The Cultural Meaning of Time Mismatch at Work: Contrasting Asian and White New Zealanders

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Working-hours mismatches occur when people want to spend less or more time at work. Conventionally, the desire for more time is interpreted as a sign of under-employment and precarious work, and the desire for more time is interpreted as a sign of overwork. Culture may also influence mismatches, however, and we posit an Asian-White contrast due to the different meanings of work across low- and high-relational-mobility groups. When relational mobility is high, the desire for more work time may be dampened by the desire to make a good impression on one's romantic partner. When relational mobility is low, such impression management is less important. Using data from a large representative New Zealand survey (N = 3,854), we found support for this hypothesis. Asian New Zealanders (low mobility) were approximately twice as likely as White New Zealanders (high mobility) to express the desire for more time at work, even after controlling for working hours, perceived deprivation, and several other confounds. Having a family diminished the desire for more work time among White New Zealanders, but slightly enhanced that desire among Asians.

Key words: *Time mismatch, Overwork, Culture, Cross-cultural*

INTRODUCTION

The discrepancy between desired and actual working time is commonly termed 'mismatch'. Mismatches have interested researchers who study precarious jobs, where workers have short hours and inadequate income (Kalleberg, 2013). Having such precarity is one factor that can drive workers to express a desire for more working hours. Longer hours would provide sufficient income. Mismatch has also been pertinent to scholars who study work-life balance because excessive work demands may induce the desire for less working time such that one has more time for family (Milkie et al., 2004). These interpretations suggest that people evaluate working hours in a rational economic manner, desiring more hours when the benefits (earnings) outweigh the costs (family time), and desiring fewer hours when the costs outweigh the benefits. While this interpretation has merit, it underplays the role of cultural values, the focus of this article.

The study of working-hours mismatch follows from a line of sociological research that began with interest in average working hours. Further research revealed that the most significant change was not in the mean, but the variance. In an influential study, Jacobs and Gerson (2004) documented an increase from 1970 to 2000 in the proportion of workers who worked less than or more than 40 hours per week. Similar increases in working-time variability were documented in Australia and New Zealand (Callister, 2005; Wooden & Drago, 2007), and the U.K. (Green, 2001). A set of under-employed people now have short working hours and insufficient earnings, while a set of highly educated people have long working hours and generous earnings (Bluestone & Rose, 1998; Coleman & Pencavel, 1993a, 1993b; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004; Kalleberg, 2013).

At the same time, social scientists have historically acknowledged that attitudes toward work vary culturally, such that a cultural change sometimes drives people to express a preference for more time at work regardless of financial need. As Weber (1958) documented, Protestantism changed the work culture of many European nations because Calvinism and similar doctrines preached that a person's work ethic signified whether God had predestined their eternal salvation. This development ramped up the propensity to be industrious and entrepreneurial, one factor in the emergence of capitalism. As an industrialized economy took hold, a Fordist ideology of efficiency determined the start and end of the working day, but in recent decades, a post-Fordist ideology has emerged. This ideology encourages employers to grant autonomy to their workers, but also requires employers to reward "motivated" workers who visibly prioritize work over other commitments, thereby promoting a culture of over-work (van Echtelt et al., 2006).

Because the interpretation of mismatch questions on surveys can be affected by this culture of overwork in certain sectors, researchers have experimented with phrasing the questions differently. They have discovered that answers to such questions can depend on whether working-time questions are asked baldly, or whether a phrase in the question tells respondents to account for the impact on income and family time (see Campbell & van Wanrooy, 2013). Workers who give inconsistent answers display an ambivalence about whether reductions are truly

feasible, given their local work culture (Campbell & van Wanrooy, 2013).

Less attention has been given to contrasts between national and regional cultures. Such contrasts are also relevant because immigration has changed the composition of the workforce in industrialized nations. It is therefore important to ask if mismatch questions are answered differently due to contrasting cultural values when other causal factors such as income adequacy are held constant. An affirmative answer would indicate another problem with the standard work mismatch question.

The article begins with an introduction to a form of cultural variability, traditionally labelled individualism vs. collectivism and more recently labelled relational mobility. Past research suggests that low relational mobility—common in Asian countries—enhances work satisfaction and perceived work-life balance, net of other differences. We review the theorized explanation for this phenomenon and explain its relevance to working-hours mismatch. Next, we describe the New Zealand context. A review of immigration patterns elucidates why Asian New Zealanders are higher in family-based collectivism than White New Zealanders. Lastly, we present our hypothesis.

Relational Mobility and Working-Time Mismatch

Socioecological psychology, a new metatheoretical perspective, incorporates socioecological and geographical facts about societies (Oishi, 2013). A common interest among socioecological psychologists is relational mobility (Oishi, 2010; Yuki & Schug, 2011). Low relational-mobility societies facilitate stable social ties in personal and work life, inhibiting one's ability to make choices about social ties based on personal preferences. In contrast, high-mobility societies facilitate continual dissolution of old ties and formation of new ties based on personal desire. People need to exert effort to be appealing to retain ties because, given high relational mobility, ties can be broken due to dissatisfaction.

This contrast partly derives from geography and agriculture. Rice farming requires a large group of individuals; wheat farming and animal herding require a small group of individuals. Aligning with these constraints, relational mobility is low in rice-framing regions where large collectives must be bound together for successful work, and high in wheat-farming and animal-herding regions where such binding is unnecessary (Talhelm & Oishi, 2018; Thomson et al., 2018). However, agriculture is not the sole reason for differences and future research will likely uncover other causes.

