

## **WORK-FAMILY BALANCE, FAMILY STRUCTURE AND FAMILY-FRIENDLY EMPLOYER PROGRAMS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the relationship between employer policies and family structure on conflicts between work and family. Using data from workforce module of the 2006 General Social Survey, we use ordinal and multinomial logistic regression models to explore the importance of work-family balance policies regarding flexibility: telecommuting, adjusting one's schedule, and ability to be absent from work for family needs. We examine these policies considering family structure, that is, for employees with and without children, and for married and non-married employees. Results indicate that the presence of children in the household is the most important family structure factor, regardless of marital status, such that having children increased the likelihood of work-family conflict. Of the three family-friendly policies, enabling employees to leave work for family needs and events is the most important for increasing work-family balance. Suggestions for other employer policies are provided.

## **Work-Family Balance, Family Structure and Family-Friendly Employer Programs**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Balancing work obligations with obligations outside of work is increasingly seen as a core factor in reducing unhealthy situations for individuals and their families, and for employers seeking to increase productivity in the workplace. Balance has also more become difficult to define and attain, given that the boundaries between work life and home life have become blurred through 21<sup>st</sup> century telecommunications and the facilitation of home and virtual offices. Both families and employers seek balance as evidenced by a large volume of popular articles in magazines such as *Redbook* or *Working Mother*, scholarly articles in family and management journals, and in books written for business managers (Kofodimous, 1993; Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000). In this article we compare family structures with their experiences in work-family balance. We then apply the results to understand which employer policies are most beneficial for different kinds of families.

This area of study is important because work- family conflict can have negative effects for both employees and organizations, thus finding ways to alleviate work family conflict can bring benefits to both. At home, work- family conflict has been associated with a large array of problems: domestic violence (Trachtenberg, 2008), poor physical activity (Eva, Sirpa, Tea & Eero, 2007; Roos, et al. 2007) poor eating habits (Allen & Armstrong, 2006; Eva, Sirpa, Tea & Eero, 2007), sickness among blue-collar and lower white collar employees (Väänänen, et al. 2008), poor emotional health following childbirth (Grice et al., 2007), excessive drinking (Roos, Lahelma & Rahkonen, 2006), substance abuse among women (Frone, Barnes & Farrell, 1994), decreased marital satisfaction and psychological health in dual-career families (Mauno & Kinnunen, 1999), decreased emotional well being, low levels of life satisfaction (Lambert, Kass, Pitrowski & Vondanovich, 2006), poor core self evaluations, self-esteem, neuroticism, locus of control and general self-efficacy (Boyar and Mosley, 2007).

Employers also face problems of work-family balance such that human resource managers seek to minimize this balance through family-friendly policies. Employers' motivation derives from the problems related to work-family conflict that they experience. These include employee burn-out (Jackson & Maslach 1982 as cited in Greenhaus & Beutell 1985; Gali, Rich & Westman 2007; Flinkman, Laine, Leino-Kilpi, Hasselhorn & Salanterä 2008; Innstrand, Langballe, Espnes, Falkum & Aasland 2008; Reinardy 2007a), frequent family interruptions, lateness and absenteeism (Hammer, Bauer & Grandey, 2003), high turnover (Anderson, Coffey & Byerly, 2002; Karatepe & Sokmen, 2006; Pasewark & Viator, 2006;), decreased job satisfaction (Anderson, Coffey & Byerly, 2002; Pasewark & Viator, 2006), high levels of job stress (Vinokur, Pierce, & Buck, 1999), low organizational commitment (Lambert, Hogan, Camp & Ventura, 2006), and the desire to work fewer hours (Reynolds and Aletraris, 2007). Clarifying the factors and programs associated with balance may help organizations develop better and more effective work/family policies.

A note about the term “work-family” as applied to either conflict or balance is in order. Some have found this term limiting since conflict between work and other needs can exist even for those with no family of orientation or procreation. ‘Work-life’ is also inadequate because work is part of life. ‘Work-Nonwork’ is awkward and vague. As the focus here is specifically on family structure, we use the work-family (or family-work) terminology.

#### CAUSES OF WORK-FAMILY IMBALANCE

An imbalance between the needs of the home and the needs of the workplace exists when there is inadequate time or energy to function as desired at both to the extent that the individual prefers, and to the extent that family members and employers prefer and require. When individuals cannot balance their own needs with those of their family and employer, work-family conflict ensues. Family roles – spouse

and parent primarily, but also adult child – become vehicles for the potential strain. Similarly, the nature of the employee's work role exists as a potential source of conflict. But these roles work in both directions: work and family confer benefits as well as strain.

