. (Traveller 39 years, three children)

Both travellers and spouses mentioned disagreements as a consequence of travelling work. One point of disagreement was the forthcoming business trip, which caused extra effort from traveller and bothered some of the spouses before the trip. During the post-trip phase, the tiredness or stress can easily spark an inability to adjust to family life and bouts of ill temper that can prompt quarrels.

> There are things you have to get done before the trip. All the planning, packing, and then at home I have to listen to the nagging of my wife more or less a week before the trip … (Traveller 32 years, two children)
> He is bad-tempered (after travel). I have learned to know that it is not because of me or the children, but it can be whatever. It is usually an insignificant issue that causes him to blow up. It is probably the stress. (Spouse 29 years, two children)

In the post-trip phase, adapting to home routines may be challenging for the traveller mainly because of fatigue; however, the spouses also described the difficulties they had adjusting to their husbands being at home. Although coping as a 'single parent' while their husbands travelled was considered to be challenging, particularly spouses whose husbands travelled frequently had developed routines to manage the time spent alone,

and had modified the boundaries between their working life and family life to maintain the balance. The reappearance of a spouse following a business trip can create a certain role confusion and a feeling of momentary loss of control for the partner whose routines are disrupted. This also relates to the change in boundaries, as mentioned above, IBTs work typically intrudes into their family lives, and thus has to be integrated into the whole family's life. In addition, after adjusting to the husband's presence, the next trip and another adjustment to being alone lies ahead.

> My feelings were somehow contradictory. I had to get used to running daily life; it was just a routine for me. Before long we were in a situation where my husband's presence almost bothered me. He didn't do things the way the kids and I had got used to. So, it's like someone just suddenly comes to your home and messes up the pattern. (Spouse 37 years, two children)

Finding balance by negotiating borders

Work with international travel was perceived as intruding into the family life of IBT's and stretching the boundaries between the life spheres of both IBTs themselves and their partners. Sometimes international business travel forced the participants to integrate or separate their different spheres of life even if they would have preferred to adopt the opposite boundary management tactic. It became evident that the participants in this study had to reassess their boundary management and the integration and segmentation of life spheres depending on whether the traveller was on a trip or at home. Specifically, during the on-trip phase, IBTs themselves reported how the segmentation of work and family life was inevitable because they were physically absent from family life. However, that is not to say that the IBTs did not think of their families when on a business trip. The spouses of the travellers needed to adapt their working hours for example, and work at home in the evenings when their partners were absent. In so doing they are adopting the boundary management choice according to the demands imposed by their partners' travel. Any examination of the borders between work and the family of IBT's, must consider two different situations: when the traveller is at home and when he or she is on a trip.

On-trip phase

During the on-trip phase, a traveller can be on another continent and in another time zone, thus distance constructs a very clear physical border between travellers' work and their family. For the traveller, the border is strong between work and family in both directions, but it is stronger in the work-to-family direction. The evident practical effect of travel is separation from the family, which might involve travellers missing family occasions and not being able to participate in everyday events. In addition to the tangible consequences, ongoing absences from home can also lead to an emotional separation between partners. Almost all the travellers tried to maintain contact and the close association with their family during periods of absence, and thus to counter the effects of the distance separating them from the family. However, maintaining contact can be challenging, especially when travelling in other time zones or to remote places.

> We do try to talk by telephone at night, but it does not really help to maintain the relationship at all. He always rings at just the wrong time, when I am dealing with the children, or am busy

with important chores … and I do not necessarily feel like talking about my everyday work, day care or school things. I just don't want to. So if nothing exceptional has happened, it is like, everything is ok, goodnight. (Spouse 37 years, two children)

Distance prevents flexibility and permeability at least in the physical sense for the traveller. Home does not prevent working, but work (distance) prevents physically participating in family life. Distance can also construct or reinforce both the psychological and the temporal borders between work and family. When on a trip, travellers often are fully occupied with work, both physically and mentally. They work long hours because they often have to manage a great deal of duties within a limited time. This concentration on work may lead to a person psychologically distancing him/herself from family matters. As mentioned above, the travel phase can be seen as a sign of the segmentation of the work and general personal life spheres. For some respondents, this inevitable segmentation caused by distance was in some sense a relief; they could leave the responsibilities of home behind and concentrate on work.

When you get to the airplane and sit down you just concentrate on the duty you have. That's a good thing in my opinion. In a sense, when you go on a work trip, you are like in isolation from the other world. You only concentrate on taking care of one thing, your work. (Traveller 52 years, two children)

For some respondents, especially those with young children, negative feelings and concern for family members were typically associated with leaving on trips.

If the children are ill and I know that my wife is at home alone with crying, poorly sleeping children, it is not a good situation … it doesn't feel comfortable to leave her. (Traveller 35 years, two children)

In addition, IBTs' spouses need to adjust their border management. In contrast to the travellers, spouses solely responsible for the practical affairs of the home during their partners absence have to make the border between work and family more flexible and permeable. This means that the integration of the spouses' own working life and family life increased. Particularly in families with children, spouses reported difficulties in managing with commitments at home without external help or making special arrangements. For instance, in order to take children to day care they went to work later and went home a little earlier to pick up the children. As a result, spouses more often needed to work at home in the evenings when the traveller partner was on a trip. Spouses of travellers also enlisted support from relatives and purchased home help and services. The period during the partner's business trips was described as a single mother's life, a struggle to manage family responsibilities and work commitments. The women interviewed denied that their husbands' careers had been prioritized, but the wives (and especially those with demanding jobs) did report that their husbands travel did to some degree hinder their job performance, and required extra flexibility from their employer.

You always have to hurry to make it to the kindergarten before five o'clock, in time to pick up the kids. You are committed to running the family. Yet I have quite a demanding job myself. The presumption is that it's always my employer that is flexible, for example, if our kid gets ill … . (Spouse 37 years, two children)

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At home-phase

Almost all of the interviewed IBTs needed to work extended hours even when in the home country. That requirement arose for example because of having to contact clients or colleagues operating in different time zones. Especially during the pre-trip phase, they needed to make travel preparations; work arrangements, scheduling and packing. The post-trip phase often involved a heavy workload in the office caused by tasks piling up during the trip, and that workload pressed travellers to use family time for work. Business travellers at home are often required to be flexible and the need to work beyond office hours and at home increases boundary permeability, and blurs work and family roles, hence when the traveller is at home the border between work and family is typically weak.

> There is no summer holiday, weekend or evening when someone would not call or send him an email. Work is always with him. Work and leisure time is blurred. (Spouse 39 years)

Travellers seemed to have no, or very limited, opportunity to determine where and when they travelled. They could seldom affect the dates of their business trips or the duration of the trips. When in their homeland, the IBTs opportunities to influence their own work improved and the individual differences in segmentation or integration preferences appeared quite strong. The trips were mostly scheduled well in advance but some trips were undertaken at very short notice. The lives of travellers are not stable, and in fact often take a circular form in which phases of the leaving, absence, and homecomings alternate. Uncertainty due to the unpredictability of the working environment, in which there is no such thing as an immutable schedule, was identified to be an integral part of the lives of business travellers and their spouses. This uncertainty makes it necessary to manage the boundaries between work and family.

