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Kopp, Lauren R. *The Effects of Perceived Supervisor Work-Life Support on Employee Work-Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior*

Abstract

Drawing on Social Exchange Theory, a study was conducted examining the effects of perceived coworker and supervisor social support on employee work-life balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors. It was predicted that perceived coworker and supervisor support would be positively related to perceptions of work-life balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors. One hundred and thirty-two participants completed a survey posted online on LinkedIn.com and the University of Wisconsin-Stout's Psychology department participant pool. Results showed that employee perceptions of work-life support (both supervisor and coworker support) are related to work-life balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors. It was also found that supervisor support predicted certain employee outcomes more so than coworker support.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Work-life balance has important implications for both employees and their organizations. This area of research is becoming more popular as the workforce continues to change (Kossek, 2005). According to Kossek (2005), there has been a steady increase in dual-earner couples, single parent families, and employees who have eldercare responsibilities. These increased pressures can have negative impacts on employees and organizational outcomes such as overall work-life balance (Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002). Furthermore, Bragger, Rodriguez-Srednicki, Kutcher, Indovino, and Rosner (2005) found that these increased pressures have a negative impact on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors.

To counterbalance these negative impacts, it is important to recognize the value of social support at work. Both one's peers and supervisors may serve to minimize some of these negative impacts. Coworkers have the ability to temporarily relieve an employee from his or her job duties at work in order to attend to personal needs. For example, if an employee needs to leave work early to take care of a sick child, a coworker can show their supportiveness through staying late for that employee. The support received and reduction in pressure may increase employee satisfaction and organizational commitment. Not only can coworkers reduce some of these pressures, but supervisors can as well. Supervisors have the power to act as gatekeepers, and they have control over whether or not employees have access to and feel comfortable using work-life initiatives (Straub, 2012). In fact, previous studies have shown that perceptions of supervisor support have a greater impact on employee outcomes compared to coworker support (Rousseau & Aubé, 2010) or the availability of work-life balance policies alone (Allen, 2001; Kelly et al., 2008).

The purpose of this study is to determine if perceived work-life support is positively related to affective and behavioral outcomes at work (i.e., work-life balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors). Furthermore, this study aims to determine which avenue of support, coworkers or supervisors, have a larger influence on affective and behavioral outcomes at work. Together, coworker and supervisor support are considered to be informal organizational supports. According to Behson (2005), there are both informal and formal work-life supports within an organization. Informal supports (coworkers and supervisors) hold more weight in determining employee outcomes compared to formal supports (policies). Kossek, Pichler, Bodner, and Hammer (2011) agree that it is important to research informal workplace supports due to the rising trend of workplace stress today. These authors argue that we need to form a better understanding of informal workplace support and how it affects work-life balance (Kossek et al., 2011), although it seems plausible that informal networks are equally as valuable in predicting other, related outcomes (i.e., the experience of job satisfaction, commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors).

Chapter II: Literature Review

Perceived Coworker Support

Coworkers have the ability to define the social environment at work (Schneider, 1987) and they can have a large influence on whether or not an employee is able to balance his/her time between work and non-work life (Cook & Minnotte, 2008). Coworker support can be defined as the extent that individuals view other workers at their organization as being helpful and supportive of them (Liao, Joshi, & Chuang, 2004). This type of support can include caring for fellow coworkers, giving them tangible aid, and/or providing them with useful information (Ducharme & Martin, 2000; Parris, 2003).

It is important to note that coworker support can also be tied to an employee's work-life balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors. Work-life conflict can be reduced when a coworker helps an employee cope with the competing demands between one's work and non-work life (Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997; Thompson & Prottas, 2006). Employee job satisfaction can increase when coworkers are actively supportive of one another (Beehr, 1986; Pollock, Whitbred, & Contractor, 2000). Similarly, coworker support, such as mentoring another employee, can be tied to organizational commitment (Raabe & Beehr, 2003; Reichers, 1985). Finally, coworker support can increase employee engagement in organizational citizenship behaviors (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). If an employee does a favor for a coworker, that coworker may respond by doing his or her part for the other employee and the organization as a whole. Given these findings, it is apparent that coworkers have a large influence on employee outcomes.

Perceived Supervisor Support

Supervisors also shape employee views of organizational support and its association with work-life conflict (Kossek et al., 2011). Eisenberger, Singlhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, and Rhoades (2002) are in agreement with Kossek et al. They argue that workers view supervisors as organizational agents, and they consider supervisor actions to be equated with organizational actions. Kossek et al. (2011) define perceptions of supervisor work-life support as an employee's perception that their supervisor cares about his or her work-life well-being. Supportive supervisor behaviors include emotional support, instrumental support, role modeling behaviors, and creative work-life management (Hammer, Kossek, Yragui, Bodner, & Hanson, 2009). A supervisor engages in emotional support when they listen and show their subordinates they care about their work-life demands. Instrumental support occurs when a supervisor reacts to employee's work-life demands on a daily basis or as it is needed. When supervisors actively demonstrate how to balance their work-life behaviors on the job, they are engaging in the third dimension of support, role modeling behaviors. The fourth and final dimension of supervisor support is creative work-life management. Creative work-life management takes place when a supervisor rearranges a work day in order to enhance employee effectiveness on the job and off the job. It is important to consider all four dimensions of perceived supervisor support as they relate to employee and organizational outcomes. If employees view their supervisor as being unsupportive of their work-life balance, they may not utilize current work-life balance policies because they are fearful that it will make them look bad in front of their supervisor (Batt & Valcour, 2003). Overall, supervisors play an important role in whether or not employees feel comfortable with balancing their work and life responsibilities (Hammer, Neal, Newsom, Brockwood, & Colton, 2005).