People agree on the level of relational mobility in their society and societies meaningfully differ in relational mobility levels (Thomson et al., 2018). "Individualistic" nations, such as the U.S. and New Zealand, have high mobility, and "collectivist" nations, such as Malaysia and Japan, have low mobility (Thomson et al., 2018). In high-mobility societies, people must elicit long-term commitment from others, because such commitment is not ensured by the culture itself. Individuals compete for social marketability. Attempts to poach romantic partners are more common in high-mobility societies, as are attempts to sustain partnerships amid such threats (Kito et al., 2017; Thomson et al., 2018). For instance, self-disclosure, which strengths the intimacy of romantic ties and friendships, occurs quickly in high-mobility nations and regions (Schug et al., 2010). Romantic passion is also stronger (Yamada et al., 2017).

Given the need to elicit commitment through such impression management, one should expect high-mobility groups (Europeans) to spend more time with romantic partners and less time at work to form a good impression. Europeans with sufficient earnings should therefore tend to desire less time at work and more time at home. In contrast, among low-mobility groups (Asians), the sustenance of ties can be assumed, and thus long hours at work symbolize dutifulness to work colleagues through labour and a long-term commitment to family stability through earnings. Asians with sufficient earnings should therefore tend to express a desire for the same or more hours at work.

Some prior research uses the terms collectivism and individualism to describe cultural differences. Because of debate about what these terms mean, recent scholars have adopted finer constructs such as relational mobility (Sato, et al., 2014). However, the older literature on individualism and collectivism is relevant to this article and therefore discussed here. Roughly, collectivism denotes a sense of duty toward members of a group, and individualism denotes the desire for self-enhancement and the power to pursue autonomous goals. Individualism is high in Western cultures, and highest in the Anglosphere (Hofstede, 1980). Collectivism is low in Asia and Latin American. These basic cross-cultural differences have been consistent over time (Beugelsdijk et al., 2015, and people of European ancestry are more individualistic than people of Asian ancestry within a given country (Benet-Martínez & Karakitapoglu-Aygün, 2003; Podsiadlowski & Fox, 2011). This does not entail that collectivistic cultures are altogether similar but that they share high levels on one dimension.

Collectivism—essentially low relational mobility—can shape appraisals of one's work situation. In collectivist nations, there is an emphasis on long-term obligations towards the family unit (Aycan, 2008). Work becomes a means of fulfilling one's financial obligation to one's family (Powell et al., 2009). Stating a desire for more hours at work can be a way to express one's allegiance to this family-oriented financial obligation. There are fewer spousal conflicts when a family member spends more time at work (reducing their subjective mismatch) because those who work long hours come across as dutiful toward the family unit rather than neglectful toward the short-term satisfaction of one's spouse (Yang et al., 2000). Such attention to interpersonal debts and obligations is a moral norm in collectivist societies (Suzuki & Greenfield, 2002; Wang & Miller, 2019).

In contrast, overwork stimulates conflict in individualistic cultures, where relational mobility is high, because more time at work reduces time with one's spouse, which makes a poor impression (Billing et al., 2014; Lu et al., 2006; Spector et al., 2007; Spector et al., 2004). A consistently poor impression can cause the dissolution of the marriage because high relational mobility facilitates dropping old ties and shopping for new ones. Consequently, individualistic workers from these cultures are less likely to work longer hours to satisfy their

obligations toward family in the same manner as collectivistic workers. On the contrary, they likely expect that spending the same time or less at work will make a good impression on their spouse. In a New Zealand study, workers from low-mobility cultures (i.e., East Asian, New Zealand Māori) and high-mobility cultures (i.e., European, New Zealand European) were compared on work-life balance and well-being. As hypothesized, a lack of work-family balance reduced well-being only among people from high-mobility cultures (Haar et al., 2014; see also Podsiadlowski & Fox, 2011). This effect suggests that collectivistic people—from low mobility cultures—do not make a poor impression on their spouse when they spend long hours at work.

In low-mobility cultures, an increase in working hours should be highly desirable even under conditions of adequate income. In fact, increases should be particularly appealing when one's income supports a family because of the possibility of being perceived as making sacrifices for long-term family prospects (Powell et al., 2009). However, researchers have taken for granted that the desire for more working hours represents underemployment—a form of deprivation—rather than a cultural appraisal that is disconnected from income deprivation and material needs. If future scholars fail to consider this difference between how White New Zealanders and Asians answer mismatch questions, they may take answers at face value and overestimate the degree of underemployment among Asians.

The New Zealand Context

In the current study, we build on earlier studies by examining time mismatch in New Zealand. Like Canada and Australia, New Zealand initiated a human-capital oriented immigration policy in the late twentieth century (Akbari & MacDonald, 2014). Asians mostly immigrated after the 1960s, when the government focused on recruiting semi- and unskilled labour from abroad (Spoonley & Bedford, 2012), and the Asian population almost doubled in size from 2001 through 2013 (Statistics New Zealand, 2013).

Given both the somewhat recent policy change and very recent acceleration, many New Zealand Asians can be assumed to be 1st, 1.5, and 2nd generation immigrants (where 1.5 denotes arrival before high school). Immigrants from these generations, on average, hold values that resemble those of residents in their home country (Polavieja, 2015). Although comprehensive analyses are lacking, data from a college sample shows stronger family orientation among ethnic Chinese and lower collectivism among ethnic Europeans (Podsiadlowski & Fox, 2011). We do not postulate perfect cultural stability from 1st through 2nd generation immigrants, but rather that there is sufficient persistence in cultural values to distinguish Asian New Zealanders from White New Zealanders.