> I think that he's leaving today, but he goes tomorrow. Something that has been announced as taking place this week happens in the next. So many changes take place in their world. (Spouse 39 years)

The major of respondents stated a preference to segment work and family in that if possible they wanted to concentrate on family life when off work. A few respondents were highly committed to their job, even in their own time, and the border between work and family was very permeable in the direction of work-to-family. For two of the integrating type of respondents work was so important that they carried their computers and smartphones everywhere. The consequences of integration and the weak work-to-family border were individual. One of the integrators did not describe integration as unbalancing or stressful, while for the other, working during family time had negative consequences. The spouses of these integrators described their husbands as follows:

> I suppose that he likes his work so much, that he cannot really think that it's work. […] He takes his computer everywhere, even when we go picking blueberries in the woods. Everywhere! (Spouse 39 years)
> In my opinion he overdoes his work, so that he also works around the clock when he is at home. […] He is a perfectionist and wants to complete his work perfectly. Often he works until 1 or 2 a.m. He is not able to let go or get away from work, even during his own time. (Spouse 37 years, two children)

Nevertheless, most of the IBTs did try to distance work from family time. The segmenters wanted to concentrate on the family and leave their work affairs and problems at work.

They were for example reluctant to answer the telephone or emails, or tried not to think about work in the evenings. Despite the best intentions of the IBTs segmenting work and family totally was rarely possible due to the nature of IBT work.

> For about one year, I have left my computer at work. […]. I noticed that when I came from work (with the laptop) I was just like an absent ghost at home. I pretended to work, reading emails or something. You imagine that you can work at home in the evenings, but it's more effective now, so that you try to be efficient at work, and then […] It's not possible to be totally off duty in the evenings, because of time differences, problems may occur when it's their morning or afternoon, so it's already late evening then in Finland. They may call, but after nine o'clock I don't answer. (Traveller 35 years, one child)

For the majority of the spouses the preference to segment different domains was clear. When travellers were at home, and contributed to completing everyday chores and took responsibility for the family, the spouses' opportunities to segment work and family were greater. Several spouses took the opportunity to put more time and energy into work; for example, spouses worked out of hours to catch up with the backlog of work.

> She works overtime when I'm at home, in order to manage her own duties. (Traveller 33 years, one child)

In sum, it can be said that the boundary between working life and family life is stretching in families where international business travel is part of one family member's job. The boundaries between work and family are not stable but vary; similarly the level of the separation and integration of these two life spheres varies during different phases of the trips. The experiences of the need or the ability to segment or integrate work differed to some extent between IBTs and their spouses. The spouses' boundary management was linked to whether the travellers were absent or present. During the on-trip phase, the separation form appeared to be strong for travellers and the need for integration increased among their partners. In the at-home phase (pre-trip and post-trip) IBTs' work was highly integrated with their family lives, and even though partners' were able to separate their own work from their family life, IBTs' work remained a presence in their everyday lives.

Discussion and conclusion

The present study aimed to improve the understanding of the consequences of international business travel for the work–family balance, and to explore how international business travellers and their spouses manage the boundaries between work and family in order to maintain the work–family balance. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 international business travellers and their spouse.

The contribution of this study to the research on international business travel and the work–family boundary literature is threefold: first this study contributes on work–family border theory by showing the evidence that in IBTs case shaping of borders between work and family is a dynamic process. Work-related travel has an impact on how travellers and their spouses construct, manage and negotiate borders between work and family in order to avoid an imbalance between these domains. The borders between work and family were found not to be clear or stable. Instead borders are re-created when travellers set off on a business trip and return home. To some extent the reproduction of borders is connected to an individual preference to either segment or integrate work and family,

though borders are created within what is possible. When on business trips, the border between work and family is strong in both directions for the traveller, due to distance. When the traveller is at home, individual preferences dictate more border management, and weaker borders in both directions are possible. Among spouses, the variations between border strength were not so notable. Spouses with dependent children had to modify borders more than spouses without children did, although childless spouses also needed to recreate borders, for example, to accommodate owning pets but not to the same extent. Spouses' borders are weaker in both directions when the traveller is absent; and spouses with dependent children had to modify and reduce working hours, and work at home in the evenings in order to manage work and home commitments. Childless spouses could instead concentrate on working while travellers were away.

The second contribution of the study concerns the integration–segmentation preferences of IBTs which have been neglected in research. Segmentation and integration are both ways to manage the work–family balance, however the current research shows that which is the more appropriate strategy depends on the situation and individual preference, but equally on work-related factors such as how much flexibility is required to support an individual's family life (Clark, 2000, 2001). IBTs' preferences to segment or integrate were an individual choice, although the situation pertaining had a considerable effect on the possibility of the IBT applying his or her preference. Work with travel rarely if ever permits either travellers or their partner to separate the work and family domains. In IBT families, integration is more or less inevitable. Integration may ease the shift from one role to another, but risks role blurring, which may be harmful to the work–family balance (Clark, 2000; Desrochers & Sargent, 2004). In addition, the findings of this study confirm the negative effect integration can have on the work–family balance. For example for some of the respondents, work had intruded on family life in the form of work being undertaken in the evenings and during holidays, which had given rise to problems in some families.

Thirdly this study contributes to the IBT research in two ways; first it proves that work with international travel has specific characteristics and challenges which may have harmful effect on balance between work and family. Secondly this study shows up travellers' spouses' perspective which is mainly lacking thus far in IBT research. The findings suggest that IBTs struggle to maintain a balance between work and family life. Work involving international business travel is typically irregular and time consuming and sets challenges around maintaining regular routines, which reinforces the experience of an imbalance between work and family spheres. In former research family situation has found to be related for example to travel activity (Gustafson, 2006). The findings of this current study emphasize the family situation being a significant factor in how travel is experienced. Children were found to be the crucial factor complicating maintaining the balance between work and family; this may be the result of an increase in the competing roles of spouse and parent. The experienced negative work–family interactions and feelings of unbalance were heavily time-related. Lack of influence over how time is spent, and due to that a lack of time together with the family, was one main reason behind the experiences of an imbalance between work and family. The lack of control over one's own work, including control over how time is spent, has been discussed in previous research, and found to be associated with personal stress (Vartiainen et al., 2005) and work–family conflict as experienced by business travellers (Jensen, 2013).

Although several respondents reported that the traveller was the primary breadwinner in the family, all the respondents can be considered part of dual-career couples since the spouses were either employed or on temporary leave from work (on maternity or family leave). Although the spouses worked outside the home, it appeared that the traditional gender order emphasizes the distribution of the domestic work, and female spouses mostly took care of the household even when the traveller was at home. Business travellers can more or less be compared to commuters, who commute from home to work and in consequence are separated from their families (Briscoe, Schuler, & Claus, 2009). It has been found that the commuter couples are traditional in their division of domestic tasks, so that women typically are in charge of the household chores (Anderson & Spruill, 1993; Gerstel & Gross, 1984). Although above-mentioned studies concerning commuter couples are old it is likely that the situation regarding division of domestic tasks is still highly gendered, and the findings can be generalized to business travellers. This traditional gender order may have an impact on how tensions between work and family are experienced. Travellers and spouses who were working needed to modify their work–family border management owing to the travellers working travel. Travellers' partners need to be flexible, and often need to adjust their work to the requirements of the family when a traveller spouse is on a trip. Spouses for example use flexitime in order to manage family demands. Some of the spouses held very responsible working positions, and were therefore especially likely to encounter problems with managing work requirements.