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory is the basis for leader-member exchange (LMX; Sparrowe & Liden, 1997). This occurs when an individual engages in a behavior for someone; they expect to receive something in return. Both persons involved need to offer the other something that is valuable and reasonable, or fair (Graen & Scandura, 1987). When there is a higher value of exchange, there is a higher quality of the LMX relationship (Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). Subordinates that have a high quality LMX relationship with their supervisors are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and engage in OCBs (Ning, Jian, & Crant, 2010). Campbell (2000) suggests that supervisors who see employees performing OCBs are more likely to give those employees independence and support as it is needed. The same has been found for coworkers. The higher the quality of the exchange relationship between coworkers, the less work-life conflict an employee will feel (Carlson & Perrewé, 1999).

Social exchange theory can be explained by the concept of reciprocity. According to Korsgaard, Meglino, Lester, and Jeong (2010), there are two forms of reciprocity. The first form is the obligation to reciprocate, which is the belief that someone will return a favor or engage in a behavior because they feel obligated to pay someone back. The second form of reciprocity is expected reciprocity. Expected reciprocity is the belief that if a person does something for another person, he or she should get some sort of benefit in return, in the near future. Beham (2011) and Korsgaard et al. (2010) agree that employees will act in accordance with social exchange theory.

Social exchange theory is relevant to employee perceptions of supervisor support because when employees believe that an organization is being supportive of them, they will, in turn, feel the need to be supportive of, and work hard, for the organization (Korsgaard et al., 2010). As supervisors are considered the face of an organization, it is important to understand how

perceptions of support on work-life balance can have an impact on an employee's work-life balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and level of engagement in OCBs. All of these outcomes can have a positive impact on the organization as a whole (i.e. having a workforce that is committed to the company or having employees that engage in organizational citizenship behaviors).

Work-Life Balance

The first outcome of interest in this study is work-life balance. According to Hughes and Bozionelos (2007), work-life balance can be defined as the ability to effectively combine an individual's work life and non-work life. Work-life balance incorporates all types of employees, whether they have children or not (see Department of Trade and Industry, 2000; Dex & Scheibl, 2001; Fu & Shaffer, 2001; Rotondo et al., 2003). Moreover, it consists of a variety of activities that employees hope to engage in outside of work. This can include such things as employee hobbies or spending time with friends (Hughes & Bozionelos, 2007).

For the purpose of this research, work-family balance is considered synonymous with work-life balance. Additionally, while there are two types of work-life conflict, work-to-life and life-to-work, here, only work-to-life conflict will be considered here. While both forms of conflict are important, perceived coworker support and supervisor support are more applicable to work-life conflict in that work support is the main variable of interest, not support that is received from one's personal life outside of work.

Previous studies have shown that coworker support has an influence on employee work-life balance (Cook & Minnotte, 2008; Lu, Siu, Spector, & Shi, 2009). Specifically, coworkers play a large role in determining how an employee is able to balance his or her time between work and personal life. For example, if an employee needs to take time off of work to care for a sick

family member, a coworker can either help or hinder the situation. They can help the situation by covering the employee's shift for as long as it is needed. On the other hand, a coworker may not offer to cover the employee's shift, which can make it harder for the employee to get time off of work. The above is an example of coworkers providing *instrumental* support. Coworkers can also provide emotional support when they listen to another employee and offer them advice on work-life balance issues.

Supervisor support is also related to work-life conflict (Kossek et al., 2011). Liao (2011) found that work-life conflict reduces the quality of LMX. This is harmful for an organization because when employees believe that their workplace is treating them poorly, they are likely to reciprocate that poor behavior towards the organization (Heckman, Bigley, & Hereford, 2009). Other studies have shown that employee stress related to work-life conflict may have an influence on organizational efficiency, profitability, and retention (Bragger et al., 2005). Overall, it has been found that work-life balance has implications on a variety of variables such as employee attitudes, behaviors, well-being, and general organizational effectiveness (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brindley, 2005). Furthermore, work-life conflict has been found to be negatively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Bragger et al., 2005; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996). These findings stress the importance of perceived work-life support from supervisors. Given these findings, a prediction is made concerning the relationship between perceived support and work-life balance.

Hypothesis 1a: Perceived coworker and supervisor support are positively related to perceived work-life balance.

Hypothesis 1b: Perceived supervisor support is more strongly related to perceived work-life balance than coworker support.

Job Satisfaction

The second outcome of interest in this study is job satisfaction. Both coworkers and supervisors have the ability to influence employees' satisfaction with their jobs. Previous research has continually shown a positive relationship between coworker support and employee job satisfaction (Beehr, 1986, Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Pollock et al., 2000; Thompson & Prottas, 2006). Employees that have supportive coworkers may feel less stressed trying to balance work and non-work responsibilities, which can result in being happier and more satisfied on the job (McCalister, Dolbier, Webster, Mallon, & Steinhardt, 2006).