Hypothesis

People from collectivistic cultures should be more likely than those from individualistic cultures to want more working hours because the earnings from greater working hours can go toward fulfilling obligations to family members, with relatively little cost to work-life balance and life satisfaction. This distinction between collectivists (Asian) and individualists (White) should be present net of basic income adequacy, household size, and current hours. Hence, we hypothesize that Asian New Zealanders express a stronger desire than White New Zealanders for more time at work, net of other factors.

The hypothesis does not imply that collectivism is the exclusive explanation for the mismatch difference between Asian and White New Zealanders. Other factors may also have explanatory value. For instance, Asian parents in Western nations instill a work ethic in children that emphasizes superior performance. This cultural mindset, found across working- and upper-class Asian immigrants, has been well documented, and is one reason for the exceptional performance of ethnically Asian children in non-Asian countries (Kao & Tienda, 1998; Lee & Zhou, 2015; Liu & Xie, 2016; Qian & Blair, 1999; Sakamoto et al., 2009). For a New Zealand study of this phenomenon, see Guo (2014). Asian and White New Zealanders also differ on other cultural dimensions, such as power distance and long-term orientation, but those factors are outside the scope of this study. The mediator was not measured in the dataset used. We therefore cannot test for mediation by cultural values. We can, however, test whether the main effect is consistent with theoretical work on culture, work life, and family life.

METHOD

Participants and Survey Procedure

Data are from Wave 1 of the Sovereign New Zealand Wellbeing Index (SNZWI), a study conducted by the Human Potential Center at Auckland University of Technology. The data are from a diverse and representative sample of New Zealand adults; pegged to the New Zealand census based on age and gender. A market research company recruited prospective participants from SmileCity, the largest commercial survey panel in New Zealand. Its users volunteer to take online surveys, and receive cash or gift cards as compensation. Email invitations were sent to 38,439 individuals over three waves. The return rate, which includes partial responses, was 32%. The complete response rate of 26% was within the typical range (20-39%) for online surveys (Cook et al., 2000). The sample may be biased because web-survey respondents tend to be higher in conscientiousness and other traits than the general population (Marcus & Schutz, 2005). Employed respondents ages 18-65, who self-identified as exclusively White or Asian, and provided sufficient data were included in analyses (N = 3,854).

Measures

Race was assessed by asking participants to select one or more of these categories: "New Zealand European / Pakeha," "New Zealand Māori," "Samoan," "Cook Island Māori," "Tongan," "Niuean," "Other Pacific," "Chinese," "Korean," "Indian," "Other Asian (e.g., Filipino, Japanese)," "British / European," "Australian," "South African," or "Other (please specify)". These categories were collapsed into Asian: Chinese, Korean, Indian, and Other Asian. These categories were collapsed into European: New Zealand European / Pakeha, British European, Australian, and South African. Participants who exclusively selected European or Asian were coded as White or Asian respectively. Other participants were

dropped, and of these, 34 participants were dropped because they were classified as both European and Asian.

Because the association between age and mismatch was unlikely to be linear or quadratic, we divided age into three categories, 18-24, 24-44, and 45-65. For robustness, we also tested a model with numerical age and age^2, and a four-category coding scheme, finding no meaningful changes.

Marital status was measured with a question with four options: single and never married, married or living with a partner, permanently separated or divorced, and widowed. Household composition was measured with a series of questions, asking participants to record the gender, age, and relationship of all household members. Combining this information with marital status, we created a four-category variable encoding household type: (1) single, no child (henceforth *single*), (2) married, no child, (3) child, not married, and (4) married with child (henceforth *family*).

Occupational class was derived from a question about ordered answer with 14 options, ordered from manager through labourer. It was recoded into a trichomotous variable. Options 1-8 (manager and seven subtypes of professional) were recoded as *high*. Options 9-12 (technician or trade workers through sales worker) were classified as middle. Options 13-14 (machinery operator or driver; labourer) were classified as low.

Participants were asked to select their highest academic qualification on a six-point scale: 1 (finished primary school), 2 (finished secondary school), 3 (University entrance/bursary/scholarship [or equivalent]), 4 (apprenticeship, diploma, trade certificate), 5 (bachelor degree or higher), and 6 (postgraduate diploma/degree or higher). We recoded answers to create a three-category variable: primary/ secondary; university entrance/ diploma; and bachelor's or higher.

Income inadequacy was measured by asking how participants felt about their household income nowadays. The options ranged from 1 (living comfortably on present income) to 4 (finding it very difficult on present income). Both job satisfaction and work-life-balance were measured on a scale from 0 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied). Participants were asked how satisfied they were with their present job, and "the balance between the time you spend on your paid work and the time you spend on other aspects of your life." Work – life balance is commonly measured with a perception item rather than a satisfaction item, in both cases, answers are likely to reflect whether one's actual work-life balance matches one's ideal.

Household income was measured with a single question: "What is the total combined income that your household got from all sources, before tax or anything was taken out of it, in the last 12 months?" Respondents answered on a 16-point scale. Items 1–3 were "zero or negative," " ≤ $5,000," and "$5,001–$10,000" respectively. Items 4–13 were intervals spanning $10,000. Items 14–16 were "$100,001–$150,000," "$150,001–-$200,000," and "≥ $200,001." Median household income in New Zealand was $57,820 at the time of survey administration (Statistics New Zealand, 2012).

Working hours were measured by asking participants how many weekly hours they spent in paid employment. Answer options ranged from 1 (less than 5) to 15 (more than 70 hours).

