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Work-Family Balance as a Mediator of Relationships between Family-Supportive Organizational Perceptions and Employee and Organization Outcomes

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WORK-FAMILY BALANCE AS A MEDIATOR OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN

FAMILY-SUPPORTIVE ORGANIZATIONAL PERCEPTIONS AND

EMPLOYEE AND ORGANIZATION OUTCOMES

An Abstract of a Thesis

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

Jaimie Bell

University of Northern Iowa

July 2011

ABSTRACT

Work-family balance is a common term used in organizations with important implications for employees. The purpose of this research was to determine if the antecedent variable family-supportive organizational perceptions were related to four positive outcomes: engagement, intent to quit, physical health, and job tension/strain. More specifically, this research focused on determining whether or not work-family balance was the mediating variable in these four relationships.

A 12 item survey was issued to those individuals who met specific inclusion criteria. This criteria stated that respondents had to have at least one dependent child currently living at home as well as work at least 32 hours per week. These respondents were recruited through undergraduate psychology students who received extra credit for their efforts. In total, there were 171 respondents included in the analyses. Six of the 12 measures were included in the data analyses for the purpose of this research.

A mediational analysis was used to determine if, in fact, work-family balance mediated the relationships between family-supportive organizational perceptions and the four outcomes. Results of these analyses revealed that family-supportive organizational perceptions predicted three of the four outcomes. In addition, the results supported two of the four hypotheses, specifically that work-family balance mediated the relationship between family-supportive organizational perceptions and intent to quit and job tension/strain. There was a lack of support for the mediation relationship with the two remaining outcomes of physical health and engagement.

The principal finding of this research was that family-supportive organizational perceptions predicted job tension/strain, intent to quit, and engagement. Of these three predicted relationships, work-family balance was found to mediate between family-supportive organizational perceptions and both intent to quit and job tension/strain but not engagement. These findings suggest the importance of providing a family-supportive culture within organizations as well as programs that will increase perceptions of work-family balance. The outcomes associated with these two variables may be beneficial to both organizations and employees.

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This Study by: Jaimie Elizabeth Bell

Entitled: WORK-FAMILY BALANCE AS A MEDIATOR OF RELATIONSHIPS
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has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family and friends who supported me throughout my educational journey. Without their love and encouragement, I would not be where I am today or the person I am today. Thank you.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

<u>Importance of Work-Family Balance</u>

There are many roles with which a person may identify such as parent, spouse, athlete, or employee just to name a few. Even though all of these roles are important to those who occupy them, the work and family roles are arguably two of the most important to working adults (Halpern, 2005). The ability to achieve a sort of balance between the two roles is obviously important, and a whole area of research has been developed around the construct of work-family balance. According to Halpern (2005), work-family balance is an integral part of individual and societal well-being, which is indicative of just how important this construct is to understand especially in organizational settings.

Work-family balance has received widespread research attention over the past few decades. This interest can in part be attributed to the number of dual earner households that are now an important part of family economic stability (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). In 1970, only 41% of the workforce was comprised of married women compared with 61% in 2000; that is a significant increase in married women's involvement in the work place and division of labor between household partners (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005).

The traditional contributions typically associated with men and women have changed over the years. According to Bond, Galinsky, and Swanberg (1998), in 1998 85% of employees reported having household responsibilities in addition to work

demands, and this number has no doubt increased over the past 13 years. No longer are the days in which wives stay home with the children and husbands are the primary or only source of income. Now both partners are employed in order to meet the financial obligations necessary to survive. The ability to find balance between work and family has become increasingly important with the inclusion of women in the workforce since women are now spending more time away from the home and family.

According to the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Americans ages 25-54 with at least one child under the age of 18 living at home spend an average of 8.8 hours at work and 7.6 hours asleep each day. This means that over one-third of an average Americans day is spent at work with nearly another one-third asleep. On average, that leaves one-third of a day open to care for others, eat, participate in household activities, and leisure activities (2010). Americans spend more time working in an average day than anything else; this is just another reason why there is a need to study and understand work-family balance.

In addition to this, research has shown that work is central to employees. This is evident through research done on those who have won the lottery. According to research, sixty-three percent of those who won the lottery would continue to work despite their financial winnings (Arvey, Harpaz, & Liao, 1996). This research goes to show that employees do not work only for the financial benefits but because it has other implications for them.

In the past, most research has focused on the work-family interface with an emphasis on conflict. This emphasis may in part be due to the origin of study for the

construct of work-family conflict from the theory of interrole conflict (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). Nonetheless, the current research is important in furthering the work-family construct by understanding how balance in the domains of work and family can affect both employee and organization outcomes. According to Carlson, Grzywacz, and Zivnuska (2009), a focus on determining whether work-family balance is more than just the absence of work-family conflict is important. It is important in order to determine if the effort put in to assisting employees balance their work and family lives is worth the investment for not only the employees but the organization as well. In order to provide clarification regarding the work-family balance construct, a definition may be needed.

Work-Family Balance Defined

Balance is a difficult construct to define which is evident through the many definitions offered throughout academia (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001; Marks & MacDermid, 1996). For the purpose of this paper, Grzywacz and Carlson's (2007) definition of work-family balance will be employed. This definition reads that work-family balance is the, "accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his/her role-related partners in the work and family domains" (p. 458). This definition was chosen because it emphasizes the individual in relation to his or her partner and in relation to work and family. This definition is also important because it does not imply that balance is achieved when conflict is absent because there are no specific restrictions placed on how responsibilities are achieved (Carlson et al., 2009).

The authors of this definition also suggest that balance does not imply excellence in either role but rather an understanding and achievement of agreed upon goals and responsibilities by both role partners.