#### *Family role strain*

Family relationships not only require attention and time, but also are typically the preferred arena compared to work. Children become a focal point of family time, as they require constant care when younger, and parenting involves both care as well as positive experiences for developing emotional bonds. Not surprisingly, the time demands for raising children are such that men and women with preschool children at home are more likely to report high levels of work/life conflict, regardless of the parents' age (Galinsky and Morris, 1993). They also report higher levels of stress and work overload than other couples. Men and women raising children are consistently more likely to experience higher levels of work/life conflict and stress than those whose children are grown.. Nevertheless, the number of children or their ages were seen having only a small effect on feelings of working more than they would like to (Clarkberg & Moen 2001, Thompson et al., 1999), although others did find positive correlations between number of children and family-work conflict. And as difficult as it can be to raise children in a two-parent household, a single-parent has even more challenges (Rindfuss, 1991). However, Duxbury, Higgins and Lee (1994) found little difference between single and married parents.

Marriages also require nurturing and leisure time in order to stay close, so it is not surprising that excessive work demands can cause marital stress (Gambles, Lewis and Rapoport 2006). In particular, a dual-career family has to conduct all the household management in the evenings and weekends, which may add to additional strain. Wives in dual-earner relationships are more likely to feel overworked with either they or their husbands have very long hours at work (Clarkberg & Moen 2001).

*Work-role strain*

When the boundaries and definitions of work roles are unmanageable or unknown, conflict will enter family needs. One such area is work overload (Greenhaus & Beutell 1985) is having too much to do or not having enough resources to carry out required tasks, which has been found to increase work-family conflict (Foley & Hang-Yue, 2005; Ngo, Foley & Loi 2005; Reinardy, 2007b; Balmforth & Gardner 2006).

Excessive work time and frequency of overtime have been found to be increase work-family conflict (Pleck et al., 1980; as cited in Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Overtime may have, however, both positive and negative impacts on work-family balance (Golden & Wiens-Tuers 2006; (Lautsch & Scully, 2007; Golden & Wiens-Tuers, 2006). Mandatory overtime is itself a symptom of one's socioeconomic class and position. Wage workers and lower income employees may see additional hours as way to improve their financial situation, which then lowers other forms of stress. For working class persons, reducing hours may represent not an alleviation of work-family imbalance but income loss that increases conflict Lautsch & Scully 2008; see also Fischer & Hout, 2006). Lautsch & Scully (2007) found that income from overtime can solve many work/family problems for working-class employees but Golden & Wiens-Tuers (2005, 2008) found that working extra hours is associated with greater work family interference. Other time based time-based factors that are positively associated with work-family conflict are the number of hours worked (Madsen, 2003; Ku, 2007; Frye & Breaugh, 2004). Men and women in families where one spouse is working more than 45 hours per week report more work/life conflict than those couples where both spouses are working regular hours (36-45) hours per week. (Galinsky, Bond, and Freidman 1993).

The large volume of research in human relations and management practices indicates that strain will occur when there is lack of support from either co-workers (Nielson, Carlson & Lankau, 2001) or

supervisors (Moen and Yu, 2000; Lapierre & Allen, 2006; Janson, Kant, Kristensen & Nijhuis, 2003; Secret & Swanberg 2008; Karateope & Kilic, 2007; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Another area in work-family balance more recently explored is work engagement. An engaged employee is committed to the employer, gains satisfaction from the work because it is meaningful, enjoys opportunities for career growth, and whose worth is validated through an environment that fosters autonomy (Freund & Baltes, 2002). Having a job that challenges one as reflected by opportunities to learn new things on the job is an important source of work engagement (Freund & Baltes, 2002). The lack of opportunity to learn new skills was one of the most difficult stressors to manage (Ng, Skitmore & Leung, 2005). Work engagement is one reason why work has positive benefits on the family beyond the financial benefit. Having autonomy at work – the ability to make decisions on one's own to self-manage one's work – is an important factor in engagement. Individuals with higher perceived control and lower levels of overload and interference tend to have less work-family conflict (Duxbury, Higgins and Lee, 1994).