Working-hours mismatch was measured using the question, "Compared with now, how much TIME WOULD YOU LIKE to spend on each these aspects?" on a scale from 0 (a lot less time) to 10 (a lot more time)." The midpoint was 5 (about the same amount of time). Ten life domains were presented, one of which was work. We recoded 1-4 as less time, 5 as same time, and 6-10 as more time. *Wanting less time* and *wanting more time* are not two poles on a single linear scale (Angrave & Charlwood, 2015; De Moortel et al., 2017), so it is more appropriate to model the desire for less time, the same time, and more time as distinct categories. Treating this factor as categorical can also be useful because the form of the Asian–White contrast may be nonlinear. If the time preference distribution of less-equal-more for White New Zealanders is 33.3%-33.3%-33.3% whereas the distribution for Asians is 25%-25%-50%, the contrast between Whites and Asians (as a ratio) is only between wanting the same time vs. more time. The pattern for Asians could also be 37.5%-25%-37.5%, in which case Asians have both a higher probability relative to Whites of wanting less time (vs. same time) and more time (vs. same time). As a robustness check, we verified that results do not substantially change if mismatch is entered as a continuous variable. More information and technical reports on the Sovereign New Zealand Wellbeing Index Wave 1 questions can be accessed from the second author.

Analytic Plan

We use a multinomial logit model, where the three categorical outcomes are desiring less time, about the same time, or more time at work. In Model 1, race—Asian vs. White—is the only predictor.

In Model 2, we include working hours, income adequacy, and a three-way interaction between race, working hours, and income adequacy. The desire for more time could represent low working hours and inadequate income. Thus, the main effect may disappear after controlling for working hours and income adequacy.

The desire for more time at work should also diminish when people are married and have children (Otterbach, 2010; Reynolds & Aletraris, 2010). In Model 3, therefore, we adjust for household type. As explained earlier, Whites should be more sensitive than Asians to the effect of household configuration, so we also enter an interaction term.

In Model 4, we add gender, income, occupational class, and age. Involuntary long hours are more common among men, and employees whose jobs have high prestige (van Echtelt et al., 2006). Involuntarily short hours are more common among women (De Moortel et al., 2017; Puig-Barrachina et al., 2014). People at different life stages have distinct priorities, and, given immigration trends, younger Asians may be over-represented.

In Model 5, we add low work-life balance and job satisfaction because mismatches can also be affected by these two factors (Başlevent & Kirmanoğlu, 2014; Lyness et al., 2012). Asians and Whites may differentially occupy sectors where objective factors improve work-life balance and satisfaction, but high balance and satisfaction may indicate the same latent attitude that drives the preference

for work time. Model 5 should be interpreted cautiously given the risk of controlling for a mediator.

To obtain robust standard errors, we used the Huber/White/sandwich estimator (Hayes & Cai, 2007). The coefficients in multinomial logistic regression can be exponentiated to obtain relative risk ratios, but interpretation is easier when marginal probabilities are estimated, for which we used SPost13 (Long & Freese, 2014). We standardized continuous variables so that intercepts and coefficients would be comparable. For the same reason, we used the middle category of age and education as reference values.

RESULTS

Demographic characteristics in aggregate and by race are in Table 1. Asian participants were younger than White participants, on average. This skew toward younger Asians is somewhat representative of the New Zealand population. The 2013 Census electorate tables show that 47% of Asian adult residents, i.e., 18 and older, are in the 25-44 age group, whereas only 27% of them are in the older 45-65 age group. However, the corresponding percentages for younger and older European residents are approximately equal: 31% and 35% respectively (Stats NZ, 2015). Nevertheless, Asians over the age of 45 are under-represented in our sample, at 19% in the sample but 27% in the population.

Table 1. Summary of Demographic Characteristics and Work Mismatch, Aggregate and By Race

	All	White	Asian
Gender			
Male	50.0	48.4	61.1
Female	50.0	51.7	38.9
Age			
18-24	10.0	9.9	11.0
24-44	49.0	45.9	69.7
45-65	41.0	44.2	19.3
Race			
White	87.2		
Asian	12.8		
Marital Status			
Single	23.2	22.0	31.7
Married	66.2	66.5	64.1
Separated/Divorced	9.5	10.3	4.0
Widowed	1.1	1.2	0.2
Household Type			
Not Married, No Child	26.9	26.3	31.4
Married, No Child	31.1	31.8	25.9
Not Married, Child	6.2	6.7	2.9
Married, Child	35.8	35.2	39.8
Education			
Primary/Secondary	26.8	30.0	5.9
Diploma/ Univ. Entrance	36.9	39.9	17.3
College	36.2	30.2	76.8
Occupational Class			
Working	11.10	11.72	6.97
Middle	40.77	42.07	32.13
Professional	48.13	46.21	60.90
Work Time Preference			
Less	38.0	40.3	22.0
Same	32.9	33.8	27.0
More	29.1	25.9	50.9
N	3746	3265	481

Includes information for individuals with non-missing data for work-time preference and race, sufficient for inclusion in Model 1. Missing data is < 3% for all variables except household type (14.2%) and occupational class (9.3%).

Marital status and household type were comparable, although more Asians were married and fewer were single parents. Asian educational attainment was quite high with 76% of Asians vs. 30% of Whites holding a bachelor's degree. Asians were also less likely to be in the working class. Almost twice as many Asians—51% vs. 26%—stated a desire for more time at work, which aligns with the study hypothesis. For a closer examination of occupational class, we compared the proportion of Asians in each occupation to their proportion (13%) in the estimation sample, using 95% confidence intervals. Asians were over-represented in four professional fields: business, human resources, and marketing (25%); design, engineering, science and transport (28%); health (20%); and information and communications technology (27%). Asians were under-represented in professionals–education (6%), technician and trade workers (8%), and community and personal service workers (4%).