The definition used for this study is sufficient in terms of defining what work-family balance is, and in addition to this definition, a theory is offered to complement the construct of work-family balance. Marks and MacDermid's (1996) theory of positive role balance is defined as, "the tendency to become fully engaged in the performance of every role in one's total role system, to approach every typical role and role partner with an attitude of attentiveness and care. Put differently, it is the practice of that evenhanded alertness known sometimes as mindfulness" (p. 421). As stated previously, the construct has been difficult to define and in the process of defining work-family balance, many researchers have neglected the use of a theoretical foundation for their claims. According to Carlson, et al., (2009), because of this lack of theoretical foundation, many of the offered definitions focus on many work-family interfaces rather than on solely work-family balance. Lastly, this definition of work-family balance emphasizes a focus on outcomes of balance rather than individual levels of balance. This definition of work-family balance allows the current research to focus on the outcomes of individuals when work-family balance is present.

In research, work-family conflict also falls under the umbrella of an inter-role theory similar to work-family balance (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Work-family conflict is widely defined as, "a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. This is,

participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77). By comparing the two definitions, it seems rather obvious that the absence of work-family balance does not imply the presence of work-family conflict. Balance and conflict are not "all or nothing" constructs, but rather operate on a spectrum with possible varying degrees of each.

Since work-family balance has been defined so inconsistently in the past, it was important for the current research to utilize a definition of the construct that emphasized the dimensions of the work-family balance measure being used for the current study. This definition of work-family balance emphasizes role-related responsibilities both family to work and negotiation between the two roles. The measure of work-family balance used in this study has similar goals and measures the factors emphasized in Carlson et al., (2009) definition.

Work-family balance is often thought of in terms of working less in order to spend more time with family (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003). The purpose of this paper is to offer support that balance is not achieved solely by spending more time with family and less time at work, but instead by another predictor of work-family balance: family-supportive organization perceptions (FSOP's).

<u>Family Supportive Organizational Perceptions</u>

Family-supportive organization perceptions can be defined as, "the extent employees view their work environment as being family-supportive" or an organizational culture "that openly acknowledges employees' family and personal situations by promoting flexibility, tolerance, and support for family needs and obligations" (Lapierre

et al., 2008, p. 93). Research by Allen (2001) has shown that the more employee's view their organization as family-supportive, the less conflict they experience between work and family. Allen (2001) also found that employees working in organizations that are perceived as family-supportive experienced lower levels of work-family conflict even when the availability of family-friendly benefits was controlled for. Often times when these family-friendly benefits are offered, those who utilize the benefits are scrutinized or presume they are being judged for their lack of commitment to the organization (Allen & Russell, 1999; Fletcher & Bailyn, 1996). Though offering family-friendly benefits appears to and does support the work-family balance construct, these benefits alone may not be sufficient to achieve or fully support this balance.

Research conducted by Allen (2001) also showed that when employees perceived their organization as more family-supportive, the organization typically offered more familial benefits and employees were more likely to use these benefits. It has been suggested that even if these family-friendly benefits are offered, the benefits cannot be fully appreciated or effective unless the norms and values of the organization have changed in order to support the use of these benefits (Lobel & Kossek, 1996). According to theory, these perceptions would influence cognitions and behaviors of employees much more than benefits alone (James & McIntyre, 1996). There has been abundant research on FSOP's and work-family conflict, but there has been a lack of research between FSOP's on work-family balance (Allen, 2001).

Recent statistics show that many lawsuits have been filed in relation to family responsibilities discrimination. This discrimination is most common among family

caregivers who are also employed outside of the home (Dickson, 2008). In research by Dickson (2008), results indicated that FSOP's decreased the levels of perceived discrimination in these employees over and above the availability of family-friendly benefits. This research is important in reiterating the importance of the perceptions of the employees rather than the availability of benefits alone.

The model being suggested for this research states that the relationship between FSOP's and the selected outcomes will be mediated by work-family balance. Our hypotheses can be broken up into two types of outcomes with the first type relating to organizational outcomes and the second type relating to employee outcomes.

<div align="center">Outcomes Associated with Our Model</div>

Organizational Outcomes

Engagement. As defined by Kahn (1990), engagement is, " the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances" (p. 694). To conceptualize engagement, the construct has often been represented on a continuum with job burnout being on one end and employee engagement being on the other end (Maslach, Schaufelli, & Leiter, 2001). These researchers describe engagement using the terms energy, involvement, and efficacy as well as define engagement as a state of energy that is a complete opposite of burn out. Another alternative definition states that "engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Rather than a momentary and specific state, engagement refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that

is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior" (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonza´lez-Roma´, & Bakker, 2002, p. 74). These definitions provide evidence that engagement is a broad construct in itself, but nonetheless important on multiple levels.

No matter how the term is defined or described, the benefits of increasing employee engagement are important for organizations and employees. Engagement has been a hot topic in research lately and because of the popularity several positive findings have been published. Some of that research states that employees who are engaged are seen as better able to deal with the responsibilities that are essential to their work role (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Research also shows that employees who are engaged have increased job performance in comparison to those who do not. Engaged employees tend to experience more positive emotions, have better mental and physical health, and share with others the experience of being engaged (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008). These elements have been shown to increase the performance of employee's, which emphasizes the importance of engagement.

In the past, job resources have been seen as a predictor of employee engagement. Job resources, according to Bakker et al., (2008), include physical, social, and organizational elements of a job that decrease the psychological costs, increase personal positive change and facilitate ability to achieve personal and professional goals in the work place. In addition to job resources, personal resources have also been discovered to be a predictor of employee engagement. Personal resources include things such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and other perceptions of personal competency and ability (Bakker

et al., 2008). Additionally, there is research that parallels this study. Researchers from the Netherlands found that family-supportive organizational culture is positively related to engagement (Peeters, Wattez, Demerouti, & de Regt, 2009). Further in their statistical analyses, these researchers found that work-family enrichment was positively related to employee engagement, and that work-family enrichment partially mediated the relationship between family-supportive organizational perceptions and employee engagement. The literature describes these predictors of employee engagement, and the current study intends to determine if both family-supportive organization perceptions and work-family balance specifically are predictors of employee engagement.

