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Employee and Employer Perceptions of the Workplace-Personal Life Interface in the Midwest

Debra Dose Gebeke

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EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER PERCEPTIONS OF
THE WORKPLACE-PERSONAL LIFE INTERFACE IN THE MIDWEST

by

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the
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for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Grand Forks, North Dakota
August
1996
This dissertation, submitted by Debra Dose Gebeke in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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This dissertation meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

Dean of the Graduate School

7-3-96
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Title  Employee and Employer Perceptions of the Workplace-Personal Life Interface in the Midwest

Department  Center for Teaching and Learning

Degree  Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Most research regarding the workplace and personal life balance has been conducted from the employer (macro level approach) or employee (micro level approach) perspective in a large business context. More recently a call for research using a contextual effects model which examines the interface between the workplace and personal life has been issued. There is also limited research in smaller businesses (fewer than 500 employees), such as those more prevalent in the Midwest. This gap in the research is addressed in the present study.

A sample of 17 businesses from North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Nebraska reflecting the smaller businesses in the Midwest was surveyed. The Work and Family Questionnaire designed by the Families and Work Institute (FWI) was used to collect the employee data. The National Changing Workforce Study Questionnaire was used and completed by 1,329 of the employees in the 17 businesses selected yielding a return rate of 65%.

Correlation and multiple regression analyses indicating significant relationships among the six business organizational characteristics (e.g., percentage of employees that are female, part-time), six employer variables (e.g., flexibility, organizational climate, economic benefits), and 16 employee variables (e.g., stress and health concerns, burnout, job demands, supervisor support, job satisfaction).
Discussion of results and implications for educations and researchers are presented.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years, rural states in the Midwest have been inundated with a variety of innovative plans and programs to increase and diversify their economic base. However, economic development without attention to the community supports and workplace policies that address the needs of workers may have a detrimental impact on the social fabric of communities and families. Sustainable economic development must take social factors into consideration, but few employers give consideration to addressing the interface between the workplace and the personal life of employees.

The workplace-personal life interface includes the interaction between aspects of both the work environment (work policies and programs, supervisor support, employer-employee relationships) and the personal life issues (dependent care, stress and health concerns, finances, community support services available) of employees. In the past, workplace issues and personal life concerns have most often been viewed as separate entities.

Today there is growing recognition of how both workplace and personal life are interdependent. It has become increasingly difficult for workers to separate their workplace and personal life issues, resulting in increasing pressure
for many employees. The present study addresses the workplace-personal life interface by examining relationships between employer and employee perceptions.

Despite countless efforts in Midwestern states to "grow" businesses of various kinds, particularly in rural areas, and/or to expand the agricultural base through value-added efforts, people continue to struggle to maintain a quality workforce and to obtain a higher quality of life in both economic and social terms. Finding ways to accommodate and balance the work and personal life concerns of employees (e.g., flextime, flexplace, dependent care support, supervisor training, support/educational programs) contributes to an organizational climate that improves retention, reduces absenteeism and turnover, and builds employee loyalty and commitment (Galinsky, Friedman, & Hernandez, 1991; Hill & Wolbers, 1995; Hofferth, Bayfield, Deich & Holcomb, 1991; Holmes & Friedman, 1995; National Report, 1995; Vanderkolk & Young, 1991). Other studies indicate that productivity is enhanced when workers receive workplace-personal life support (Friedman, 1991; Friedman, Galinsky, & Plowden, 1993a; Hill & Wolbers, 1995; Katz & Piotrkowski, 1983). Often the demands of a changing workplace come into conflict with the community and family supports available to workers. Businesses in the Midwest, especially smaller businesses, have not been accustomed to considering the workplace-personal life needs of their employees in the past (MacDermid, Williams, Mark, & Heilbrun, 1994).

It is no longer business as usual for corporate America. Responding to personal life or human capital issues is important to community and economic
development. Most business efforts neglect to take the time to explore a
community's capacity to support families and individuals. This neglect may result
in problems that surface as these businesses struggle to become established.
Resolving these issues is always more difficult after the fact. While it is difficult
to measure the tangible benefits related to the presence of policies and programs
that support employees, organizations have also been challenged to consider the
costs of not doing so, in terms of potential increased turnover, absenteeism, and
lower productivity (Friedman, Galinsky, & Plowden, 1993b).

Today, these workplace-personal life needs frequently emerge at the top of
both employer and employee concerns. Furthermore, the perceptions of
employers and employees regarding the needs can differ, resulting in mixed
messages and increased difficulty in addressing concerns.

Patterns of work force participation and family composition in the United
States have been dramatically changing. The following statistics illustrate this
transformation:

- Labor force participation rate for all women was 57.8% in 1992
- Labor force participation rate for women with children under 6
  years of age increased from 45.7% in 1980 to 59.7% in 1990 and for
  women with children 6 to 17 from 63% to 75% (Population
  Reference Bureau, 1992).
Of all children living in families, only 26% lived with two-parent families where only one parent worked outside the home (Population Reference Bureau, 1992).

It is often believed that these employment trends are less evident in rural states common to the Midwest. Statistics from the four states involved in the present study (North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska) illustrated in Table 1 indicate that this is not true (Population Reference Bureau, 1992).

In many Midwest economic development efforts, women constitute the primary source of available labor. In reaction to a depressed rural economy during the 1980s, economic development work encouraged the growth in rural communities of service industries that employed primarily women. And as the cost of medical care increases and families seek insurance benefits offered through paid employment, women are entering the paid work force in increasing numbers.

Table 1

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<th>Labor Force Demographics in the Midwest</th>
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<td>Percent of Women in the Labor Force with Children &lt; 6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Nebraska</td>
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Between now and the year 2000, some experts predict that two thirds of new entrants to the work force will be women with children (Galinsky et al., 1991).

As businesses in which women form a major part of the work force are established in Midwestern communities, workplace and personal life issues become increasingly important. Many of the relatively small businesses created under an economic development agenda have not had the resources and information needed to provide the kind of family-supportive policies offered by larger corporate entities, and/or they have not perceived the benefits of such policies in terms of increased productivity, lower absenteeism, worker loyalty, commitment, and job satisfaction. When policies that support a balance between workplace and personal life do exist in small businesses, they are often unwritten (Gebeke et al., 1994; MacDermid et al., 1994). Midwestern businesses, many of them employing fewer than 200 people, face difficult issues in terms of policy and training as they attempt to balance the concerns of their employees with their "bottom line" profits. Increased knowledge of employer and employee perspectives is needed to address workplace policy aspects important to sustainable economic and social development in Midwestern communities.

There is mounting evidence that U.S. workers are changing what they want from a work experience. They want meaningful work, more flexibility, and increased job satisfaction. The change in expectations of the workplace is accompanied by a rising concern for a better quality of life (Holmes & Friedman,
1995). This emphasis on both workplace and personal life issues has an impact on employer-employee relationships regardless of business size and geographics.

Currently little is known about the knowledge, attitudes and needs of Midwestern employers and employees regarding supportive policies and the workplace culture. Despite numerous research studies about work and personal life issues conducted during the 1980s, little attention has been given to the Midwestern states and there continues to be a debate as to the appropriate organizational response (Bowen & Pittman, 1995; Lambert, 1990). During the 1990s, there has been an increase in research regarding the work-life interface and appropriate organizational response (Bailyn, 1993; Ferber & Farrell, 1991; Seyler, Monroe, & Garand, 1995; Solomon, 1994; Vanderkolk & Young, 1991). Again, little attention has been given to the Midwestern states to identify specific concerns or to assist in creating a better understanding of Midwest employer/employee relationships.

Most research using employer and employee perspectives has been conducted with metro-area large businesses on the east and west coasts (Friedman, 1991; Galinsky, Bond, & Friedman, 1993; Galinsky et al., 1991). The future of economic development and the quality of life for families is affected by the implementation of supportive policies in the workplace and a positive work environment (Morgan & Milliken, 1992). The present research project increases the understanding of employer and employee perceptions and adds to the
knowledge base of factors affecting the workplace and personal life interface in a Midwest context.

The North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension Service has a history of providing research and information to community and economic development efforts and to business and industry product development efforts. As an NDSU Extension educator in the Child Development Family Science department, this researcher saw the opportunity to use the results of the present study to develop educational programs targeting employers and employees as they address their human capital needs. During the past five years, there have been frequent requests for programs to assist employees in balancing work and family responsibilities, handling stress, and getting along with difficult people in the workplace. Often these programs are rendered ineffective due to the policies and practices at the workplace. Little attention has been given to employer educational efforts. To reach the end goal of creating workplaces that achieve high productivity, provide job satisfaction, and create supportive policies that address the workplace-personal life interface, it is imperative that programs also be directed toward employers and supervisors in addition to employees. This research supports the development of such an educational effort by the NDSU Extension Service.

Research indicates that work responsibilities spill over into family life more frequently and intensely than family responsibilities spill over into the workplace (Friedman, 1991; Friedman, Galinsky, & Plowden, 1993b; Holmes & Friedman,
Educators and human resource professionals are often asked to teach strategies for balancing work and family responsibilities, yet these efforts fall short if the employer or workplace is not equipped with policies and supportive supervisors to make the balance possible. Difficulties also arise when policies or programs do exist, but supervisors respond inconsistently or not at all to the needs of employees. If the employer or workplace has inaccurate perceptions of employee needs, actions taken may be less effective. Educators are faced with the challenge of providing guidance to the employer/business without substantial research to underpin these educational and policy efforts. This study provides an opportunity to fill this gap.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the present study was to investigate relationships among organizational characteristics (such as percentage of part-time employees, female employees), employer variables (such as flexibility and leave policies, economic benefits), and employee variables (such as job satisfaction, stress and health concerns, supervisor support) within the workplace and personal life interface. The workplace-personal life interface refers to the relationships between both entities to create a balance between responsibilities related to one's work and the responsibilities related to one's personal and/or family life; the relationships need to be identified and addressed. The employer and employee surveys used to collect the Midwest data used in the present study were patterned after national research conducted by the Families and Work Institute of New York.
Significance of the Study

The majority of research conducted on the topic of the workplace-personal life interface has been conducted with large companies on the east and west coasts that are listed in Fortune 500 and Fortune 1000 businesses. The Midwest research project conducted in the winter of 1994 was the first large-scale effort to address small businesses which are more prevalent in this region. The present study expands the existing literature base and provides a benchmark for Midwest businesses and small businesses nationwide that currently does not exist.

Exploring the relationships between employer and employee perceptions of the workplace-personal life interface is a significant step toward helping individuals and businesses achieve a balance between the workplace and one's personal life. The approach used in the present study is a contextual effects model and differs from examining the workplace and the employee's personal life independently (Bowen & Pittman, 1995).

The literature calls for research that moves beyond the micro level or individual perception. Documenting an individual's perception of his or her workplace or personal life concerns, without inclusion of the context from which these perceptions are made, has been defined as a micro level study. A macro level study examines the context of the issues such as the quantity and type of policies or programs in the workplace and/or the community supports available to individuals.
The current research emphasis calls for a move toward a contextual effects model which means data are examined from a macro level, as well as the micro level. Micro level research using individual reports cannot account for the structure of the benefits and workplace. Part of the linkage between the features of employment and the outcomes of interest is lost because the contexts themselves are left out. While individuals interpret many factors in their environment, the macro level variables shape the stage in ways that may precede the perceptions of the actors (Bowen & Pittman, 1995). This study moves beyond the individual level and incorporates the contextual effects model.

Human resource personnel and family science educators are being called upon to help mediate the work-life and personal-life balance. This study expands the knowledge base and provides a basis for the development of educational programs addressing key issues for employers and employees.

**Research Questions**

The present study used a contextual effects model (explained in Chapter II) which includes three components. First, the dependent variable is an individual level behavior. Contextual effects models help explain the behavior of individuals. Second, at least one independent variable is measured at the macro level. Third, at least one of the macro level variables is measured at the metric level (use of interval/ratio variables). This approach is most likely to provide the basis for enhancing the work-life interface into the next century (Bowen &
The present study was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the organizational characteristics, employer and employee perceptions for the variables in the present study?

2. What are the relationships among business organizational characteristics and the employer variables in the work-life interface?

3. What are the relationships among business organizational characteristics and the employee variables in the work-life interface?

4. What are the relationships among employer and employee variables in the work-life interface?

5. What are the relationships among the organizational characteristics, employer and employee variables, and job satisfaction?

Independent variables were the business organizational characteristics and employer variables. Organizational characteristics included percentage of women employees; percentage of professional, administrative, and managerial employees; percentage of employees under age 40; percentage of part-time employees; hiring ability; and size. Employer variables included flexibility, leave, dependent care, organizational climate, corporate culture, and economic benefits.

Dependent variables for this study were the employee variables including job satisfaction, stress and health concerns related to the job and to the family, influence of family responsibilities on the job, burnout, general health, stress, job demands, job autonomy, supervisor support, supervisor work-family support,
perception of employer accommodation and resentfulness, co-worker resentfulness, employer/employee commitment, and the work-family culture.

Definitions

The present study used data collected in a manner that replicated national research completed by the Families and Work Institute of New York. All questions and definitions were taken from instruments used in previous studies, the National Workforce Study, (Galinsky et al., 1993), and the National Work-Family Questionnaire (Galinsky et al., 1991). Consultation with the Families and Work Institute and regional researchers provided clarification of the following terms:

Cross-training: Training two or more workers to perform each other's jobs (which may be very different from each other) so that they can fill in for each other in the other's absence (Galinsky et al., 1991).

Family Members: Spouse (or domestic partner) and dependent children/elderly (Galinsky et al., 1991).

Family Supportive Workplace Environment, Family-friendly: Phrases commonly used in the media and the literature to refer to policies/programs that are supportive of individuals as they attempt to balance responsibilities of family/personal life and occupation (Galinsky et al., 1991).

Job Share: Two workers voluntarily share responsibilities of one full-time job with the salary prorated (Galinsky et al., 1991).

Long-term: Six months or more (Galinsky et al., 1991).
Rural: Having a population of 2,500 or fewer (Rathge, personal communication, 1993).

Short-term: Less than six months (Galinsky et al., 1991).


Small business: Having 500 or fewer employees (Rathge, 1993).

Vouchers: Company provides payment, in whole or part, for the employee's child care expenses (Galinsky et al., 1991).

Work-Family Interface, Work-Life Interface: More current phrases used in the literature to refer to the relationships between the workplace and personal life or family responsibilities, rather than viewing workplace and personal life as separate or opposing forces (Bowen & Pittman, 1995).

Workplace-Personal Life Interface: Phrase used in the present study to identify the interplay between the workplace and one's personal life.

Assumptions

The basic assumptions of this study were as follows:

1. The terminology used in the questions on the survey was understood by participants.
2. The participants in the study were truthful in their responses.
3. It was possible to measure perceptions accurately.
4. Employees at the time of the study were representative of the Midwest workforce.
5. Employers at the time of the study were representative of the Midwest workplace.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations were noted for the purpose of this study:

1. The study was limited by participant responses on the Work and Family Questionnaire.

2. The study was limited to self-reported knowledge of participants at each business site.

3. The study was limited to the four participating states in the Midwest (North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska).

4. The study was limited to the secondary data analysis. Original data were collected by a regional research team from four states for the purpose of establishing a baseline of existing policies in Midwest workplaces.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationships between employer and employee perceptions of the work-life interface. The majority of work in this field of study is relatively recent, beginning in the 1980s. The attention given to this field of study is growing within several disciplines. A review of the literature revealed an emphasis from the individual or micro level. This study incorporated a contextual effects model which examined both macro level and micro level variables. The review of literature documented the path this field of study has followed and the need for a contextual effects model in future research.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of the work-life interface emerged in the 1970s. Most research has concentrated on the individual perception of the work-life experience (micro level study) and how events in one sphere (work) are likely to affect another sphere (family) (Burke, 1988). The individual impact of work variables on family/personal life outcomes became a common approach for research (Galinsky et al., 1993; Zimney, 1994). Stresses, strains, and feelings of well-being relative to the work environment have also been documented (Crourter & Manki, 1984; Galinsky et al., 1993; Shuster, 1993).