Supervisors can have an influence on employee job satisfaction as well. If employees recognize that their supervisors genuinely care about them and their individual work-life balance, they may become more satisfied with their jobs and feel the need to give back their supervisors in some way (Erdogan & Enders, 2007). According to Liao (2011), job satisfaction is linked to employee opinions of perceived organizational support (POS) and LMX. Work-life conflict weakens these perceptions, which results in lower job satisfaction. Furthermore, if employers try to enhance employee perceptions of POS and LMX, employees will remain unsatisfied as long as their organization does not put forth any effort when it comes to reducing work-life conflict (Liao, 2011). On the other hand, social exchange theory suggests that positive social exchange will have an impact on *positive* attitudes that are directed towards the organization, such as job satisfaction (Judge, Bodreau, & Bretz, 1994). In general, prior research has shown that supervisor work-life balance support significantly predicts employee levels of job satisfaction (e.g., Baral & Bhargava, 2010; Parasuraman & Alutto, 1984; & Straub, 2012). The effects of supervisor work-life balance on job satisfaction do not necessarily deteriorate over time.

Hammer et al. (2005) conducted a longitudinal study and found workplace supports can lead to significant increases in job satisfaction as time goes on.

The following research provides a specific example of a study that was conducted with supervisor support and job satisfaction. Mauno, Kinnunen, and Feldt (2012) examined the difference of managerial work-life support among a male dominated, female dominated, and gender mixed organization and how they influenced an employee's level of job satisfaction. Researchers found that managerial work-life support was positively related to job satisfaction across the three differing organizations, regardless of gender or occupation. This study and other studies similar to this, point to the conclusion that perceived supervisor support is positively related to employee job satisfaction. Given these findings, it is predicted that perceived support will have a positive influence on job satisfaction in the current study.

Hypothesis 2a: Perceived coworker and supervisor support are positively related to job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2b: Perceived supervisor support is more strongly related to job satisfaction than coworker support.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is the third outcome of interest. Solinger, Van Olffen and Roe (2008) discuss three components of organizational commitment that are referenced in the literature today. The three components of organizational commitment are affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Affective commitment describes an employee's emotional attachment to an organization (Solinger et al., 2008). Furthermore, affective commitment describes the way an employee identifies with, and is involved in an organization. The second component of commitment, continuance commitment, is defined by

employee perceptions of the costs associated with leaving an organization. Finally, the third component of commitment, normative commitment, refers to whether or not employees feel obligated to work for their organizations.

Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) developed the concept of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) to further explain employee organizational commitment (Liao, 2011). These authors argue that employees form beliefs surrounding the organization and whether or not their employer cares about their individual well-being. Aligning with social exchange theory, these authors further state that if employees view their organization as being committed to them, they will in turn be committed to the organization.

Organizational commitment is important for a variety of reasons. First, employee turnover costs organizations a large amount of money because time and resources have to be spent on finding someone to replace the previous employee. After a new employee is selected, more time and resources are spent on training that individual for the position. Thus, it is essential that employers consider organizational commitment and how it is related to perceptions of coworker and supervisor work-life support. According to Allen and Meyer (1990), employees who are highly committed to their jobs identify themselves with the organization, and they tend to be more active in the workplace. Additionally, these employees stay with the organization because they want to, not because they feel pressured to stay.

There is a clear connection between issues with work-life balance and organizational commitment. Both coworker support and supervisor support can result in an increase in an employee's level of affective commitment (Rousseau & Aubé, 2010). These authors state that when coworkers and supervisors actively show their support, employees become more satisfied with their jobs, and over time they can develop an emotional attachment to their organizations.

While three components of organizational commitment exist (affective, continuance, and normative) only *affective* commitment will be measured in this study. After conducting an extensive literature review, it is evident that this dimension of commitment is predominately measured when researchers are studying organizational commitment as it relates to work-life balance (e.g. Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan, 2005; Baral & Bhargava, 2010; Hughes & Bozionelos, 2007; Odle-Dusseau, Britt, & Greene-Shortridge, 2012; Smith & Gardner, 2007). Furthermore, Allen and Meyer (1990) have found that affective and normative commitment are somewhat related to one another. Given these findings, the following prediction is made.

Hypothesis 3a: Perceived coworker and supervisor support are positively related to affective organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 3b: Perceived supervisor support is more strongly related to affective organizational commitment than coworker support.

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

The final outcome of interest in this study is organizational citizenship behaviors. Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) occur when employees go above and beyond their assigned duties and engage in behaviors that will have a positive effect on the organization and other employees around them (Coleman & Borman, 2000). Researchers have broken OCBs down into various dimensions. For the purpose of this research, OCBs will be condensed into organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards the individual (OCBI) and organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards the organization (OCBO).