#### FLEXIBILITY: FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES

Many organizations have implemented policies to curb or reduce work-family conflict (Foley & Hang-Yue, 2005). The majority of employer policies – known as family friendly work policies, personal resource management, the promotion of work-family facilitation, and simply ‘flexibility’ – fall into three basic categories: (1) adjusting hours of arrival or departure, or days of work; (2) working at home or telecommuting; and (3) being able to take time off, either scheduled or impromptu. Family-friendly policies have been shown to decrease many of the effects of work-family conflict (Mauno, Kinnunen & Ruokolainen, 2006; Dikkers, Geurts, Kompier, Teris, Houtman & Van den Heuvel, 2007; McManus, Korabik, Rosin, & Kelloway, 2002). Specifically these programs have been shown to decrease sickness, absence, work-related impairment, turnover (Antani, 2008), decrease missed

deadlines and lateness (Halpern, 2005). Other benefits from family-friendly policies include increases in workplace safety (Cullen, 2005), job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment (Balmforth & Gardner, 2006), personal resource levels and organizational effectiveness (Greenblatt, 2002), (Bragger, Rodriguez-Srednicki, Kutcher, Indovino & Rosner, 2005), commitment (Haar & Spell, 2004; Halpern, 2005; Casey & Grzywacz, 2008),, and employee creativity (Pevney, 2007).

*Adjustable schedules:* Increasingly seen as a key factor cited by employees for high job satisfaction (Sahibzada, Hammer, Neal & Kuang, 2005; Thompson et al., 1999), employers and employees may utilize scheduling as a mechanism for alleviating strain, that is, the ability to adjust scheduled hours of work to fit family or personal needs. Rather than working the traditional five-day, 9 to 5 shift, flexibility includes altering the time of arrival or departure to work, working compressed 4-day weeks, or even having short Fridays in the summer, A large volume of research has shown that married couples benefit from flexibility at work, and parents benefit from flexibility to meet the often unpredictable needs of their children. Inflexibility of work schedule causes work-family conflict (Pleck et al., 1980; as cited in Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), and increasing flexibility mitigates conflict (Towers, Duxbury, Higgins & Thomas 2006; Facer 2008; Casey & Grzywacz 2008; Mannon, Minnotte & Brower 2007; Hill, Yang, Hawkins & Ferris (2004). Yet at the same time, the benefits of flexibility could diminish over time, and the underlying reasons are not as apparent so that flexibility means different things to different people or at different times. (Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright \$ Neuman, 1999).

*Telecommuting:* The ability to work outside the office and outside normal office hours makes it easier to accommodate work and family, given the job requirements for timing and location. Not all positions are amenable to telecommuting, and employers often express reluctance to grant this benefit

citing concerns about actual productivity Working at home might also increase work-family balance by being an encroachment on the family space (Saltzstein, Ting & Salzstein, 2001).

*Taking off time for family as needed:* This form of flexibility is simply being able to have opportunities to not be at work when family needs require it. While the solution might result in telecommuting, flex scheduling or reduced hours, the benefit is that the employee is able to negotiate with the employer a solution for an immediate problem, rather than an ongoing scheduling preference. Indeed, when there is this option, work-family conflict has been shown to be lower (Goff et al. 1990).

Not all policies are effective at reducing work-family and family-work conflicts, however (Frye & Breaugh, 2004; Haar & Spell 2004; Haar 2004, Harr, Spell & Driscoll 2005). For example, Goff et al. (1990) found that on-site childcare did not mitigate work-family conflict. One reason is a perceived discrimination against some workers (Dickson 2008). This body of research suggests that sometimes work-family support is not effective in reducing the problems of work-family conflict and that often knowledge of such programs or the perception or opinion of such program may determine how successful they are.

#### MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

Our proposed model builds upon the existing research such that family structure, employer support and work quality all act upon work-family balance. What has not yet been done is to examine which forms of family-friendly policies are the most meaningful for managing balance, and for which family structures. Because the flow of conflict can go both directions, we will examine work to family conflict (WFC), family to work conflict (FWC), and a state of balance. The hypotheses for understanding when there is work-family conflict, family-work conflict, or work-family balance are organized as follows:

1. Work-family and family-work conflict will be most likely for:
  - a. Households with children compared to those without children.
  - b. Married couples compared to non-married persons.
  - c. Single parents compared to married parents.
2. Conflict will be reduced – and balance achieved – when:
  - a. The employer provides flexible arrangements.
  - b. The work itself is engaging.
  - c. Employees do not experience work overload.
3. We expect all forms of flexibility to be more beneficial for families with children than for those without.