The distribution of working hours mismatch by race is displayed in Figure 1. The tails of the distribution are thicker for Whites on the left and Asians on the right. The modal answer for both groups is a preference for spending about the same time at work. Among those who have mismatches, Asians tend to prefer more hours at work, whereas Whites tend to prefer fewer hours. The Asian distribution is also bimodal with a peak at 5 (about the same) and a second peak at 7 on the scale.

Table 2 displays the means and standard deviations of work-related variables, in aggregate and by race. The standardized White–Asian difference is in the last column.

Asian and White household incomes were comparable despite the Asian advantage in education and occupational class. Greater job seniority among Whites may explain this equality. In job satisfaction, d = -.03, and working hours, d = .11, Whites and Asians were reasonably similar, but Whites are more likely to perceive their income an inadequate, d = .30.

Table 3 displays correlations between key variables. The correlation between household income and income

correlated with income inadequacy. These findings align with the idea that (subjective) income adequacy is a better predictor of mismatch than (objective) household income.

Asian–White Contrasts in Multinomial Logistic Models

Table 4 displays the results of the first three multinomial logistic models.

Coefficients in the model are relative risk ratios, with 'same time' as the reference outcome. Model 1 showed that Asians are more likely to want more time at work, inadequacy was moderate, at .40, and working hours

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Cohen's *d* of Continuous Demographic and Social Psychological Variables

		All		White		Asian		Cohen's *d* (95%CI)
Variable	Range	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Working Hours[1]	1-15	7.73	2.31	7.7	2.35	7.96	1.98	0.11 (0.02, 0.21)
Household Income[2]	1-15	9.84	3	9.86	2.97	9.72	3.14	-0.05 (-0.15, 0.06)
Income Inadequacy	1-4	2.01	0.88	2.04	0.88	1.79	0.84	-0.30 (-0.40, -0.20)
Job Satisfaction	0-10	6.29	2.42	6.3	2.45	6.23	2.23	-0.03 (-0.13, 0.07)
Work-Life Balance	0-10	6.01	2.31	5.97	2.33	6.26	2.18	0.13 (0.03, 0.22)
N		3746		3265		481		

[1]Working hours were measured on an interval scale where 7 = 31-35 hours, and 8 = 36-40 hours

[2] Household income was measured on an ordinal scale where 9 = $60,001-70,000, and 10 = $70,001-80,000.

Table 3. Pairwise Correlations Between Variables Used in Regression Models

	Female	Asian	Age (yrs.)	Educ	Working Hrs.	Hsehold Inc.	Occupat Class	Income Inadeq.	Job Sat.
Female	1								
Asian	-0.09***	1							
Age (yrs.)	-0.08***	-0.19***	1						
Education	-0.01	0.30***	-0.17***	1					
Working Hrs.	-0.29***	0.04*	0.03	0.08***	1				
Household Inc.	-0.13***	-0.02	-0.03	0.23***	0.28***	1			
Occupational Class	0.08***	0.10***	-0.01	0.43***	0.12***	0.31***	1		
Income Inadeq.	0.02	-0.10***	0.07***	-0.17***	-0.11***	-0.40***	-0.17***	1	
Job Sat.	0.05**	-0.01	0.09***	0	0.02	0.08***	0.13***	-0.24***	1
Work-Life Balance	0.04*	0.04*	0.04*	0.04*	-0.20***	0.07***	0.07***	-0.27***	0.59***

Age and occupational class were treated as continuous variables in this analysis. *$p <$ .05 **$p <$ .01 ***$p <$ .001 (two-tailed tests).

positively correlated with income, but negatively less likely to want less time at work. In Model 2, as anticipated, the interaction between inadequate income and short hours was predictive of wanting more time. At .08, the *p* value for the three-way interaction with race was marginally significant, but the statistical power to detect three-way interactions is low, so we retained it. We probed the interaction by computing the desire for more time at low (-1 *SD*) and high (1 *SD*) values of income inadequacy and working hours, by race (Table 5).

Although both Asian and White respondents were affected by deprivation, the effect was much stronger for White. The probability of wanting more time for a White individual short on income and hours was .35, and but only .21 if the worker had adequate income and long working hours, $z = 6.088$, $p < .001$. For Asians, however,

Figure 1. Distribution of Working Time Mismatches for White (N = 3,265) and Asian (N = 481) Workers

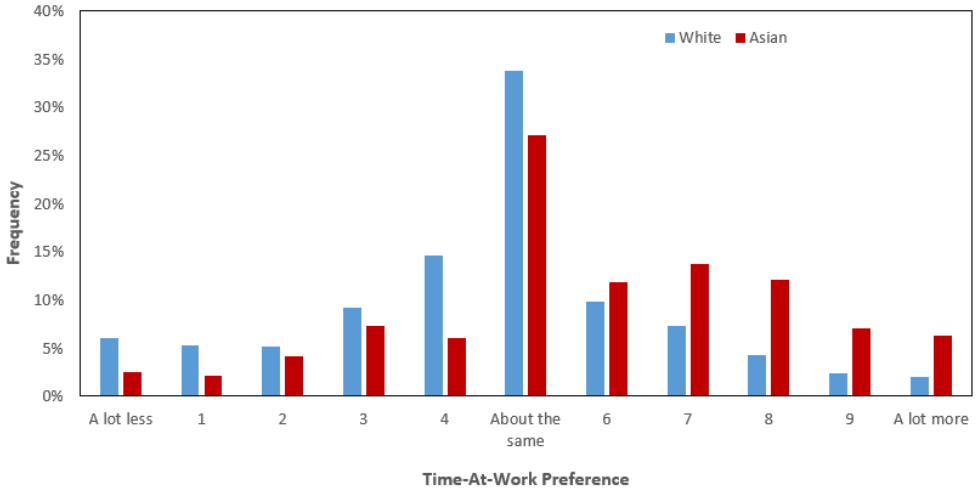


Table 4. Multinomial Logistic Models 1-3 Predicting Desire for Less/More Time Relative to Same Time at Work