Both coworkers and supervisors may have an impact on whether or not an employee is able or willing to engage in OCBs. Research has shown that if a coworker is supportive of another employee, that employee will engage in OCBI (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). This

aligns with social exchange theory where if employee “A” does something for employee “B”, employee “B” will feel like they need to do something for employee “A.” Both social exchange and leader-member exchange can be tied to employee engagement in OCBs. Aquino and Bommer (2003) have found that leader-member exchange is significantly related to employee engagement in OCBs. When employees have a high quality LMX relationship with their supervisor, employees might be encouraged to go above and beyond their assigned duties without expecting anything in return. Bragger et al. (2005), in a study of teachers, found that conflict between work and life roles has a negative impact on OCBs. The more role conflict an employee is feeling, the less likely he or she will engage in OCBs. These authors also found that if teachers perceive their organization as being supportive of them, they are still likely to engage in OCBs whether or not they are highly committed to the organization. Beham (2011) further emphasized the findings by Bragger et al. (2005) by stating that work-life conflict can decrease OCBs because employees are cautious of the personal resources they contribute in both domains. These findings have important implications for organizations, as perceived support may lead to an increase in OCBs. Given the relationship between support and employee engagement in organizational citizenship behaviors, the following predictions are made.

Hypothesis 4a: Perceived coworker and supervisor support are positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors towards the organization and individuals.

Hypothesis 4b: Perceived supervisor support is more strongly related to organizational citizenship behaviors towards the organization and individuals.

Chapter III: Methodology Design

The current study was descriptive in nature and included the use of quantitative data collection procedures. The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between perceived coworker and supervisor work-life support on different outcome variables (i.e., employee work-life balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors). Furthermore, this study sought to determine which avenue of support, coworkers or supervisors, had a stronger relationship with the outcome variables.

Participants

A total of 142 people responded to the survey (available between 10/22/2012 – 3/20/2013). A closer examination of the data revealed that 10 respondents dropped out of the survey immediately after they opened it. These responses were deleted from survey results prior to running analyses. The final sample size consisted of 132 participants. The sample was mainly Caucasian (84.8%), single (72.6%), female (64.5%) and in their late twenties ($M = 28.66$, $SD = 12.18$). The majority of participants did not provide care for dependent children (73.5%) or dependent adults (82.6%). More participants identified themselves to be full-time workers (40.8%) compared to part-time workers (36.8%). Additionally, 13.6% of participants identified themselves as being a part-time worker with multiple jobs and 8.8% of participants identified themselves as being both a part-time and full-time worker. Participants work an average of 30 hours a week ($M = 30.23$, $SD = 14.65$) in one employment position (61.4%). On average, participants had been employed at their primary job for 2.5 years ($M = 2.5$, $SD = 3.83$). On average, participants had 7.41 hours of contact with their supervisor each week ($SD = 9.85$).

Materials

Coworker support. Perceived coworker support was measured using a 10-item scale developed by Ducharme and Martin (2000). Using a 5-point Likert scale, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree, with regard to perceptions of coworker work-life balance support. Items were specific to emotional and instrumental support. A sample item of emotional support was, “Your coworkers are friendly to you.” A sample item of instrumental support included, “Your coworkers would fill in while you’re absent” (see Appendix A). The coefficient alpha for the coworker emotional support scale was .85. The coefficient alpha for the instrumental support scale was .76 (Ducharme & Martin, 2000)

Supervisor support. Perceived supervisor support was gauged using a 14-item questionnaire developed by Hammer et al. (2009). The coefficient alpha for the Hammer et al. (2009) scale was .94. Using a 5-point Likert scale, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. A sample item measuring emotional support was, “My supervisor is willing to listen to my problems in juggling work and non-work life.” A sample item measuring role modeling was, “My supervisor is a good role model for work and non-work balance.” An example of an item measuring instrumental support was, “I can depend on my supervisor to help me with scheduling conflicts if I need it.” Finally, a sample item measuring creative work-life management was, “My supervisor thinks about how the work in my department can be organized to jointly benefit employees and the company” (see Appendix B).

Work-life conflict. Netemeyer et al.’s (1996) five-item scale was used to measure work-life conflict. The average alpha level for the work-life conflict scale was .88 (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree,

respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements such as, “The demands of my work interfere with my home and **non-work** life” and “My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill **non-work** duties.” Some of the items have been reworded to reflect work-life conflict. Please reference the highlighted words found in Appendix C under the work-life conflict measure to identify which words have been altered.

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was measured using the short form of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, 1967). The short version of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire consists of 20 items. This scale had an average Hoyt reliability coefficient from .78 to .93 (Weiss et al., 1967). Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with different aspects of their job such as, “Being able to keep busy all the time” and “The chance to work alone on the job” using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) very dissatisfied to (5) very satisfied. See Appendix D.

Organizational commitment. Meyer and Allen’s (1990) eight-item scale was used to measure affective commitment. It had a coefficient alpha of .83 (Smith & Gardner, 2007). Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a scale of (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. A sample item from the affective commitment was, “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.” See Appendix E.

Organizational citizenship behaviors. Lee & Allen’s (2002) measure of OCBs was utilized. These authors distinguished between organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards individuals (OCBIs) and organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards the organization as a whole (OCBOs). Reliabilities were .83 for the OCBI measure and .88 for the OCBO dimensions (Lee & Allen, 2002). Each dimension had a total of eight items. Participants were asked to indicate how often they felt a target person engaged in the various forms of

behavior using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) never to (7) always. For the purpose of this research, respondents were asked to indicate how often they personally engaged in OCBI and OCBOs using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) never to (5) always. An example item of OCBI was, “Please indicate how often you help others who have been absent.” An example item that seeks to measure OBCOs was, “I attend functions that are not required, but that help the organizational image.” See Appendix F.