## **DATA AND METHODS**

We use data from the 2006 General Social Survey (GSS) because it is a nationally representative sample containing a module with rich detail about respondents' current work experience and predictors of work-family balance, in addition to the permanent questions in each wave. From the total of 4,510 completed interviews, we focus on respondents who were working at the time of the survey. In addition, the GSS used a system of modular sampling, so that some questions were asked only of some respondents. We used data from Ballots 1-6, which contains the Quality of Working life variables (NORC, 2006). We further restrict this to those age 66 or younger to focus on those in their primary work years, and removed self-employed respondents, which left us with 1,488 respondents. As with any cross-sectional survey, we are not able to view transitions that increase or decrease strain, and are therefore limited in conclusions regarding causality. Further, we only have the perspective of the employee as respondent, not the employer or the spouse.

*Dependent variables:*

The GSS provides two dependent variables for measuring work-family balance: “How often does your job interfere with your family life?” (WKSVSFAM); and “How often does your family interfere with your work on the job?” (FAMVSWK). Each is a 4-point scale, where 1 = never and 4 = often (all variables have been reverse coded when necessary in order to have the highest numeric value match the inherent meaning of the measurement). We then created a third dependent variable in order to identify predictors of balance, derived from the two dependent variables. It has three values: 1=never or rarely interference from both WFC or FWC (48% of cases), 2 = moderate interference (31%), and 3= stress where WFC and FWC are both frequently or always (21%).

*Independent variables:*

Family structure is central to this inquiry because we want to examine explicitly the impact of flexibility on families, meaning in this case, the presence of spouses and children in the household. We therefore include a dummy variable for being married (versus not married). As with all dummy variables described, the focal status = 1, with the reference = 0. For the presence of children in the household, we also have a dummy variable (1=children <18 are in the household, 0 = not), as well as a variable that counts the number of children in the household, and further, the GSS allows us to look at specific ages (pre-school, pre-teens, teens), which we have also transformed into dummy variables. We further explored combinations of these two family components, creating dummy variables for ‘married with minor children in the household’, ‘single parent of minor children’, and ‘married with no minor children in the household’.

Family-role strain: In addition the family structure, we considered the measure for marital happiness, but used general happiness ( $r=.447$ ) in order to include non-married parents, where 3 = very happy, 2=pretty happy, and 1 = not too happy (reverse coded).

Work-family flexibility: The GSS provides three variables for work flexibility. Shift flexibility is a four-point scale, where 4=often and 1 = never, for being able to change one's work schedule [CHNGTME – reverse coded]. Telecommuting is measured in terms of how frequently one can work from home (1 Never, 2 A few times a year, 3 About once a month, 4 About once a week, 5 More than once a week, 6 Worker works mainly at home). [WORKHOME], and the difficulty of which one can take time away from work to tend to family matters as they arise is a four-point scale (1=not at all hard, 4=very hard), based on the question: How hard is it to take time off during your work to take care of personal or family matters? [FAMWKOFF]. These forms of flexibility represent the most common flexibility benefits that employers offer employees.

Work-role strain: These variables include support from the supervisor “My supervisor is concerned about the welfare of his employees” (4=very true, 1 = not at all true) [SUPCARES, reverse coded], quality of relations between management and employees (5=very good, 1=very bad) [MANVSEMP, reverse coded], and ability to rely on coworkers when needed [COWRKHLP, reverse coded], based on “The people I work with can be relied on when I need help” where 4=very true and 1 = not at all true. Work engagement consists of several measures. The quality of one's work is represented by whether one has opportunities for career development, “My job requires that I keep learning new things” where 4=strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree. Autonomy is measured as an index constructed from two variables [WKDECIDE and SETTHNGS], ranging from 2 to 8, and reverse coded so that 8 is a high level of autonomy and 2 is little autonomy. Work overload is measured by three variables: Knowing exactly what to do on the job (KNOWWHAT) and OVERWORK, I have too much work to do everything well, both reverse coded so that 4 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree; and ‘Mandatory extra work hours’ [MUSTWORK], recoded into a dummy variable for being required to put in extra hours regardless of whether paid. Satisfaction with the one's financial [SATFIN] situation

measures the imperative to work (1=not at all satisfied and 3 = very satisfied), such that people who are not as satisfied with their financial situation feel compelled trade work time over family time leading to greater balance. We also include a control measure for the number of hours worked in a typical week.

Social capital: Social capital enables one to benefit more from work opportunities. While many SES measures are possible, we selected highest degree as a measure of the kind of work one is likely to get, and the possible satisfaction derived therein (0 = less than high school and 4 = graduate degree).

