Personal and Work-related Correlates of Mental Health in Slovak Women in Higher Education: 1996 and 2006

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Krakow, Poland, June 2008
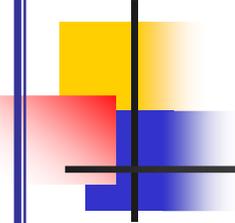
Purpose of the Study

To examine the association between mental health variables and specific work-related and personal factors.
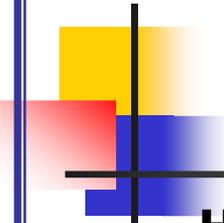
Hypotheses

H1: Role Conflict and Ambiguity will correlate positively with symptoms of depression, anxiety, hostility, and somatization.

H2: Greater externality will be associated with higher levels of somatization, anxiety, depression and hostility.

H3: The positive relationship between role conflict and ambiguity and psychological distress symptoms will be moderated by locus of control. High internality will buffer the negative impact of role conflict and ambiguity on mental health.

H4: Life satisfaction will correlate negatively with somatization, anxiety, depression, and hostility.

H5: Life Satisfaction will moderate the positive relationship between role conflict and ambiguity and symptoms of psychological distress. High life satisfaction will buffer the negative impact of role conflict and ambiguity on mental health.
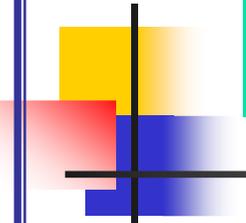
Variables

Personal Variables

Life Satisfaction

Internal vs. External Locus of Control

Work-related Variables

Role Conflict

Role Ambiguity

Dependent Variables

Mental Health (Psychological Distress Symptoms)
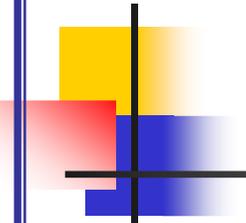
Survey Instrument

Women in Higher Education Questionnaire

Subscales:

- Symptom Checklist (SCL 90-R) (Payne, 1985)
- Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control (Rotter, 1966)
- Role Conflict and Ambiguity (Murphy et al., 1988)
- Life Satisfaction Index-A (Neugarten et al., 1961)

Participants

SAMPLE 1 (1996)	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	STD Deviation
Age	55	22	64	37.76	11.63
Years Experience	54	1	41	13.79	10.26

SAMPLE 2 (2006)	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	STD Deviation
Age	35	27	65	46.57	11.47
Years Experience	36	1	44	19.01	12.40
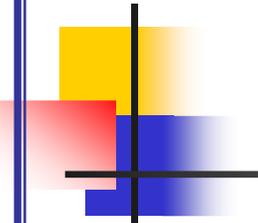
Results-Table 2
Zero-Order Correlations between Personal and Work Variables and Mental Health

	Role Conflict	Role Ambiguity	Locus of Control	Life Satisfaction
Combined Symptom Scale	.347**	.252*	.375**	-.422**
Somatization	.292**	.243*	.310*	-.359**
Anxiety	.342**	.287**	.314*	-.368**
Depression	.259*	.292**	.434**	-.448**
Hostility	.331**	.252*	.123	-.242*

*p<.05, **p<.01
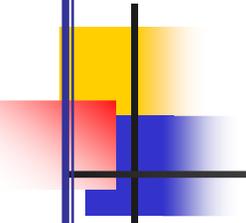
Results

H1: Higher levels of role ambiguity and conflict were associated with higher levels of symptomatology across areas measured **(p < .05). Supports H1.**

H2: Greater externality of locus of control was significantly related to higher combined symptom scores except for hostility **(p < .05). Generally supports H2.**
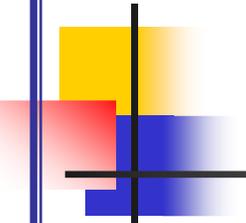
Results

H3: High internality was not found to moderate the negative impact of role conflict and ambiguity on mental health. **(H3 was not supported)**

H4: Significant negative correlations were found between life satisfaction and combined symptom scores **(p < .05). Supports H4.**
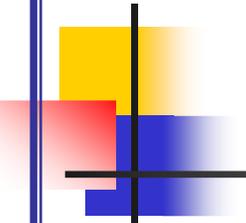
Results

H5: High life satisfaction was not found to moderate the negative impact of role conflict and ambiguity on mental health. **(H3 was not supported)**
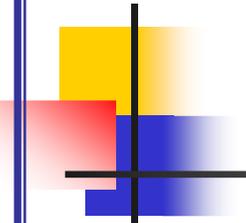
Summary

- Work-related variables (role conflict and ambiguity) predict mental health in Slovak women in higher education as they did among U.S. women.

- Personal variables (locus of control and life satisfaction) predict mental health in Slovak women in higher education.

- Work-related variables were not moderated by locus of control or life satisfaction with respect to mental health among Slovak women in higher education.
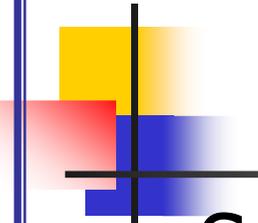
Conclusions

- Some aspects of the experiences of women in higher education are similar across countries. Mental health appears to be affected by role conflict and ambiguity regardless of cultural context.