Demographics. Respondents were asked to provide demographic information. Specific work-related questions were asked including respondent job level (i.e., senior management, middle management, first-level management, and non-management), job industry, job status (full-time or part-time), average number of hours worked during the week, length of time working with the company, number of contact hours they have with their supervisor per week, and finally number of jobs they were working. Personal demographic questions were asked about respondents’ gender, age, race/ethnicity, marital status, family configuration (e.g., single-earner family), and whether they were responsible for providing care for a child, an adult, or both a child and adult.

Procedure

A survey link was posted online in two different locations. First the link was posted on LinkedIn.com. Specifically, the researcher posted a short description of the study and a survey link in the following groups on LinkedIn: The American Evaluation Association, American Psychological Association, I/O Careers, Network of Industrial Organizational Psychologists (IOP), Psychology Student Network, and SIOP – The Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Second, the survey was posted on the University of Wisconsin-Stout’s Psychology

department participant pool. Students attending the university could view a short description of the survey and decided if they would like to participate in the survey.

Before clicking on the survey link, participants were asked to indicate whether they met the minimum requirements for participation: at least 18 years of age, and currently working under at least one supervisor for a minimum of three months. If a participant did not meet the requirements, they were thanked for their time and willingness to participate. Those participants who met the above requirements were directed to click on the survey link. They initially viewed an informed consent page assuring them that their information would remain confidential, and that they could stop the survey at any time without consequence.

The survey itself consisted of measures of perceived coworker and supervisor work-life support, employee work-life balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors, along with demographic questions. Responses to demographic questions were optional. To provide incentive for participation, participants had an option to enter into a drawing for a \$50.00 Visa gift card. If a participant decided to enter into the drawing, they were directed to a separate survey to provide contact information. Eligible students who took the survey through SONA were granted credit by the researcher. Finally, all participants were thanked and debriefed about the purpose of the study.

Chapter IV: Results

Preliminary Analyses

Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations and frequencies are presented in Table 1. Correlations among study variables are presented in Table 2, along with scale reliabilities. The data were examined and cleaned before analyses were run. Specifically, participants who dropped out of the survey without answering any questions were omitted from the dataset. The researcher deleted any unnecessary text that was given for responses requiring numerical information. Additionally, the researcher reverse scored items within scales to ensure that high or low scale scores could be analyzed correctly.

Hypothesis Testing

An overview of study hypotheses findings can be found in Table 3.

Hypothesis 1a: Perceived coworker and supervisor support are positively related to perceived work-life balance.

Hypothesis 1b: Perceived supervisor support is more strongly related to perceived work-life balance than coworker support.

The first pair of hypotheses predicted relationships between types of perceived support and work-life balance. As shown in Table 2, perceived coworker support ($r(127) = .23, p < .01$) and perceived supervisor support ($r(127) = .39, p < .01$) were positively related to work-life balance. These correlations are taken as support for Hypothesis 1a. Regarding Hypothesis 1b, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. Both co-worker and supervisor support were entered simultaneously to explore the prediction that perceived supervisor support would be more strongly related to perceptions of work-life balance than would co-worker support. As shown in Table 4, results indicated that supervisor support ($\beta = .35, p < .01$) significantly

predicted employee work-life balance. Coworker support did not significantly predict employee work-life balance ($\beta = .12, p < .01$). Partial support was found for Hypothesis 1b, as only supervisor support predicted perceptions of work-life balance.

Hypothesis 2a: Perceived coworker and supervisor support are positively related to job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2b: Perceived supervisor support is more strongly related to job satisfaction than coworker support.

The second set of hypotheses examined perceived supervisor support and perceived coworker support as they related to job satisfaction. Perceived coworker support (Hypothesis 2a) had a moderate, positive correlation with job satisfaction ($r(122) = .52, p < .01$). Perceived supervisor support had a strong, positive correlation with job satisfaction ($r(122) = .73, p < .01$). These results provide support for Hypothesis 2a. As show in Table 5, multiple regression analysis revealed that supervisor support significantly predicted employee job satisfaction, ($\beta = .64, p < .01$) more so than coworker support ($\beta = .33, p < .01$). Thus, Hypothesis 2b was supported.

Hypothesis 3a: Perceived coworker and supervisor support are positively related to affective organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 3b: Perceived supervisor support is more strongly related to affective organizational commitment than coworker support.

The third set of hypotheses predicted relationships between perceived support and organizational commitment. Perceived coworker support and supervisor support (Hypothesis 3a) were moderately related to organizational commitment ($r(125) = .46$ and $.55, p < .01$, respectively). Multiple regression analysis revealed that organizational commitment (Hypothesis

3b) was significantly predicted by supervisor support ($\beta = .45, p < .01$) and coworker support ($\beta = .32, p < .01$). Supervisor support was more strongly related to organizational commitment compared to coworker support, thus Hypothesis 3b was supported. See Table 6.

Hypothesis 4a: Perceived coworker and supervisor support are positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors towards the organization and individuals.

Hypothesis 4b: Perceived supervisor support is more strongly related to organizational citizenship behaviors towards the organization and individuals.

