

ABSTRACT

Previous studies have found that the effectiveness of family-friendly workplace policies (FFWP) in reducing work-family conflict (WFC) is far from conclusive. To address this equivocal link the present study examined whether the policies of flexible scheduling and reduced work hours were differentially effective in reducing work-interference-with-family (WIF) for managers and nonmanagers. As well, the impact of different work stressors (i.e., job control vs. work overload) was examined. From a sample of Canadian employees, it was found that for nonmanagers flexible scheduling was associated with higher job control, which in turn was associated with improved WIF. By contrast, for managers reduced work hours were associated with lower work overload, which in turn was associated with improved WIF.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The equivocal link between FFWP and WIF is largely due to a lack of consideration for moderators that may be more or less effective at reducing WIF (Shockley & Allen, 07). Whereas gender has been studied as a potential moderating variable (e.g., Kossek & Korabik, 02), the moderating effect of job type (i.e., managerial vs. nonmanagerial) has not been directly studied even though previous research has found that job type was a significant moderator for FFWP and work outcomes (e.g., Kossek et al., 06).

Nonmanagerial jobs are characterized by lower job control (i.e., less freedom in work schedules, work pace, work process, etc.) (Baltes et al., 99). As a flexible schedule policy allows employees to increase their job control (i.e., adjust when they work) nonmanagers should benefit most from such a policy.

Conversely managers are more likely to work longer hours, perform more unpaid overtime, and perform supplemental work at home (Schieman et al., 06). This leads to managers reporting higher work overload than nonmanagers (Duxbury, et al., 08). However, no previous studies have investigated the effects of FFWP at reducing work overload. A reduced work hours policy reduces the number of work hours an employee is required to work, which conceptually leads to a decrease in work responsibilities, thus a likely decrease in work overload.

H1: The relationship for user satisfaction with flexible work schedule will be stronger for nonmanagers than for managers.

H2: The relationship for user satisfaction with reduced work hours will be stronger for managers than for nonmanagers.

H3A: The relationship between job control and WIF will be stronger for nonmanagers than managers.

H3B: The relationship between work overload and WIF will be stronger for managers than nonmanagers.

METHODS

Participants were from from the Canadian sample of an ongoing nine-nation study of WFC. The Canadian sample consisted of men and women survey respondents employed within one of three occupations. Only participants who met the following two criteria were included in the current study.

1. Participants must have been living with a common-law partner or spouse, as well as at least one child 18 years of age or younger.
2. Participants must have used at least one of two FFWP (flexible schedule or reduced work hours) 3 months prior to the survey.

Given these conditions the current study included:

- 184 participants (113 managerial, 71 nonmanagerial) in the analysis of **flexible work schedules**.
- 103 participants (60 managerial, 43 non-managerial) in the analysis of **reduced work hours**.

Previous research found that user satisfaction with FFWP was related to FIW and WIF, whereas mere policy availability and use were not (Rosin & Korabik, 2002). Therefore, the current study measured user satisfaction with FFWP use. The survey also included multi-item measures for job control, work overload, and WIF

RESULTS

A path analysis was calculated with least squares regression (Kerlinger & Pedhazur 73). Separate path models were estimated for managers and nonmanagers. For the first step of the path analysis the relationships between FFWP (i.e., flexible schedule, reduced work hours) and work stressors (i.e., job control, work overload) were analyzed.

- For nonmanages, satisfaction with flexible schedule had a significant association to job control $r=.42$, $p<.001$. This relationship was significantly stronger for nonmanagers than for managers, $z = 3.13$, $p=.002$. **H1 Supported**
- For managers, satisfaction with reduced work hours had a significant association to work overload $r=-.27$, $p=.042$. This relationship was significantly stronger for managers than for nonmanagers, $z = 1.99$, $p=.047$. **H2 Supported**

The second step of the path analysis analyzed the relationships between work stressors (i.e., job control, work overload) and WIF.

- The relationship between job control and WIF was stronger for nonmanagers $r=-.34$, $p=.002$, than for managers $r=.025$, $p=.007$. However, the difference between the manager and nonmanager path coefficients did not reach statistical significance, $z = -.61$, $p=.542$. **H3A Partially Supported**
- The relationship between work overload and WIF was stronger for managers $r=.60$, $p<.001$, than for nonmanagers $r=.55$, $p<.001$. However, the difference between the manager and nonmanager path coefficients did not reach statistical significance, $z = .85$, $p=.395$. **H3B Partially Supported**

FIGURE 1: NONMANAGERS
Satisfaction With Policy, Work Stressor, and WIF

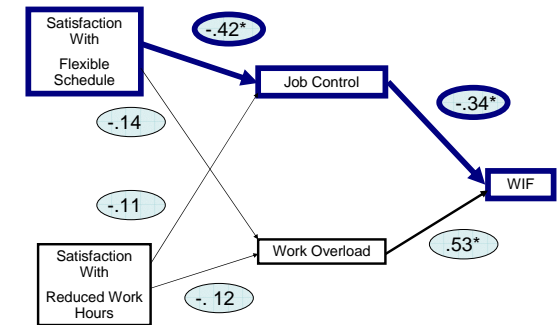
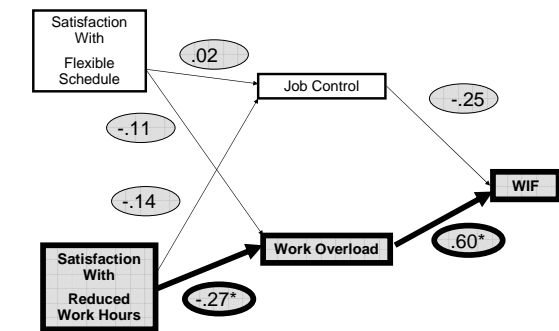


FIGURE 2: MANAGERS
Satisfaction With Policy, Work Stressor, and WIF



IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

This is the first study to directly test and find evidence that particular policies will be more or less effective at reducing WIF depending on an employee's job type. Further, the results indicate that these differences can be explained by differences in the salience of particular work stressors that are antecedents to WIF. Specifically, job control appeared to be a more significant work stressor for nonmanagerial employees, and work overload appeared to be a more significant stressor for managerial employees.

However, conclusions drawn from this study are limited by its cross-sectional design, and relatively small sample size.