The study of individual perceptions of the work experience was followed by investigating additional worksite variables (turnover rate, absenteeism) and the relationships between these workplace variables and the individual's perception of personal life, such as stress and job satisfaction. Productivity, absenteeism, and turnover have been assessed in the workplace using a variety of methodologies (Bailyn, 1993; Galinsky et al., 1991; Hill & Wolbers, 1995; Holmes & Friedman, 1995; Vanderkolk & Young, 1991). Examining the impact of personal life variables on work outcomes is a more neglected area of research and was first pointed out by Crouter (1984) as a significant gap. Crouter emphasized that the
family exerts important influences on the workplace that have generally been overlooked.

Studies identifying companies most receptive to programs that enhance the work-life balance emerged and brought new information regarding macro level or contextual variables to the forefront (Kingston, 1990; McNeely & Fogarty, 1988; Morgan & Milliken, 1992; Starrels, 1992).

Chow and Berheide (1988) reviewed the literature and concluded that a shift in emphasis had taken place in the research from viewing family and work as separate spheres to an interactive model of interdependence between family and work systems. This new model recognized the mutual interdependence between work and family, or personal life, considered their reciprocal influences, and acknowledged their independent and joint effects.

More recently, the call for more sharply focused research using a contextual effects perspective has pointed out the problems inherent in drawing conclusions from the macro level or micro level alone (Bowen & Pittman, 1995). Examination of variables from the individual level alone implies that the context in which the individual acts is unimportant. Addressing the interface by linking both micro level and macro level variables has emerged as the next challenge. Consideration of the macro level processes that are presumed to have an impact on the individual actor over and above the effects of any individual level variables that may be operating forms the basis of the contextual effects model which has been proposed as the most rewarding perspective to take in the future (Bowen &
Pittman, 1995). The contextual perspective addresses relationships between macro level and micro level variables which creates new opportunities for understanding the work-life interface.

This review of literature examines the history of work-life research, the theoretical approaches commonly used in work-life research including the contextual effects model used in the present study, and the significance of both employer and employee variables in this field of research.

Overview of the Workplace-Personal Life Interface

A concise history of broader concepts surrounding the current emphasis on work-life issues in the business sector can be found in academic journals as well as popular literature. The terminology used to address these issues provides an intriguing overview of the topic. This field of research has been referred to as welfarism, women's issues, human capital, human resources, family-friendly or family-supportive policies, the work and family balance, and most recently the work-life interface. Bowen and Pittman (1995) provide a concise history from the work published in academic journals. They point out that despite recent expansions of family-oriented policies and services among selected corporations, corporate concern for the family situations of their employees is not a new development. Nineteenth century industrialization resulted in a rapid growth in the labor force, rural to urban migration, a surge in immigration to the United States with family members, including women and children, and women leaving home to enter the labor force. Company "welfarism" began in response to the
rapid growth and changes in the labor force and peaked during the 1920s. Welfarism was a term that described services provided by the company that are "neither a necessity of the industry nor required by law." The 1920s was a decade of company towns, company houses, and company stores. Simultaneously, the growth of unions emerged in response to the needs of workers. Unions have played the role of advocate for employee concerns throughout their history. The present study did not address the union impact as only one business had unionized employees.

Company "welfarism" began to decrease in the early 1930s with the growth in industrial technology, the expansion of voluntary and private agencies, and a growing resentment among employees of company paternalism. The depression in the 1930s, the passing of the New Deal, declining profits, and the oversupply of available labor during the 1930s resulted in significant reductions in the benefits provided to employees. Federal legislation, such as the Wagner Act, helped to eliminate company unions, decreasing the power of employers over employees and encouraging the organization of trade and labor unions—an adversary that companies had hoped to constrain through company welfarism.

The years of the depression demonstrated the inability of private efforts, either business (profit) or voluntary (nonprofit), to respond adequately to personal and family needs during periods of economic upheaval and social crisis. By the end of the Great Depression, the federal government had assumed basic responsibility for the general welfare of the population.
The federal government is now attempting to reverse the tide of increasing social welfare expenditures, in part, by encouraging private business and industry to broaden their role and scope in support of the nation's families. Currently, a debate exists regarding the respective roles and responsibilities of business, labor, and government in helping families better balance work and family demands.

Demographic shifts in the labor force and the increasing recognition of the consequences of work and family spillover on corporate outcomes are bringing another opportunity for corporations to reexamine their own assumptions about work and family linkages. Many new corporate innovations and strategies to help employees better balance work and family demands are operating on an experimental basis. The continuation and expansion of corporate efforts depends on empirical evidence demonstrating benefits of such efforts for the employee as well as the organization. Not all companies are convinced of the potential benefits of expanded policies and support programs for employees and their families. A more substantial research foundation is needed to demonstrate how employer costs associated with expanded family-oriented policies and practices are balanced by gains in the corporate "bottom line," including improved employee recruitment, retention, and performance.

One example of the popular press perspective of work-life history is found in Working Mother magazine (Wilburn & McMorris, 1994). The historical perspective began in 1978 with the passing of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, which was the first significant federal event. Soon after the passing of this law,
the nation's largest child care chain opened in 1980, and new tax laws allowing parents to use pretax dollars to pay for child care in 1981 were in place. In 1982, the first free on-site child care facility was opened by a business, and by 1983 associations and businesses that addressed resources and referrals for child care began to appear across the United States. By 1985, even Dr. Spock revised his book's chapter on the working mother, and hit movies and TV programs reflected mothers and families that attempted to strike the work and family balance. In 1989, Arlie Hochschild examined the lives of two-career couples in her book, *The Second Shift*.

By 1992, more than 100 companies had created a collaboration to distribute over $26 million to child- and elder-care projects and the famous Murphy Brown debate began. In 1993, President Clinton signed the Family Leave and Medical Act, and Hillary Rodham Clinton became the first First Lady to have a powerful career. At the end of 1994, younger women's salaries were reported to have grown to 80 cents for every dollar earned by a man.

Both academic and popular press versions of historical developments related to the workplace-personal life interface point to the challenges facing employers and employees. Piotrkowski (1979) pointed out that although individual families have actively attempted to control and manage their lives, in the long run, it is the institution of the family that has adapted—though not capitulated—to economic, political, and technical changes in society, rather than vice versa. Others have proposed that if the tensions between work (productivity
and job demands) and family (time management, dependent care, sick leave) are to be resolved, it may be more satisfactory to alter work rather than the family. An example from several businesses in the present study was the travel policy indicating employees must take advantage of Saturday night stays to receive lowest possible air fares, which directly affects time for personal and/or family concerns on weekends. No compensation time was provided. This conflict between workplace and personal life is beyond the control of individuals and contributes to tension in the workplace and at home.

Few studies have examined the influence of the family on work behavior and commitment (Crouter, 1984). Organizational researchers have especially ignored the influence of families. Instead, management studies have focused almost exclusively on job and economic factors to predict job morale, performance, and commitment. As a result, most personnel managers are unaware of potential family influences (positive and negative) to the world of work. This lack of recognition was first demonstrated in a national survey in which 62% of working adults considered their family to be an important factor in making decisions about work schedules. Only 16% of the personnel managers in that same study thought workers considered their families when making decisions about work schedules. Other differences were found in areas such as commuting, job-required travel, and employee relocation requirements (Bowen & Pittman, 1995).
By denying connections of interdependence between work and personal life, the corporate world is able to disclaim responsibilities for the personal lives of workers and to expect the individuals/family to fit the demands and needs of corporate organizations. Even though research suggests more ways in which work influences the family than the family influences work (Friedman et al., 1993b; Galinsky et al., 1991), it is apparent that there is more potential reciprocity between work and family roles than has been reflected in the literature to date. Neither the family nor the workplace is a closed system (Bowen & Pittman, 1995). Continued research is necessary to create a deeper understanding of the many variables and multiple relationships within the work-life interface.

**Theoretical Approaches**

The complexity of the work-life interface makes it difficult for any single model or theory to capture all its intricacies under all circumstances (Evans & Bartolome, 1986; Lambert, 1990). Three conceptual perspectives underlying the research are the multiple roles model, the job demands model, and the spillover-crossover model.

The multiple roles model was the first to emerge in work-family research. This approach shifts from a special focus on wives’ employment in itself to viewing it as only one special case of a broader phenomenon: the possible occupancy of multiple roles by persons of either gender. The job-demands model focuses on the contribution of job characteristics to work-life conflict and other negative family/personal outcomes as well as policy. The role spillover-crossover
model attempts to operationalize these processes and is the most methodologically advanced. Spillover refers to processes whereby experiences in one role impact other roles of the same individual. Crossover concerns dynamics in which one individual's experiences affect the experiences of his or her partner (Bowen & Pittman, 1995).

The majority of research has used role conflict or spillover theory and has suggested that demands in one setting are likely to restrict or prevent fulfillment of expectations in the other. Thus, work and personal life issues are viewed as incompatible. This theoretical approach uses a micro level approach, which leads one to ask individuals to report the demands of their jobs, rather than asking employers to define these demands. Bypassing employer or macro level data means only individuals are asked to observe the flexibility of an employer's benefit structure rather than attempting to obtain additional objective information about the structure of these benefits (Bowen & Pittman, 1995).

Relatively few researchers have attempted to address macro level variables. Repetti (1987) was one of the first. She studied the social environment at work and individual mental health by relating the average of co-worker ratings and individual ratings to self-reports of well-being. The results indicated that the quality of the social environment at work was related to the individual's mental health. A supportive supervisor was found to have a buffering effect by compensating for an aversive social environment. The linkage between social relations at work and well-being is not due simply to respondent bias. The
relationship with supervisors had the strongest impact on well-being. Repetti’s approach assumed that if the context affects the individual, then the individual must have recognized and interpreted important aspects of the environment in making his or her behavioral selection.

Bowen and Pittman (1995) note that when a researcher evaluates the impact of job demands or the benefits structure in a model taking the individual as the unit of analysis, each person’s assessments predict the outcome of interest without benefit of the contexts within which these assessments were made so the context is lost. Research that attended to both micro level and macro level variables evolved into the contextual approach that has become more common in the literature today. Bowen and Pittman (1995) note that the contextual approach is different from the contextual effects model being proposed for work in the future.

The contextual effects model involves three components. First, the dependent variable is the individual level behavior. Explaining the individual behavior comes first, and the individual remains the unit of analysis. Second, at least one independent variable must be measured at the micro level of the individual and at least one at the macro level. Third, at least one variable must be measured at a metric level (interval/ratio variable). This set of interdependent variables best distinguishes a contextual effects model from others (Bowen & Pittman, 1995).
The present study used the contextual effects model in addressing the work-life interface. This model is emerging as an important approach for advancing policy and program efforts. It allows individuals to better balance and negotiate contradictory expectations and competing demands that all workers face. It also better serves the needs of employers as they attempt to navigate through the current period of change in the workforce and workplace.

Bowen and Pittman (1995) propose that corporate culture and philosophy influence the work environment, which in turn affects outcomes at home and at work. These outcomes have a reciprocal relationship between work environment and outcomes mediated by perceptions of individual employees. Empirical support for such a model is needed. Furthermore, such support would document that employer supports facilitate positive reciprocal relations among work and personal life outcomes such as job and family satisfaction, family well-being, and work productivity. This evidence provides information for corporate leaders to recognize that work-life policies benefit the corporate world as well as the employee's personal life.

The present study addressed the need for such empirical evidence. Employer and employee relationships and perceptions of critical issues in the work-life interface are addressed in this research. Piotrkowski (1979) have suggested that a more substantial research foundation is needed that demonstrates how employer costs associated with expanded policies and practices are balanced by gains in the corporate "bottom line" including improved employee recruitment,
retention, and performance. The present study did not attempt to place a dollar
value on policies and programs; however, the study provided an important step
toward creating the research base needed to do so.

**The Workplace-Personal Life Interface: Employee and Employer Variables**

Even when evidence exists to suggest that work-family programs can
improve the profitability or bottom line of a company, the response of corporate
America has not always kept pace with the dynamics of work and family (Bailyn,
1993; Bohen, 1984; Friedman, 1991; Hill & Wolbers, 1995). For years, the
interest in work and family issues from the business sector has been marginal and
low profile. The work-life interface is no longer a marginal issue, and the
companies that have taken steps to incorporate the family or personal life needs
of their employees into the fabric of their organizations have learned the value of
doing so (Galinsky et al., 1991).

A survey by the Society for Human Resource Management (Work and
Family Survey, 1992) reported that most companies cite expense as the major
obstacle to adopting work-life initiatives. Also, companies may have been slow to
become more active in addressing issues in their employees’ private lives (e.g.,
resource and referral services or time away from work for elder care) because of
the limited evidence on the economic benefit of doing so (Vanderkolk & Young,
1991). However, research conducted on the organizational effects of work-life
programs and policies has shown that such efforts build employee loyalty and
commitment, improve retention and may reduce absenteeism and turnover.
Some studies have also shown that productivity can be enhanced when employees are provided with work-family support (Friedman, 1991; Friedman et al., 1993b; Katz & Piotrkowski, 1983). Small businesses have been encouraged to offer more work-life programs and policies to compete with larger companies for well qualified employees (Bureau of National Affairs, 1990). Finally, some have suggested that while it may be difficult to measure or pin down the tangible benefits related to the presence of policies and programs that support employees in this way, organizations should consider the strategic cost of not doing so in terms of potentially increased turnover, more absenteeism, and lowered productivity (Friedman et al., 1993b).

Some studies have attempted to catalogue the experience of major U.S. corporations with a wide range of policies falling under the work-family umbrella (Galinsky et al., 1991). Such efforts provide a benchmark for the business sector. Compiling the types of policies and programs available in Fortune 500 companies resulted in the development of the Family Friendly Index, a guide to the status of policies in the United States. This work contributed to a better understanding of practices in larger organizations, but it did not investigate the relationships between various organizational characteristics and employer or employee variables.

Morgan and Milliken (1992) first addressed this deficiency in their study of work-family responsiveness. Companies were scored on three categories of work
and family policies and benefits: family leave policies, flexible work options, and
dependent care benefits. All policies and benefits were assigned equal
importance, but additional points were allocated to more generous versions of the
policies (e.g., a flexible option available to all employees, available to only a few,
or individually negotiated). Scores were summed to produce an overall work-
family responsiveness score of employer policies. Various external and internal
factors were also examined. They found that the most important factors
influencing work-family responsiveness included the size of the company, the
industry, the geographic region of the country, and the degree of managerial
attention (supervisor training, employee needs assessments) given to work-family
issues. For example, companies with more than 500 employees; companies in
health care, finance, insurance, and real estate; and companies located in the
Northwest were found to be most family responsive. The study also concluded
that companies that actively assessed the work-family needs of their employees
were more generous in terms of work-family programs and policies than those
that did not.

The low response rate and treatment of company size as a dichotomous
variable, in which companies were viewed as being either greater than 500
employees or fewer than 500 employees, were significant limitations to Morgan
and Milliken's work. The use of only 16 traditional benefits with little attention
to organizational climate and company culture also limited the findings.
However, the study did provide the impetus for another research effort addressing these limitations.

Jacobson and McCaul (1996) conducted a study of smaller Midwest businesses (25 to 500 employees) and measured a number of factors related to work-life support in smaller businesses that were generally overlooked in previous research. These companies, often located in smaller communities, do not have the support services available in larger communities or from larger corporations. And yet, since 80% of working Americans work for companies with fewer than 500 employees (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993) and since the Small Business Administration has predicted that by the year 2000 more than half of the workers in business will be women (Bureau of National Affairs, 1990), concern with the work-life interface has emerged in smaller businesses more common to the Midwest.