The results of this study have practical implications for organizations with travelling staff. Work with international travel was found to have effects on the family. Therefore, instead of striving for low travel costs, employers should direct more attention to taking account of travellers' individual needs and family situation. In order to reduce the unbalancing effects of travel employers should provide support for employees with challenging life situations, for example by flexible scheduling of business trips and reducing the amount of trips when the traveller's family situation requires presence at home more than usual.

Study limitations and future research

This present study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. Because the data were supplied by a limited number of interviewees, and they were all Finnish travellers, using a more international sample would benefit future research. The second limitation of this study is that international business travel in this study means exiting Finland. In some other areas such as Australia or the USA, the same distance could be labelled domestic travel. Although the distance, for example, from Finland to Russia is short, the cultural difference between the countries is high, which has an influence on how travel is experienced by the traveller and the spouse (e. g. safety concerns). It should also be noted that the present findings are specific to families in which the traveller is male. Despite gender-equality, women often still do the bulk of the housework and take responsibility for any children more often than men do. It would be interesting to see whether gender affects border management and the experience of international business travel. Future research might investigate whether experiences of the consequences of travel are different if the traveller is a woman and the spouse a

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man. The gender-related limitation of this study points to the importance of research on female travellers. It would also be interesting to investigate how female travellers and their male spouses share the burden of domestic responsibilities, whether stay-at-home male spouses accept the division of labour, and whether they participate in household tasks with the same intensity as female spouses. Research into these issues would add to our understanding of how gender affects the experiences of international business travel and how organizations might change their travel policies to be more family friendly.

In addition to research concerning female travellers, future research should also pursue a detailed investigation of the role of the family as an important factor affecting the success of work involving international business travel. Such research might focus on issues such as spousal support and the experiences of the children of travellers, issues that have been scarcely researched to date. Since work-related international business travel tends to be increasingly common, couples where both parties' jobs include international travelling would be an interesting research subject. Furthermore it would be interesting to explore single parent travellers. Future research should also pay attention to the positive and enriching sides of international business travel, which have not yet been adequately explored.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

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Dyadic stress and coping: An investigation with international business travelers and their spouses

Abstract

Purpose- The purpose of this paper is examine the experiences of dyadic stress related to international business travel and the dyadic coping strategies couples use to cope with such stress.

Design/methodology/approach- This paper employs a qualitative methodology; semi-structured interviews with 10 male international business travelers and their female spouses were conducted. Couples were interviewed separately to explore their personal experiences. The interviews were analyzed using an interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA).

Findings- The empirical findings of this study identified travel-related stress to be chronic and dyadic such that it creates a need to cope both individually and as a couple. The findings related to dyadic stress are discussed in terms of three superordinate themes: the irregularity of life, inability to control one's own life, and experiences of role overload. Findings related to dyadic coping are discussed in terms of six superordinate themes: adaptation, empathy, compensation, flexibility, active problem solving, and negative forms of support

Originality/value- This paper contributes to both global mobility research and on work-family research by being among first that takes a dyadic perspective on the consequences of international business travel and examines how couples use dyadic coping strategies to manage the stress related to travel. Theoretically this paper contributes theoretical contribution of this research lies in bringing the research of dyadic stress and dyadic coping in the new context, namely international mobility context.

The globalization of economies has changed the way people work and instigated a growing need for globally mobile employees, such as international business travelers (IBTs). In an increasing number of positions, travel is not optional but a requirement to perform the job (Kraimer et al. 2014; Shaffer et al. 2012). While international business travel is seen as a crucial factor in the success of international organizations (Inkson & Myers 2003), travel can be a source of stress and work-family conflict to the travelers (Striker et al. 1999; Gustafson 2013; Patel 2011; Hill et al. 2004; Mäkelä et al. 2014).

Stressors that individuals face at work, such as stress related to international mobility, do not limit their influence to the individuals themselves, but instead

affect the lives of others in the individual's social network, above all a partner who stays at home (Dimberg et al. 2002; Espino et al. 2002; Harvey et al. 2010; Nicholas & McDowall 2012; Revenson et al. 2005b). If one partner faces a challenge without access to sufficient or appropriate coping strategies, the stressful event or encounter is likely to affect both partners. In that case it is defined as a dyadic stress (Revenson et al. 2005a; Bodenmann 2005). The dyadic point of view has been a feature of expatriate literature for some time now (e.g., McNulty 2015; Riusala & Suutari 2000; Mäkelä et al. 2011). Commuter research has also identified negative psychological and emotional impacts on the spouses of absent husbands (Cooper & Sloan 1985; Isay 1968; Morrice et al. 1985; Rigg & Cosgrove 1994). The well-being of one partner depends significantly on the other's well-being and satisfaction, thus it is beneficial to each partner to try to stabilize the other in order to reduce his or her own stress (Bodenmann 1995; Bodenmann 1997). Therefore, partners can have an important role in managing stress through dyadic coping strategies which aim to maintain or restore balance if the partners are being adversely affected by stress (Bodenmann 1997).

In existing literature, international business travel has been to some extent considered as a source of dyadic stress, and adverse consequences of travel for the personal life of travelers and their partners have been identified (Nicholas & McDowall, 2012; Stewart & Donald, 2006; Westman, Etzion, & Chen, 2008). However, to the best of the authors' knowledge there is no research using the concept of dyadic stress, or research on how couples cope together with the stress related to international business travel. This work attempts to tackle these gaps in the research on international business travelers (IBTs) by raising the following research questions: What kind of dyadic stress related to the international business travel of one partner does couples experience? How do couples manage stress related to the international business travel of one partner?

The study contributes to the literature in the following ways: first, it complements the earlier research by taking a dyadic perspective on the consequences of international business travel and examines stress related to travel as a shared stress. Second, the study is among the first to examine how couples use dyadic coping strategies to manage the stress related to travel. The theoretical contribution of this research lies in introducing a new context to the research on dyadic stress and dyadic coping, namely the international mobility context.

Literature review

Although research on the work and family interactions of IBTs has increased over recent decades, little attention has been paid to travel-related stress that is shared between partners. In the following literature review, the focus is primarily on dyadic stress. The elements of international travel that produce dyadic stress are then discussed subsequently. Finally, we turn our attention to dyadic coping.