Hypothesis 1: Work-family balance will mediate the relationship between FSOP's and increased employee engagement.

Intention to Quit. Though work-family balance is not solely the absence of work-family conflict, it is still important to understand past research implications of the work-family conflict construct. Research suggests that decreased work-family conflict is related to decreased turnover intentions which therefore could imply that increased work-family balance would decrease turnover intentions, as well (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Barnett, Gordon, Gareis, & Morgan, 2004; Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Collins, 2001; Kossek & Ozeki, 1999).

Research conducted with a nurse population has shown that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction with job conditions are two predictors of intention to quit (Irvine & Evans, 1995). On a sample of Air Force personnel, researchers found that life satisfaction was a predictor of intention to quit (Rode, Rehg, Near, & Underhill, 2007). Lastly, research has

shown that affective commitment has a negative relationship with intentions to quit implying that if an employee does not feel emotionally committed to an organization, that employee's intentions to quit are more likely to be increased (Mohamed, Taylor, & Hassan, 2006). The current study aims at adding to the literature by providing support for other predictors of intent to quit: family-supportive organization perceptions and work-family balance.

Hypothesis 2: Work-family balance will mediate the relationship between FSOP's and intentions to quit.

Employee Outcomes

Tension/Job Strain. In the literature, tension and stress/strain have been used interchangeably in the employee context. Research within the work-family interface has offered justification as to why distinguishing predictors of stressors and strain is so important to both employees and organizations. A portion of this research suggests that family-supportive work variables such as flexible scheduling and supervisor support indirectly decrease work stress through work-family conflict (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). This research parallels the current study by studying the way in which the work-family interface can decrease job tension/strain.

Additionally we know stress and strain can lead to diminished physical health. Americans alone spend over $150 billion on health care annually (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). This cost of healthcare is outstanding, and it would serve a good purpose for both employees and organizations to be aware of predictors for decreased tension/strain in order to avoid major health care costs. In this same line of research, it has been argued

that decreasing levels of stress and strain can decrease accidents at work and also increase focus on job tasks (Ganster & Schaubroeck, 1991). These are important reasons as to why the current research is integral to both employees and organizations.

Qualitative research on the work-family interface suggests that advice can be taken from individuals who perceive work-family balance. The researchers examined data from dual earner couples who believe they balance work and family well. According to their data analyses, perceptions of support from supervisors were a way in which these couples felt they were best able to deal with the stresses of a dual earner life (Haddock, Zimmerman, & Ziemba, 2006). This research leads me to believe that not only supportive supervisors but family- supportive organizational perceptions will decrease tension/strain.

In looking at previous predictors of stress/strain, research has found that employee tension and stress can be predicted through employee perceptions of organizational politics (Ferris et al., 1996). Past research also shows that perceived accountability was a predictor of job tension/strain while autonomy served as a moderator to this relationship (Hall et al., 2006). The goal of the current research is to unveil additional predictors of decreased employee tension/strain. This study aimed to determine if both family-supportive organization perceptions and work-family balance were predictors of job tension/strain.

Hypothesis 3: Work-family balance will mediate the relationship between FSOP's and tension/job strain.

Health. Recent research has tied work-related stress to decreased health (Halpern, 2005). The model used for the current study suggests that if an employee views their organization as family-supportive, this will then lead to work-family balance which in turn will increase physical health. Though stress has already been found to be a predictor of physical health, I hope to demonstrate that physical health can be increased if these two other constructs of family-supportive organizational perceptions and work-family balance are present.

Similar research to this current study measured several types of physical health including blood pressure, cholesterol, and somatic complaints while controlling for supervisor and organizational support. This research produced findings similar to the ones in which we hope to uncover, such that when there is perceived support from an employee's organization and supervisor, physical health increases (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Another study of objective physical health outcomes such as BMI, stamina, and cholesterol discovered that work-family conflict is a predictor of negative health outcomes. These same researchers conducted longitudinal research on what they called work-family facilitation and discovered that work-family facilitation did indeed decrease cholesterol and BMI after a year (Van Steenbergen & Ellemers, 2009).

A study done by researchers on employee's in Finland discovered that social capital was a predictor of health outcomes (Oksanen et al., 2008). Also, in a study done by Scandinavian researchers, job insecurity was found to be correlated with mental health (Størseth, 2006). These studies offer some established predictors of employee health,

both mental and physical, and the current study hopes to offer both family-supportive organization perceptions and work-family balance as additional predictors.

Hypothesis 4: Work-family balance will mediate the relationship between FSOP's and physical health.