Demographic characteristics. We control for health, as health may be a reason to be more strained by work, age (older less so than younger, as they have more seniority), sex (males less likely to be strained) and race, as measured by Black versus all others. African-American households may experience more strain due to less power in the workplace, or may have more inter-familial resources to handle childcare.

See Table 1 for descriptive statistics for measures used in this analysis.

#### *Method*

The two existing measures of work-family balance WFC and FWC are ordinal scales and so we shall use ordinal logistic regression. This form of logistic regression tests for the significance of being in the next value level compared to the previous. The measure for balance includes three categorical states of balance, and so the appropriate statistical method is multinomial logistic regression, which compares two of the three states to the reference. Our interest is in what factors are associated with being in balance versus being in imbalance, so full imbalance is the reference category. In each analysis we include separate models for all families, married couples, and families with children.

## RESULTS

### *Work to Family Conflict (WFC)*

Employer flexibility policies met with mixed results: As expected, the more difficult it is to leave work for family needs, the greater the work-family conflict, but not for Model II, married families (Table 2). Yet despite what we hypothesized, for all three subgroups – all families, married families, and families with children – ease of adjusting the schedule was associated with *more* strain, not less, in models I and III (all families, and those with children, respectively). In all models, the more a person worked at home, the greater the work-family conflict. Having an adjustable schedule was marginally associated with more strain.

The importance of family structure played out primarily around children. Having a spouse was insignificant, but having children was associated with increased work-family interference. The ages of children did not matter, just the mere fact that they are part of the household. We also tested number of children, and dummy variables for whether there are pre-school, pre-teen or teenage children in the household. Individually all are significant. Entering two of these three age-specific dummy variables returned insignificant results. In the households with children, the number of children was insignificant.

Work roles have an impact on work-family balance via co-worker support, but not through support from the supervisor or a perception of quality management-employee relations. Despite hypothesized relationships, only co-worker support was found to reduce work-family conflict. As for the work itself, less work-family conflict obtained when the employee is clear on what is required for the job and does not feel overwhelmed at work through too much to do. Also as expected, the more hours one works and those who have mandatory work hours, the more likely it is that work-family interference will occur. The hypothesis that financial pressure would compel a situation of too many

work hours garnered support, in that the less satisfied respondents were with their financial situation, the more strain they reported. Yet another pattern that went contrary to hypotheses was for work engagement, as measured by having autonomy at work and learning new things on the job; these measures were also associated with *more*, rather than less, work-family strain.

For the rest of the social capital and demographic variables there were no significant effects in any of the models, except for one variable: race. Black families experienced less work-in-family strain than did non-Black families. Black families may be more likely have kin networks to rely upon for childcare than do other families, or possibly have children whose lives are less managed. Surprisingly, women reported only marginally higher conflict.

#### *Family to Work Conflict (FWC)*

In the direction where family roles interfere with work, one would expect family role strain to take prominence over work characteristics (Table 3), and indeed, that is what we found: married persons and households with children experience more family-work strain than those without kids or without spouses. However, the model for families with children only did not show a significant result for married versus non-married respondents.

As with the case for work-family conflict, the ease of adjusting one's schedule is associated with more rather than less strain. For families with children, working at home was also associated with more strain, but no other significant relationships were seen for flexibility.

As for work-roles and family-work conflict, employees with co-workers that they can rely on relieved strain as hypothesized,, and having too much work to do increased conflict, for the model with all families. Satisfaction with one's financial situation also was associated with increased conflict. Yet again, the work engagement variables were associated with higher family-in-work conflict. While hours worked appears to increase work-family conflict, it has no effect on family-work conflict. As for the

demographic and control variables, we see again that Black married families have less family-work strain than do non-Black families. The older one is the greater the likelihood for family-work conflict in the model with all families.

*Balance between work and family*

In this multinomial logistic regression (Table 4), we compare the status of having balance (conflict never a problem in either WFC or FWC) to imbalance (conflict always a problem), again doing so by looking at models for all employed adults, married respondents, and families with children (see Table 4). In Model I (all respondents), all of the flexibility variables are significant and reduce likelihood of imbalance, with difficulty of taking work off for family having an odds ratio with the most effect (.679) followed by telecommuting (.884). People with no children are 3.28 times more likely to have work-family balance. Work engagement – consistent with the other results – is associated with decreased likelihood of having work-family balance: people who have autonomy at work and who frequently get to learn new things on the job are less likely to have balance than those without the same level of work engagement. Work-role strain also increases likelihood of imbalance: having too much to do at work puts one at risk for conflict, whereas supportive coworkers decrease that risk. Non-black families are half as likely black families to be in a state of balance.