Dyadic stress

Stress is traditionally seen as an individual phenomenon, and often considered through the transactional stress approach (Lazarus & Folkman 1984). That approach considers stress as a process between a person and environment; stress is seen as a personal experience, which is caused by an imbalance of demands and resources. Although stress is often seen as an issue for the individual, some scholars are interested in stress as a dyadic phenomenon. The stress experienced at work for example can be brought home, where it affects the whole dyad, and generates *dyadic stress* (Bodenmann 2005). Dyadic stress is *indirect* when the stress of one partner spills over to affect a partner owing to that person's coping efforts being ineffective. If the partners deal with stress from the same source, or the stress stems from within the dyad, the dyadic stress is described as *direct*. In addition to studying the locus of stress (i.e., whether the stress originates internally or externally), stress within a dyad can be studied according to its intensity (i.e., whether the stressor is minor, in that it is an everyday occurrence, or major, in that it is a critical life event), and the duration of stress (i.e., if it is acute or chronic, in that the effects of stress are limited to a single instance, or the stressors are stable aspects of the environment and the effects long lasting) (Randall & Bodenmann 2009).

Stress related business travel has often been examined from the traveler's perspective, but there is also evidence that travel increases the traveler's partner's stress (e.g., Nicholas & McDowall 2012; Dimberg et al. 2002; Orthner & Roderick 2009; Stewart & Donald 2006). Business travel is time-consuming and irregular in nature, and the traveler is frequently absent from home and unable to wholly engage in family life, which inevitably affects the whole family's life and sharing of family responsibilities, and moreover is likely to cause stress for couples.

This study was implemented in Finland, where dual-career households are more the norm than an exception, and part-time employment rates are lower than in other EU-countries. The dual-career research frame has not been applied in the international business travel context, but the findings of other fields of research indicate that in dual-career couples where one partner travels, spouses are likely to experience additional shared stress (e.g., Bird & Schnurman-Crook 2005;

Dupuis et al. 2008). This is presumably because both partners navigate home-related and work-related stressors, and because one partner's work role demands may be incompatible with the other partner's absences occasioned by business travel.

However, little research has considered travel-related stress as a shared stressor (Nicholas & McDowall 2012; Stewart & Donald 2006; Westman et al. 2008). Instead, a significant feature of international travel has been found; although a single business trip has a start and ending point, travel-related stress is not limited to the period when the traveler is on a trip, but appears at three distinct travel phases; pre-trip, during the trip, and post-trip (DeFrank et al. 2000; Saarenpää 2016). In other words, work-related international travel is a stressor that is chronically present in families where one family member travels.

Previous research has identified several factors that add to the stress of an individual traveler. How tiring and stressful the traveling itself is, and the extent to which that affects other life spheres depends on issues like the extent and intensity of travel (Mäkelä, Bergbom, et al. 2015; Hyrkkänen et al. 2011; Mäkelä, Kinnunen, et al. 2015). Working and adapting to a different culture may create extra strain on travelers, and traveling across time zones may cause extra stress through the physiological effects known as jet lag (DeFrank et al. 2000). IBTs on a trip typically work long hours and under pressure, often leading travelers to be tired and fraught when returning home, which can influence mood and behavior.

Previous research has recognized a range of different psychological and physical effects, and ill health among travelers' partners occasioned by the absence of the traveler (Dimberg et al. 2002; Espino et al. 2002; Orthner & Roderick 2009). It has also been reported that prioritizing a business travelers' work can predispose partners to experience conflict between family and work (Nicholas & McDowall 2012). One main reason for partners experiencing increased stress is the need to manage multiple roles and tasks both at home and as part of working life (Nicholas & McDowall 2012; Duxbury et al. 2008).

Dyadic coping

When people encounter challenges or stressful situations individual coping strategies are applied (Lazarus & Folkman 1984). In a close relationship, it is worthwhile for partners to learn to cope together to maintain the balance and quality of their relationship during stressful periods (Revenson et al. 2005a; Chen 2014). Therefore, if an individual's coping efforts are insufficient to deal with the stressors produced for example by work, such as business travel, the person might mobilize dyadic coping strategies.

Dyadic coping has been described as a process in which three factors operate and interact: the stress signals of one partner, the perception of those signals by the other partner, and the reaction of that partner to the stress signals (Bodenmann 2008, p.108). When coping in a dyad, partners can for example tackle an individual's work stressors as a dyad, meaning that dyadic coping can for instance help the partner most affected to resolve his/her work stressors or alleviate negative emotions caused by them (Chen 2014).

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) divided individual coping strategies into problem-focused and emotion-focused forms, and the division applies accordingly to dyadic coping responses (Bodenmann 1997). Problem-focused strategies attempt to resolve, conceptualize, or minimize the effects of a stressful situation, and emotion-focused strategies refer more to the regulation of emotions that flow from the stress (Stahl & Caligiuri 2005).

Partners can respond to stress signals with either *positive* or *negative coping* strategies (Bodenmann 2005). Positive dyadic coping occurs in three forms: *common coping* refers to coping efforts by both partners when both are exposed to a stressful encounter. Such coping might involve joint problem solving or information seeking (problem-focused) or sharing feelings, mutual commitment, or relaxing together (emotion-focused). *Supportive coping* refers to a situation when only one partner is concerned by the stressful event and the other partner supports that person. Assistance might take the form of helping with domestic chores, offering help and advice (problem-focused) or empathic understanding, expressing solidarity with the partner (emotion-focused) (Bodenmann & Randall 2012). In *delegated coping*, one partner tries to reduce the stress of the other by taking over his/her responsibilities. Unlike in supportive dyadic coping, in delegated dyadic coping the partner is asked to give support; the coping effort of the other partner might for example involve increased participation in domestic chores like shopping or cleaning when requested (Bodenmann 2005).

Negative dyadic coping includes hostile responses (giving support in a negative way, expressing disinterest, sarcasm, being insulting, or minimizing the seriousness of stress); providing *ambivalent* support (supporting the other unwillingly, or with an attitude suggesting the contribution should not be necessary); or *superficial* support (e.g., asking solicitous questions but not listening to the answers) (Bodenmann 2005, 2008; Bodenmann et al. 2006).

Which coping strategies couples use depends on whether the stressor is internal or external. If the stressor originates outside the relationship (external), the situation might be easier to understand and the partners might find it easier to support each other (Randall & Bodenmann 2009). Couples can also develop their coping skills;

if the same stress affects a couple repeatedly, they can get used to it, and can learn to cope with it more effectively.

The majority of studies of dyadic coping are quantitative and have been conducted within the field of psychology, focusing on the dyadic coping process of couples dealing with chronic illness (Schulz & Schwarzer 2004). There are also examples of studies on dyadic coping with relationship satisfaction issues (e.g. Herzberg 2013). Extant research places less emphasis on how couples cope with factors outside the relationship, such as stress at work. Dyadic coping in couples has been found to be positively and significantly related to better relationship quality, better communication in the relationship, improved well-being, and fewer psychological problems. The inability to manage stress, in other words, an absence of dyadic coping, has in contrast been shown to be a major predictor of separation and divorce (Karney et al. 2005).

Data and method

The results are derived from guided, semi-structured interviews (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). Interview data were collected from 10 Finnish couples. To qualify for inclusion one of the partners had to be working in a position that necessitated repeated international business travel. They had to be within a family, meaning in this particular study, that they were in a long-term partnership, whether married or cohabiting. The data were collected in the course of a larger research project and the participants worked for three large Finnish industrial companies that operated in the ICT, automation and development, and consulting business sectors. The participants were asked to nominate their partner if s(he) was willing to participate in the interview research directed at the partners of travelers. Interviews were conducted by telephone because the respondents were located in various places and far from each other, and to accord with the respondents' schedules. There is evidence that interviewing by telephone can be even more useful than face-to-face interviews when doing sensitive research because telephone interviews can heighten the respondents' perceptions of anonymity (Greenfield, Midanik & Rogers, 2000; Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). The respondents were sent information prior to the interview to acquaint them with the study content. The partners were interviewed separately to enable each respondent to reflect on the issue freely.