Present Study

The goal of the current study is to offer support for the proposed model. My model states that the relationship between family-supportive organization perceptions and four outcomes (engagement, intent to quit, job tension/strain, and physical health) will be mediated by work-family balance (Figure 1). Support for this model would further establish FSOP's as an important aspect of organizational culture and explain how FSOP's are related to critical organizational and personal outcomes.
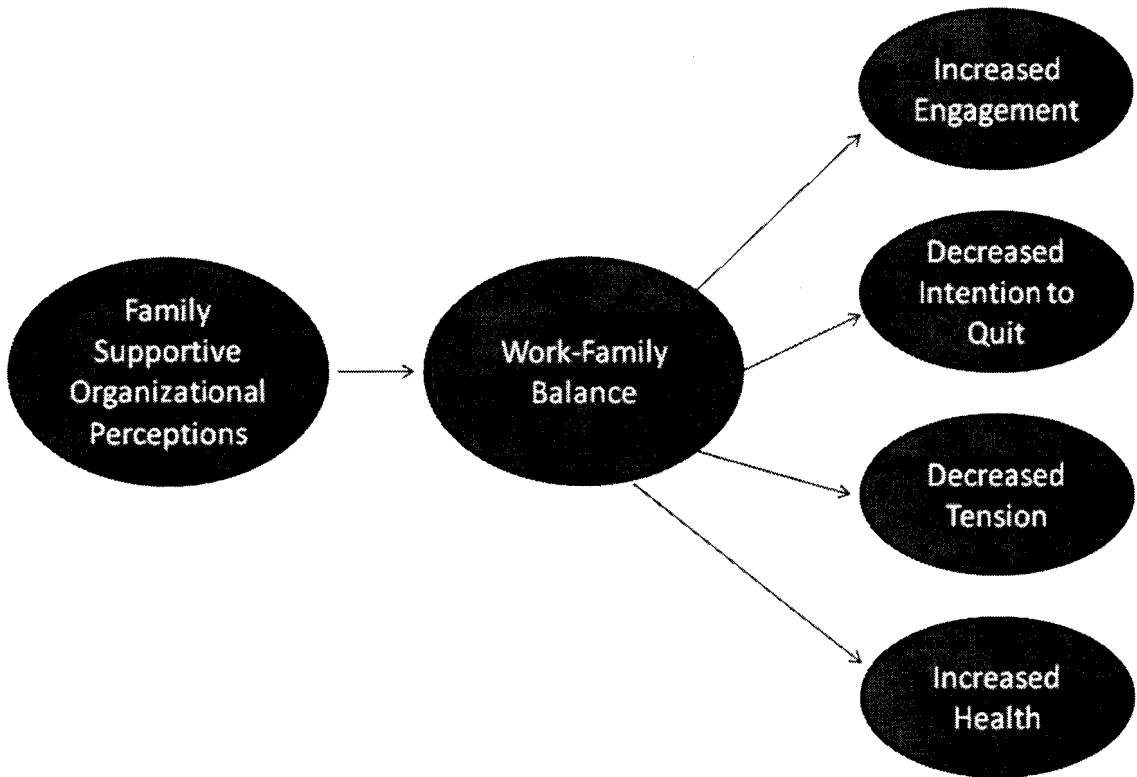
Figure 1. Hypothesized work-family balance mediation model

Table 1

Proposed Hypotheses

1. Work-family balance will mediate the relationship between FSOP's and increased employee engagement.
2. Work-family balance will mediate the relationship between FSOP'S and decreased employee intentions to quit.
3. Work-family balance will mediate the relationship between FSOP'S and decreased employee job strain/tension.
4. Work-family balance will mediate the relationship between FSOP'S and increased employee physical health.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants

In total there were 171 participants included in this study; the majority of respondents (72.5%) were female and were an average of 40.72 years old ($SD = 8.10$). On average, respondents reported working 42.87 hours per week ($SD = 7.58$). The majority of the respondents (83.6%) were either married or cohabitating while the remaining respondents were considered not married. Nearly half of the respondents (42.9%) had one child living at home while the remaining majority (39.2%) had two children living at home.

Procedure

In order to recruit participants for this study, researchers visited six undergraduate classes (psychology and family studies courses) with the opportunity for students to receive extra credit. The researchers explained the nature of the current study stating that for students to receive extra credit they must pass an email link in a provided email template to a person who fit the following criteria: at least eighteen years old, currently employed full time (32 to 40 hours on average per week), and have at least one dependent child living at home. An alternative extra credit assignment was given to students who chose not to participate in the study. This alternative assignment consisted of the requirement to watch a short video and answer questions that pertained to the content of the video.

Upon visiting with the six undergraduate psychology and family studies classes, the link was given to those students who chose to participate along with an email template that was to be sent to anyone receiving the link. The template was made up of the link, information on how to identify the student that provided them the link that would be used only to issue credit for participation, and information regarding the voluntary participation in the study. Along with this information, there was contact information for the researchers involved. The participants were told in the email that the purpose of the survey was to measure levels of work-family balance.

Measures

The survey for this study was created online via SurveyMonkey. The survey consisted of an area to identify the student who prompted them to participate, demographic information such as age, race, gender, and marital status along with twelve measures. For this particular study six of the measures were used. Measures used are referenced in the Appendix.

Family-Supportive Organizational Perceptions

The first scale was labeled Family-Supportive Organizational Perceptions and was developed by Allen (2001) to determine employee levels of perceived family-support from their organization. This scale consisted of 14 items, and the items were answered on a five point Likert-type scale with options ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The reliability of this scale was moderate to high, $\alpha = .717$.

Work-Family Balance

The second scale was labeled Work-Family Balance and was developed by Valcour (2007) to measure several dimensions of satisfaction with employee work-family balance. This measure consisted of five items, and the items were rated on a five point Likert-type scale with options ranging from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied." The reliability of this scale was high, $\alpha = .934$.

Intentions to Leave

The third measure was labeled Intentions to Leave and was used in previous work by Michaels and Spector (1982). This scale aimed at measuring how often employees thought about leaving their current organization. This scale consisted of three items, and the items were rated on a five point Likert-type scale with options spanning from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The reliability of this scale was high, $\alpha = .904$.

Health/Health Behaviors

The fourth scale was labeled Health and was used by Allen and Armstrong (2006) as a scale of overall health. The scale consisted of a rating of perceptions of health with a five point Likert-type scale with options spanning from "poor" to "excellent," and a question about health conditions in a yes/no format which served as a control for the health scale. Though typically single-item scale are deemed unacceptable to measure a construct, research shows that if the construct is easily understood and defined as well as concrete a single-item scale is acceptable (Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007).