The results for married families and families with children are similar with some notable differences. For married families, only two of the four forms of flexibility are associated with balance: ease of taking off work, and not having mandatory overtime. For families with children, the only form of flexibility associated with balance is ease of taking off work, although the smaller sample size may have contributed to the apparent significance level. In terms of work strain, having too much to do decreases the likelihood of having balance for all family types. For engagement, learning new things decreases the likelihood of balance in all models, although autonomy does not imply imbalance for the

families with children as it does for the other households. The presence of children varies by model: For all households, having children, as expected, is associated with less likelihood of having balance, but single parents are not at greater risk of imbalance as indicated by Model III.

## **DISCUSSION**

There are several conclusions apparent from the results. First and foremost, work-family and family-work conflicts are more likely when there are children in the household, and it doesn't matter as much how many or what age, but simply that they are there. Moreover, it is not about being married that causes strain, and even in households with children, we did not see that single parents were more likely to experience strain than married parents. For employers who want to design policies to address those most at risk for work-family conflict, the focus is simply parenthood. However, this lesson would likely apply to employees taking care of elderly parents, who can become very time-consuming when their health begins to deteriorate. Worth pondering is the result for Black families, who report less work-family and family-work conflict, and greater likelihood for balance, perhaps reflecting a larger network of supportive family and fictive kin.

The second area is about the family-friendly policies. The most consistently helpful policy was being able to take off from work when family duties called. This policy reduced work-family conflict, family-work conflict, and increased the likelihood of balance for all households. Mandatory overtime hours indicates work role strain, but it too is a policy that affects family, given that alleviation of this demand reduces work-family conflict but not family-work conflict. If a company requires this kind of commitment, then it needs to balance it through additional policies to prevent burnout. An example of this strategy is typical in accounting offices, who work long hours in the first third of the year, and then have shortened weeks and company outings during the summer. Working from home is more complex. Rather than reducing work-family and family-work strain, it was more likely though not always a factor

in increasing work-family conflict, perhaps because of the presence of children makes working in the home feel intrusive. While some workers may know how to impose self-discipline on themselves and on their family members, not all succeed, but note that this pattern is true for all employees, regardless of family status. In contrast, being able to readjust one's schedule was more helpful for reducing family-work strain rather than work-family. Running counter to the hypothesis, it is possible that employees who seek out this solution are selected for already having more conflict and didn't get the resolution desired, or perhaps this solution works for commute rather than family strain. But if for the latter, adjustable scheduling could be applied when one's family situation demanded adjustment, and given research demonstrating that its effectiveness could waver over time, be applied as a short-term solution.

The next conclusion for employers to take to heart is regarding the work environment itself. The support of management is implicitly recognized in the availability of family-friendly policies. Indeed, balance was not the result of individual supervisors. Rather, some aspect of management of the work itself was conducive to balance, as evidenced by the finding that a realistic workload and adequate training were the operating factors here. Further evidence of the role of management is seen in the result for the existence (or not) of mandatory extra hours, where obligatory 'extra' hours lowers the likelihood that a worker has no conflict. Work overload, task confusion and frequency of overtime exist when there is inadequate staffing or the lack of coordination between different functions in an organization. It therefore is a feature that requires direction from management.

Beyond specific policies about flexible arrangements of work, the nature of the work itself is a different facet of responsibility in an organizational strategy. Employee engagement is more than just a buzzword: using just two measures of engagement – autonomy and learning – we find that both were strongly associated with increased work-family conflict and decreased balance. When one considers that autonomy seems to make men want to work more (Reynolds 2006), then we can conclude that for those

employees who are most engaged in their work, a healthy situation means a policy of encouraging these employees to take time off for families before they hit a burn-out stage. We find then that different aspects of the workplace are interwoven and support each other. Flexibility allows employers and employees to maintain balance, and employee engagement programs make work more attractive. Used judiciously in combination, employees and employers alike can benefit, and the relationship between management and employees becomes supportive rather than adversarial.