Regional and State Trends

The review of literature completed for this study found few published journal articles originating in the four states cited as partners in the present research effort (North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska). The Midwest in general has not been the subject of a consistent and comprehensive approach to examine the issues surrounding the work-life interface. The present study consisted of a Midwest sample and addressed both employer and employee perspectives and the relationships between them.
Companies considering work-life responses such as flex time, job sharing, home-based offices, telecommuting, and dependent care look for proof of the economic benefit of doing so. Limited quantitative data have been available on the dollar impact of providing work-family benefits (Vanderkolk & Young, 1991). However, research conducted in recent years and business case studies support the conclusion that work-family interference is costly to companies in terms of retention, recruitment, productivity, absenteeism, and turnover and that the provision of support improves measures in these areas (Anfuso, 1995; Bowen & Pittman, 1995).

**Retention, Recruitment, and Turnover**

The main predictors of retention among a representative sample of new mothers in four states were found to be: (a) the importance of working to their self-image, (b) the percentage of family income which they contributed, (c) the family-friendly policies at their companies, and (d) the availability of child care (Galinsky et al., 1991).

In another study, pregnant employees who were employed by more family-responsive companies were found to be more satisfied with their jobs (73% were satisfied compared with 41% at less accommodating companies), felt sick less often, missed less work, spent more uncompensated time working, worked later into their pregnancies, and were more likely to return to their jobs (Bond, 1991).
The average rate of annual turnover for all American companies was 13% when a series of longitudinal studies indicated that lowered turnover rates were found to be associated with the implementation of work-family initiatives. For example, in a small textile manufacturing company in the Southwest, which was experiencing a 40% turnover rate, turnover rates dropped to 7% after the first year of initiation of a child-care program. For every $1 spent, the company yielded $6 in cost containment (Vanderkolk & Young, 1991).

Unpublished data from the Families and Work Institute indicate that work-family programs generally have a greater impact on retention of employees than on recruitment. Work-family supports were rated 14th out of 16 reasons for taking a job, but the same supports were ranked 6th out of 16 reasons for staying in a job (Friedman et al., 1993b). In another study, 25% of mothers were found to leave their jobs for family reasons (Hofferth et al., 1991).

Employee retention is a particularly important issue when one considers the relatively high cost of recruitment and training of a new employee. One estimate indicates that it costs an organization three to four times more to replace an employee on parental leave than to hold the job open for the employee’s return (Friedman et al., 1993a). Johnson and Johnson (Seitel, Fingerman, & Kieger, 1996) research found users of work-family benefits were absent less, 71% reported the programs were important in their decision to stay, and 57% would recommend the company to others. Studies at John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance and a Commerce Clearinghouse Survey found absenteeism was cut in
half and savings were as much as $668 per employee each year when work-life benefits were put in place. The Detroit office of Deloitte & Touche found their benefits were responsible for a turnover drop from 40% to 10%. SAS Institute initiated work-family programs and has since maintained a turnover rate of half the national average.

Waste Management started its programs and evaluated 50 participants along with a control group of 130 randomly selected employees. They found the results to exceed their hopes in real dollar savings. Half the participants had considered leaving; only 22% did after the program. They documented savings of $1,600 per participant through productivity, reduced absenteeism, lost time from work, and benefit claims. The savings of $1,600 was offset by an average cost of $200 per person (Seitel et al., 1996).

Work-family programs have become even more important as more states develop and experiment with welfare reform initiatives. A longitudinal study of participants in a welfare reform program found that single mothers who were able to obtain dependable, high-quality child care were more likely to successfully complete their job training and/or maintain their employment (Meyers, 1993). Workplace supports, like paid sick leave, employer-provided health insurance, employer-provided or subsidized child care, and co-worker support, were positively related to single mothers reducing their reliance on welfare as a source of household income (Parker, 1994).
Productivity

A number of studies have shown that productivity is negatively affected by the lack of work-family support. One of the earliest studies found that family problems may cause worry and stress at work resulting in loss of concentration and the inability of employees to perform at the expected level (Katz & Piotrkowski, 1983). In another study, 25% of employees with children under 12 years of age were found to experience performance breakdowns two to five times in a three-month period. Such breakdowns were linked to higher absenteeism and tardiness and lower concentration on the job (Friedman, 1991). In fact, one third of employees with children spent time worrying about the care of their children on the job. And absenteeism for both men and women has been found to be more related to family conditions and economic status than to motivation and commitment (Galinsky et al., 1991).

To date, however, far more research has examined how productivity is negatively affected by unresolved family problems than how it is positively affected by company efforts to support the family. Lower absenteeism as well as improved recruitment and productivity seem to be the most important outcomes for organizations when they initiate work-family policies (Galinsky et al., 1991; Holmes & Friedman, 1995).

Improving profitability means eliminating factors that limit productivity such as absenteeism and turnover. It also means conveying a message of responsiveness to employees. They need to know they are valued members of the
business team. Corporate culture and image is reflected to consumers and good corporate citizenship pays off as consumers become more savvy about their choices.

Merck moved the field ahead by figuring all the costs of losing a valued employee and found that it cost 150% of an exempt salary and 75% of a non-exempt employee. Suddenly, the cost of turnover moved into the millions and retention efforts became a priority. Families and Work Institute found the cost of parental leave to be less than replacing employees (32% of annual salary versus 150% for replacement for managers and 75% for non-managers). GMAC planned to improve profitability by reducing absenteeism, turnover, and lateness and within five years went from 43% turnover to 7.5%. Fel-Pro is a smaller company with a long list of family-friendly efforts. Their studies showed employees make good use of benefits (72% have used at least one) and believe the benefits are valuable, 77% agreed the benefit package is a major reason they stay, and 81% perceived supervisors as helpful. In the end, these employees showed better work performance than those not using the available programs. A study by the Commission on Skills of the American Workforce found too many American companies were using short-term solutions to remain competitive, such as cutting wages, exporting production to low-wage countries, and automating skilled jobs rather than investing in people. The ultimate result will be lower standards of living. The study urged investing in better wages and training for high performance work systems with supports. Labor Secretary Robert Reich
concluded that treating employees as assets to be developed rather than costs to be cut was the surest way to productivity and profits (Seitel et al., 1996).

While a review of research journals provided limited numbers of research publications to document business outcomes, many examples can be found in business publications such as the Wall Street Journal and company reports to stockholders or boards of directors. Such reports document outcomes in a manner that is recognized as valid by the business world. A summary of findings from these sources was compiled by The Center for Advancement of Work-Life (Hill & Wolbers, 1995) and included numerous positive outcomes.

A survey of benefit professionals regarding the impact of child- and elder-care problems found that 53% reported increased absenteeism over child-care compared to elder-care responsibilities, 41% reported increased tardiness, 22% reported reduced productivity, 17% reported increased turnover, and 34% said senior management considers child-care benefits more important now than they did two years ago.

A Gallup survey found that 22% of working women reported frequent on-the-job stress related to personal or family issues resulting in muscle pain, headaches, sleep problems, fatigue, and anxiety. At First Chicago, when Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offerings were extended to include more help with family issues, psychiatric benefits fell from 15% of the total medical costs to 11.5%.
Quaker Oats surveyed 1,100 employees about the impact of family concerns and responsibilities on work performance and found that 90% of employees spent some time during work attending to family and personal concerns, 60% were absent from work an average of 3 days a year due to children's illness, 33% were absent 3 days due to childcare problems, and 40% were absent an average of 3.4 days due to responsibilities for elderly family members. In addition, 66% were late for work or left early because of child-care problems and 50% because of elder-care problems.

A survey of workers in Oregon, conducted by Portland State University, found that fathers and mothers whose children cared for themselves (before and after school) were the workers most affected on the job by days missed, lateness, interruptions, and early departures. In fact, the highest absenteeism rate was for men whose children were in self-care.

Elder-care problems among employees already cost businesses $10 billion a year, and the percentage of workers with care-giving responsibilities will hover around 40% to 50% in the next five years, according to the Families and Work Institute. The worries and distractions of elder care can be far more damaging and distracting in the workplace than child-care issues. This is exacerbated by the fact that one third of employed care-givers live more than 100 miles from their parents, and 25% changed careers or took less demanding jobs or part-time jobs as a result of elder-care responsibilities. Care-givers are absent one and one half times more than the average, and productivity losses amount to about $2,500 per
care-giving employee, according to Andre Scharlach, professor of aging at the University of California at Berkeley.

Businesses lose $12 billion a year because parents stay home with sick children, and Honeywell Corporation claims it saves $3 for every dollar spent on sick-child care. In general, employees with family-related problems have an impact on company productivity at a cost of 3% more than non-parent employees.

In general, several factors were found to be associated with productivity-related problems in a review completed by a national panel of experts (Ferber & Farrell, 1991): (a) terms of employment, such as number of hours and weekends and the flexibility in work schedules and locations; (b) availability of services for family members such as care arrangements for children, elderly, and handicapped members and short-term care when regular arrangements break down; and (c) extent to which family considerations are recognized as legitimate in the workplace.

**Flexibility, Leave, and Dependent Care**

The most commonly requested support of workers is flexibility (Friedman et al., 1993b; Galinsky & Stein, 1990). Flexibility relates to job autonomy and control in the work environment. A sense of control is important to the employee’s ability to navigate the work-life interface. Personal leave and dependent care are also linked to reduced stress (Bureau of National Affairs, 1990; Friedman et al., 1993b). Workers are given the resources to solve problems rather than someone else solving the problems for them. Supports range from
referrals to child-care consortiums to funded on-site care. Elder-care and child-care were cited as major problems facing employees in Galinsky and Stein's study (1990), and companies cited commitment to these work-family issues to improve recruitment and retention, increase morale, reduce stress, and keep up with the competition. Seyler et al. (1995) studied the role of employer-supported child-care benefits and under which conditions these benefits are offered. Their study concluded that the benefits offered were related to size of the company and the number of women in the workforce.

Three major studies of company perception of benefits and corporate child-care found that offering such benefits resulted in an increased ability to attract employees, lower absenteeism, improved employee attitudes/morale, and positive public relations (Galinsky & Stein, 1990).

A study by St. Paul Fire & Marine Insurance Company found bosses to be one of the chief sources of workplace stress. A "bad boss" lowered productivity, diminished quality, and increased absenteeism. Of those with "bad supervisors," 76% mentioned quitting and 65% said productivity could be improved. Effects of poor supervisors led to strain in relationships at home and even increased alcohol consumption. In fact, employees indicated that work more than personal issues affected home life. Factors that contribute to a low-stress environment included teamwork, sense that everyone is contributing equally, "fair" treatment, manageable workload, and balance in their lives with time spent relaxing with family or friends (Seitel et al., 1996).
A 1990 study by Robert Half International, an executive recruiting firm, showed more than half of 500 men polled would accept as much as a 25% cut in salary if it meant they could spend more time with their families, and 45% would refuse a promotion if the alternative was less time (Seitel et al., 1996).

Organizational Climate and Corporate Culture

Starrels (1992) found corporate culture to be one of the most salient themes in work-family research. Corporate culture was defined as a macro level variable in the policies available and as a micro level variable in the disapproval from managers which discourages workers. Progressive policies were likely to be subverted by negative attitudes and nonsupportive organizational climates. For example, having a supportive supervisor was found to have about the same effect on stress as having a supportive spouse. Supervisor support was linked to lower stress-related health problems and less stress in general.

Dahler-Larsen (1994) concluded that organizational performance was largely influenced by corporate culture. He viewed individuals as emotional with a need to belong to a collectivity. The corporate culture of a business reflects a broader meaning about the corporate strategy for adaptation. The atmosphere or climate impacts the individual. Transformation of attitude cannot be attributed to one single motive but to the interplay between several processes in organizations.

A work-unit with little role ambiguity, strong sociopolitical support, access to information, and a participative unit climate is found to be associated with perceptions of empowerment (Edwards, 1996). Attaining this environment is a
challenge for businesses today and was found to be characteristic of responsive workplaces.

Perhaps one of the most interesting examples of seeking corporate culture can be found in the military. The military is the largest single employer in the United States accounting for 5% of the total workforce when civilians are included. After performing retention studies, the armed forces in the U.S. identified the need to make career military service more attractive to families and more supportive of family life to retain experienced personnel (Ortiz & Bassoff, 1987). The military was in the forefront of the movement to create a culture or climate that supports employees.

Although supervisor support permeates many employer variables, it is very important to the foundation of the corporate culture. Research has identified job satisfaction, productivity, and turnover as relevant in predicting employee responses. Significant effects of employee-supervisor training found most employee reactions to be positive. Changes in the effects on the value of the job, attitude toward the job, job problems, and job stress were significant. Overall job satisfaction was also improved when supervisor support was present (Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982). Continued research has found the supervisor training and relationship with employees to be critical to outcomes. Policies are rendered ineffectual if supervisors do not support them. Merck was the first business to include this type of training, and many have followed (Galinsky & Stein, 1990).
Workplace changes such as downsizing, telecommunication technologies, and team approaches are related to workplace characteristics that impact families, including work stress, social support, and occupational complexity. The policies and programs that may be most important, given the workplace changes, are time policies that increase flexibility, dependent care policies that reduce caregiver stress, and educational programs in the areas of stress management and skill development (Seyler et al., 1995).

Galinsky and Stein's (1990) research used a completed scale of seven indicators of an accommodating workplace, which included sick leave, disability, parental leave, supportive supervisor, health insurance, flexible scheduling, and child-care assistance. The women in the study who worked for more accommodating companies were found to be more satisfied with their jobs, took fewer sick days, and worked more on their own. In addition, 78% returned to the workplace after a child was born compared to 52% who worked in unaccommodating environments. In the end, employers who were more accommodating were more likely to experience the same in return from their employees (Galinsky & Stein, 1990).

Mergenhagen (1994) observed that over the last decade job benefits have become more personal. More than one third of employed caregivers lost time from work because of care-giving duties. Retirement was noted as one of the top five stress producers. Changes in benefits reflect these employee concerns as witnessed by retirement planning programs and child-care support from
employers. In the end, all employers share the same goal: keeping employees productive in times of stress.

A Cambridge Institute study concluded that workers' commitment grow when they see their employers acknowledging the importance of home life issues. Another commitment study by professors at Indiana University and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee assessed the impact of parental leave, flex schedules, and child-care assistance on organizational attachment. Results indicated greater commitment to employers among employees who felt their employers cared. They were more willing to stay late and work extra days. They were more loyal.

Employee Variables

Employee variables have been assessed using fairly consistent constructs during the past decade. Measuring job satisfaction, corporate culture, marital and family quality of life, and other employee variables has been completed in a variety of settings (Coverman, 1989; Galinsky et al., 1993; Hughes, Galinsky, & Morris, 1992; Small & Riley, 1990).

The Families and Work Institute (FWI) is responsible for the most recent national study of employees. The National Workforce Study (Galinsky et al., 1993) was conducted with a random sample of all employees in the United States. The constructs included were job satisfaction, work environment/work group, stress and health concerns, impact of family responsibilities on the job, burnout, stress symptoms, job demands, supervisor support, attitudes toward policies, and work-family culture. The FWI national study is one of the most comprehensive
available, yet rarely has such a study been analyzed for geographical effects or conducted with a Midwest population. The present study had a focus on Midwest employees from small to large businesses as defined in the Midwest and used the constructs from the National Workforce Study.

The National Workforce Study documented the perceptions of workers during a decade of substantial business change. Workers in the study spent more than 40 hours per week on the job. Overtime and commuting brought the total to more than 45 hours per week. Downsizing was experienced by 42% of the workers, and 28% have seen cutbacks in the numbers of managers. Many feel burned out (42%), and 89% feel their jobs require them to work very hard.