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	less	more	less	more	less	more
	RRR/SE	RRR/SE	RRR/SE	RRR/SE	RRR/SE	RRR/SE
White	1	1	1	1	1	1
Asian	0.68**	2.46***	0.67*	2.64***	1.43	2.82***
	(0.09)	(0.29)	(0.11)	(0.37)	(0.39)	(0.73)
Income Inadeq.(z)			1.15**	1.22***	1.14**	1.19**
			(0.05)	(0.065)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Asian X Income Inadeq.(z)			0.95	0.89	0.96	0.88
			(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.14)
Working Hrs.(z)			1.32***	0.92	1.30***	0.93
			(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Asian X Working Hrs.(z)			1.25	1.26	1.37	1.22
			(0.24)	(0.20)	(0.29)	(0.20)
Income Inadeq.(z) X Working Hrs.(z)			0.95	0.85**	0.94	0.85**
			(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Asian X Income Inadeq.(z) X Working Hrs.(z)			1.15	1.33	1.41	1.42*
			(0.24)	(0.22)	(0.30)	(0.24)
Single No Child					1	1
Married No Child					1.09	0.95
					(0.13)	(0.13)
Child Not Married					0.93	0.79
					(0.19)	(0.18)
Married Has Child					1.10	0.85
					(0.13)	(0.11)
White X Single No Child					1	1
Asian X Married No Child					0.35*	0.86
					(0.14)	(0.31)
Asian X Child Not Married					0.23	0.28
					(0.19)	(0.22)
Asian X Married Has Child					0.26***	1.01
					(0.10)	(0.33)
Pseudo R^2	0.02		0.03		0.03	
N	3746		3520		3037	

RRR = relative risk ratio. Pseudo R^2 is McFadden's R^2. *p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

the corresponding probabilities were .52 and .46, a negligible difference, $z = 0.620$, $p = .54$.

Model 3 included household type and its interaction with race. Although there were no effects for wanting more time, there was an interaction effect for wanting less time. For White individuals, the probability of wanting less time increased as household size increased. Specifically, the probability was .39 if single and .43 with a family, $z = 1.620$, $p = .11$. Though weak, this change suggests a desire for family time. For Asians, however, the probability of wanting less time was .33 if single, but dropped to .14 with a family, $z = -3.749$, $p < .001$, suggesting an aspiration to serve one's family better through earning more.

Table 6 displays models 4 and 5. In model 4, occupational class, education, gender, and age were added to the model. Workers in the 45-65 age bracket were less likely than younger workers to want a time reduction. Parents in this bracket having older children, who require no supervision, or having job seniority, which

Table 5. Predicted Probability of Wanting More Work Time by Race, Working Hours, and Income Inadequacy (Model 2)

Race	Working Hours	Income	p	95% CI	
				LL	UL
White	Short hours	Inadequate	0.35	0.32	0.39
	Short hours	Adequate	0.24	0.21	0.27
	Long hours	Inadequate	0.20	0.17	0.24
	Long hours	Adequate	0.21	0.18	0.24
Asian	Short hours	Inadequate	0.52	0.38	0.66
	Short hours	Adequate	0.54	0.45	0.63
	Long hours	Inadequate	0.51	0.37	0.65
	Long hours	Adequate	0.47	0.39	0.54

Table 6. Multinomial Logistics Models 4-5 Predicting Desire for Less or More Time Relative to Same Time at Work

		Model 4 less RRR/SE	Model 4 more RRR/SE	Model 5 less RRR/SE	Model 5 more RRR/SE
	White	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
	Asian	1.437 (0.459)	4.621*** (1.445)	1.329 (0.467)	4.677*** (1.480)
	Income Inadeq.(z)	1.162* (0.073)	1.073 (0.075)	0.862*	1.078 (0.078)
	Asian X Income Inadeq.(z)	1.062 (0.209)	1.034 (0.194)	1.006	1.045
	Working Hrs.(z)	1.306*** (0.076)	0.963 (0.063)	1.143*	0.931
	Asian X Working Hrs.(z)	1.369 (0.368)	1.305 (0.274)	1.241	1.312
	Income Inadeq.(z) X Working Hrs.(z)	0.934 (0.054)	0.822** (0.051)	0.951	0.827**
	Asian X Income Inadeq.(z) X Working Hrs.(z)	1.553 (0.404)	1.530* (0.312)	1.415	1.544*
	Single No Child	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
	Married No Child	1.103 (0.158)	1.067 (0.175)	1.251 (0.191)	1.050 (0.171)
	Child Not Married	0.938 (0.212)	0.868 (0.214)	0.950 (0.231)	0.862 (0.213)
	Married Has Child	1.134 (0.161)	1.008 (0.166)	1.279 (0.194)	0.969 (0.159)
Household Type X Race	White X Single No Child	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
	Asian X Married No Child	0.331* (0.157)	0.742 (0.315)	0.390 (0.193)	0.740 (0.316)
	Asian X Child Not Married	0.265 (0.236)	0.194 (0.181)	0.280 (0.269)	0.198 (0.185)
	Asian X Married Has Child	0.264** (0.112)	0.635 (0.239)	0.258** (0.119)	0.656 (0.248)
	Household Inc.(z)	1.067 (0.074)	0.863 (0.065)	1.045 (0.076)	0.875 (0.066)
Occupational Class	Working	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
	Middle	1.195 (0.219)	0.806 (0.155)	1.321 (0.253)	0.789 (0.151)
	Professional	0.776 (0.146)	0.777 (0.156)	0.974 (0.192)	0.734 (0.148)
Education	Primary/Sec.	1.004 (0.129)	1.120 (0.158)	1.019 (0.139)	1.090 (0.154)
	Univ. entrance/Dipl.	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
	Coll./Grad Sch.	1.289* (0.160)	0.889 (0.126)	1.203 (0.158)	0.907 (0.130)
	Female	0.994 (0.105)	0.905 (0.106)	0.949 (0.105)	0.886 (0.105)
Age	18-24	1.170 (0.229)	1.366 (0.293)	1.223 (0.250)	1.317 (0.283)
	25-44	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
	45-65	0.760** (0.080)	1.287* (0.151)	0.759* (0.084)	1.259 (0.149)
	Job Satisfaction (z)			0.700*** (0.044)	1.188* (0.086)
	Work-Life Balance (z)			0.519*** (0.034)	0.888 (0.065)
	Pseudo R2	0.046 (N = 2458)		0.109 (N = 2457)	