The fourth and final set of hypotheses examined the relationship between perceived supervisor/coworker support and organizational citizenship behaviors. In regards to Hypothesis 4a, perceived coworker support had a weak, positive relationship with organizational citizenship behaviors ($r(123) = .22, p < .05$). Perceived supervisor support was also slightly positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors ($r(123) = .27, p < .01$). Organizational citizenship behaviors significantly predicted by supervisor support ($\beta = .22, p < .05$; Hypothesis 4b). Coworker support did not significantly predict organizational citizenship behaviors ($\beta = .16, p > .01$). As it is shown in Table 7, while perceived supervisor support was significantly related to organizational citizenship behaviors, coworker support was not significantly related to them. Thus, Hypothesis 4b was only partially supported.

Chapter V: Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the impact of supervisor work-life support on various employee outcomes such as work-life balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors. Additionally, this study sought to determine whether supervisor work-life support or co-worker work-life support had a bigger influence on these outcomes. The findings of this study align with past research that demonstrates perceived work-life support has an influence on employee outcomes (e.g., Eby et al., 2005). The current study demonstrates that perceived work-life balance support is related to general work-life balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior, although support from one's coworkers and supervisors are not perceived equally.

First, previous research suggests a positive relationship between coworker support and employee job satisfaction (e.g. Beehr, 1986, Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; Pollock et al., 2000; Thompson & Prottas, 2006). Somewhat surprisingly, findings from the current study suggest a stronger relation between supervisor support and job satisfaction, although coworker support is also related to job satisfaction. This confirms past research that supervisor work-life support significantly predicts job satisfaction (e.g., Baral & Bhargava, 2010; Parasuraman & Alutto, 1984; & Straub, 2012).

Both types of support were related to organizational commitment as well. This, too, is consistent with prior research suggesting that when both coworkers and supervisors are supportive of an employee, that employee may be more satisfied with his or her job and develop emotional attachments to the organization (Rousseau & Aubé, 2010).

The relationship between perceived support and organizational citizenship behaviors is similar to that of commitment. One might think that if employees perceive their supervisors as being supportive of them, they would like to be supportive of their supervisors in return by going above and beyond their assigned duties at work. Indeed, there has been some support in the literature that perceived support may be related to organizational citizenship behaviors. Specifically, Chiaburu and Harrison (2008) found that *coworkers* who are supportive of one another are more likely to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors directed towards individuals. Aquino and Bommer (2003) state that if employees have a good quality LMX relationship with their *supervisor* they may engage in organizational citizenship behaviors without expecting anything in return. Surprisingly, findings from the current study suggest that perceived support is only weakly related to organizational citizenship behaviors. As a matter of fact, coworker support was not found to be a predictor of organizational citizenship behaviors. Perhaps organizational citizenship behaviors stem from other factors such as how long an employee has worked at a company, or organizational culture. A newly hired employee may engage in organizational citizenship behaviors in order to impress his or her supervisor. It might also be the case that employees who have worked at their organizations for a long period of time may feel more devoted to the organization and want to see it succeed. The organizational culture as a whole could impact organizational citizenship behaviors as a strict and less inviting culture may not foster those types of employee behaviors.

Regarding the last outcome of interest, it was found that supervisor support was related to perceptions of work-life balance. However, as with OCBs, coworker support was not predictive of work-life balance. It's possible that coworker support did not predict employee work-life balance simply because coworkers do not have the power to influence work-life balance in the

same way that supervisors do (e.g., flexibility regarding scheduling). While coworkers can offer each other emotional support, there is sometimes little they can do to help cover a shift or alleviate job responsibilities. It may also be the case that employees in certain job positions have little interaction with coworkers. In sum, findings suggest supervisors have a stronger influence on these organizational outcomes than coworkers.

Practical Implications

Overall, survey results indicated that perceived supervisor support does indeed have a significant impact on employees' work-life balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. In fact, across all four outcomes, supervisor support appears to be more influential on employee evaluations of work-life balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the display of organizational citizenship behaviors. Perhaps if organizations want to increase work-life balance among their employees, they may want to direct their initial attention to supervisors.

To encourage satisfied employees that are committed to their jobs and go above and beyond their assigned duties at work, supervisors should be supportive of their employees' work-life balance. More specifically, *it is important that employees perceive their supervisors as being supportive*. The results of this study indicate that perceived work-life balance support from one's supervisor had the strongest relationship to job satisfaction. As job satisfaction is linked to leader-member exchange and social exchange theory (Judge et al., 1994; Laio, 2011), it is vital that supervisors are aware of employee work-life balance. If a supervisor engages in a positive social exchange with their employee (i.e., verbally showing support for an employee's work-life balance), that employee may in turn work extra hours or do what they can to show their supervisor they appreciate the support. If needed, training could be given to supervisors on how

to handle situations involving employee work-life balance (Baral & Bhargava, 2010).

Supervisors could make it a habit to periodically ask their employees if they are satisfied with their current levels of work-life balance. If it is discovered that an employee is unhappy with his or her work-life balance, the supervisor and employee could schedule a meeting to discuss ways to increase satisfaction, for example.

Perhaps even before providing training to supervisors regarding sensitivity to work-life balance issues, organizations should make sure they have programs or practices set in place that allow for employees to attend to their personal lives when needed. For example, it may be beneficial for an organization to consider flexible scheduling. Flexible scheduling may help an employee alleviate some of the stressors that cause work-life conflict, such as time allocation. Furthermore, it is important that employees know they will not be punished for utilizing such policies or programs (Batt & Valcour, 2003).