- Life Satisfaction is negatively associated with psychological distress symptoms and was lower for Slovak women than US women.
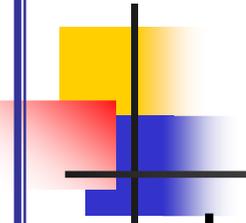
Conclusions-Continued

- Level of externality for Slovak women was significantly higher than for US women and both were associated with symptoms of psychological distress.
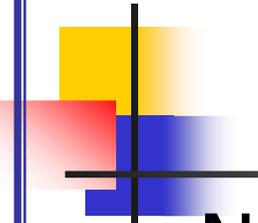
Limitations

- Non-matched samples

- Relatively small samples

- Possible Non-Response Bias

- Survey translation
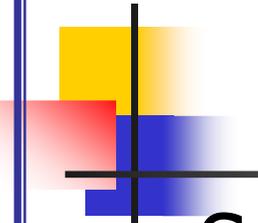
Future Research

- Survey women in higher education in less-researched post-Communist western and eastern European countries.

- Survey women in higher education in a European country without a history of Communist rule.

- Survey a current sample of U.S. women in higher education.

Table 1
Subscale Means and Standard Deviations
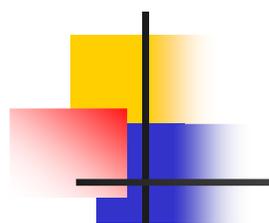
		Range	Mean	Standard Deviation
Locus of Control	(1996)	5-20	12.03	3.46
	(2006)	4-22	12.46	3.94
Role Conflict	(1996)	21-72	52.36	11.98
	(2006)	22-93	48.64	18.97
Role Ambiguity	(1996)	23-64	45.39	9.39
	(2006)	8-89	41.94	17.08
Life Satisfaction	(1996)	56-109	67.83	7.21
	(2006)	51-75	65.97	5.75
Somatization	(1996)	12-42	20.83	7.16
	(2006)	12-31	19.83	5.60
Anxiety	(1996)	10-42	18.10	6.84
	(2006)	10-36	16.42	4.99
Depression	(1996)	12-38	21.91	6.89
	(2006)	12-31	19.19	5.95
Hostility	(1996)	6-24	10.30	4.04
	(2006)	6-16	9.43	2.74
Combined Symptom	(1996)	41-135	70.60	21.56
	(2006)	43-109	65.19	16.62

(1996) N= 55
(2006) N= 36

Table 3
Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Combined Symptoms on Role Conflict (RC), Locus of Control (LC) & Role Conflict x Locus of Control

Variable	SEB	B	t	Overall F
Step 1				
Role Conflict	.169	.347	2.723**	
Adjusted R^2	.104**			7.412**
Step 2				
Role Conflict	.166	.277	2.213*	
Locus of Control	.652	.309	2.466*	
R^2 Increment	.09*			7.094**
Step 3				
Role Conflict	.508	-.214	-2.086	
Locus of Control	2.047	-.196	-.498	
RCxLC	.04	.797	1.352	
R^2 Increment	.027			5.413**

*p<.05, **p<.01

Table 3-Continued
Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Combined Symptoms on Role Ambiguity (RA), Locus of Control (LC), & Role Ambiguity x Locus of Control

Variable	SEB	B	t	Overall F
Step 1				
Role Ambiguity	.205	.303	2.315	
Adjusted R^2	.092*			5.361*
Step 2				
Role Ambiguity	.197	.247	1.966	
Locus of Control	.651	.336	2.674*	
R^2 Increment	.11**			6.566**
Step 3				
Role Ambiguity	.595	-.293	-.769	
Locus of Control	2.191	-.271	-.640	
RAxLC	.049	.896	1.501	
R^2 Increment	.034			5.234**

*$p<.05$, **$p<.01$

Table 4
Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Combined Symptoms on
Role Conflict (RC), Life Satisfaction (LS)
& Role Conflict x Life Satisfaction

Variable	SEB	B	t	Overall F
Step 1				
Role Conflict	.145	.328	2.926**	
Adjusted R^2	.095**			8.560**
Step 2				
Role Conflict	.139	.213	1.982*	
Life Satisfaction	.253	-.401	-3.724*	
R^2 Increment	.148*			11.990**
Step 3				
Role Conflict	1.143	1.211	1.367	
Life Satisfaction	.897	.015	.039	
RCxLS	.016	-.072	-1.135	
R^2 Increment	.014			8.455**

*p<.05, **p<.01

Table 4-Continued
Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Combined Symptoms on
Role Ambiguity (RA), Life Satisfaction (LS)
& Role Ambiguity x Life Satisfaction

Variable	SEB	B	t	Overall F
Step 1				
Role Ambiguity	.171	.304	2.767**	
Adjusted R^2	.081**			7.656**
Step 2				
Role Ambiguity	.163	.201	1.913	
Life Satisfaction	.248	-.393	-3.740**	
R^2 Increment	.144*			11.483**
Step 3				
Role Ambiguity	1.469	1.747	1.847	
Life Satisfaction	.930	.233	.590	
RAxLS	.021	-1.517	-1.644	
R^2 Increment	.027			8.733**

*p<.05, **p<.01

Participants

SAMPLE 1 (1996)	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	STD Deviation
Age	55	22	64	37.76	11.63
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Age	55	22	64	37.76	11.63
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