The study also concluded that workers are not just concerned about the quality of their own work, but also the quality of their work environments. Findings suggest that employer efforts should include a focus on the quality of the work environment itself, on social relationships at work, and on the general corporate culture. Supportive relationships with co-workers and supervisors led to less burnout and more commitment. Men and women were not seen as different in the way they supervise workers. The economic basis for working was apparent as workers brought in 64% of their households' incomes. The work-family benefits supported both employee and employer because workers with greater access to work-family assistance were more committed to doing their jobs well, were more loyal, and took more initiative on the job.
The study concluded that in the end the focus must be on the workplace. Characteristics of jobs and workplaces affect not only workers’ attitudes and behaviors at work, but also their general well-being and their abilities to balance work and family life. Work-family solutions are most effective if they focus on the nature of jobs, relationships at work, and the organizational culture. The most powerful predictors of work attitudes and behaviors and the ability to balance work and family were workload, job autonomy, work schedule control, social relationships at work, workers’ perceptions of equal opportunity in the workplace, and supportiveness of the culture. Thus, what helped workers also promoted workforce productivity (Galinsky et al., 1993).

Zimney (1994) concluded that workers withhold their discretionary effort when they think employers do not see eye to eye with them about what is really important. His study of what drives the commitment of workers indicates that the number who say "having a job that doesn’t interfere with personal life is important" has doubled since 1992. This is an emerging priority for American employees. Managers now face the task of motivating employees who are stressed by pressures to maintain their share of a shrinking pie while preserving enough energy to deal with demands outside of work. Company size was found to impact commitment levels among employees. Commitment is higher among companies with fewer than 100 employees than among larger companies. The higher the employee’s commitment, the stronger the tendency to work hard and to increase
output. When commitment declines, discretionary effort is withheld, productivity decreases, and the incidence of nonsupportive behaviors rises.

The use of employee skills was found to be a major contributor to commitment. Utilization of skills and abilities is the performance area most closely tied to employee commitment. Multiple regression indicated that utilization of skills was twice as important as corporate vision, job security, or fair wages in fostering employee commitment.

Employee variables in the present study consisted of six variables that relate to the employee personally, including employee stress and health concerns due to the job, stress and health concerns due to the family, impact of family responsibilities on the job, burnout, general health, and stress. An additional nine variables related to factors at the workplace, including job demands, job autonomy, supervisor support, supervisor work-family support, employer accommodation, company resentment, co-worker resentment, commitment, and the work-family culture.

Job Satisfaction

The job satisfaction variable was identified as an overall measure of the individual’s perception of his or her work environment. Previous research has examined whether family responsibilities take away from satisfaction in the work role (Hanson & Sloane, 1992). This hypothesis was not supported for both men and women. In general, the level of job satisfaction among working women is as high or higher than the levels of men. The sources of job satisfaction for men and
women are usually categorized into two areas: individual and family characteristics (needs, values, parental status) and the nature of the job (good pay, interesting work, demands, autonomy). Studies have concluded that it is the structural characteristics that are most important to job satisfaction, although a few studies identify special aspects that vary by sex. A single item measure of job satisfaction was used in their study as is often the case in others as well. The item read: On the whole, how satisfied are you with the work you do?

The present study used a two-item measure of job satisfaction. The items read: All in all, how satisfied are you with your present job? Knowing what you know now, if you had it to decide all over again whether to take the job you now have, what would you decide?

Hanson and Sloane (1992) caution about the problems with single indicators of job satisfaction and call for more sophisticated measures. The present study used the two items developed for the National Workforce Study and was also limited in its sophistication.

Summary

Society is in a transition from the era of two separate spheres in society for work and personal life issues to a recognition of the interdependence of the two spheres. The transition and resulting experiences in the evolution of the work-life interface impact both micro level and macro level responses. The study of the work-life interface has an important role to play in defining employer-employee relationships that go beyond micro level issues (i.e., managing stress).
This review of literature provided the basis for the present research study. Chapter III describes the approach for the present study, a description of the instruments, methodology, sample, data collection, and data analysis.
The purpose of the present study was to investigate relationships among organizational characteristics, employer variables, and employee variables with the work-life interface. During the winter of 1994, a four-state regional research project was initiated with a grant from the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development located at Iowa State University. Data were collected from a random sample of 403 businesses meeting criteria established for small, rural Midwestern businesses (classified by size and type of business). The data from the employer survey established a baseline for work-life policy status in the Midwest. This was patterned after the national research conducted by the Families and Work Institute (FWI) of New York, which resulted in the establishment of corporate benchmarks.

A second survey of employers was completed with 17 businesses in the four participating states (North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Nebraska). This survey was completed in the same manner as the larger regional study. The data from these 17 employers were used for analysis in the present study. The influence of a series of macro level or contextual factors on the provision of various work-life policies and programs was examined. Employer work-life
variables examined included flexibility, leave policies, dependent care, organizational climate, corporate culture, and economic benefits.

Organizational characteristics of the businesses included the percentage of women employees, percentage of professional employees, percentage of employees under 40, percentage of employees that are part-time, organizational size, and hiring ability. These micro level factors were also examined for their impact on the provision of work-life policies and programs.

A third survey was completed for employees at the same 17 businesses within the four participating states. A total of 2,030 employees were provided surveys and 1,329 completed surveys (65% return rate). This survey data provided the employee perception of the work-life interface. The employee variables included job satisfaction, stress and health concerns related to the job and to the family, influence of family responsibilities on the job, burnout, general health, stress, job demands, autonomy, supervisor support, supervisor work-family support, perception of employer accommodation and resentfulness, co-worker resentfulness, employer/employee commitment, and the work family culture.

Description of Instruments

Employer Survey

The survey tool used for the employer study is titled the Work-Family Questionnaire (WFQ) (Galinsky et al., 1991) (see Appendix A). As used by the Families and Work Institute, it was, by its nature and design, subjective and dependent on expert judgment in terms of scoring and interpretation. This
subjectivity created difficulties for a replication of this research in the Midwest. Therefore, a secondary goal of this research project was realized when the WFQ was transformed into a less subjective instrument which could be used in this and future research contexts.

Permission to both use and modify the WFQ was obtained by the research team. The plan was to transform it into a simplified questionnaire to be used with a large sample of businesses. The revised WFQ was tested at a state meeting of the North Dakota Human Resource Management association professionals. Questionnaires were distributed to the 76 members in attendance, and 35 (46%) completed it. Comments were solicited concerning further modifications.

Tabulation of results proved both time consuming and subjective. It was clear that codification of data drawn from the instrument in its present form would be impossible. Because simple modification of the WFQ did not seem feasible, attention turned to the development of a revised research tool. To obtain additional input for the revision of this tool, a focus group of human resource professionals was assembled to gain their impressions on two issues: a definition of what a family-friendly firm might be in a Midwestern context and possible ways to eliminate the question and scoring subjectivity of the WFQ instrument in its present form. The process involved asking each of the five experts to independently generate a list of characteristics of a family-friendly organization. Next, the lists were combined. While there was substantial overlap,
a combined list of 18 characteristics was produced. Next, participants ranked each of these characteristics on a scale of 1 to 10 along two dimensions: (a) the value of the characteristic or benefit to employees, and (b) the cost or benefit (in terms of time, energy, money, and administration) of the characteristic.

Finally, each participant was asked to score a group of the WFQ questionnaires to assess inter-rater reliability. From this input, a revised survey instrument was produced which included dimensions identified by the panel as constituting family-friendliness. Questions were designed to assess programs and policies in five categories: flexibility, leave, dependent care, organizational climate, and economic benefits (see Appendix A). A sixth category, corporate culture, also emerged during the process. Organizational characteristics were also included. The revised survey tool was approved by WFQ and again field tested with the Midwest panel of experts.

The six categories listed above were used in the present study. All 43 survey questions in these six categories were designed to assess availability of policies and programs and the degree of support for them based upon two factors used in studies by Galinsky et al. (1991) and Morgan and Milliken (1992): (a) whether or not a given program or policy was present in an organization, and (b) whether the program or policy was available to some, most, or all employees. Points were assigned for each of the policies and practices currently being offered in each organization on the following basis: No = 0 points, Yes = 1 point, and
available to all = 2 points. The sixth category, corporate culture, consisted of four items and did not include measures of the degree of support.

The organizational characteristics used as independent variables consisted of (a) four estimates of demographic characteristics of the institution (percentage women, percentage professional, percentage under age 40, and percentage part time), (b) categorization by size of business, and (c) a measure of the hiring ability of the employer. The hiring ability variable was created by summing four questions that asked about the difficulty or ease of hiring. Reliability analysis of internal consistency produced a reliability coefficient of alpha equals .77 for this variable.

Employee Survey

The second survey tool was developed by choosing specific measures from the 1993 National Workforce Study (see Appendix B). The regional research team identified constructs of most significance and developed a scaled-down version of the national study. The survey was distributed to employees asking for "yes" or "no" and Likert-scale responses. No revisions of the original instrument constructs were made. Variables selected for inclusion in the employee survey included job satisfaction, stress and health concerns related to the job and to the family, influence of family responsibilities on the job, burnout, general health, stress, job demands, autonomy, supervisor support, supervisor work-family support, perception of employer accommodation and resentfulness, co-worker resentfulness, commitment, and the work-family culture.
Two measures of job satisfaction were summed and presented as one variable. The correlation between the two variables was .905 (p. < .01). Reliability coefficients of internal consistency for job satisfaction was alpha equals .9100.

Methodology

In the present study, a revision of the Work and Family Questionnaire (Galinsky et al., 1991) and the original National Workforce Study (Galinsky et al., 1993) was used to collect data. The independent variables were the organizational characteristics measured including the percentage of women employees, percentage of professional employees, percentage of employees under 40, percentage of employees that are part-time, organizational size, and hiring ability. A definition and description of the organizational variables used in the present study follows (see Table 2).

The dependent variables were the employer perceptions of the work-life interface (flexibility, leave policies, dependent care, organizational climate, corporate culture, and economic benefits) (see Table 3) and the employee perceptions of the work-life interface (job satisfaction, stress and health concerns related to the job and to the family, influence of family responsibilities on the job, burnout, general health, stress, job demands, autonomy, supervisor support, supervisor work-family support, perception of employer accommodation and resentfulness, co-worker resentfulness, employer/employee commitment, and the work-family culture) (see Table 4).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Description of Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% women employees</td>
<td>PCTWOM</td>
<td>% of total employees that are women</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% professional employees</td>
<td>PCTPROF</td>
<td>% of total employees that are professional, administrative, or managerial</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of employees under 40</td>
<td>PCTL40</td>
<td>% of total employees under age 40</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of employees that are part-time</td>
<td>PCT PART</td>
<td>% of the total number of employees working part-time</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational size</td>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>Based on number of employees: 0-49, 50-99, 100-249, 250-499</td>
<td>25-435</td>
<td>Size was categorized relative to typical Midwest businesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring (4 items)</td>
<td>HIRING</td>
<td>Easy or difficult to fill jobs in past 12 months and projection for next 12 months</td>
<td>Easy, difficult, neither</td>
<td>High score = more difficulty hiring employees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3

**Employer Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Description of Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility (10 items)</td>
<td>FLEX</td>
<td>Including job sharing, flex time, flex place, flex scheduling, cross training availability</td>
<td>Availability &amp; degree of flexibility</td>
<td>High score = high degree of flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/Personal Leave (7 items)</td>
<td>LEAVE</td>
<td>Short leave for personal needs, leave with or without pay for elder care, child's needs, funeral, maternity/paternity</td>
<td>Availability &amp; degree of availability</td>
<td>High score = high/ more generous leave policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent Care Support (9 items)</td>
<td>DEPCARE</td>
<td>Resource &amp; referral support, pre-tax spending accounts, child-care subsidies, child-care center support, school-age care, &amp; similar elder-care support</td>
<td>Availability &amp; degree of availability</td>
<td>High score = high support for meeting care needs of children &amp; elderly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Climate (16 items)</td>
<td>ORGCLIM</td>
<td>Provision of EAPs, referrals, support groups, info &amp; education on parenting/elderly/work-life issues, wellness/fitness programs, discounts, recreational activities, help partner find work, conducted formal assessments, train supervisors in work-life supports</td>
<td>Availability &amp; degree of availability</td>
<td>High score = high availability of supports reflecting a positive organizational climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Culture (4 items)</td>
<td>CORPCULT</td>
<td>How is it generally as a place to work based on four common work-life scenarios?</td>
<td>Likert scale (1 to 4 (very true of company to not at all true)</td>
<td>High score = a positive place to work as perceived by employer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Score Range</td>
<td>Description of Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Benefits (9 items)</td>
<td>ECONBEN</td>
<td>Life insurance, short &amp; long-term disability, sick leave with pay, tuition reimbursement plan.</td>
<td>Likert scale (1 to 4 (very true of company to not at all true)</td>
<td>High score = more financial-based supports available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Score Range</td>
<td>Description of Score</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress &amp; health concerns because of my job (5 items)</td>
<td>SHCJOB</td>
<td>Questions difficulties due to job within last 3 months</td>
<td>Likert scale 1 to 5 (never to very often)</td>
<td>High score = high stress/health concerns due to job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress &amp; health concerns because of my family or personal life (7 items)</td>
<td>SHCFAM</td>
<td>Questions difficulties due to family or personal life within last 3 months</td>
<td>Likert scale 1 to 5 (never to very often)</td>
<td>High score = high stress/health concerns due to personal life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of family responsibilities on job (12 items)</td>
<td>FIMPACT</td>
<td>Indicate whether you've experienced any of the listed (12) experiences due to family responsibilities: reduced hours, refused travel/overtime/promotion, worry about child/elderly, problems with supervisors/co-workers, lower productivity, quality of work, etc.</td>
<td>Yes, No, NA</td>
<td>High score reflects majority of items answered yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout (5 items)</td>
<td>BURNOUT</td>
<td>Questions reflect feelings of being drained, tired, and frustrated</td>
<td>Likert scale 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree)</td>
<td>High score = high burnout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health (2 items)</td>
<td>HEALTH</td>
<td>Bothered by health problems and overall assessment of health status</td>
<td>Likert scale 1 to 5 (poor to excellent)</td>
<td>High score = high/positive health status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Score Range</td>
<td>Description of Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological stress (6 items)</td>
<td>STRESS</td>
<td>How often employees felt good about their ability to cope with feelings of stress, manage nervous and overwhelmed feelings.</td>
<td>Likert scale 1 to 5 (never to very often)</td>
<td>High score = more likely to feel good about ability to cope with stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Demands (5 items)</td>
<td>JDEMANDS</td>
<td>Degree to which job demands hard, fast excessive amounts of work, and enough time to get it done</td>
<td>Likert scale 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree)</td>
<td>High score = high demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Autonomy (2 items)</td>
<td>AUTONOMY</td>
<td>Degree of input one has into job and freedom to get it done</td>
<td>Likert scale 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree)</td>
<td>High score = more difficulty experiencing job autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor Support (5 items)</td>
<td>SUPERSUP</td>
<td>Questions about supervisor or boss and their general support of you as employee</td>
<td>Likert scale 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree)</td>
<td>High score = high support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor Work-Family Support (4 items)</td>
<td>SUPERWFS</td>
<td>Questions about supervisor or boss and their handling of family or personal needs (fair, understanding, approachable, accommodating)</td>
<td>Likert scale 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree)</td>
<td>High score = high supervisor work-family support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodating (1 item)</td>
<td>ACCOM</td>
<td>If employer accommodates my personal/family needs, I'd go out of my way to meet employer's needs</td>
<td>Likert scale 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree)</td>
<td>High score = high accommodation attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Score Range</td>
<td>Description of Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company Resentfulness (1 item)</td>
<td>COMRESN</td>
<td>If employer provides work-family benefits I don't need personally, I'd feel resentful</td>
<td>Likert scale 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree)</td>
<td>High score = high company resentment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Worker Resentfulness (1 item)</td>
<td>COWRESN</td>
<td>If I do extra work occasionally to help other co-workers accommodate personal/family needs, I'd feel resentful</td>
<td>Likert scale 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree)</td>
<td>High score = high co-worker resentment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment (1 item)</td>
<td>COMMIT</td>
<td>If employer helps me with family/personal responsibilities, I'd be more likely to to stay at my job</td>
<td>Likert scale 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree)</td>
<td>High score = high commitment to stay at job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-Family Culture (4 items)</td>
<td>WFCULT</td>
<td>Responses to 4 work-family scenarios that require one to put work ahead of family or face being rejected/looked at unfavorably</td>
<td>Likert scale 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree)</td>
<td>High score = positive work-family culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction (2 items)</td>
<td>JOBSAT</td>
<td>How satisfied are you with your job and knowing what you know now, would you take it again?</td>
<td>Likert scale 1 to 5 (strongly agree)</td>
<td>High score = high job satisfaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample

Employer Survey

To ensure randomization, a national mailing list from American Business Lists was purchased to create the original sample. Because previous research had documented the connection of size and business type with family friendliness (Galinsky et al., 1991; MacDermid et al., 1994; Morgan & Milliken, 1992), the sample was stratified by size and type using Standard Industry Codes (SIC) to determine business type and Census/Small Business Association information to determine size categories (Rathge, 1993). It was determined that 400 completed surveys from firms across the four-state region would be required to ensure a 5 to 6% error rate. The random sample of 525 businesses yielded 403 completed surveys (77%) and provided the data for the overall status of policies and programs in the Midwest.