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**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Range (* = reverse coded)</b>
<i>Dependent Variables</i>			
Work-Family Conflict	2.27	.981	1 = never, 3=always*
Family-Work Conflict	1.99	.848	1 = never, 3=always*
Work/Family Balance	1.7	.773	1= neither form of conflict, 2= some conflict, 3 = both forms of conflict
<i>Family Structure</i>			
Married	0.48	0.50	Effect
Children under 18 in household	0.39	.489	Effect
<i>Work Flexibility</i>			
Mandatory to work extra hours	0.27	0.45	Effect
How hard to leave work for family	1.98	1.00	1=not at all hard, 4=very hard
Frequency of working at home	1.93	1.487	1 =Never, 6 =Works mainly at home
How often allowed to change schedule	2.43	1.24	1=never and 4 = often*
<i>Work Role Strain</i>			
Supervisor concern	3.25	.885	1 = not at all true, 4=very true*
Co-worker reliance if needed	2.39	0.647	1= not at all true, 4=very true*
Management-employee relations	2.90	.916	1=very bad, 5=very good*
<i>Work Overload</i>			
Knows what to do in job	2.32	0.62	1 = strongly disagree, 3 = strongly agree*
Too much work to do	2.24	0.71	1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree*
Satisfaction with financial situation	2.03	0.736	1=not at all satisfied, 3=satisfied *
Hours worked weekly	42.56	13.597	1 to 89
<i>Employee Engagement</i>			
Autonomy index	5.17	1.77	1=no autonomy, 8 = much autonomy
Learning new things on the job	2.27	0.724	1 = strongly disagree, 3=strongly agree*
<i>Socioeconomic and demographic</i>			
Female	0.55	0.498	effect
Black	0.16	0.37	1=Black, 2 = else
Highest degree earned	1.79	1.171	0=LT High School, 4=College graduate
Age	41	11.96	18 to 67
Health	2.66	.997	1=poor, 5=excellent*
Overall life happiness	2.19	.599	1=not too happy, 3=very happy*

Notes: Data in Table 1 are not weighted. N=1,488.

**Table 2: Work-Family Conflict – Ordinal Logistic Regression**

	All Families		Married		Families with Children	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
[WKVSFAM = 1]	2.301***	.496	2.782***	.744	2.095***	.772
[WKVSFAM = 2]	3.943***	.503	4.578***	.753	3.809***	.781
[WKVSFAM = 3]	6.203***	.522	7.221***	.786	6.376***	.816
Ease of adjusting schedule	.089*	.047	.098	.065	.100	.079
Difficulty of leaving work for family	.480***	.058	.528***	.081	.743***	.099
Frequency of working at home	.156***	.041	.122**	.052	.129**	.064
Management-employee relations	-.036	.066	.066	.089	.081	.102
Supervisor cares	-.023	.069	.014	.099	.080	.107
Co-worker support	-.297***	.091	-.468***	.124	-.413***	.140
Knows what to do in job	-.255***	.085	-.180	.116	-.365***	.140
Too much work to do	.420***	.077	.434***	.107	.565***	.122
Mandatory to work extra hours (d)	.487***	.121	.623***	.165	.591***	.192
Hours worked weekly	.019***	.004	.019***	.006	.021***	.007
Learning new things on the job	.262***	.082	.471***	.119	.297**	.129
Autonomy index	.197***	.035	.186***	.048	.199***	.057
Satisfaction with financial situation	-.163**	.076	-.227**	.106	-.140	.121
Married (d)	.090	.119			-.190	.199
Children under 18 in household (d)	.771***	.112	.589***	.148		
Black (d)	-.445***	.153	-.413*	.248	-.609**	.243
Females	-.174*	.106	-.274*	.146	.036	.182
Overall life happiness	-.075	.096	-.122	.131	-.325**	.161
Age	.011**	.005	.007	.007	.010	.009
Health	-.067	.055	.066	.075	-.025	.090
Highest degree earned	.076	.051	.162**	.067	.118	.083
Number of Cases (Unweighted)		1,478		831		602
-2 log likelihood		3155.985		1709.747		1240.861
Cox & Snell Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>		.277		.297		.328

Note: \*\*\* p&lt; .01, \*\* p&lt; .05 \* p&lt; .10 (weighted data)