The frequency of travel varied between six and fifty trips a year abroad, and the total days spent on business trips per annum ranged between 30 and 150 days. All the travelers interviewed were male and their partners' female. The dominance of men is mainly because of the industrial nature of the companies where the IBTs worked. Both international work and the positions that require travel remain gendered and male dominated (Collins & Tisdell, 2002; Gripenberg, Niemistö, &

Alapeteri, 2013; Hearn et al., 2008). The ages of the travelers ranged from 28 to 52, and the average age was 37. The ages of the partners ranged between 29 and 43. Nine of the interviewed couples were married and the other was cohabiting at the time of the interviews. Six of the couples had children living at home, the husband of one couple had children living independently, and three couples had no children. At the time of the interviews, three of the partners were on maternity leave, and the remainder were working full-time.

Table 1. Participants of the study

Couple	Traveler				Partner		
	Age	Type of job	Trips/year	Travel days/year	Age	Occupational position	Number of children
1	42	Leading position	75	150	37	working full-time	3 (2 together)
2	37	Team manager	10	30	31	on maternity leave	2
3	52	Leading position	30	100	39	working full-time	2 (adults)
4	32	Engineer	10	150	30	working full-time	0
5	35	Project manager	50	70	36	on maternity leave	2
6	28	Operative manager	12	80	29	working full-time	1
7	44	Engineer	25	75	43	working full-time	0
8	32	Team manager	15	45	30	working full-time	0
9	30	Engineer	6	70	29	on maternity leave	2
10	33	Engineer	6	120	34	working full-time	1

The current study uses Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to analyze the data from the interviews. The IPA methodology is qualitative, in that it not only describes, but also interprets, the subject through an understanding of the individual's personal experience and relationship with a particular event, process, or phenomenon (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). As with other phenomenological methods, IPA focuses on understanding experience from the participant's perspective. Unlike other phenomenological methods, IPA's focus is

idiographic (VanScoy & Evenstad 2015). The main objective of the study was to understand the participants' personal experiences of international business travel, and IPA suits that research aim. Owing to the idiographic approach of this study, the relatively small sample size is also reasonable. Collecting data through semi-structured interviews is recommend as the most suitable method for IPA-based research (Smith et al. 2009, pp.49, 56). This is because such data is flexible enough to analyze how participants perceive and make sense of things that are happening to them (Smith & Osborn 2003).

An interview schedule was used to shape the interview and help the researcher to be a more engaged and attentive listener (Smith et al. 2009). The interview schedule was e-mailed to participants before the interviews. The interviewees were asked questions about their individual experience of business travel and family life combined, and the different strategies they employ to resolve conflicts. The questions for travelers and partners were not identical, but ran parallel; so for example, the non-traveling partner was asked: "What is the everyday home routine when you are on a trip?" While the partner was asked: "What is the everyday home routine during your spouse's trips?" The interviews with the travelers lasted between 33 and 126 minutes and with partners between 19 and 50 minutes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The analysis followed the step by step approach of Smith and Osborn (2003) where the process proceeds from specific observations to non-specifics, from the concrete to the more abstract, and gradually from a descriptive level to a more interpretative level. First, the themes relating to travel-related stress that emerged as a dyadic stress were observed, the same process was repeated with observation of dyadic coping. The transcripts of each couple were analyzed one by one, remaining aware of what had come before so that it was possible to identify similarities and differences in the stories (Smith & Osborn 2003). Each transcript was read several times. During each reading, anything that the researcher thought significant to the research was highlighted and noted. During the second stage of analysis, the transcripts were re-read to capture any emerging themes from the notes made during the first reading. During the third stage of analysis, the initial themes and subthemes the researcher identified were listed and the themes were re-examined to identify connections between them, so that the themes could be clustered to form superordinate themes before being named. Finally, the themes were categorized with respect to the categorization of the forms of dyadic coping exemplified (Bodenmann 1995; Bodenmann 1997). The superordinate themes and subthemes of dyadic stress are presented in Table 1 and the superordinate themes of dyadic coping in Table 2. The results of the analysis, including examples from transcripts are illustrated in the next section.

Table 2. Themes of dyadic stress

SUPERORDINATE THEME 1. Irregularity of life
Subtheme 1. Cyclical lifestyle
Subtheme 2. Unscheduled trips/Trips at short-notice
Subtheme 3. Tiredness due to trips/being alone at home
Subtheme 4. Inability to participate in family life

SUPERORDINATE THEME 2. Inability to control own life
Subtheme 1. Difficulties integrating work with travel and family
Subtheme 2. Family needs to be flexible
Subtheme 3. Imbalance between work and family

SUPERORDINATE THEME 3. Experiences of role-overload
Subtheme 1. Responsibilities at home unequally polarized
Subtheme 2. Inability to fulfill different roles (employee, partner, parent)
Subtheme 3. Inability to manage every day without external help

Table 3. Themes of dyadic coping

SUPERORDINATE THEME 1. Adaptation
Subtheme 1. Accepting travel as part of everyday life
Subtheme 2. Learning to live with irregularity

SUPERORDINATE THEME 2. Empathy
Subtheme 1. Understanding that travel/being alone is stressful
Subtheme 2. Appreciating the other's contribution
Subtheme 3. Respecting each other's needs
Subtheme 4. Spouse approves of travel because her husband enjoys it

SUPERORDINATE THEME 3. Compensation
Subtheme 1. Compensating for the time away by taking charge of domestic issues
Subtheme 2. Compensating for the time away by giving own time for partner

SUPERORDINATE THEME 4. Flexibility
Subtheme 1. Being flexible with own time
Subtheme 2. Being flexible with work
Subtheme 3. Taking on partner's responsibilities

SUPERORDINATE THEME 5. Active problem solving
Subtheme 1. Establishing routines
Subtheme 2. Using networks for support to manage family demands

SUPERORDINATE THEME 6. Negative forms of support
Subtheme 1. Underestimating other's contribution
Subtheme 2. Lack of involvement in shared responsibilities

Empirical findings

Stress caused by international business travel

This first section of findings concentrates on the stressful aspects of work involving international business travel. Participants were asked to reflect on the stressful aspects of international business travel and how travel (either their own or that of their partner) affects their own well-being and family life. Both sets of interviewees were also asked about effects on the level of the couple. Three superordinate themes that illustrate how stress related to travel produces dyadic stress, were generated from the interviews with the couples. Those themes, *irregularity of life, inability to control one's own life, and experiences of role overload* are presented below.

International business travel is something that causes stress for both the traveler and his or her partner. Moreover, the stress is of the kind that it is not temporal or limited to a single instance. IBTs' trips occur repeatedly but irregularly, and may be necessary at short notice, they also affect domestic life because the absence from home is unavoidable. The consequences of travel have a direct impact on both partners, but in different ways. Travel causes stress on the individual level for both the traveler and the partner, and the individual stress easily spills over into the dyad and generates dyadic stress.