The subsample of 17 employers was selected to meet size and geographic considerations, and they were approached for permission to survey their employees. As a result, the subsample was not a random sample. This database was used to answer the research questions regarding relationships between employer and employee variables.

Employee Survey

The 17 businesses surveyed consisted of a stratified sample reflecting the various sizes of businesses contacted in the employer sample (three had 20 to 49 employees, five had 50 to 99 employees, six had 100 to 249 employees, and three
had 250 to 499 employees). Nine were manufacturing companies, two were in health services, two were in transportation-related businesses, and four were in business and professional services. These size and industry categories are typical of Midwest businesses. The employees of these 17 businesses were the source of data for the employee database used in the present study.

Due to the sensitive nature of questions asked and the attempt to include one business from each size category in each of four regions of each state, it was necessary to approach businesses personally to obtain their participation in the study. The researchers identified businesses and contacted them to visit about the project. Establishing a sense of trust with employers was essential in obtaining their full participation. Employers needed to be assured of confidentiality and generally were quite eager to receive the individual company results for use in their business planning. Although this was a time-consuming process, it was critical to the success of the project. In general, the researchers received positive support once employers were assured of how the information would be used. A total of 2,030 employees were invited to participate and 1,329 completed the survey (65% return rate).

Data Collection

Employer Survey

Letters soliciting participation were mailed to the 525 companies in the original sample several weeks before the telephoning began. A team of three professional telephone interviewers, trained by the research team to ensure
consistency across the interviews, was employed to conduct the study, which was completed in a one-month period during the winter of 1994. Ultimately, 403 firms were contacted and agreed to be interviewed (77%). Information was collected on scanning forms and entered into the computer database. The identical procedure was used for the subsample of 17 businesses identified for the present study, with the addition of a personal contact with the employer to establish a sense of trust.

The three trained telephone interviewers collected the data. In each case, the interviewee was either the owner/manager of the firm or a designated alternate. Letters were sent prior to the phone calls to inform owners/managers about the study and to set up times for the phone calls. Each call took 20 to 30 minutes. It should be noted that the sample included a large number of small businesses (72% employed fewer than 50 employees), that the largest type of industry represented was wholesale/retail trade (42%), and that other segments of industry were represented in substantial numbers as well. These figures reflect the business configuration in the Midwest.

**Employee Survey**

Surveys were delivered personally by research team members and placed in the business mail (in-house) systems established in each site. Employees were invited to participate through a cover letter from the research team and the business management. Each employee was asked to complete the survey and return it in a sealed envelope provided to ensure confidentiality. Envelopes were
mailed directly to the research team, and data collected were entered into the database. A summary report was compiled for each participating business and returned for their review.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS software to determine relationships between variables. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients and Multiple Regression were completed using the identified variables. Correlational research is sometimes treated as a type of descriptive research, primarily because it describes an existing condition. However, the condition it describes is distinctly different from the conditions typically described in self-reported or observational studies; a correlational study describes in quantitative terms the degree to which the variables are related. Correlational research involves collecting data to determine whether and to what degree a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables. Degree of relationship is expressed as a correlation coefficient. If a relationship exists, it means that scores within a certain range on one measure are associated with scores within a certain range on another measure. The purpose of correlational study is to determine relationships between variables and to use the relationships in developing predictions with regressions. The more highly related the variables, the more accurate the predictions are based on their relationships (Gay, 1987).

Independent variables for this study were organizational characteristics and employer variables. Organizational characteristics included the percentage of
women employees; percentage of professional, administrative and managerial employees; percentage of employees under 40; percentage of part-time employees; ability to fill jobs in the past and future; and size. Employer variables included flexibility, leave, dependent care, organizational climate, economic benefits, and corporate culture.

Dependent variables were employee variables, including job satisfaction, stress and health concerns related to the job and to the family, influence of family responsibilities on the job, burnout, general health, stress, job demands, autonomy, supervisor support, supervisor work-family support, perception of employer accommodation and resentfulness, co-worker resentfulness, commitment, and the work-family culture.

The research questions presented in Chapter I were analyzed using the data as described in this chapter. The analysis and results are presented in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

The purpose of the present study was to examine relationships among organizational characteristics, employer variables, and employee variables with the work-life interface. This chapter contains sections addressing each of the five research questions.

Seventeen companies were assessed using both employer and employee surveys. Surveys were administered beginning in November of 1994. The sample consisted of 2,039 employees with 1,329 completing surveys (return rate of 65%). The 17 businesses included four from South Dakota, four from Iowa, four from Nebraska, and five from North Dakota. The 17 businesses were stratified by size with four employing 25 to 49 people, three employing 50 to 99 people, seven employing 100 to 249 people, and three employing 250 to 500 people. The actual range of employees at the businesses in the sample was 25 to 435 people. The type of businesses surveyed included transportation, health services, finance, business/professional services, and manufacturing. The majority of businesses (7) were manufacturing firms.
Research Question One

The first research question asked was: What are the organizational characteristics, employer variables, and employee variables regarding the work-life balance for the businesses in the present study? Descriptive statistics provided this information.

Organizational Variables

Table 5 presents the organizational variables and their means, standard deviations, and ranges. The majority of the employees were female and under age 40. The percentage of part-time employees had a wide range (0 to 50) and the overall average was 12.2%. The percentage of employees who were professional, managerial, or administrative also had a wide percentage range. Companies in the study were diverse in the types of employment arrangements used and positions held. Size of business was treated as a categorical variable to coincide with parameters established in the original study of 403 employers (Gebeke et al., 1994). The average size of businesses surveyed was between two categories, 50 to 99 and 100 to 249, indicating just over 100 employees per business. Each size category was represented in the study as follows: 20 to 49 (4), 50 to 99 (3), 100 to 249 (7), and 250 to 500 (3). Hiring ability measured the ease or difficulty experienced by employers in filling job vacancies. The four items asked for employer perceptions of their ability to hire (for the past 12 months and the next 12 months) for jobs in general and highly skilled positions. The results indicated some difficulty existed (score of 1 to 4 indicated ease in
Table 5

Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for Organizational Variables (N = 1,329)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage women employed</td>
<td>PCTWOM</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>12 to 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage professional, administrative, &amp; managerial employees</td>
<td>PCTPROF</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>4 to 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage employees under 40</td>
<td>PCTL40</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>28 to 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage employees part time</td>
<td>PCTPART</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>0 to 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>25 to 435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring ability</td>
<td>HIRING</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>4 to 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

hiring, 5 to 8 indicated neutral response, and 9 to 12 indicated difficulty in hiring). An average score of 8.4 reflected a borderline response between neutral and difficult.

Employer Variables

Six employer variables were addressed and are presented in Table 6. Flexibility was scored according to availability and whether all employees had equal access to flexibility benefits. Flexibility had a mean score of 10.4 out of 20 points, indicating most businesses made flexibility options available, but few made the options available to all employees. Equal access to flexible benefits was not available. Family/personal leave was available in all businesses, but the mean
Table 6

Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for Employer Variables (N = 17)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>FLEX</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>7 to 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave</td>
<td>LEAVE</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4 to 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent care</td>
<td>DEPCARE</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0 to 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational climate</td>
<td>CRGCLIM</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4 to 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate culture</td>
<td>CCULT</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>5 to 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic benefits</td>
<td>ECONBEN</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0 to 16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(8.7 out of 14) indicated leave was not available to all employees. Leave was more likely to be available to all employees than flexibility. Dependent-care support was non-existent in some cases and minimally addressed in most cases. Flexible spending accounts that provide tax breaks to employees were the most common form of support.

Organizational climate scores had the widest range of all employer variables. The mean score (11.7 out of 32) indicated few supports were in place to create a positive organizational climate. Only five companies offered employee assistance programs; one offered support groups in the workplace; three offered information or workshops related to parenting or elder-care needs; nine provided nutrition, health, or fitness programs to employees; and three extended these programs to their families. Five of the businesses had conducted formal
assessments about work-family needs, and six offered training to supervisors/managers. In general, the organizational climate of businesses in this study represented a minimal effort to address the work-life interface. Previous research has indicated that these benefits are often available at a minimal cost, yet few businesses offered them (Friedman et al., 1993b; Galinsky et al., 1991).

Corporate culture was defined as the employer’s perception of how the business is as a place to work for the present study. The majority of employers believed it was very true that their businesses allowed employees to place family needs before the demands of their jobs without jeopardizing their chances of job advancement, that they encouraged supervisors to be supportive, that supervisors treated employees who attended to family matters fairly, and that they made a strong effort to inform employees of the programs available to them. The economic benefits provided were slightly above the median (10.6 out of 18 points). Fourteen of the businesses provided life insurance and ten provided short-term disability insurance at least partially paid for by the company, although only three paid completely for short-term disability. Most (15 out of 17) businesses provided health insurance for their employees and family members that was at least partially paid for by the employer, although only six provided health insurance for part-time employees partially paid for by the employer. Seven allowed 10 or more sick days annually with pay.
Employee Variables

Employee variables are summarized in Table 7. In general, stress and health concerns due to the job were cited more often (15 out of 25 points) than stress and health concerns due to family or personal life (17 out of 35 points). The impact of family responsibilities on the job consisted of a list of 12 items (e.g., refusing a promotion due to family responsibilities) and was assessed by employees. Results indicated "yes" as the most common response to the 12 items, meaning family responsibilities were a strong consideration in job decisions.

Several items on the employee survey were a measure of the individual's well-being. Burnout scores were above average (15 out of 20 points) yet the employees indicated their ability to cope with stress (psychological stress) was also just above average (20 out of 30 points). Job demands were above average (18 out of 25 points) and the job autonomy (2.6 out of 10 points) average indicated little freedom or control in the individual's job. In spite of these results, overall health was rated above average (6.7 out of 10), and in general, the results indicated workers were contending with above average stress levels. These results were similar to results from the National Workforce Study (Galinsky et al., 1993), which concluded that characteristics of the job and workplace affect not only worker attitudes and behaviors at work but also general well-being and the ability to balance work and family life.
Table 7
Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for Employee Variables (N = 1,329)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress &amp; health concerns due to job</td>
<td>SHCJOB</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>13.5 to 16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress &amp; health concerns due to family/personal life</td>
<td>SHCFAM</td>
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<td>1.3</td>
<td>14.9 to 19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of family responsibilities on job</td>
<td>FAIMPACT</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.3 to 3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout</td>
<td>BURNOUT</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>11.7 to 19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>HEALTH</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>5.6 to 7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological stress</td>
<td>STRESS</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>17.8 to 22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job demands</td>
<td>JDEMANDS</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>15.6 to 21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>AUTONOMY</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>2.1 to 3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor support</td>
<td>SUPERSUP</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>17.1 to 19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor work-family support</td>
<td>SUPERWFS</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>13.7 to 16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodating</td>
<td>ACCOM</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>3.3 to 3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company resentfulness</td>
<td>COMRESENT</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2.2 to 3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-worker resentfulness</td>
<td>CORESENT</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2.0 to 2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>COMMIT</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>3.2 to 3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-family culture</td>
<td>WFCULT</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>9.0 to 14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job satisfaction</td>
<td>JOBSAT</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>6.0 to 8.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support from the workplace was measured using seven indicators. The employee’s overall perception of support from supervisors and of supervisor work-
family support was slightly above average. The results indicated a positive perception of supervisors in Midwest businesses and were not consistent with the results of national research with Fortune 1000 companies (Galinsky et al., 1991). Supervisor support was one of the most powerful predictors of worker attitudes and behavior in the National Workforce Study (Galinsky et al., 1993). The next four items measured employee opinions regarding common beliefs about addressing work-life programs. Employees indicated they would be more likely to go out of their way to meet employer needs if the employer accommodated their personal needs (3.6 out of 5). Also, if employers helped with personal/family needs, employees would be somewhat more likely to stay at the job (commitment). Employees were asked about company and co-worker resentfulness. Little resentfulness would be felt by employees (2.7 out of 5 points) if benefits were provided that they did not use or if they were asked to occasionally help co-workers with family/personal needs (2.4 out of 5 points).

When asked about the work-family culture at their place of employment, results indicated neutral to slightly positive perceptions of the overall work-family culture (10.8 out of 20). Supportiveness of culture was also one of the most powerful predictors of work attitudes and behavior in the National Workforce Study (Galinsky et al., 1993). Job satisfaction scores indicated most employees were satisfied with their jobs (7.4 out of 10 points).
Research Question Two

The second research question asked: What are the relationships among business organizational characteristics and the employer variables of the work-life interface? Table 8 provides the correlations necessary to identify these relationships.

Results indicated that the percentage of employees under 40 was negatively correlated with organizational climate and economic benefits. These results indicated that fewer employee supports, such as employee assistance programs,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PERWOM</th>
<th>PERPROF</th>
<th>PERL40</th>
<th>PERPART</th>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>HIRING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>-.133</td>
<td>.160</td>
<td>-.186</td>
<td>-.078</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEAVE</td>
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<td>.158</td>
<td>-.256</td>
<td>.465*</td>
<td>-.300</td>
<td>-.049</td>
</tr>
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<td>-.151</td>
<td>-.232</td>
<td>.184</td>
<td>-.073</td>
</tr>
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<td>-.458*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.269</td>
<td>-.568**</td>
<td>-.511**</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>-.453*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:  * p. < .10  
** p. < .05

and fewer financial benefits, such as disability insurance, were available in companies with higher percentages of employees under 40. Companies with more part-time employees had more generous leave policies and fewer economic
benefits. Difficulty in hiring employees was negatively correlated with economic benefits. Minimum-wage and low-income positions often do not have access to other financial supports such as disability insurance. Those that offer no additional benefits would most likely experience more difficulty in hiring.

In addition to the correlational analysis, multiple regression analyses were performed to identify significant predictors. Certain organizational characteristics were significant in predicting the employer variables of leave, organizational climate and economic benefits (see Table 9). The percentage of part-time employees predicted leave. The percentage of employees under 40 predicted organizational climate. The combination of percentage of employees under 40 and percentage of part-time employees predicted economic benefits.

Table 9

**Standardized Regression Coefficients (Beta) for Organizational Variables**

**Predicting Employer Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PERWOM</th>
<th>PERPROF</th>
<th>PERL40</th>
<th>PERPART</th>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>HIRING</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>FLEX</td>
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<td>ns</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAVE</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>.465*</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEPCARE</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
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<tr>
<td>ORGCLIM</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-.458*</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORPCULT</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECONBEN</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-.572***</td>
<td>-.516***</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:  
* p. < .10  
** p. < .05  
*** p. < .01
Research Question Three

The third research question asked was: What are the relationships among business organizational characteristics and the employee variables in the work-life interface? Table 10 provided the correlations necessary to identify relationships.