Employee Engagement

The fifth scale was entitled Employee Engagement and was based on the work of Schauefli, Bakker and Salanova (2006) on the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). This scale measured employees level of energy and excitement toward their work in addition to their perceived ability to deal with demands related to their job. The scale consisted of nine items, and were rated on a five point Likert-type scale with options ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The reliability of this scale was high, $\alpha = .848$.

Job Tension/Strain

The sixth and final scale was entitled Job Tension/Strain which was used from the work of House and Rizzo's (1972) work-related anxiety scale. The scale consisted of seven items, and the items were rated on a five point Likert-type scale with the same options as the Employee Engagement scale. The reliability of this scale was high, $\alpha = .821$.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

In total, 185 participants responded to the survey, but because some of the participants did not meet the inclusion criteria of being employed full-time or having a dependent child in the home, 171 participants responses were used in this study.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics from the sample for this study are presented in Table 1. The average age of the sample was 40.72 years of age (SD = 8.10) and nearly three-fourths (72.9%) of the sample was female (M = 0.27, SD = 0.45). The majority of participants were married (84%) and on average had roughly two dependent children living at home (M = 1.81, SD = 0.88).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	M	SD
Age	40.72	8.10
Children	1.81	0.88
Marital Status	0.84	0.37
Gender	0.27	0.45
WFB	3.54	0.86
FSOP	3.42	0.62
Employee Engagement	3.43	0.56
Intent to Quit	1.92	1.03
Job Tension	2.64	0.66
Health	3.60	0.88

Notes: N=171

The scales for family-supportive organizational perceptions, employee engagement, intent to quit, and job tension/strain ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Health was measured on a scale ranging from "poor" to "excellent," and work-family balance was measured on a scale ranging from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied." Participants reported high levels of physical health ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.88$), work-family balance ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.86$), employee engagement ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 0.56$), and family-supportive organizational perceptions ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.62$).

Alternatively, our sample reported lower levels on the intent to quit ($M = 1.92$, $SD = 1.03$) and job tension ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 0.66$) scales.

This research and data analysis addressed two types of outcome variables: employee (physical health and job tension/strain) and organizational (intent to quit and employee engagement). To address the employee-related outcomes, 92.1% of the sample reported "average" to "excellent" health when asked to rate their physical health in comparison to others their age. 31% of the participants either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they, "work under a great deal of tension" in the job tension/strain scale.

To address the organizational outcomes, 71.9% of participants either "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" when asked if they, "want to quit [their] job." In the employee engagement scale, 73.5% of participants "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they, "feel happy when [they are] working intensely."

<u>Intercorrelations</u>

Correlations are provided in Table 3. Though this is not the sole analysis conducted for this study, this statistical analysis provides important information regarding the sample, as well as non-hypothesized relationships.

Table 3

Correlations for Included Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Age									
2. Children	-.03								
3. Marital Status	.10	.08							
4. Gender	-.07	-.04	.12						
5. WFB	.12	-.04	.06	-.05	.93				
6. FSOP	.15	-.02	.07	-.12	.43**	.72			
7. Engagement	.20**	.02	.10	.05	.30**	.42**	.85		
8. Intent to Quit	-.08	-.01	-.01	.08	-.56**	-.43**	-.51**	.90	
9. Job Tension	-.05	.01	.13	.23**	-.43**	-.43**	-.06	.44**	.82
10. Health	.02	-.14	-.16*	-.04	.13	.11	.10	-.13	-.32**

Notes: N=171 **$p < .01$ *$p < .05$ Scale reliabilities on the diagonal.
For the demographic variables gender (women = 1, men = 0) and marital status (not married = 0, married = 1)

The control variables (age, children, marital status and gender) had minimal correlations with the outcome variables. Two significant correlations worth noting existed between age and employee engagement, r (161) = .20, $p < .01$ and gender and job tension, r (164) = .23, $p < .01$.

Family-supportive organizational perceptions had significant correlations with several outcomes. Family-supportive organizational perceptions were moderately correlated with employee engagement, r (165) = .42, $p < .01$. There was a moderate, negative correlation between family-supportive organizational perceptions and intentions to quit, r (166) = -.43, $p < .01$. And lastly, family-supportive organizational perceptions were moderately correlated with job tension, r (165) = -.43, $p < .01$.

There were three significant correlations among the dependent variables. There was a strong, negative correlation with intent to quit and employee engagement r (165) = -.51, $p<.01$. There was also a moderate, negative correlation between physical health and job tension/strain r (163) = -.32, $p<.01$. And lastly, there was a moderate, positive correlation between intent to quit and job tension/strain r (165) = .44, $p<.01$.

Regression Analyses

I regressed employee engagement, intent to quit, job tension/strain, and physical health on the antecedent variable FSOP and the mediator variable WFB and control variables which included age, number of children at home, marital status (not married-0, married-1), and gender (women-1, men-0),. It should be mentioned that in these regression equations z-scores were used for all predictors in order to center all scales. I used the steps provided for mediation analysis by Baron and Kenny (1986). According to

these researchers, the first step states that one must show that the predictor is related to the outcome. The second step states that one must show the predictor is related to the mediator. The third step states that one must show that the mediator is related to the outcome. If these steps have been supported, one must then control for the mediator to determine the degree of mediation (partial or full) which will be indicated by a significance level. Then the significance of the indirect effect indicated in the mediation predictions must be tested directly using the Sobel (1982) test. Results for the regression analyses for the four hypotheses can be found in Tables 4 and 5.

The first hypothesis for this study stated that WFB would mediate the relationship between FSOP's and employee engagement. Following the essential steps recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986), I first established a relationship between the initial variable and the mediator by regressing WFB on FSOP and the control variables. As expected, there was a significant relationship between FSOP and WFB ($b = 0.36$, p<.01). Next, I regressed employee engagement on FSOP's while controlling for WFB to demonstrate the degree of mediation (either partial or full) WFB had in the overall relationship, as shown in Table 4. Since the relationship between WFB and engagement was not significant, this analysis did not offer support for the mediation effect predicted in Hypothesis 1. Because the regression analyses did not support the presence of an indirect effect, Sobel tests were not conducted.