Travel itself is stressful for the traveler and can induce both psychological and physical stress in travelers, which affects their ability to manage their responsibilities at home. In addition to tiredness, travelers reported that when their travel commitments were unpredictable, they were unable to maintain life routines, such as hobbies requiring regular input; a consequence of traveling making life cyclical. For frequent travelers, the impact of travel continues even when they are at home, because they are so often either in a just returned home situation or a preparing to leave one. In addition, the work of travelers is often such that it is not restricted to normal office hours.

For the partners of travelers, the former's absence can cause stress and complicate life. The partner might feel stress because he or she is solely responsible for the home and family. The partners who were working experienced increased stress because they had to both function at work and fulfill domestic responsibilities. In practice, the absence of the traveler affects a partner's time management and how they manage work demands. The partners' time they can devote to themselves decreases significantly and they need to be flexible with regard to their work. In a reflection of the travelers' responses, spouses also reported it was difficult to maintain regular hobbies, mainly because the travelers' absence caused childcare problems. The stress caused by travel may also spill-/crossover from one spouse to another, that is, the individual's stress takes on the characteristics of dyadic

stress, and for example causes quarrels between partners. In addition, travel complicates the planning of family life, and the ability to maintain relationships with friends and relatives.

In some senses, traveling was experienced as a cause of dissatisfaction in the relationship between partners, and couples had experienced marital problems flowing from the obligation to travel for work. Disagreements between partners were attributed to tiredness after travel, and repeated periods of separation reported to cause a gradual emotional distancing between some of the spouses. Moreover, travel has adversely affected the relationship between the traveling father and his children in some families. Especially when a father was required to travel frequently when the child was very young the absence was regarded as deleterious to creating the parent-child relationship.

> *It has had an effect (the absence of the father) particularly on the relationship of the father and our younger child. [..] It seemed that he did not miss his father at all, unlike his big sister, who had developed a closer relationship with her father when she was younger. (Spouse Couple 1, 2 children)*

Slightly surprisingly, both travelers and spouses experienced the return of the traveler as a source of stress. Some of the spouses described difficulties in adjustment when travelers came home. Gerstel and Gross (1984) report a similar phenomenon affecting commuter couples. Wives developed their own routines and ways of doing things that made the adjustment to the requirements of the other partner difficult. For travelers, homecoming was stressful mainly because of tiredness, which meant they could struggle to adjust to everyday life. Especially for travelers with children, homecoming and fulfilling family responsibilities can be a strain.

> *You always have to get used to being together, after a long trip. There will always be moments when you think that our everyday life goes so smoothly, why do you (the traveler) come home and mess everything up. He has his own ideas on how we should schedule our time and how things are working. So, then we have disagreements, we are both tired after his trip, because I have taken care of the daily chores 24/7, there is no resting time when you are alone. Of course, both are tired. (Spouse Couple 10, 1 child)*

How the partner who stays at home manages while the traveler is abroad depends on the demands facing that person and the resources available. Couples with young children face different challenges to a childless couple. All the interviewed partners

informing this particular study were working or were on maternity leave at the time of interviews. This is explained by the origin of the data, namely Finland, where dual income households are the norm rather than an exception (Statistics Finland 2016).

Dyadic coping of couples

Six superordinate themes of dyadic coping were generated from the analysis of the interviews; adaptation, empathy, compensation, flexibility, active problem solving, and negative forms of support (see Table 2.).

The couples interviewed had an interest in supporting each other and used multiple dyadic coping strategies to protect both their own and their family's well-being and balance. Most of the interviewed couples seemed to manage quite well with balancing their family life with the regular travel of the other partner; however, there were a few couples whose coping efforts were not so successful. One main reason for those couples not coping well seemed to be the inability to accept the current life situation in which the travel element has negative consequences not only for the traveler but also for the partner. All positive forms of dyadic coping (supportive, common, and delegated) were used by couples but the negative forms were not so commonplace. The identified dyadic coping strategies of IBT couples are discussed in more detail below.

Adaptation

One of the most important ways in which spouses supported travelers was in accepting the need for travel, instead of opposing it. Although travel makes life cyclical and causes problems, those who accepted it willingly did not see it as a major problem. Instead, they have accepted that it is part of their life and relationship. They try to proactively find solutions to make life easier, for example by negotiating with their partners and thinking optimistically. Some couples view travel, despite all the negative effects, as a positive force in their relationship because it can help keep that relationship fresh. Some have managed both mentally and in practice to adapt to a life in which the absence of the partner poses extra challenges.

> *Actually, I think that I look on traveling pretty positively. In fact, traveling has been part of our life for the whole time we have been married. If the situation were different, so that he would start traveling now, so I would have been used to him being at home all the time; and I think that would be much more challenging. Traveling is not a problem for me because I have adjusted to it. [...] Occasionally, it has really been a challenge to arrange everyday life when he is away. In general, I would say that I take it quite positively. (Spouse Couple 4, no children)*

I have traveled throughout the time we have been together. She has adjusted to it, and knows that there is always changes in schedules etc. (Traveler, Couple 4, no children)

Empathy

Travelers were often tired when they returned home. Most of the spouses showed empathy and let the traveler rest and recover after an exhausting trip. One of the spouses reported that previously her expectations of how things would be when her husband came home were too high; so she had been disappointed when he was too tired to dine and discuss matters for example, and often the homecoming ended in a quarrel. She has now learned not to make plans or have expectations and to let her husband recuperate after a business trip before raising any domestic issues. Narratives also indicate that adjusting to a life involving extensive work-related travel is a result of a certain kind of learning process. That is to say that successful coping with the consequences of travel requires both partners to be flexible and respect each other's needs.

I happily allow him to rest when he comes home. At the beginning of our relationship, we had arguments because I waited for him to come home and then set out plans to do something nice together. He felt completely exhausted from traveling and we both lost our tempers, because our needs did not meet. I have learned that he really needs a rest before anything else. (Spouse, Couple 10, 1 child)

I avoid coming home on a night flight, I'd rather sleep over in Helsinki than come home tired. I don't want to come home and quarrel. It so important to me to get rest and sleep. [...] She knows not to have high expectations of me when I come home. (Traveler, couple 10, 1 child)

Compensation

Just as travelers can be exhausted when they return home, so their spouses who have run the household are likely to be tired. The travelers interviewed were aware of that and wanted to compensate for their absence by spending time with their children or encouraging spouses to take some time for themselves. Although there are very few opportunities for travelers to support their partners during trips, those interviewed wanted to offer emotional support to their partners, for instance by trying to maintain contact with the family when away. Travelers did not take it

for granted that their partners took care of the children and other home responsibilities during their trips. This empathy that travelers showed seemed to be important to their partners, and was probably one reason for couples having a positive attitude toward work travel.