As the percentage of female employees increased, the number of employees who felt less able to cope with stress also increased. Companies with higher percentages of professionals, managers, and administrators reported lower stress and health concerns due to family/personal life, lower burnout rates, higher overall health status, lower job demands, lower job autonomy, and employees who were better able to cope with stress.

Companies with a higher percentage of employees under 40 had employees experiencing higher job demands, higher overall supervisor support, higher supervisor work-family support, and employees who were more likely to stay if employers assisted them with family/personal responsibilities (commitment). These results indicated a positive reflection of the supervisors in the sample.

As the percentage of part-time employees in a company increased, the number of employees reporting a positive work-family culture also increased. A positive work-family culture is one which avoids an emphasis on work at the expense of family. Employees had the support needed, in spite of the lack of formal policies. This was also consistent with research in other small businesses where written policy was often missing but support was not (MacDermid et al., 1994; McNeely & Fogarty, 1988; Morgan & Milliken, 1992).
Table 10

Correlations Between Organizational Variables and Employee Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PERWOM</th>
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<th>PERL40</th>
<th>PERPART</th>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>HIRING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>SHCJOB</td>
<td>-.080</td>
<td>-.123</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>-.155</td>
<td>-.041</td>
<td>.143</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.070</td>
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<td>.236</td>
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<td>FIMPACT</td>
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<td>-.342</td>
<td>-.351</td>
<td>-.248</td>
<td>.237</td>
<td>-.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURNOUT</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>-.574**</td>
<td>.113</td>
<td>-.320</td>
<td>.284</td>
<td>.525**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTH</td>
<td>-.370</td>
<td>.521**</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>-.287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRESS</td>
<td>-.427*</td>
<td>.460*</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>-.229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JDEMANDS</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>-.504**</td>
<td>.432*</td>
<td>-.242</td>
<td>.350</td>
<td>.730***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-.460*</td>
<td>-.011</td>
<td>-.163</td>
<td>-.064</td>
<td>.493**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.287</td>
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<td>.380</td>
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<td>.247</td>
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<td>-.117</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>-.200</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMRESN</td>
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<td>-.384</td>
<td>-.160</td>
<td>.248</td>
<td>-.466*</td>
<td>.186</td>
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<td>CONRESN</td>
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<td>-.094</td>
<td>.463*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-.258</td>
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<td>.406*</td>
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<td>.364</td>
<td>.317</td>
<td>.436*</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.015</td>
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</table>

Note: * p. < .10
      ** p. < .05
      *** p. < .01

Employees in larger companies were more likely to report resentment toward employers who offer benefits not needed by the employee.
Companies reporting difficulty in hiring employees had employees experiencing higher burnout levels, higher job demands, lower job autonomy, higher resentment among employees when occasionally asked to help co-workers accommodate their personal/family needs, and more employees who indicated they would have a higher commitment to stay if employers helped with work-family responsibilities. These results indicated that employee variables contributed to turnover and the ability of a business to recruit employees.

In addition to the correlational analysis, multiple regression analyses were performed to identify significant predictors (see Table 11). A stepwise regression was calculated, the purpose of which was to identify predictors of employee variables. All organizational variables had at least one significant relationship with employee variables, indicating that organizational characteristics were predictive of employee attitudes and behaviors.

The percentage of employees under age 40 predicted stress and health concerns due to family; the percentage of professional predicted burnout; the combination of women, professional, and those under age 40 predicted overall health status and ability to cope with stress. Hiring ability predicted job demands. The combination of percentage under age 40 and hiring ability predicted job autonomy and supervisor support; the percentage under 40 predicted supervisor work-family support. The combination of percentage of professional and organizational size predicted company resentfulness. Hiring ability predicted co-worker resentfulness. The percentage under 40 predicted commitment. The percentage of part-time employees predicted work-family culture.
Table 11

Standardized Regression Coefficients (Beta) for Organizational Variables Predicting Employee Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PERWOM</th>
<th>PERPROF</th>
<th>PERL40</th>
<th>PERPART</th>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>HIRING</th>
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</thead>
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<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
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<td>ns</td>
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<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMRESN</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</table>

Note:  
* p. < .10  
** p. < .05  
*** p. < .01  
**** p. < .001
Research Question Four

The fourth research question asked was: What are the relationships among employer and employee variables in the work-life interface? Table 12 provided the correlations necessary to identify relationships.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Variable</th>
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<th>CORPCULT</th>
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<td>-.301</td>
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<td>-.132</td>
<td>-.019</td>
<td>-.166</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>-.188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPERSUP</td>
<td>-.193</td>
<td>.161</td>
<td>-.208</td>
<td>-.072</td>
<td>.170</td>
<td>-.281</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUPERWFS</td>
<td>-.383</td>
<td>.268</td>
<td>-.046</td>
<td>-.337</td>
<td>.460*</td>
<td>-.336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCOM</td>
<td>-.454*</td>
<td>-.035</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>-.547**</td>
<td>.057</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMRESN</td>
<td>-.003</td>
<td>.095</td>
<td>-.036</td>
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<tr>
<td>COWRESN</td>
<td>-.093</td>
<td>-.256</td>
<td>-.226</td>
<td>-.509**</td>
<td>-.025</td>
<td>-.427*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMIT</td>
<td>-.489**</td>
<td>-.298</td>
<td>-.095</td>
<td>-.469*</td>
<td>-.178</td>
<td>-.228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFCULT</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>-.193</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.220</td>
<td>-.136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:  
* p. < .10  
** p. < .05  
*** p. < .01
Companies offering more flexibility had employees with lower stress and health concerns due to their jobs, lower accommodation attitudes indicating they would be less likely to go out of their way to meet employer needs if employers accommodated their personal/family needs, and lower commitment to stay if their personal/family needs were met.

Employers who indicated they perceived their businesses to have a positive organizational climate had employees who were more likely to report increased family impacts on the job, less likely to go out of their way to meet the employer needs if accommodated with personal/family needs, less likely to be resentful when asked to occasionally accommodate co-workers’ personal/family needs, and employees indicating less commitment to stay if personal/family needs were addressed.

Companies identifying themselves as having positive corporate cultures had employees with less personal/family impact on the job, higher overall health status, higher ability to cope with stress, and higher work-family support from supervisors. The results indicated that the employer perceptions of corporate culture were congruent with employee perceptions on several items measured in this study. Previous research in larger companies found more dissonance between employer and employee perceptions of corporate culture (Galinsky et al., 1993). These results reflect a positive finding about the Midwest businesses sampled in this study.
In addition to the correlational analysis, multiple regression analyses were performed to identify significant predictors. A stepwise regression was calculated (see Table 13). The purpose was to identify predictors of employee variables. No significant relationships were found for family/personal leave. Flexibility, dependent care, organizational climate, corporate culture, and economic benefits were significant in predicting certain employee variables. Flexibility predicted stress and health concerns due to job and commitment. The combination of dependent care and organizational climate predicted an accommodating attitude. Organizational climate predicted co-worker resentment. Corporate culture predicted the impact of family responsibilities on the job, health status, ability to cope with stress, and supervisor work-family support. Economic benefits predicted job demands.

**Research Question Five**

The fifth research question asked was: What are the relationships among organizational characteristics, employer and employee variables, and job satisfaction? Table 14 provides the correlations necessary to identify the relationships.

Companies with higher percentages of professionals, managers, and administrators had higher levels of job satisfaction. Companies with more difficulty in hiring had employees expressing lower job satisfaction. Professionals usually had access to more supports and higher salaries resulting in more job satisfaction. Employees with lower burnout levels, higher overall health status,
Table 13

Standardized Regression Coefficients (Beta) for Employer Variables Predicting Employee Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FLEX</th>
<th>LEAVE</th>
<th>DEPCARE</th>
<th>ORGCLIM</th>
<th>CORPCULT</th>
<th>ECONBEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHCJOB</td>
<td>-.684***</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHCFAM</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIMPACT</td>
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<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-.684***</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURNOUT</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEALTH</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>.525**</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STRESS</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>.596**</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JDEMANDS</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-.483**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTONOMY</td>
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<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPERSUP</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPERWFS</td>
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<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>.460*</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCOM</td>
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<td>ns</td>
<td>.423*</td>
<td>-.680***</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMRESN</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COWRESN</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>-.509**</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMIT</td>
<td>-.489**</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFCULT</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:  
* p. < .10  
** p. < .05  
*** p. < .01

higher ability to cope with stress, lower job demands, higher job autonomy, less co-worker resentment when asked to accommodate personal needs, and a positive work-family culture were more likely to experience higher job satisfaction.
Table 14

Pearson Product Moment Correlations Between Job Satisfaction and Organizational Variables, Employer Variables, and Employee Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOBSAT</th>
<th>JOBSAT</th>
<th>JOBSAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERWOM</td>
<td>-0.067</td>
<td>FLEX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERPROF</td>
<td>0.442*</td>
<td>LEAVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERL40</td>
<td>-0.328</td>
<td>DEPCARE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERPART</td>
<td>0.324</td>
<td>ORGCLIM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>-0.289</td>
<td>CORPCULT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIRING</td>
<td>-0.520**</td>
<td>ECONBEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHCJOB</td>
<td>-0.121</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHCFAM</td>
<td>-0.112</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIMPACT</td>
<td>-0.377</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BURNOUT</td>
<td>-0.881***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>-0.289</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIRING</td>
<td>-0.520**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JDEMANDS</td>
<td>-0.676***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTONOMY</td>
<td>-0.500**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPERSUP</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCOM</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMRESN</td>
<td>-0.318</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COWRESN</td>
<td>-0.570**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMIT</td>
<td>-0.391</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFCULT</td>
<td>0.517**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:  * p. < .10  
** p. < .05  
*** p. < .01

In addition to the correlational analysis, multiple regression analyses were performed to identify significant predictors. A stepwise regression was calculated (see Table 15), the purpose of which was to identify predictors of job satisfaction.
For organizational characteristics, difficulty in hiring predicted job satisfaction. No significant relationships were found for employer variables. For employee

Table 15

**Standardized Regression Coefficients (Beta) for Job Satisfaction Predicting Organizational Variables, Employer Variables, and Employee Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JOBSAT</th>
<th>JOBSAT</th>
<th>JOBSAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERWOM ns</td>
<td>FLEX ns</td>
<td>SHCJOB ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERPROF ns</td>
<td>LEAVE ns</td>
<td>SHCFAM .403****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERL40 ns</td>
<td>DEPCARE ns</td>
<td>FIMPACT ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERPART ns</td>
<td>ORGCLIM ns</td>
<td>BURNOUT -1.074****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIZE ns</td>
<td>CORPCULT ns</td>
<td>HEALTH ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIRING -.520**</td>
<td>ECONBEN ns</td>
<td>STRESS ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>JDEMANDS ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AUTONOMY ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SUPERSUP ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SUPERWFS ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ACCOM ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>COMRESN ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>COWRESN -.501**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>COMMIT ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>WFCULT .437**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:**  
* p. < .10  
** p. < .05  
*** p. < .01  
**** p. < .001
variables, four significant relationships were found to predict job satisfaction: stress and health concerns due to family, burnout, co-worker resentfulness, and work-family culture.

This chapter reviewed the results of the analysis conducted for this study. Chapter V includes discussion of the results, recommendations, and conclusions for this study.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter provides a discussion of the present study within the context of previous research. The discussion is presented in relation to each research question. In addition, recommendations and conclusions are presented.

Discussion

Question One

The first question asked: What are the organizational characteristics, employer variables, and employee variables regarding the work-life interface for the businesses in the present study?

Organizational Variables. The 17 businesses in the present study reflected the business community of the Midwest in size and business type. The organizational characteristics provided a glimpse of the Midwest workforce. As cited in the literature review, there has been a significant increase in the number of women in the labor force during the last decades and in the number of part-time employees. North Dakota and South Dakota reported some of the highest labor participation rates for women with children under 18 in the nation (Population Reference Bureau, 1992). The employment trends are also indicative of the agricultural base of the four states included in the sample for the present
study. Many men and women are employed off the farm to supplement income and obtain benefits such as health insurance.

Job creation and economic development are currently emphasized in the four states participating in the present study. The rise in need for dual-incomes, off-farm incomes, and the consistent rise in female labor force participation rates have provided the labor pool for these new jobs. Yet, many employers have difficulty hiring and have concerns about retaining a quality workforce in rural areas. Employers may benefit from understanding who constitutes the labor supply and giving attention to their work-life issues within the context of their business planning.

**Employer Variables.** The survey of employer variables indicated the status of policies in these businesses as reported by management. The results of the present study established a baseline to report against and to observe for progress in Midwest work-life efforts.

Most benefits were not available on an equal basis to all employees. The organizational climate of most businesses was below average. Few supports were in place such as employee assistance programs, formal assessments, and supervisor training in work-life issues. Dependent care was given minimal attention, yet the majority of employees were in two categories (under age 40 and female) that consisted of people facing these issues on a regular basis. Also, limited economic benefits were offered. Each of these findings represents a topic available for
employer consideration in examining their businesses and their responsiveness to employees.

Employee Variables. The survey of employee variables reflected the perceptions of Midwest employees regarding their ability to address the work-life interface. Midwest employees reported above average stress and concerns about their ability to balance their work and personal responsibilities. As the National Workforce Study concluded, the quality of workplace-personal life programs and policies today are in some ways just as important to workers as the traditional value of money. The more support provided, the more satisfied and committed the employee; without attention to these issues, the family will bear the brunt of the work-family conflict (Galinsky, 1993).

Reviewing the results of the employee or employer survey alone provides the individual perspective, or a micro-level approach. Reviewing both surveys in relationship to each other provides a deeper understanding of the relationships between organizational, employer, and employee variables. The present study met the criteria for the contextual effects approach as outlined by Bowen and Pittman (1995). These results reflected a more in-depth examination of the workplace-personal life interface and a source of information for educational programming, policy or program design, and future research.
Question Two

Question two asked: What are the relationships among business organizational characteristics and the employer variables of the work-life interface?

Results of the present study found that the percentage of part-time employees in a company predicted leave, the percentage of employees under 40 predicted organizational climate, and the combination of percentage under 40 and part time predicted economic benefits. Businesses with a higher percentage of employees under 40 and part-time status had fewer economic benefits and were more likely to have a negative organizational climate. This employee group is often raising a family and experiencing stress in doing so. Businesses may find these employees are more vulnerable to decreased productivity, turnover, and absenteeism. It is also possible that the percentage under 40 and part time were related and consisted of parents opting for part-time employment as a means of dealing with work and personal life issues.

In spite of fewer economic benefits, part-time workers reported more generous leave policies. As businesses employ more part-time workers, many are concerned about their benefit status. Generous leave policies were a positive employer contribution to the work-life balance. The data do not allow speculation as to whether employees felt more supported by one type of policy over another (such as leave or economic benefits). It is possible that part-time
workers were satisfied with lower salaries when they were provided generous leave policies making it possible to balance their responsibilities.

These results indicated some concern for young families in the Midwest. The economic benefits were low, and the likelihood of countering low benefits with additional supports that contribute to a positive organizational climate were also low. Rural areas often have limited community supports such as quality child care, and this compounds the problems for younger families.

Further research into these questions could lead to the development of a weighing system for benefits, which would provide a better understanding of these policies. For example, child-care resource and referral was considered equal weight to providing child-care center support. These represent very different levels of commitment from the employer and would no doubt be rated differently with a weighing system. The present study did not apply any weights to employer variables. Employers who understand the organizational characteristics of their business and design programs to support employees may be more successful in their efforts to improve productivity. Examples of successes can be found in the literature review (Hill & Wolbers, 1995; Seitel et al., 1996).

**Question Three**

Question three asked: What are the relationships among business organizational characteristics and the employee variables in the work-life interface?
As the percentage of female employees increased, the number of employees who felt less able to cope with stress also increased. Perhaps these results reflected the gender issues involved in the work-life balance. Previous research reported that women still assume the majority of child- and family-caretaking responsibilities in the majority of cases, although there is a trend toward more men taking these responsibilities and reporting increased stress and conflict (Seitel et al., 1996).