RRR = relative risk ratio. Pseudo R^2 is McFadden's R^2. SEs in parentheses. $^*p < .05$ $^{**}p < .01$ $^{***}p < .001$ (two-tailed tests)

gives them time autonomy, and thus need less time for non-work priorities.

In Model 5, job satisfaction and work-life balance were added, and both factors were strong predictors of wanting less time at work. However, the White–Asian contrast was robust to their inclusion. It is therefore unlikely that Whitemainly express a preference for less work time because they have worse work-life balance and poorer job satisfaction than Asians.

The probabilities of wanting more and less working time for Asian and White New Zealanders at particular levels of working hours, household type, and income inadequacy are plotted in Figure 2. This is a forest plot with items ordered from deprived individuals (insufficient income and short hours) to over-satiated individuals (sufficient

Table 7. Relative Risk Ratios for Asians Desiring More Time, Divided by Gender (Models 1-5)

	RRR	
	Men	Women
Model 1	2.825***	2.020***
Model 2	2.936***	2.339***
Model 3		
Single No Child	4.105***	1.645
Married Has Child	2.506***	3.451**
Model 4		
Single No Child	4.321**	4.401**
Married Has Child	2.722**	3.054*
Model 5		
Single No Child	4.350**	4.489**
Married Has Child	2.788**	3.282**

Note. RRR = relative risk ratio. Risk ratios greater than 1 indicate stronger desire for more work time among Asians, relative to Whites, the reference group. In Models 3-5, where interaction effects are modeled, the results are reported for two reference categories.

Gender is not a predictor in Models 4-5 here. *$p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$.

income and long hours). For estimation, the value of occupational class is set at *high* because of the plurality of people in that class.

In both the upper and lower plot, White followed the canonical pattern: income-deprived and underworked Whites were less likely to want time reductions and more likely to want time increases; and Whiteswith families were more interested in time reductions than single White. Income-deprived and underworked Asian workers were less inclined to want time reductions. Non-deprived Asian workers were roughly twice as likely to want time increases.

In the upper plot, there is a zigzag pattern—Asian and White respondents are close in odd (single) rows and far apart in even (family) rows, which represents the interaction effect of household type discussed earlier. When they have a family, Asians became less interested in time reductions, whereas Whites became more interested in time reductions. The plot suggests that when single, Asians see work as a thief of leisure time, as Whites do. Once within a family, however, Asians and Whites evaluate time differently based on differences in collectivism. Whites wanted time reductions, which would create more family time, whereas Asians did not.

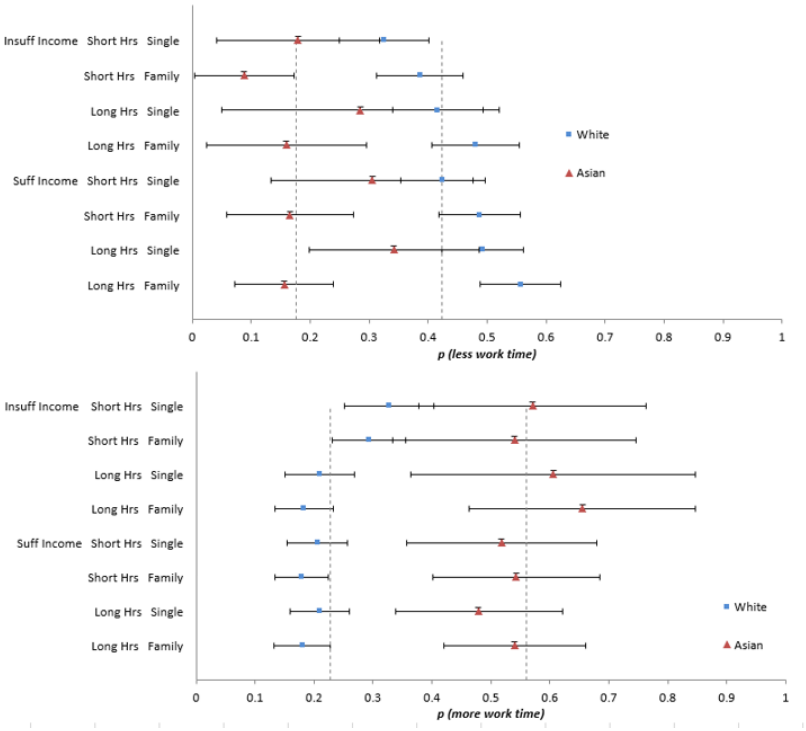
To evaluate whether the results were driven the over-representation of Asian men and under-representation of Asian women, we re-tested the five models by gender (see Table 7). For Models 4-5 here, gender was not entered as a predictor, but the models are otherwise equivalent. In Models 3-5, two reference categories were used for household type—Single No Child and Married Has Child—with the results on separate lines. With just one exception, all risk ratios for Asian men and Asian women were statistically significant and aligned with the main hypothesis. The non-significant risk ratio was in the expected direction, i.e., greater than 1. The main findings were robust.