**Table 3: Family-Work Conflict – Ordinal Logistic Regression**

	All Families		Married		Families with Children	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
[FAMVSWK = 1]	.401	.488	-.343	.728	-1.777**	.759
[FAMVSWK = 2]	2.257***	.492	1.712**	.730	.264	.755
[FAMVSWK = 3]	4.746***	.514	4.394***	.757	2.644***	.772
Ease of adjusting schedule	.113**	.047	.086	.064	.199**	.078
Difficulty of leaving work for family	.092	.057	-.007	.078	.127	.092
Frequency of working at home	.045	.040	.082	.051	.105*	.062
Management-employee relations	-.086	.066	-.029	.088	-.166*	.100
Supervisor cares	-.019	.069	.044	.099	.036	.106
Co-worker support	-.209**	.090	-.240**	.122	-.236*	.137
Knows what to do in job	-.085	.084	-.073	.114	-.261*	.136
Too much work to do	.187**	.076	.051	.104	.106	.117
Mandatory to work extra hours(d)	.050	.121	-.112	.162	.328	.188
Hours worked weekly	-.003	.004	-.004	.005	.007	.007
Learning new things on the job	.197**	.081	.231**	.117	.371***	.128
Autonomy index	.119***	.034	.098**	.047	.006	.056
Satisfaction with financial situation	-.187**	.076	-.234**	.105	-.028	.120
Married (d)	.213*	.118			.028	.195
Children under 18 in household(d)	.729***	.111	.578***	.147		
Females	-.090	.105	-.197	.145	.045*	.180
Black (d)	-.223	.152	-.787***	.251	-.325	.240
Age	.012***	.005	.008	.007	-.002	.009
Health	.043	.055	.097	.074	-.019	.088
Highest degree earned	.052	.051	.119*	.066	.065	.082
Overall life happiness	-.127	.096	-.124	.129	-.273*	.158
Number of Cases (Unweighted)		1,478		831		602
-2 log likelihood		3111.401		1721.780		1292.746
Cox & Snell Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>		.105		.104		.047

Note: \*\*\* p&lt; .01, \*\* p&lt; .05 \* p&lt; .10 (weighted data)

**Table 4: Work-Family Balance – Multinomial Logistic Regression**  
 Balance versus Imbalance (reference) comparisons presented; Mixed versus Imbalance not shown

	All Families			Married			Families with Children		
	B	SE	Exp(B)	B	SE	Exp(B)	B	SE	Exp(B)
Balance Intercept	4.496***	.769		5.091***	1.137		2.512**	1.104	
Ease of adjusting schedule	-.123*	.073	.884	-.038	.099	.963	-.141	.115	.868
Difficulty of leaving work for family	-.387***	.087	.679	-.381***	.120	.683	-.379***	.139	.685
Frequency of working at home	-.123**	.061	.884	-.092	.077	.913	-.123	.094	.884
Management-employee relations	.041	.101	1.042	-.072	.134	.931	.002	.147	1.002
Supervisor cares	.071	.106	1.074	-.051	.151	.950	.038	.158	1.039
Co-worker support	.337*	.136	1.401	.471**	.184	1.602	.336*	.202	1.399
Knows what to do in job	.192	.130	1.211	.263	.177	1.301	.390*	.204	1.476
Too much work to do	-.471***	.116	.624	-.432***	.156	.649	-.615***	.179	.540
Learning new things on the job	-.295**	.128	.745	-.520***	.182	.594	-.433**	.190	.648
Autonomy index	-.180***	.055	.835	-.200***	.078	.819	-.120	.083	.887
Satisfaction with financial situation	.208*	.118	1.231	.338**	.160	1.402	.150	.178	1.162
Hours worked weekly	-.009	.006	.991	-.015*	.008	.985	-.017	.010	.984
Mandatory to work extra hours (d)	-.159	.185	1.172	-.073	.249	1.076	-.540**	.275	1.716
Married (d)	-.058	.183	1.060				.160	.291	.853
Children under 18 in household (d)	-1.186***	.172	3.275	-1.012***	.228	2.750			
Females	.289*	.164	.749	.369*	.223	.692	.046	.267	.955
Black (d)	.528**	.255	.590	1.572***	.539	.208	.955**	.398	.385
Age	-.025***	.007	.976	-.022**	.011	.978	-.008	.014	.992
Health	-.005	.085	.995	-.128	.114	.880	.125*	.132	1.133
Highest degree earned	-.092	.078	.912	-.193*	.100	.825	-.221	.122	.802
Overall life happiness	.137	.148	1.147	.167	.201	1.181	.375	.240	1.454
Number of Cases		1,478			831			602	
-2 log likelihood		2549.839			1442.549			1068.399	
C&S Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>		.185			.217			.231	

Note: \*\*\* p< .01, \*\* p< .05 \* p< .10 (weighted data).