All organizational characteristics were predictive of at least one employee variable. The characteristics of an organization described the employee issues facing the workforce. Employers who are accustomed to examining the demographics of their workforce may find the results of the present study useful in viewing their demographic profile through a work-family lens. This type of review could guide their prioritization of workplace-personal life policies and programs. Organizational characteristics could become a general guide for employers as they assess options available to increase productivity.

The percentage of professional employees predicted burnout; the combination of percentage of women, percentage of professional, and percentage under age 40 predicted overall health status and ability to cope; and the combination of percentage of professional and size predicted company resentment. Companies with a higher percentage of professionals, managers, and administrators had more satisfied and healthy employees with additional supports available. Previous research has concluded that increased employee
supports lead to increased productivity (Seitel et al., 1996). The non-professional staff in these businesses rarely have equal access to benefits, an example being evident in the fast-food chains included in the present study where only management received benefits. Professional-level employees also are more likely to be able to afford to purchase additional supports needed to assist in meeting personal concerns. Businesses in the present study appeared to be comfortable investing in professionals and results indicate the benefit of doing so. Employers were less likely to invest in other groups, particularly the younger and part-time employees.

The results also indicated a positive reflection of supervisor support. Although the demands were high, many employees in the present study felt supported. Perhaps this reflected the Midwest work ethic as well as the consequences of additional job demands. Business size was also related to co-worker resentment. Perhaps larger companies tend to have more formal policies and programs offered that are not well explained, that have little emphasis or support for by supervisors, or that employees do not have equal access to which may result in resentment. Smaller companies may have fewer formal policies, but they may be more likely to respond to worker needs because of the size factor which permits familiarity with employees' lives. Related research indicated that offering benefits in a cafeteria approach allows each employee to create a benefit package that meets their individual needs. One of the most frequent complaints
was that benefits were not well understood or explained to employees (Friedman et al., 1993b).

Census Data Center Reports (Rathge, personal communication, May 1996) have reported the exodus of young people and families from North Dakota and other rural, Midwestern states. Economic development leaders express their concern with the number of young workers and their families leaving the state for better jobs, usually meaning higher wages and benefits. Employers seeking to retain quality workers in the under age 40 and female categories may find it helpful to offer supportive work-life benefits and to review the accessibility of programs to all employees. The results of the present study and other research indicated that employers could improve retention of younger employees by providing attention to the workplace-personal life interface (Seitel et al., 1996). If employers became aware of how organizational characteristics predicted employee attitudes and behaviors, steps could be taken to mediate the negative impacts.

Question Four

The fourth question asked: What are the relationships among employer and employee variables in the work-life interface?

The relationship between flexibility and lower stress was consistent with other studies reported in the literature. Flexibility has been cited as the most requested and needed program/policy by employees in the research to date (Friedman et al., 1993b; Galinsky et al., 1991; Holmes et al., 1995; National Report, 1995; Seitel et al., 1996). When employees are asked what would allow
them to better meet the needs of both personal and work responsibilities, flexibility is on top of the list.

The two remaining correlations did not appear to be consistent with the literature. First, increased flexibility was related to less accommodating attitudes among employees. A less accommodating attitude means that employees were less likely to go out of their way to meet employer needs if employers accommodated their personal/family needs. Second, increased flexibility was related to less commitment to stay if family/personal needs were addressed. Companies reporting more flexibility in the present study were also more likely to have part-time employees which was related to offering more generous leave. Perhaps the employee’s part-time status serves as their primary stress reduction strategy. As a result, increased flexibility is already present in their schedules and they may not respond positively to questions about accommodation and commitment. The wording of the questions may also impact responses on this item. Another explanation may be that part-time employees may have a different experience from full-time employees, resulting in varied accommodation and commitment levels.

The relationship between organizational climate and family impacts on the job may be interpreted positively. Perhaps a positive organizational climate makes it possible for employees to report family issues and develop a negotiated response that is favorable to both employer and employee. The additional supports necessary to do so would be in place for businesses with positive
organizational climates. This could also explain the fact that there was a relationship with employees who were less likely to feel resentful if they were asked to accommodate co-workers' needs. If the additional supports (positive organizational climate) are in place, and the employer is open to such needs being addressed, there would be little need for resentment among employees.

The next two relationships, "less likely to go out of their way to meet employer needs if accommodated with family/personal needs" and "less commitment to stay if family/personal needs are met," may be receiving a negative response because the business is already accommodating them and assisting in meeting their needs. Or perhaps the items are worded in a manner that could be interpreted that a problem already exists, and these responses could indicate the employee's reaction to the wording of the items. The present study compared the employers' perceptions of their support to the employee experience. It is also possible that the employer perception of the workplace environment does not match the employee perception due to lack of understanding and communication with employees. The results were not clear and require further investigation. Previous work has been conducted to specifically examine the outcome of initiated programs that contribute to a positive organizational climate which found positive results (Seitel et al., 1996). In the present study, opinions were examined and no specific policy was initiated. No additional sources of data, such as business records, were used to confirm survey responses. A closer examination is needed.
All variables except leave were significant predictors of employee attitudes and behaviors. If employers adopt a plan to regularly assess the status of employee attitudes and behaviors, they can track the corporate culture, commitment levels, and organizational climate of their workplace and use this information to address needs. Conducting assessments can be difficult for employers to do. Employers are not always eager to ask questions of employees for many reasons. More than once in the course of this study, employers who were approached to participate in this research expressed their concerns, such as fearing the results will subject them to unrealistic expectations. Consequently, few conduct formal or regular assessments as indicated in the results of this study.

Employers must first become aware of the relationships between employer and employee variables and then become convinced of their impact on job satisfaction, commitment, turnover, and productivity, which translates into the profitability, or bottom line, of a business. Once this is accomplished, research results such as those found in this study can be used to guide employers in the design of a responsive work-life program. The literature cited many examples of relatively simple and low-cost programs that address employee concerns, and many business case studies have found that employer fears tend to be unwarranted. One example was found in a 1995 DuPont study. An executive who described himself as a nominal supporter of work-life programs agreed to conduct assessments and develop responsive programs. He was moved to become a strong believer that these programs are imperative to a business. The study of 1,800
DuPont workers found that those who used the work-life programs were the most committed and that they were 45% more likely than non-users to strongly agree that they would "go the extra mile" to assure DuPont's success (Seitel et al., 1996). The results of the present study found several employer variables to be predictive of employee outcomes.

In general, the results were consistent with the National Workforce Study (Galinsky et al., 1993). Flexibility, leave, and supportive programs, such as employee assistance and educational efforts, were all associated with more positive work attitudes and behaviors, indicating investments in such programs are a benefit to both employers as well as employees. The employer variables in the present study predicted several employee outcomes. These results support the case for employer attention to workplace-personal life issues.

**Question Five**

Question five asked: What are the relationships among organizational characteristics, employer variables, and employee variables with job satisfaction?

In general, the results of the present study supported previous research which indicated that workers who were happy and satisfied with their jobs experienced less overall health problems and were more able to balance their work and personal responsibilities. This research question attempted to determine whether an employee's overall level of job satisfaction was related to any organizational, employee, or employer variables.
Results of the present study indicated that hiring ability, stress and health concerns due to family, burnout, co-worker resentfulness, and work-family culture predicted job satisfaction. It should be noted that there were no employer variables that predicted job satisfaction. Perhaps the two-item measure of overall job satisfaction was not specific enough to determine relationships with employer variables used in the present study. Other measures of job satisfaction may prove to be more useful in the future.

Five predictors of job satisfaction were identified, and it is possible that these five predictors could be the basis for an employer assessment of the workplace. Businesses could examine their difficulty in hiring, the status of employee perceptions of stress, burnout, co-worker resentfulness, work-family culture and job satisfaction. These assessments could serve as a guide for employers to track the course of job satisfaction which is related to overall productivity in the business.

The factors that contributed to decreased job satisfaction could serve as warning signs to employers. Factors that increase job satisfaction would be a positive starting point for employers interested in addressing workplace-personal life issues. The National Workforce Study reported that work-family solutions will be most effective if they focus on the nature of the job, relationships at work and the culture (Galinsky et al., 1993). These national results were consistent with findings in the present study.
Recommendations for Researchers

Faber and Farrell (1991) concluded in their review of the work-family field of study that it is important to build on what is already known so the payoff will be high in relation to the cost of these activities. Cutting funding for data collection and research is a false economy; the costs of shaping policies without adequate information are likely to greatly exceed any short-term savings. Continued research is imperative to better understand the many complex issues surrounding this topic. Bowen and Pittman (1995) recommended a move toward a contextual effects approach including both micro- and macro-level data. The present study was conducted from a contextual effects perspective. Continued work from this framework is needed to more clearly identify the complex issues involved in the work-life interface.

The present study increased the knowledge base for the Midwest businesses in this sample and was representative of the Midwest business configuration. The study represented one step in the direction of providing the information needed to develop policies that will adequately meet the needs of both employers and employees. It is easy to predict continued dissonance between work and personal responsibilities. The future workforce is threatened by the results of this conflict (Akabas, 1990). The present study found some dissonance between employers and employees. It is inappropriate and non-productive to place blame or expect solutions from one source—the family,
individual, employer, government, or community. Each one contributes to the work-life interface. Future research will need to take the Midwest perspective of the work-life interface and attempt to place a dollar value on policies and programs. Employers are becoming more aware of the relationships as discussed in this and other studies; however, many are not convinced until a cost-benefit analysis is conducted. Previous research has found that for every dollar spent on preventive supports, six dollars are saved or returned to the employer (Vanderkolk & Young, 1991). This information is important to businesses and needs to be addressed more specifically in terms of the cost-benefit of flexibility, leave, and other programs or policies.

Longitudinal research will also provide more conclusive evidence of the impact of such policies on both employer and employee. Longitudinal research would prove especially beneficial in the area of impact of family on work, the more neglected side of research in general and perhaps the more convincing information needed for employers to focus on the work-life interface.

The policy implications of this research and other related research has as its driving force the concept of addressing and surmounting barriers to participatory competence, developing strategic plans, and realizing gains (strengths approach) rather than the concept of solving problems (deficit approach) (Weick & Saleeby, 1995). Moving employers from a deficit approach to a strengths perspective will continue to be a challenge for researchers.
Recommendations for Educators/Human Resource Professionals

Educators and human resource professionals are often charged with leading the effort to create a productive workforce. These efforts may be shortsighted if they fail to recognize the relationships of a productive workforce to a responsive business culture. Understanding the organizational characteristics and the employer and employee perceptions of the work-life interface enhances the work of educators and human resource professionals as they develop responsive policies and programs for the businesses they serve.

Educators and human resource professionals can promote regular assessments of employer and employee needs. Consistent assessments will provide the baseline data needed to chart a path toward increased productivity. The relationships between employer and employee variables support the notion that worker needs and workplace goals can impact both quality of life and business productivity. Economic development efforts will be enhanced when consideration of human capital is given and workers are considered as assets to be developed or as customers to be served within the workplace. Educators and human resource professionals can champion the effort and move companies from awareness to having a few policies to changing the corporate culture (Galinsky et al., 1991).

The results indicated that there is no single solution or policy which acts as a silver bullet for employers in assisting employees with their workplace-personal life balance. The combinations of several factors such as flexibility and supports
that contribute to an overall positive organizational climate may be most successful for increasing employee productivity and a positive workplace-personal life balance. Work-life issues have emerged as a key factor for educators and human resource professionals in the business success formula. As the 1990s conclude and a new century emerges, businesses will be contending with this topic to ensure their strength in the economy as well as in their human capital.

Conclusions

The results of the present study are presented within the following limitations. The present study was limited due to the employer sample size of 17 businesses; however, the employee sample generated from this group was adequate for statistical analysis. This study was exploratory in nature and was developed from a contextual effects approach. Financial restrictions determined the size of the sample used. This study provided the feedback necessary to refine the survey tools for future efforts.

Self-report data from owners/managers also present limitations as no attempt to verify the information through other methods took place. The existence of programs and policies as described by management could be altered when reported by other individuals. Other data such as turnover rates and costs of programs could be calculated in the future to further substantiate the results.

The scoring system used in the employer survey applied the same weight to all work-life programs and did not attempt to discriminate between different types of work-life programs in measuring overall responsiveness. For example, the
same weight was given to the presence of on-site child care centers as to resource and referrals for child care. The former represented a different level of commitment from the employer.

The results of the present study and previous work cited in the literature review provide the basis for arguing for employer attention to employee needs in the workplace-personal life interface. The expansion of policies and programs to support employees can mediate the development and success of businesses in any community or region. Businesses must support programs that are traditional, such as dependent care, and examine how jobs are designed and structured throughout the business. Using the results of this research and previous efforts presents an opportunity to align worker needs with workplace goals and impact employer productivity and employee quality of life.

The unwritten rules of the past, such as never bringing family concerns to the office, dictated the separation of work and family. These rules are impossible for people today and a growing number of businesses are realizing they must develop responsive programs (Zedeck, 1990). Despite tremendous changes in the family arena, political interest in and concerns for family are reflected more in rhetoric than in substantive policy initiatives. In contrast to views of most other cultures, the American family is perceived as an isolated economic unit that survives or fails by its own hand (Faber & Farrell, 1991).

Finally, there is some evidence that the underlying reason for the failure of a "total quality" approach adopted as a philosophy for the future is the lack of
attention to the foundation of all human motivation (Steininger, 1995). There are
certain assumptions about people that must be understood if a company is to be
transformed into one that continually manages for quality. Businesses usually
forget that their foremost constituencies are their employees. If employees are
not happy, productivity suffers. While financial rewards do motivate people, there
is more beyond the money. Human beings are also internally motivated. A work
environment can be structured that will maximize utilization of human potential.
Employees need to feel they are engaged in meaningful work to be productive.
Leaders must eliminate the fear in the workplace and the lack of trust. They
need to create policies and procedures that reinforce the notion that employees
have power and are free to pursue goals. Progressive leaders choose to address
the work-life interface not only because it increases productivity and reduces
turnover and absenteeism, but also because it motivates the intrinsic aspects of
the employee’s potential (Steininger, 1995).

Faith Wohl, former work-life director for DuPont and current director of
the new Federal Office of Workplace Initiatives, has concluded that these
employer-employee changes call for a new social contract that redefines the
critical agreements among work, family and community where work assumes a
more rightful place within our lives rather than demanding we rearrange our lives
around it. The National Workforce Study made it very clear that there are
problems with the workplace itself. Improving the quality of the workplace to
achieve productivity is important. Workers are fighting burnout and those with
more control over jobs and schedules tend to be more satisfied, are less burned out, take more initiative at work, feel greater loyalty to employers and plan to remain with them longer than other workers (Seitel et al., 1996).

The issues surrounding the workplace-personal life interface require consensus and combined action. Perhaps no issue so effectively combines self-interest with societal interest. The workplace-personal life interface has a unique potential to mediate the balance between economic and social development into the next century. Economist R. M. Kanter (1984) concluded, "If the tensions between work and family are to be resolved, it may be more satisfactory to alter work rather than family" (p. 295). Workers have rising expectations that work will provide job satisfaction as well as quality of life, both of which depend on greater understanding and successful resolution of the issues surrounding the work-life interface.
APPENDIX A

EMPLOYER SURVEY
January 20, 1994

Dear Company President:

Many employers today are realizing the benefits of developing policies and programs designed to help employees manage their family and work responsibilities more effectively. Not only can employees benefit personally but their companies can benefit through lower turnover and absenteeism, and higher morale and productivity. However, no one really knows which policies and programs are most widely available or of greatest benefit here in the Upper Midwest, particularly in smaller rural communities.

Therefore, we would like to invite your participation in an important research project addressing Work/Family Issues. We need your participation so that we can obtain accurate information about how companies in this part of the country are helping their employees to manage work and family responsibilities more effectively.