> *When he is at home, he really concentrates on our children...plays with them and so on. (Spouse, couple 2, 2 children)*

> *It is not nice to be away from home for a long period of time. There are feelings of longing and it is far more of a strain for my wife. When I come home I try to participate in family life as much I can. (Traveler, couple 2, 2 children)*

Flexibility

Spouses were solely responsible for the burden of domestic responsibilities when they were alone. To manage at home during their husbands' business trips, spouses take on things that their husbands would normally do, such as taking the car in for a service or undertaking some home repairs. Although all of the interviewed spouses had professional careers and most were career orientated, the couples were very traditional in their division of household work. Spouses were typically in charge of most of the household chores, such as cooking, cleaning, and childcare, even if the traveler was at home. This may be because of traditional gender roles, but also because of a desire to help their partner manage stress. This kind of flexibility and reorganizing of the tasks can be seen as a form of supportive dyadic coping.

> *To a large extent, my spouse's flexibility enables it (work with travel) and that we have an undemanding child and dogs. (Traveler, Couple 6, 1 child)*

> *... Definitely I do most of the domestic chores in this household. That's definite. Somehow it's sensible. It would not make sense if he has been like three days at some trade fair or somewhere and when he comes home and is tired I will wait here with a vacuum cleaner and decide that now we will clean up the mess. (Spouse, Couple 6, 1 child)*

Active problem solving

The majority of couples tried to tackle the challenges of everyday routines by themselves, or perhaps with the help someone such as grandparents. Some couples had been more active in problem solving and eased the burden by hiring childcare services that can be seen as a form of common dyadic coping. Only one of the couples used a cleaning services provider, though several had considered doing so as way to ease daily life.

> *When he (husband) is on a trip, I do not actually have much spare time. […] I try to use the time when our child is for example in musical playschool and go for run. […] Our networks help, but I do not remember asking for help from my parents so that I could go for a run (Spouse, Couple 10, 1 child)*

> *It goes some way, I guess so. However, it is much harder for her, because she has to do everything herself […] We have relatives who can help. Grandparents live within 100 km. […] No, we don't have a cleaner. I think we should have, but wife does not… I have not won her over. (Traveler, couple 10, 1 child)*

Negative forms of support

Both travelers and spouses scarcely expressed any examples of negative coping in interviews. Perhaps they were wary of expressing negative feelings in an interview, but the same interviewees did not shy away from expressing the negative consequences of travel. One of the reasons may be that the work-related travel is not perceived to be own choice, and therefore the stress related to it is easier to accept. For most interviewed travelers, there is no realistic alternative to work involving travel. This was mainly because of the situation in the labor market and because they worked within the particular fields covered by this study (ICT, automation, development and consulting businesses) where international mobility is typical. If the alternative to work involving international travel were unemployment, it is probably easier to accept travel, even with all its downsides.

Negative forms of coping include questioning the necessity of business trips, and underestimating or not appreciating the traveler's tiredness after a trip, or not valuing the importance of the partner's work (an example of hostile dyadic coping). For example, one of the travelers said that *"I'm the one who earns most of the money, so maybe I therefore prioritize my work over her needs" (Traveler, Couple 5, 2 children)*. Ambivalent negative coping was demonstrated as an lack of involvement in shared responsibilities. For example, the selfish use of time on the

traveler's own interests, such as sports, when at home, even when the traveler is aware that the spouse is feeling the strain of being solely responsible for the home and children during the traveler's absence.

> *It has happened often, that he has a match the day after he comes home and again he is away from home. I have waited two weeks for him to come home, and when he comes he goes right away on some match trip, which I personally do not think should be so important. I wish he would stay home and be with us. (Spouse, Couple 9, 2 children)*

The findings of the analysis of the empirical data of this study are summed up in the following section and summarized in Table 1. Overall, international business travel clearly creates stress for travelers and their partners. For travelers, the travel itself is a source of stress, but a career involving considerable amounts of travel also has negative side effects on family life. These side effects, such as life taking on a cyclical form, and the inability to participate in family life, add to the stress felt by the travelers' partners. For partners, the major cause of stress is the absence of the traveler. Because the travel undertaken by one family member unavoidably affects the whole family's everyday life, and travel is associated with stressors that affect both partners, dyadic coping efforts are worthwhile.

Several factors affect the experiences of dyadic stress produced by the international business travel of one partner. Those factors either directly or indirectly add to or mitigate the strain felt by the individual. In light of the findings of this study, life stage (primarily whether there are children in the family) is the most determining factor of experiences of dyadic stress. The other significant factors are the intensity of work travel alongside the ability to control work travel.

According to the dyadic coping theory applied as a framework in this study, if individuals' own coping efforts are insufficient, the strain they experience crosses over to the marital dyad and induces dyadic stress. The main themes of dyadic stress emerging from the analysis process of the data were the irregularity of life, the inability to control one's own life, and experiences of role overload. Each theme had several subthemes (see Table 2) that illustrate the dyadic stress experienced by couples. The couples interviewed use various coping strategies to minimize the negative effects of international business travel undertaken by one partner. Adaptation, a particular kind of learning process where a couple accepts travel as a part of their family life and relationship, seems to be a major predictor of how couples deal with the international business travel of one partner. Another form of dyadic coping that seems important to the successful functioning of the family was flexibility; and especially in the form of the partners' flexibility concerning their own time and work.
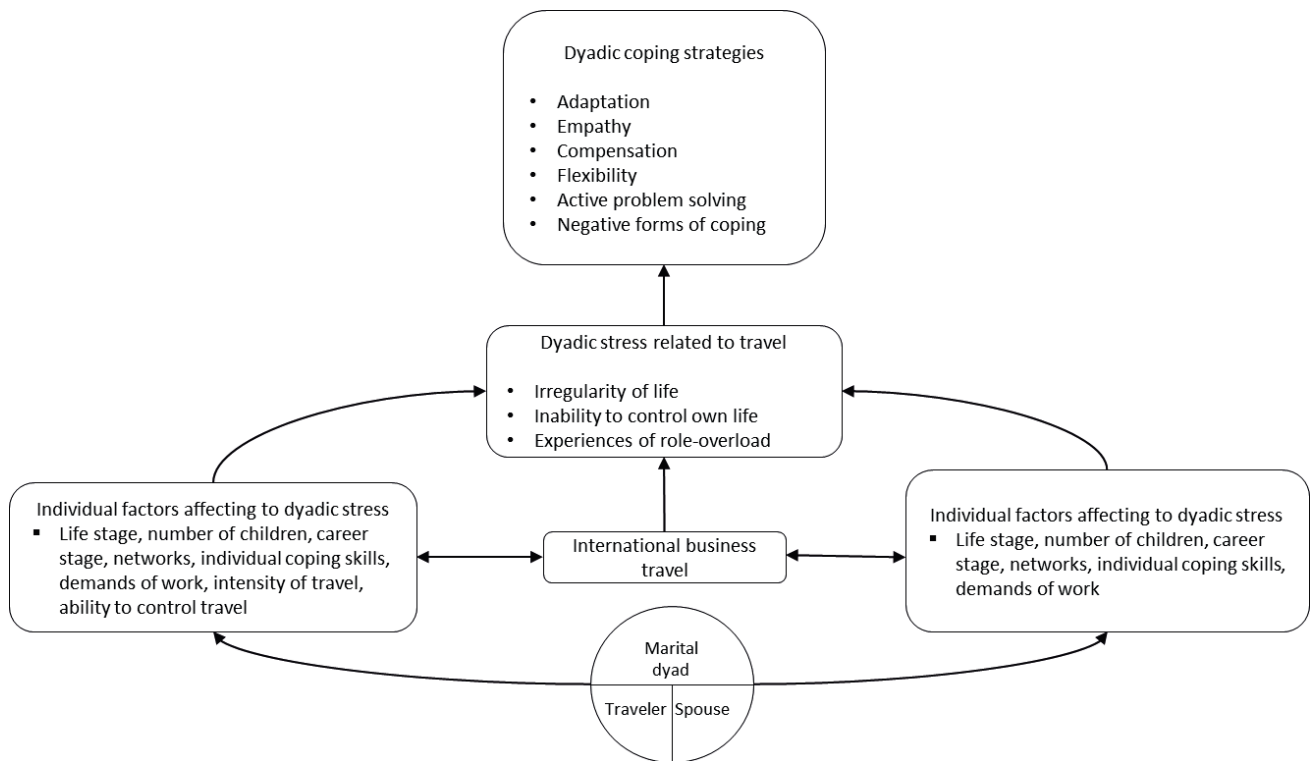
Figure 1. Summary of the findings