The second hypothesis in this study stated that WFB will mediate the relationship between FSOP's and intent to quit. As shown above, I found a significant relationship between FSOP and WFB. Next I found a significant relationship between WFB and

intentions to quit after controlling for FSOP, as shown in Table 4. Finally, the Sobel test of the indirect effect, was significant ($z = 4.26$, $p<.00001$). When controlling for WFB though, the relationship between FSOP's on intent to quit was not reduced completely to zero as we would expect with full mediation. Therefore, the results suggest that WFB is a partial mediator of the relationship between FSOP and intention to quit supporting hypothesis two.

The third hypothesis in the study states that WFB will mediate the relationship between FSOP's and job tension/strain. Again, I found a significant relationship between FSOP and WFB, as shown above. Next, I found a significant relationship between WFB and job tension after controlling for FSOP, as shown in Table 5. Finally, the Sobel test of the indirect effect was significant ($z = 3.35$, $p< .001$). As with intentions to quit, the relationship between FSOP and job tension was not completely reduced to zero after controlling for the mediator. Therefore, the results suggest that WFB is a partial mediator of the relationship between FSOP and job tension, supporting hypothesis three.

The fourth and final hypothesis stated that WFB would mediate the relationship between FSOP and employee physical health. After establishing the significant relationship between FSOP and WFB, above, I next regressed physical health on WFB after controlling for FSOP, as shown in Table 5. However, that relationship was not significant indicating that there was no mediation. As a result, the Sobel test of the indirect effect was not conducted, and hypothesis four was not supported.

Table 4

Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Employee Engagement and Intent to Quit

	Employee Engagement			Intent to Quit		
	b	*SE*	*t*	*b*	*SE*	*t*
Age	0.08	.041	1.95*	0.01	0.07	0.17
Children	0.03	.042	0.81	-0.03	0.07	-0.49
Marital Status	0.01	.043	0.24	0.02	0.07	0.34
Gender	0.07	0.04	1.64	0.01	0.07	0.09
WFB	0.08	0.04	1.70	-0.47	0.07	-6.37**
FSOP	0.21	0.04	4.68**	-0.24	0.07	-3.22**

Note: *p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 5

Hierarchical Regression Analyses for Job Tension and Health

	Job Tension			Health		
	b	*SE*	*t*	*b*	*SE*	*t*
Age	0.02	0.05	0.43	0.01	0.07	0.17
Children	-0.02	0.05	-0.32	-0.09	0.07	-1.23
Marital Status	0.10	0.05	2.11*	-0.20	0.07	-2.71**
Gender	0.10	0.05	2.26*	0.00	0.07	0.02
WFB	-0.21	0.05	-4.14**	0.11	0.08	1.41
FSOP	-0.19	0.05	-3.79**	0.08	0.08	1.04

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

Table 6

Summary of Hypotheses and Outcomes

Hypotheses	Outcome
1. Work-family balance will mediate the relationship between FSOP's and increased employee engagement.	Not supported
2. Work-family balance will mediate the relationship between FSOP'S and decreased employee intentions to quit.	Supported
3. Work-family balance will mediate the relationship between FSOP'S and decreased employee job strain/tension.	Supported
4. Work-family balance will mediate the relationship between FSOP'S and increased employee physical health.	Not supported

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

As the economy rises and falls, one thing appears to remain the same: the integration of women in a workplace previously occupied mostly by men. This means that in a traditional household where there are two spouses and at least one child, men are spending more time with children than before while women are spending more time away from their homes and families. To help both men and women better balance the conflicting demands of work and family, many employers have started to offer family-friendly benefits to their workers.

However, past research has indicated that the presence of family-friendly benefits is not enough in itself to create positive outcomes for men and women in the workplace. Instead, these benefits need to be offered within the context of a family supportive culture (Allen, 2001). To address the possible influence of this sort of family supportive culture on important outcomes for both employees and the organization, the current research was conducted. The primary purpose of this study was to explain the relationship between the antecedent of family-supportive organizational perceptions and the outcomes of employee engagement, intention to quit, job tension/strain, and physical health. I proposed work-family balance as the link between this antecedent and outcomes, suggesting that the relationships between the antecedent and outcomes would diminish when work-family balance was controlled for.

The data collected from the questionnaire along with the analyses conducted provided relevant information about relationships between the proposed antecedent and

the outcomes, as well as more general correlational information about key topics in the workplace. The principal finding of this study is that FSOP's predicted job tension, intent to quit, and employee engagement. This finding suggests when employees perceive their current organization to have a family-supportive culture, employees are less likely to experience job tension, less likely to leave their current organization (quit), and experience higher levels of engagement. These are all positive outcomes which can be influenced with the presence of a family-supportive organizational culture.

Of these three predicted relationships, WFB was found to be the mediator for two. Work-family balance was found to be the mediator between FSOP's and job tension/strain as well as for FSOP's and intent to quit. These finding suggest that FSOP's operate to reduce strain and intentions to quit by improving perceptions of WFB. However, I found evidence that WFB was only a partial mediator, and so other mechanisms may account for the relationships as well. Conversely, WFB was not found to be the mediator between FSOP's and employee engagement. This suggests the presence of another mediator variable, not WFB as hypothesized.