Limitations and Future Directions

While the current study contributes to our understanding of work-life balance, there are limitations to the study that should be taken into account. The first consideration is the methodology. The current study utilizes a cross-sectional design. Future research should conduct this same study using a longitudinal design. Relatedly, some researchers argue that individual level data is insufficient, and more research should be conducted at the organizational level. Straub (2012) suggests that if individual level factors (e.g., gender roles, one's life course stage, or family life stage) are positively associated with supportive supervisor behaviors, it can provide human resource managers with important information regarding supportive behaviors. For example, it may be beneficial to conduct this research again examining what type of supervisor support (i.e., emotional, instrumental) has a bigger impact on employee outcomes.

This information would allow insight into how supervisors should show their employees they are supportive of their work-life balance.

Regarding the sample utilized here, about half of survey participants were students. This study should be replicated with a more experienced employee population to explore whether age and/or experience make a difference. Comparisons could be made between companies with higher support and those with lower support to indicate how much of a difference perceived support has on various outcomes. Additionally, it may be beneficial to explore support across types of jobs (e.g., hospitality, construction).

Furthermore, this study could be repeated with an emphasis on examining diverse cultures. Different cultures may place a stronger (or weaker) emphasis on work-life balance. For example, Hassan, Dollard, and Winefield (2010) found that employees in Malaysia were significantly lower on “work interference with family” compared to western countries. Baral and Bhargava (2010) examined work-family enrichment within India. These authors found that supervisor support was positively related to job satisfaction and affective commitment.

Conclusion

In sum, findings of this study indicate perceived work-life balance from one’s coworkers and supervisor are positively related to various employee outcomes. Supervisor support was found to predict employee outcomes more so than coworker support. As this study revealed, when supervisors are supportive of employee work-life balance, it has *positive* implications for both the organizations and its employees. Perceived support is related to positive perceptions of work-life balance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors. This study contributes to the literature by further emphasizing the importance of work-life balance support. Specifically, it emphasizes the importance of *perceived supervisor*

support. It would be beneficial for supervisors to evaluate current policies and procedures related to work-life balance and make adjustments accordingly so that employees feel supported and react favorably towards their organizations.

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Appendix A: Perceived Coworker Support Scale

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements (1_Strongly Disagree, 5_Strongly Agree).

Affective support

1. Your coworkers really care about you
2. You feel close to your coworkers
3. Your coworkers take a personal interest in you
4. You feel appreciated by your coworkers
5. Your coworkers are friendly to you

Instrumental support

6. Your coworkers would fill in while you're absent
7. Your coworkers are helpful in getting your job done
8. Your coworkers give useful advice on job problems
9. Your coworkers assist with unusual work problems
10. Your coworkers will pitch in and help

Appendix B: Perceived Supervisor Support Scale

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements (1_Strongly Disagree, 5_Strongly Agree).

Emotional support

1. My supervisor is willing to listen to my problems in juggling work and non-work life
2. My supervisor takes the time to learn about my personal needs.
3. My supervisor makes me feel comfortable talking to him or her about my conflicts between work and non-work.
4. My supervisor and I can talk effectively to solve conflicts between work and non-work issues.

Instrumental support

5. I can depend on my supervisor to help me with scheduling conflicts if I need it.
6. I can rely on my supervisor to make sure my work responsibilities are handled when I have unanticipated non-work demands.
7. My supervisor works effectively with workers to creatively solve conflicts between work and non-work.

Role model

8. My supervisor is a good role model for work and non-work balance.
9. My supervisor demonstrates effective behaviors in how to juggle work and non-work balance.
10. My supervisor demonstrates how a person can jointly be successful on and off the job.

Creative work-family management

11. My supervisor thinks about how the work in my department can be organized to jointly benefit employees and the company.

12. My supervisor asks for suggestions to make it easier for employees to balance work and non-work demands.

13. My supervisor is creative in reallocating job duties to help my department work better as a team.

14. My supervisor is able to manage the department as a whole team to enable everyone's needs to be met.

Appendix C: Work-Life Conflict Scale

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements (1_Strongly Disagree, 5_Strongly Agree).

1. The demands of my work interfere with my home and **non-work** life.
2. The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill **non-work** responsibilities.
3. Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.
4. My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill **non-work** duties.
5. Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for activities **outside of work**.

Appendix D: Job Satisfaction Scale (Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire)

Please ask yourself, how satisfied am I with this aspect of my job (1_Very Dissatisfied, 5_Very Satisfied)?

On my present job, this is how I feel about . . .

1. Being able to keep busy all the time
2. The chance to work alone on the job
3. The chance to do different things from time to time
4. The chance to be “somebody” in the community
5. The way my boss handles his/her workers
6. The competence of my supervisor in making decisions
7. Being able to do things that don’t go against my conscience
8. The way my job provides for steady employment
9. The chance to do things for other people
10. The chance to tell people what to do
11. The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities
12. The way company policies are put into practice
13. My pay and the amount of work I do
14. The chances for advancement on this job
15. The freedom to use my own judgment
16. The chance to try my own methods of doing the job
17. The working conditions
18. The way my co-workers get along with each other
19. The praise I get for doing a good job

20. The feel of accomplishment I get from the job

Appendix E: Organizational Commitment Scale (Affective Organizational Commitment)

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements (1_Strongly Disagree, 5_Strongly Agree).