The purpose of the first stage of this project will be to assess the extent to which companies in this region provide programs and policies that assist their employees in dealing with family and work responsibilities. We have attached a summary of the kinds of information we will be collecting. Your participation in this project in no way implies any obligation on your part to make any changes in your company policies or programs.

You will receive a phone call shortly after January 26th and you will be asked to provide answers to the questions on the survey over the phone. Your primary responsibility will be to provide complete and accurate answers over the phone. (You may wish to direct our call to another staff member in your company.) The total time required for each call should only be about 15 minutes.

Please be assured that all information that you provide will be kept strictly confidential. After all of the information has been collected, we will be glad to provide to you a summary report of our findings, upon your request. No company will be identified by name in the report.
Page 2 - Work/Family Project

This project is sponsored by the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development and includes researchers from Iowa State University, North Dakota State University, South Dakota State University, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. If you have any questions about this project, please write or call Deb Gebeke, NDSU Extension (237-7255). If you have questions about the rights of research subjects, please call the NDSU IRB Office (237-7035).

Thank you for your consideration of this important project. We hope that the results will provide useful information to you as you strive to compete more successfully in today's labor market.

Sincerely,

Deb Gebeke
Family Science Specialist
Types of Information to be Solicited in Project:

1. **Flexible Work Arrangements** - Flextime, Job Sharing, Flexplace, Part-time

2. **Child Care Assistance** - Parental Leave, Sick Leave, Child Care Referral, Flexible Spending Accounts, Child Care vouchers, On-site Child Care Facilities, Summer Child Care Programs

3. **Elder Care Assistance** - Service Referral, Leave With or Without Pay

4. **Employee Assistance Programs** - Company Provided, Referral Only, Support Groups, Parenting Workshops


6. **Health, Educational, and Recreational Programs** - Health Insurance, Paid Time Off, Wellness Programs, Tuition Reimbursement, Family Recreational Activities

7. **Other** - Needs Assessment, Supervisory Training, Dual Career Assistance
The first series of questions involves Flexible Work Arrangements which your company may provide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offered?</th>
<th>What proportion of employees are eligible for this program?</th>
<th>How is eligibility determined?</th>
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<td>Formal policy</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Written policy</td>
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</table>

1. Does your company allow flexibility in starting and quitting times, as long as employees work the required numbers of hours?

2. Does your company allow employees who must provide care for family members (children, spouses, elderly parents) to reduce their work schedules to part-time?

3. Does your company allow employees to job-share?

4. Does your company permit flexibility in scheduling - including setting shift schedules to meet family needs?

5. Does your company permit flexibility in scheduling vacations to meet family needs?

6. Does your company allow employees to work at home occasionally?
### Flexible Work Arrangements (contd)

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<th>Offered?</th>
<th>What proportion of employees are eligible for this program?</th>
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7. Does your company allow employees to work at home or at off-site locations on a regular basis, possibly linked by telephone or computer?

8. Does your company do cross training and/or design jobs with an eye toward flexibility?

9. Does your company provide bereavement or funeral leave to employees after the death of a close relative?

Now we will ask a series of questions concerning the manner in which your company may help employees to address childcare needs.

10. Does your company allow female employees to take extended unpaid job-guaranteed leaves of more than 12 weeks to care for newborn, newly adopted or foster children?

11. Does your company allow male employees to take extended unpaid job guaranteed leaves of more than 12 weeks to care for newborn, newly adopted or foster children?
Child Care Needs (contd)

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<tr>
<th>Offered?</th>
<th>What proportion of employees are eligible for this program?</th>
<th>How is eligibility determined?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Some  Most  All  Case-by-Case</td>
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<td>Formal</td>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>Written  Unwritten  policy  practice</td>
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</table>

12. Does your company allow employees to take several days off without pay to care for a sick child with the assurance that they will not lose their job?

13. Does your company allow employees to take several days off with pay to care for a sick child with the assurance that they will not lose their jobs?

14. Does your company provide information to help employees locate child care in the community?

15. Does your company have a flexible spending account which helps employees pay for child care through pre-tax transfers?

16. Does your company help employees to pay for child care with vouchers or other subsidies?

17. Does your company provide a child care center at or near the work-site either independently or in a consortium with other employers?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Most</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Formal Policy</th>
<th>Written Policy</th>
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18. Does your company allow employees flexibility to take time off work to attend children's school functions?

19. Does your company fall under the provisions of federal and/or state family leave policies?

20. Does your company permit employees to take small pieces of leave [i.e. an hour or two] to meet personal or family needs.

21. Does your company help employees to arrange care for school-age children:
   a. before school?
   b. after school?
   c. on holidays?
   d. on summer breaks?

22. Does your company allow employees to make and/or accept personal phone calls?
The next questions have to do with ways in which your company may help its employees to care for elderly family members.

23. Does your company help employees to access information and locate needed services for elderly family members?

24. Does your company allow employees to take several days of leave without pay to care for elderly family members?

25. Does your company allow employees to take several days of leave with pay to care for elderly family members?

The next questions have to do with ways in which your company may help employees to resolve family problems.

26. Does your company offer free EAP [Employee Assistance Programs] for example, family/marital counseling, counseling on personal problems that disrupt family life & work
   a. for its employees?
   b. for employees' family members?
### Family Problems (contd)

<table>
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<th>Offered?</th>
<th>What proportion of employees are eligible for this program?</th>
<th>How is eligibility determined?</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Some               Most         All</td>
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#### 27. Does your company provide referral to community service agencies & support groups?
- a. for its employees?
- b. for its employees' family members?

#### 28. Does your company offer support groups in the workplace for employees facing problems or experiencing work-family conflict?

#### 29. Does your company offer written information and/or workshops for employees on
- a. parenting?
- b. child-development?
- c. care of the elderly?
- d. work-family issues?

Now we would like to ask a few questions regarding benefits which your company may provide that protect the economic security of employees' families.

#### 30. Does your company provide life insurance coverage which is partly paid for by the company?
### Economic Security Benefits (contd)

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<th>Offered?</th>
<th>What proportion of employees are eligible for this program?</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Some</td>
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31. Does your company provide short-term non-occupational disability insurance (also called temporary disability insurance) that is at least partly paid for by the company?
   a. company paid at least in part?
   b. employee pays all?

32. Does your company provide long-term disability coverage as a supplement to Social Security disability insurance that is at least partly paid by the company?

The next series of questions have to do with health, educational and recreational programs which your company may provide for its employees & their families.

33. Does your company provide health insurance for full-time employees with at least part of the premium paid for by the company?

34. Does your company provide health insurance for part-time employees with at least part of the premium paid for by the company?
Providing Programs (cont'd)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Offered?</th>
<th>Formal</th>
<th>Informal</th>
<th>Written</th>
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35. Does your company provide health coverage for employees' family members with at least part of the premium paid for by the company?

36. Does your company allow employees 10 or more sick days annually with pay?

37. If your answer to the last question was no, does your company offer an earned time or paid time off program?

38. Does your company provide nutrition, fitness, and/or health programs or opportunities a. for employees? b. for employees and their families?

39. Does your company have a tuition reimbursement plan or program?

40. Does your company offer discounted tickets for family oriented recreational activities or sponsor family events?
The next series of questions relating to work-family don’t really fit into a category but may be provided by your company.

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<th>Offered?</th>
<th>What proportion of employees are eligible for this program?</th>
<th>How is eligibility determined?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes No</td>
<td>Some Most All</td>
<td>Formal Written Informal Unwritten policy practice by Case</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

41. Does your company assist the partner of a new hire in finding a job in dual-earner relationships?

42. Has your company conducted a formal assessment about work-family needs and issues?

43. Does your company offer training to supervisors and managers in dealing with the employees’ work-family issues?

44. Apart from the specific kinds of assistance your company provides to its employees, how is it generally as a place to work?

Very true of this company | Somewhat true | Not very true | Not at all true of this company
---|---|---|---
a. When employees must place the needs of their families before the demands of their jobs, they can (within reason) do so without jeopardizing their chances for job advancement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4
b. Supervisors are encouraged to be supportive of employees with family problems and to find solutions that work for both employees and the company. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4
Question 44 (contd)

c. Men and women who must attend to family matters are treated equally by supervisors and the company. 1 2 3 4

d. The company makes a real effort to inform employees of the programs that are available to them. 1 2 3 4

Now some general background questions about your company.

45. Which of the following categories best describes the business of your company?

a. Mining, agriculture, forestry and fishing
b. Construction
c. Manufacturing
d. Transportation, communication, and public utilities
e. Wholesale and retail trade (e.g., stores, distributors, restaurants, mail order houses, etc.)
f. Finance, insurance, and real estate
g. Business and professional services (e.g., law office, ad agencies, temporary agencies, etc.)
h. Health services
i. Educational services
j. Social services (e.g., community services, religious organizations, etc.)
k. Other services (e.g., hotels, cleaners, theaters, health clubs, etc.)
l. Other (Please specify.)

46. Approximately what percent of your company’s employees fall into each of the following categories? (If none, please write 0 in the space provided.)

% Percent women employees
% Percent professional, administrative, or managerial employees
% Percent unionized employees
% Percent employees under age 40
% Part-time employees

47. How does your company define a part-time worker?

_______ hours or less per week.
_____ percent of employees are part-time.
48. How would you describe the location of your business?

____ a. Urban
____ b. Suburban
____ c. Rural
____ d. Other (Please specify.)

49. In which of the following size categories is your company located?

____ a. 20-49 employees
____ b. 50-99 employees
____ c. 100-249 employees
____ d. 250-499 employees
____ e. 500+ employees

50. In general, has it been easy or difficult to fill the following types of job vacancies at your company in the past 12 months? What do you project for the next 12 months?

a. Job vacancies in general

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past 12 months</th>
<th>Next 12 months</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
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</table>

b. Job vacancies in highly skilled positions...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past 12 months</th>
<th>Next 12 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

51. How well is your company doing in comparison with companies you consider to be your competitors?

____ a. Better
____ b. About the Same
____ c. Worse

52. Is your company

____ a) Independently owned or
____ b) A subsidiary of another company which determines policy
APPENDIX B

EMPLOYEE SURVEY
April 1994

TO: All employees invited to participate in the North Dakota State University Research Project

FR: Deb Gebeke, Researcher

North Dakota State University is participating in a four state regional research project called WORK AND FAMILY POLICIES IN THE MIDWEST: PEOPLE, BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. Your employer has given us permission to invite all employees at your business site to complete a survey. Therefore, you are invited to participate at this time. Your responses will be kept confidential. No individual information will be released. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. The complete set of results will be available upon completion of the study and available for you to review if you are interested. This study does not mean to imply that any action will be taken as a result of the findings.

This study is part of a regional effort designed to assist businesses in better understanding the needs of its changing workforce. In September 1993, the National Workforce Study was released. This study will allow us to take a closer look at the workforce in the midwest and particularly in North Dakota. Workers today want to be both productive employees and responsible family members.

The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. We are interested in exploring many issues and questions such as: What are workers looking for today in a job? Do women and men think differently about work issues? How comfortable are workers with the diverse workforce? How do workers manage their dual responsibilities of home life and work life? What can employers do to support quality output and quality workers?

Findings from this research and other studies provide information that is useful for meeting the needs of both employer and employee as everyone adjusts to the changing workforce and the increasingly complex issues of balancing work and family.

Thank you for your assistance in this research effort. If you have any questions about this study, you can contact one of the researchers (Deb Gebeke, 237-7255 or Sarah Jacobson, 237-7770) or the NDSU Institutional Review Board at 237-7035.
Work and Family Policies in the Midwest: 
People, Business, and Economic Development

Regional Research Study supported by:
North Dakota State University
South Dakota State University
Iowa State University
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

This is a survey to find out how your job at this company affects your home life — and how your home life affects your job.
The results will be used to compile information about work and family issues in the Midwest. Various businesses are participating in this study. Please be as candid and specific as you can. This survey is confidential, so your employer will see the group results, but no individual names or surveys. This information will be useful to many people as they consider how to best meet the needs of the changing workforce in the ’90s.

Job Satisfaction
All in all, how satisfied would you say you are with your present job? (Circle the best response.)
1. Not at all satisfied
2. Not too satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
4. Somewhat satisfied
5. Very satisfied

Knowing what you know now, if you had to decide all over again whether to take the job you now have, what would you decide? (Circle the best response.)
1. Take the same job without hesitation
2. Have some second thoughts, but would take the same job
3. Probably would not take the same job
4. Definitely would not take the same job

Work Environment/Work Group
In your job, do you mainly work alone or with other people? (Circle the best response.)
1. Work alone
2. Work with other people

How many people would you say you work with on a day-to-day basis?

For Respondents Whose Work Groups are Four People or More:

How much do you agree or disagree with each statement? (Circle the best response or skip this section if you do not work in a group of 4 or more people.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel I am really part of the group of people I work with</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I look forward to being with the people I work with each day</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

How much time do you have on a typical day off to spend on yourself, just to do the things you like to do? ____ minutes ____ or hours

(please turn over for more)
**Burnout**

The following questions ask about your feelings about your job. For each of the following statements please indicate how much you agree or disagree. (Circle the best response.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel emotionally drained from my work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel used up at the end of the workday</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel tired when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel burned out from my work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel frustrated by my job</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Health**

How often would you say you are bothered by minor health problems, such as headaches, insomnia, upset stomach, and the like? (Circle the best response.)

1. Never
2. Seldom
3. Occasionally
4. Often
5. Quite often

Overall, how would you say your physical health is these days? Would you say your general physical health is: (circle the best response)

1. Poor
2. Fair
3. Good
4. Very good
5. Excellent

**Psychological Stress Symptoms**

The following questions ask about thoughts or feelings you may or may not have experienced. For each of the following, please indicate how often you have felt this way during the last 3 months by circling the best response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How often have you felt nervous and stressed?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How often have you felt things were going your way?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How often have you found that you could not cope with all the things you had to do?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All things considered, how do you feel about your life in general these days? Would you say you feel: (circle the best response)

1. Delighted
2. Pleased
3. Mostly satisfied
4. Mixed
5. Mostly dissatisfied
6. Unhappy
7. Terrible

(please turn over for more)
### Supervisor Work-Family Support

Circle the response that best fits your situation. If you do not have a supervisor or do not feel these items apply to you, circle number 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My supervisor is fair and doesn’t show favoritism in responding to employees’ personal or family needs.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My supervisor accommodates me when I have family or personal business to take care of (for example, medical appointments, meeting with child’s teacher, etc.).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My supervisor is understanding when I talk about personal or family issues that affect my work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I feel comfortable bringing up personal or family issues with my supervisor.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**My supervisor is**
- 1. Male
- 2. Female

**My supervisor has significant responsibility for the care of children or elderly dependents**
- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don’t know

### Personal Attitudes Toward Work-Family Policies

Circle the response that best fits your situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. If my employer accommodated the personal and family needs of its workers through work and family programs or policies, then I would feel responsible to go out of my way to meet the needs of my employer.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If my employer provided work-family benefits that did not benefit me personally, I would feel resentful.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If I had to do extra work occasionally to accommodate the personal or family needs of co-workers, I would feel resentful.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If my employer helped me with work-family responsibilities, then I would be more likely to stay at my job.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Work-Family Culture at Place of Employment

Circle the response that best fits your situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. There is an unwritten rule at my place of employment that you can’t take care of family needs on company time.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. At my place of employment, employees who put their family or personal needs ahead of their jobs are not looked on favorably.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If you have a problem managing your work and family responsibilities, the attitude at my place of employment is “you made your bed now lie in it.”</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. At my place of employment, employees have to choose between advancing in their jobs or devoting attention to their family or personal lives.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### General Comments

If you have any additional comments about job satisfaction, demands, stress, work-family support and/or supervisor support, please list them here:

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PLEASE TURN OVER FOR MORE
REFERENCES