In an effort to uncover the potential mediator between FSOP's and employee engagement, I began to speculate on possible links between these two variables. I speculated that organizational commitment may be the potential mediator between the two proposed variables. This speculation arose from the thought that the presence of a family supportive organizational culture may lead employees to feel more committed to their organization as a sort of duty or loyalty to return the favor to their organization which then would increase their levels of engagement. This speculation is also based on

research suggesting that employee engagement is an antecedent of organizational commitment (Saks & Rotman, 2006) and that the relationship may be reciprocal in nature. Also, I speculate interactional justice to be another potential mediator between FSOP's and employee engagement. This speculation also arises from the Saks and Rotman (2006) research that suggested both procedural and distributive justice as antecedents of employee engagement. I speculate interactional justice may be a mediator because FSOP's would increase employee's perceptions of fair interactions with their organization, which in turn may increase their levels of engagement. Though these are purely speculations, it would be both interesting and worthwhile to test them in future research.

Research also has shown that organizational commitment was a mediating variable between career calling and withdrawal intentions or intentions to quit (Duffy, Dik, & Steger, 2001). This research may explain an additional variable that explains the relationship between FSOP and employee intentions to quit. In looking at other potential mediating factors for the relationship between FSOP and job tension, research shows that role stressors mediated the relationship between organizational culture and job tension (Pool, 1999). These two potential mediators are only some of the possibilities of other mediators that may be present in the relationships between FSOP's and both job tension and intentions to quit.

Unfortunately, the data collected from my sample was unable to provide support for my fourth and final hypothesis that work-family balance would mediate the relationship between FSOP's and employee physical health. Though our expectations of

a relationship between these variables led us to hypothesize that this relationship would exist, the data do not support our expectations. Upon correlational analysis, a significant relationship did not exist between FSOP's and employee physical health. However, health is a dynamic construct which was measured by a one-item scale within my overall measure. This one-item may not have been a sufficient measurement of physical health and may have skewed the results of my study. Though research suggests that one-item measures can be sufficient to adequately measure some constructs (Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007), this research also indicates the construct must be concrete and easily understandable. As stated previously, health is a dynamic construct which is comprised of both mental and physical health and may not have been assessed by our measure appropriately.

Upon review of the regression analyses, the results supported only two of the four hypotheses. The two supported relationships, FSOP's to job tension/strain and intent to quit, and the two unsupported relationships, FSOP's to engagement and physical health indicated a clear difference between the unsupported and supported outcomes. Job tension/strain and intent to quit, the supported outcome variables, are both specific types of outcomes. On the other hand, engagement and physical health, the unsupported outcome variables, are broader types of outcomes. For instance, engagement has been previously broken down into many forms of engagement including vigor, dedication, absorption, occupation engagement, organization engagement among others (Schaufeli,et al., 2002 ; Saks & Rotman, 2006). The many ways in which engagement have been defined and conceptualized offers support for my claim that engagement is a broader and

more ill-defined construct than either job tension/strain or intent to quit. Additionally physical health can be broken down into portions of health such as cardiovascular, muscular, pulmonary, cognitive, and several others suggesting the broadness of this outcome variable, as well. The broad nature of these two outcome variables may serve as an explanation as to why neither were not found to be mediated by WFB.

Additionally, the two supported hypotheses are more negative in nature compared to the two unsupported hypotheses. Due to this distinction between outcome-type, it may be hypothesized that work-family balance has more of an impact on negative outcomes than positive outcomes. Since the sample consisted mostly of women with children, the impact of a family-supportive culture in addition to perceptions of work-family balance may have influenced these negative outcomes more than the positive outcomes. Women are generally healthier than men and with that said, the level of influence on physical health for our sample may not have been as substantial if the sample had been more representative (Bertakis & Azari, 2010). Also, there may have been a priming effect on the survey results due to the order in which the scales within the overall measure were ordered.

Implications

Based on the findings from this study, there are several implications for employers and organizations to take into consideration. First, when the four outcome variables are looked at from a two-grouped standpoint, health and job tension/strain can be seen as outcomes directly affecting the employee while employee engagement and intention to quit can be seen as affecting the organization more. The information

gathered and taken from our data suggest that family-supportive organizational

perceptions are not solely beneficial to the organization or the employee, but rather both.

From this information, the point should be taken that the investment in aiding to increase

employee's family-supportive perceptions of your organization will increase levels of

WFB which then not only benefit the employee, but those perceptions also benefit the

organization. The investment, may it be time-based or financial, of increasing FSOP's

and opportunities for employees to seek balance between their work and family will have

benefits for the organization and employees.

As indicated from the regression analyses conducted for the purpose of this paper,

FSOP's are not the only missing piece of the puzzle. It is even more important that

organizations offer programs that increase or assist to maintain employee's feeling of

balance between work and family. This can be achieved by offering forms of family-

friendly benefits such as flexible work arrangements, telecommuting (Baltes, Briggs,

Huff, Wright & Neuman, 1999), on-sight daycare, and others in addition to

organizational support encouraging employees to utilize these benefits. This support is

what bridges the gap between simply offering these benefits, and the employee's belief

that there is genuine encouragement to take advantage of the benefits for family offered.

Though it is difficult to assign a direct monetary amount to these outcomes, the

Sloan Work and Family Research Network estimated that decreased productivity and

increased absenteeism by employees due to employee stress can cost businesses

anywhere from $496 to $1,984 per employee annually (Rosenzweig & Huffstutter, 2004).

These stressors may be reduced by offering work-family balance programs such as

telework, flexible scheduling, and others of the like potentially saving billions of dollars per year. Moreover, in an unscheduled absence survey, research showed that illness was not the primary reason employees missed work. Rather, 21% of those employees reported not being present for work due to family issues (CCH Incorporated, 2005). Clearly, if more work-family balance programs can be implemented in organizations, both employees and organizations will reap the benefits.