Discussion and conclusions

International business travel has been considered easier for employees with families than expatriation, yet family concerns are critical issues for IBTs (Shaffer et al. 2012; Starr & Currie 2009). The aim of this study was to investigate the experiences of dyadic stress related to international business travel and examine the dyadic coping strategies employed by couples. The study raised two questions: what kind of dyadic stress related to international business travel do couples experience, and how do partners cope with the stress related to the international business travel of the other partner.

As a result, this study makes two important contributions: First, while previous research has paid little attention to the partners of travelers, and how international business travel affects their lives, this study identified that the traveling of one partner significantly touches upon their partners lives and affects the marital dyad. Second, the findings of this study extend those of previous studies on how travel-related stress can be chronic and dyadic, and that it creates a need to cope both individually and as a couple. Moreover, dyadic coping has almost solely been

studied with quantitative methods in contrast to the qualitative approach adopted in this study. The dyadic perspective also offers a novel way to acquire an understanding of how IBTs cope with the undesirable effects of frequent travel.

Previous studies have mainly considered separation (i.e., the actual absence due to travel) as a major factor behind experiences of travel-related stress (Mayerhofer et al. 2004). Nevertheless, the findings of this study show that travel-related stress is not limited only to the period when the traveler is on a trip, but has an affect both before and after it. This finding is in accordance with the business travel stress model (DeFrank et al. 2000; Ivancevich et al. 2003). The analysis of the empirical data illustrated a number of challenges international business travelers and their partners must face due to the work-related travel of one partner. The individual-level factors and characteristics of both the travelers and their partners, such as career stage, networks, individual coping skills, and the demands of work, significantly affect how stressful travel is experienced and how stress transfers to the marital dyad and produces dyadic stress.

Three themes describing dyadic stress were identified: *irregularity of life, inability to control one's own life,* and *experiences of role overload.* Each of those themes illustrates how the business travel of one partner can hinder the establishment of a clear division between work and family (Nicholas & McDowall 2012). The findings show that the dyadic coping employed by the couples interviewed had two primary goals; to reduce the stress of the partners, and to maintain the balance of their family life. The dyadic coping of the couples took many forms and six main themes of dyadic coping were identified: *adaptation, empathy, compensation, flexibility, active problem solving,* and *negative forms of coping.*

Most couples had made a conscious decision to accept work travel as part of their lives, and they had a shared ambition to act in the interests of the family. Couples made considerable efforts to ensure everyday routines ran smoothly when the traveler was away, and the couples were aware of the need to compromise to ensure that happened. They compromised with each other and tried to organize their work schedules so that the travel of one partner caused as little disruption as possible to family life. Sometimes however disruption was inevitable, and it was especially at such times that the mutual emotional support of the couple became truly significant. The partners of travelers had a considerable amount of responsibility during their partners' trips, and had to be flexible in terms of their own time, both at home and at work. However, they did not see their having to be flexible as an onerous sacrifice.

Forms of dyadic coping can be seen in rather mundane and minor issues such as empathy or doing domestic chores on behalf of the other, at the same time dyadic

coping was used in significant life choices such as changing job or decisions about having children. The interviewed couples spoke at length about getting used to travel and its effects.

Overall, the findings of this study emphasize the importance of considering every traveler as an individual. Travel causes stress that produces not only physical strain on travelers, but a conflict between work and other life spheres; travel also has consequences for other family members, above all for partners. Therefore, organizations should understand that the impact of international business travel is not limited to the personal well-being of the travelers themselves, but that when frequent, work-related travel affects the whole family of those traveling staff, and that can affect how willing travelers are to travel, and also how successfully jobs involving international business travel are undertaken.

Limitations and future research

As with all studies, there are some limitations that need to be noted when interpreting the results of the current research. First, the small sample size limits the generalizability of the results. Another factor that weakens the generalizability of the results is that all the couples interviewed were Finns. In interpreting the results, it is important to bear in mind that Finns have relatively individualist family values and that fact may influence their experiences of stress and their choice of coping strategy. In addition, in Finland the difference between the rate of employment for men and women is very low at under 2 % (Eurostat 2015). The results in a society that places a greater emphasis on traditional family values could be different. Thus, future research would benefit from using more international samples.

Another limitation of the present study is that the findings are specific to couples where the traveler is male and the partner female. Though, Finland is relatively advanced in gender equality terms, women still do the bulk of the housework and responsibility for taking care of children rests largely on their shoulders too (Miettinen & Rotkirch 2012). This may be reflected in the results, and thus future research should consider whether gender affects the experiences of balance between work and the coping strategies of IBT couples.

The majority of the participant couples were in their thirties and in the child-rearing life phase. The analysis in this study confirms that whether a couple has children affects that couple's experience of travel-related stress. Couples face different tasks, responsibilities, and requirements according to their life course (see Super 1980). It is likely that career stage also has an impact on how work-related international travel is experienced, on the consequences for family life, and also on what kind of individual and dyadic coping strategies are applied. Each of

couples can be referred to as dual-career couples, meaning that both partners were committed to their careers (Pierce & Delahaye 1996). They were either working full-time at the time of the interviews, or had a full-time job to return to after maternity leave. A partner working full-time in a demanding position, may face more issues combining work and family demands than a partner who works part-time. One partner working part time has been suggested to be a strategy that can help manage the work-family interface (e.g. Lovejoy & Stone 2012). The findings of this study show that partners of IBTs had been flexible with their work and adapted to changing situations. It would be interesting to research the career management of an IBT's partner and find out if travel affects the partners' career choices, and whether they for example make career adjustments and take less demanding jobs to enable their IBT partners to undertake extensive travel for work.

Future studies should compare the experiences of couples in different phases of life and couples who have different family setups, such as couples with or without dependent children and indeed same-sex couples. In addition, future research might investigate how single parent travelers experience travel and how they cope with it. Another interesting research subject might also be couples where both partners' jobs require international business travel.

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