1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization
2. I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it
3. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own
4. I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to this one (R)
5. I do not feel like 'part of the family' at my organization (R)
6. I do not feel 'emotionally attached' to this organization (R)
7. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me
8. I do not feel a *strong* sense of belonging to *my* organization (R)

Appendix F: Organizational Citizenship Behavior Scale

Please indicate how often you engage in the following behaviors (1_Never, 5_Always).

OCBI Items

1. Help others who have been absent.
2. Willingly give your time to help others who have work-related problems.
3. Adjust your work schedule to accommodate other employees' requests for time off.
4. Go out of the way to make newer employees feel welcome in the work group.
5. Show genuine concern and courtesy toward coworkers, even under the most trying business or personal situations.
6. Give up time to help others who have work or non-work problems.
7. Assist others with their duties.
8. Share personal property with others to help their work.

OCBO Items

1. Attend functions that are not required but that help the organizational image.
2. Keep up with developments in the organization.
3. Defend the organization when other employees criticize it.
4. Show pride when representing the organization in public.
5. Offer ideas to improve the functioning of the organization.
6. Express loyalty toward the organization.
7. Take action to protect the organization from potential problems.
8. Demonstrate concern about the image of the organization.

Table 1

Demographic Variable Frequencies

Variable	%
Race/Ethnicity	
White/Caucasian	84.4
Black/African American	2.4
Latino/Hispanic	4.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	4.8
Other	3.2
Family Configuration	
Single-Earner Family	36
Dual-Earner Family	20
N/A	24
Current Job Level	
Senior Management	2.4
Middle Management	14.4
First-Level Management	19.2
Non-Management	64
Job Industry	
Manufacturing	1.6
Construction	1.6
Utilities	0.8
Retail	15.2

Transportation & Warehousing	2.4
Information	3.2
Financial Industry	2.4
Educational Services	16
Health Care	8.8
Leisure & Hospitality	3.2
State & Local Government	1.6
Federal Government	1.6
Food Services	15.2
Other	26.4

Note. $N = 125$.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for all Study Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Coworker Support	3.72	0.68	(.91)					
2. Supervisor Support	3.44	0.95	.30**	(.96)				
3. Work-Life Conflict	3.18	1.08	.23**	.39**	(.94)			
4. Job Satisfaction	3.56	0.67	.52**	.73**	.28**	(.91)		
5. Organizational Commitment	3.06	0.80	.46**	.55**	.29**	.73**	(.87)	
6. Organizational Citizenship Behaviors	3.70	0.57	.22*	.27**	-.06	.37**	.37**	(.88)

Note. *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed); **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed);

Coefficient alphas are presented on the diagonal.

Table 3

Summary of Hypotheses and Findings

Hypothesis	Supported/Not Supported
<i>Hypothesis 1a:</i> Perceived coworker and supervisor support are positively related to perceived work-life balance.	Supported
<i>Hypothesis 1b:</i> Perceived supervisor support is more strongly related to perceived work-life balance than coworker support.	Partially Supported
<i>Hypothesis 2a:</i> Perceived coworker and supervisor support are positively related to job satisfaction.	Supported
<i>Hypothesis 2b:</i> Perceived supervisor support is more strongly related to job satisfaction than coworker support	Supported
<i>Hypothesis 3a:</i> Perceived coworker and supervisor support are positively related to <u>affective</u> organizational commitment.	Supported
<i>Hypothesis 3b:</i> Perceived supervisor support is more strongly related to <u>affective</u> organizational commitment than coworker support.	Supported
<i>Hypothesis 4a:</i> Perceived coworker and supervisor support are positively related to organizational citizenship behaviors towards the organization and individuals.	Supported
<i>Hypothesis 4b:</i> Perceived supervisor support is more strongly related to organizational citizenship behaviors towards the organization and individuals.	Partially Supported

Table 4

Multiple Regression Analysis Examining the Effects of Coworker Support and Supervisor Support on Work-Life Conflict (N = 129)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Coworker Support	.20	.14	.12
Supervisor Support	.40	.10	.35**

Note. $R^2 = .17$, Adjusted $R^2 = .15$

$p < .01^{**}$, $p < .05^*$.

Table 5

Multiple Regression Analysis Examining the Effects of Coworker Support and Supervisor

Support on Job Satisfaction (N = 124)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Coworker Support	.32	.06	.33**
Supervisor Support	.45	.04	.64**

Note. $R^2 = .64$, Adjusted $R^2 = .63$

$p < .01^{**}$, $p < .05^*$.

Table 6

Multiple Regression Analysis Examining the Effects of Coworker Support and Supervisor Support on Organizational Commitment (N = 127)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Coworker Support	.38	.09	.32**
Supervisor Support	.38	.06	.45**

Note. $R^2 = .40$, Adjusted $R^2 = .39$

$p < .01^{**}$, $p < .05^*$.

Table 7

Multiple Regression Analysis Examining the Effects of Coworker Support and Supervisor Support on Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (N = 125)

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Coworker Support	.13	.08	.16
Supervisor Support	.14	.06	.22*

Note. $R^2 = .10$, Adjusted $R^2 = .08$

$p < .01^{**}$, $p < .05^*$.