In sum, work-family balance is an invaluable construct that is relevant to the well being of both organizations and employees. Programs to support the balance between employees work and familial roles should be implemented when at all possible by organizations in order to achieve desirable outcomes such as decreased intent to quit and decreased job tension. Though these programs may come with a price tag, the outcomes associated with the presence of work-family balance are invaluable to both the organization and the employees.

Limitations

Though this research has several important implications, there are also some limitations that accompany it. First, the data for this research were collected via self-report. Though self-report is often times used in the work-family interface research, it carries with it the possibility of response-bias. Though all of the scales within my overall measure had acceptable reliability, self-report data can negatively affect data because all responses are collected at one point in time (Valcour, 2007). For example, participants may have been influenced by a scale within the first portion of the overall measure and from that point in the survey the participant may respond in accordance to that influence.

Also, the sample for this study was recruited through participation from undergraduate students. It is likely that this sample is more educated and of a higher socioeconomic status than a broader sample, making generalizations to other groups tenuous. In addition to the recruitment style for this study, the sample was mostly comprised of middle-aged women. It is possible that the homogeneity of this sample provided skewed results, though meta-analytic research has supported that demographic variables have a near-zero relationship with the work-family interface and can be considered a poor predictor of work-family interfaces (Byron, 2005). Nonetheless, future research along these lines should be conducted with a more heterogeneous sample.

And lastly, this specific study focused on four outcomes expected to be affected by family-supportive organizational perceptions and work-family balance. As stated previously, our physical health outcome was measured with a one-item scale. This is problematic in that physical health may not be a concrete enough construct to be measured with a one-item measure. Due to this measurement issue, we may or may not have achieved different results had we used a longer or more comprehensive index of physical health.

Future Research

Though this research has important implications for employers, there is certainly room for improvement and discovery in future research on all of these constructs. As stated in the introductory portions of this document, work-family balance is an understudied construct in comparison to work-family conflict. Due to the importance of balance between the family and work roles in an employee's life, further exploration of

this construct is needed. Work-family balance is an integral part of employee well-being, and with that being said the construct deserves further exploration (Halpern, 2005).

Conclusion

Overall, the research presented here reinforces the importance of a family supportive organizational culture. The research shows relationship between FSOP's and positive outcomes like decreased job tension/strain and decreased intent to quit. Moreover, these beneficial relationships are partly due to a perceived increase in work-family balance. Since the investment in creating a family supportive organizational culture is beneficial to both the organization and the employee, these findings provide an impetus for implementing new employee benefit programs in organizations.

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APPENDIX

MEASURE USED

Demographics
Gender
Please indicate your gender (male or female)
Age
Please state in numbers your age.
Marital Status
Please indicate which explains your marital status (married, single, co-habitating, divorced, widowed).

Work Hours and Children
Dependent Children
Please indicate in numbers how many dependent children live with you in your home.

Family-Supportive Organizational Perceptions (Allen, 2001)
To what extent do you agree that the following statements represent the philosophy or beliefs of your organization (remember, these are not your own personal beliefs, but pertain to what you believe is the philosophy of your organization). The scale ranged from 1=*strongly disagree* to 5=*strongly agree.*
1. The ideal employee is the one who is available 24 hours a day (R).
2. Offering employees flexibility in completing their work is viewed as a strategic way of doing business.
3. Employees are given ample opportunity to perform both their job and their personal responsibilities.
4. It is assumed that the most productive employees are those who put their work before their family life (R).
5. Individuals who take time off to attend to personal matters are not committed to their work (R).
6. The way to advance in this company is to keep non-work matters out of the workplace (R).
7. Employees should keep their personal problems at home (R).
8. Attending to personal lives, such as taking time off for sick children, is frowned upon (R).
9. Employees who are highly committed to their personal lives cannot be highly committed to their work (R).
10. Expressing involvement and interest in non-work matters is viewed as healthy.
11. It is considered taboo to talk about life outside work (R).
12. It is best to keep family matters separate from work (R).
13. Long hours inside the office are the way to achieving advancement (R).
14. Work should be the primary priority in a person's life (R).

Work-Family Balance (Valcour, 2007)
Please respond with the extent to which you are satisfied with the following aspects of your work and family lives. The scale ranged from 1=*very dissatisfied* to 5=*very satisfied*.
1. The opportunity you have to perform your job well and yet be able to perform home-related duties.
2. Your ability to balance the needs of your job with those of our personal life.
3. How well your family and life fit together.
4. The way you divide your attention between work and home.
5. The way you divide your time between work and personal or family life.

Intentions to Leave (Michaels & Spector, 1982)
Please respond with the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements. The scale ranged from 1=*strongly disagree* to 5=*strongly agree*.
1. I am planning to quit my job.
2. I want to quit my job.
3. I often seriously consider quitting my job.

Health/Health Behaviors (Allen & Armstrong, 2006)
1. Please rate your physical health relative to others your age (1=*poor* to 5=*excellent*).
2. Do you have any chronic health conditions that interfere with your participation in daily activities (*yes* or *no*)?

Employee Engagement (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006)
Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements. The scale ranged from 1=*strongly disagree* to 5=*strongly agree*.
1. I get carried away when I am working.
2. I am immersed in my work.
3. I am proud of the work that I do.
4. I feel happy when I am working intensely.
5. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.
6. My job inspires me.
7. I am enthusiastic about my job.
8. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.
9. At my work, I feel bursting with energy.

Job Tension/Strain (House & Rizzo, 1972)
Please rate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements. The scale ranged from 1=*strongly disagree* to 5=*strongly agree*.
1. I often "take my job home with me" in the sense that I think about it when doing other things.

2. I have felt nervous before attending meetings in the company.
3. Problems associated with my job have kept me awake at night.
4. If I had a different job, my health would probably improve.
5. I have felt fidgety or nervous as a result of my job.
6. I work under a great deal of tension.
7. My job tends to directly affect my health.