DISCUSSION

The results here are consistent with the thesis that under-employment and low earnings are predictive of subjective under-employment, but they also reveal a racial contrast in time mismatches. Even after accounting for differences in subjective deprivation, household income, work satisfaction, and work-life balance, Asians are much more likely than comparable Whites to desire more time at work. Although we could not directly test individualism and collectivism as mediators, this racial contrast is consistent with the cultural hypothesis. Moreover, the interaction between household type and desire for more time fits the theoretical prediction that collectivism determines how people appraise their work time and work-life balance.

Hypothetically, time-mismatch questions could assess whether people foresee a net time gain from reducing working time or a net income gain from expanding working time. White individuals answer in this fashion, consistently wanting more time given short hours and insufficient earnings, and less time given long hours, sufficient earnings and a reason to spend time at home. On average, an Asian individual with short hours and

Figure 2. Adjusted Probability of Wanting More and Less Work Time for White and Asian Workers, Ages 18-65 (Model 5). Error bars denote 95% confidence intervals. Hrs = working hours. Insuff. = insufficient. Suff. = sufficient. Single = not married or cohabiting, no child at home. Family = married or cohabiting with 1+ child at home.



insufficient earnings, like a White individual, desires more work time. In other respects, the Asian responding pattern deviates from the White pattern. Asians' desire for more work time is surprisingly high by absolute standards, even under conditions of high income and long working hours. This effect is not mitigated by having a spouse and child.

These results tentatively indicate that Asians may not solely appraise work through the lens of net gains and losses. Rather, they consider their role-based identity. Among Asians who are married parents, a collectivistic or low relational-mobility orientation seems to motivate an answer to the mismatch question that verifies their identity as a family-oriented breadwinner (Stryker, 2003). Yet even single Asians desire more work time than comparable Whites, so family-based orientations cannot be the sole explanation. Possibly, the perfectionistic Asian school ethic persists as a work ethic. Alternatively, collectivism may motivate the interpretation of diligent work as duty fulfilment toward parents and younger siblings. Fear of discrimination should also not be ruled out, however. Given that even professional Asians with substantial earnings state a preference for more work hours, fears of downward mobility may be salient (Zeng, 2011), motivating compensatory behaviour.

Family-focused collectivism is probably not the exclusive reason for the Asian-White difference. A work team may also be an in-group to whom one has strict obligations based in collectivisms or low relational mobility, propelling a desire for working time. However, we found a stronger desire for work time among Asians *with* families, which is more consistent with the idea that family-focused obligations are a critical factor. Other cultural dimensions such as power distance and long-term orientation (which resembles the Asian work ethic) may also matter for work mismatch, and future research may separate the indirect effects of each of these mediators. We have focused on collectivism because of the theoretical and empirical work that already establishes an association between collectivism and work-life balance.

Limitations

The primary limitation is that we could not ascertain if relational mobility was a mediator because it was not measured. However, data from other countries shows that migrants maintain the values of their home nations up through the second generation (Polavieja, 2015), and in New Zealand, most migration is recent. Thus, at minimum, the results suggest that some cultural factor causes a difference in working hours mismatch. A related limitation is that the immigration status of respondents is unknown. Non-citizens may have a stronger work ethic because of insecurity about their immigration prospects. This is supported by research that shows that immigrants who enter a country on temporary work visas or student/trainee visas outperform native colleges graduates in wages, patenting, commercializing, licensing patents, exceptional contributions to STEM fields, and authoring articles and conference presentations, whereas immigrants who arrived as legal residents (via family unification) perform similarly to natives (Hunt, 2011; Kerr, 2013). However, other research suggests that immigrants are not selected on motivational orientation, which suggests that immigrants are not, by disposition, more achievement-oriented (Polavieja et al., 2018).

There were also some drawbacks to using this sample. Although the sample was diverse and pegged to the New Zealand census based on age and gender, ensuring broad representativeness, some occupations may have been disproportionally represented within particular demographic categories. Asians may also be concentrated in occupations where the workplace culture emphasizes overwork (e.g., law), and the Asian–White contrast may weaken after accounting for this fact. Furthermore, the proportion of Asian female respondents was also small, and the reason for this skew is unclear.

Conclusion

Our primary contribution is to show that relational mobility may affect working hours mismatches. The impact of culture has been neglected in previous research, possibly leading to the overestimation of other influences. A secondary implication is Asian and White New Zealanders may not interpret time-mismatch questions similarly. Even if phrased to emphasize the impact of hours on income, a mismatch question may elicit contrasting answers from groups that differ in relational mobility Surveys may be improved by adding a deprivation-based question: What would the respondent afford given different working hours? Surveys should also measure whether the respondent's employer allots fixed hours.

A broader problem is that all survey questions are interpreted through a cultural lens. Given how Asian immigrants have changed workforce composition, sociologists may need to reconsider their explanation for longitudinal changes in many work-related attitudes, not merely working-hours mismatch.

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